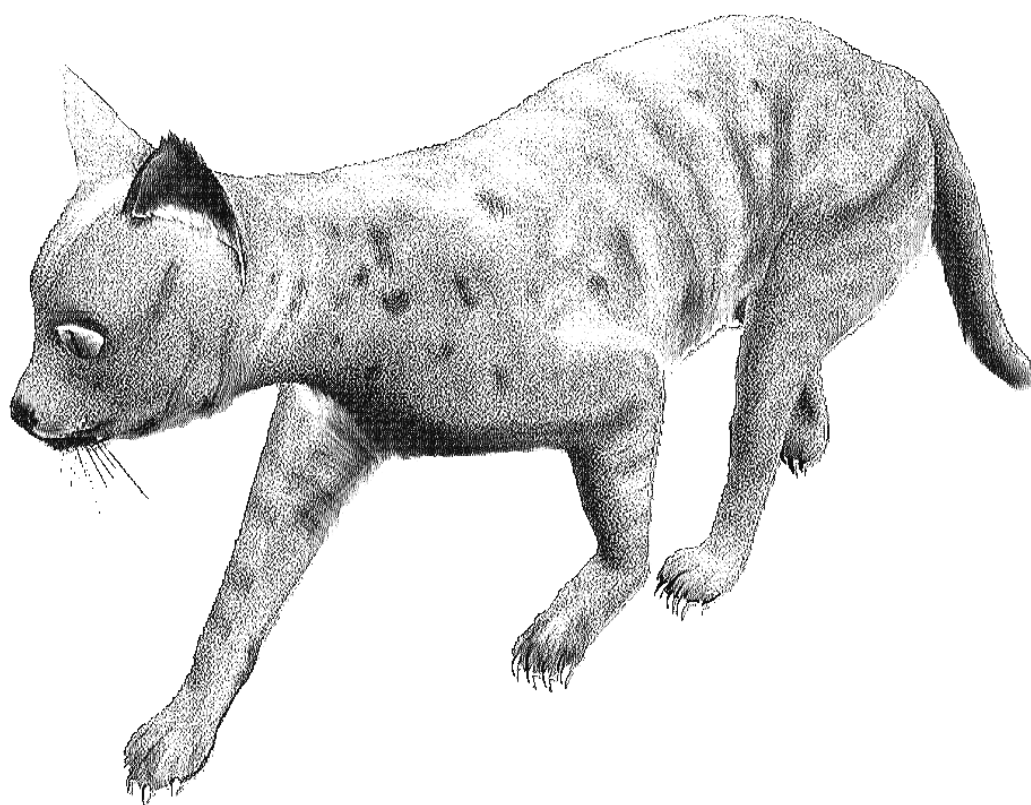


Essex Archaeology and History News



Summer 2006

THE ESSEX SOCIETY FOR ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

NEWSLETTER 149

SUMMER 2006

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COPY FOR THE NEXT ISSUE SHOULD BE SENT TO THE EDITOR AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS NO LATER THAN 23 OCTOBER 2006

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Society or its officers.

Cover illustration:

The Aveley Jungle Cat, drawn by Roger Massey-Ryan. A foreleg bone was found in the 1990s on a road improvement scheme for the A13. This was the first record of this species anywhere in Britain. Further information can be found on the National Ice Age Network (see page 5) or in "The finest prospect" The Archaeology of South Essex, by Nigel Brown and Roger Massey-Ryan, published by Essex County Council and available post free (in the UK) for £10.00 per copy. You can send a cheque made payable to Essex County Council to Janet Hill, Historic Environment Branch, Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1QH.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Harlow Civic Society, which I chair – in addition to making representations about future development to defend the green wedges and the character of the town, as it was planned by Sir Frederick Gibberd - is also concerned to protect and enhance the local heritage as a whole.

One of our most celebrated historic endowments is the Romano-British Temple site which dates back several thousand years before 80 AD when the Romans erected a square cella surrounded by an ambulatory and other buildings. This lasted some 300 years but then fell into ruins and total oblivion until it was rediscovered in modern times.

Sadly, the site has been neglected since it was excavated and at times it has been totally overgrown. Stones laid down to mark the walls of the Temple have become dislodged or have disappeared.

As the result of local efforts, the Council now cuts the grass at regular intervals. The Friends of Harlow Museum, of which I am a member, has had two explanatory boards erected. We are now in touch with English Heritage and the Council with a view to preparing the ground to apply for a grant to replace and reset the stones. Unfortunately, they were not set very accurately from the outset, but we are hoping to improve the presentation of this important historic monument.

Several miles away – today, just outside Harlow's boundary – is the Foster Street Baptist Burial Ground, established in 1677 by William Woodward, the founder of the Baptist Church in the Harlow area and previously, it would appear, a chaplain in the Parliamentary Army during the Civil War. The graves of a number of local celebrities are situated here, including that of the Flower family.

Benjamin Flower (1755-1829) a prominent radical and Unitarian, edited the *Cambridge Intelligencer*, which spoke up for libertarian causes during the French Revolution. His daughters, Eliza (1803-1846) and Sarah (1805-1848) were poets and composers. The latter wrote the hymn 'Nearer My God to Thee', which was supposed to have been sung as the ill-fated 'Titanic' was sinking.

This graveyard had become completely overgrown but, by dint of the work of volunteers, was cleared and all the inscriptions recorded. Epping Forest Country Care has more recently kept the site in order.

Another local memorial, at the former St. Andrew's Church at Netteswellbury in Harlow, has also been restored. This is the grave of Canon John Lionel Fisher (1887-1969) the celebrated Essex historian. The son of the Revd. Arthur Thomas Fisher, Rector of Skelton in Yorkshire, John L. Fisher was presented to the living of St. Andrew's Netteswell in 1918 and to Little Parndon in 1921. During the 35 years that he discharged his duties as a minister of the church, he became a member of the Epping Rural District Council, of which he became Chairman, and also served as a JP on the Epping Bench. In addition, he carried out intensive and systematic historical research which he incorporated into several books and numerous articles, particularly in the *Essex Review* and *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*. *The Harlow Deanery* (1922) and *Harlow New Town: a short history of the area it will embrace* (1951) are probably his best known publications, but he did much more.

On 6th June we had a well attended event to mark the refurbishment of Canon Fisher's grave, at which a number of us spoke, including Ben Fisher, Canon Fisher's son.

We hope that activities such as those described here will help to conserve our local heritage. Living in a county with such a rich history, we shall never run short of work of this sort, but it is fitting that those of us with a historical consciousness should strive in every locality to ensure that our past continues to live.

Stan Newens,
July 2006

MORANT LUNCH

October 15th - Morant Lunch - The Bear, Stock - after lunch speaker our patron, Lord Petre. 12.30 for 1.00pm. Cost £21 for a five course meal.

All bookings through Pat Ryan by 23 September at the latest - 01245 222237

THOBY PRIORY, A SERIOUSLY NEGLECTED RUIN

The date of the foundation of Thoby Priory, near Mountnessing, is unknown but it was already in existence in the mid C12. It was one of the smaller houses, dissolved in the first round in 1525. It was granted to Cardinal's College, Oxford in 1526 but, after the fall of Wolsey, passed into private hands. A small part of the claustral building of C15 date was incorporated into a dwelling house (probably in the C16) and this was further extended in the late C19 or early C20. Its declining fortunes were reflected by its use as a prisoner of war camp in the Second World War, and its subsequent demolition in 1953 and replacement with a new house.

The site is surprisingly remote and little known. In 1845, Suckling was able to

trace the entire plan of the priory, though the only standing ruins were the south window of the chancel, and the first arcade of the nave on the same side. He reported the cloisters to be to the north of the church, and commented on the monks' refectory surviving within the later house, 'much disfigured by the introduction of sash windows and a modern ceiling of plaster'. A decade or so later, Collier (probably using Suckling's account) noted 'so little has curiosity been gratified here, that the principal antiquarian treasures of this fallen pile remain to be developed at a future day.' He reported the discovery of stone and oak dug-out coffins, knives, coins, and floor tiles, referred to by Suckling. In the late C19, the house was seriously damaged by fire, destroying many of the original features, but it was subsequently repaired. On 29 June 1915, between 50 and 60 members of the Society visited the priory and had lunch in the picturesque grounds. Frederic Chancellor's article, based on a paper read at that gathering, included a scaled reconstruction of the ground plan of the church, noting the standing south chancel window, devoid of tracery, and the single nave arcade arch as described by Suckling and Collier. The accompanying photograph shows the standing ruin heavily mantled in ivy, the nave arcade being surmounted by a weathervane! Chancellor also reported the incorporation of the priory refectory in the core of the mansion and, though his report post-dated the fire, he described various C16 features, such as fireplaces and panelling. However, it was not clear whether these had been salvaged from other parts of the house, or had been imported from elsewhere. The site is now used for various industrial purposes, including a car breaker's yard, a timber yard and a joiner's shop. It is in divided ownership

and, though there have been exploratory negotiations by a developer (who does not own the site) to build a substantial number of houses and to enhance the setting of the ruin, nothing has been agreed. Limited excavations in 2001-2 revealed several graves from the cemetery, and extensive remains of the Tudor mansion, containing remnants of the priory buildings. The report by Essex County Council identified it as a site of 'high archaeological potential'. The freestanding south wall of the nave and chancel (of C14 and C15 date) has suffered from serious neglect, and remains smothered in a very heavy growth of ivy. Recently one of the two remaining arches has collapsed. In response to a recent enquiry by the Society, Brentwood District Council (BDC) stated that it has 'no direct involvement in the preservation of this historic site'. The Society has also approached English Heritage (EH). The buried remains are protected by its scheduled monument status but EH has no powers to enforce repairs, and only limited resources to provide grants or staff time. Its priorities are clearly with more important structures elsewhere, where there is public access. EH have contacted BDC about the priory remains, but the council has serious reservations about any development on this green belt site, and has not been not convinced by EH that the planning gain from preservation and enhancement of the ruins would over-ride these objections. EH is not concerned about potential development, provided that it is preceded by appropriate archaeological investigation and recording. The next quinquennial EH inspection of the standing ruin is due next year but it is clear that there is no immediate solution to this unsatisfactory state of affairs. It is may be surprising that monastic remains can suffer such neglect in the

C20 and 21, but there is at least one other priory ruin in Essex which has virtually disappeared since the RCHM visited. The largely C12 nave and its C16 roof at Stanesgate Priory, in the parish of Steeple, were largely intact when measured and photographed in the early 1920s. Now almost nothing remains.

Michael Leach

Sources:

Coller DW 'The People's History of Essex' (1861) Chelmsford

EAH Transactions second series xiv, 240-244, 262 (1916)

RCHM (Essex) volume iv (1923)

VCH (Essex) volume ii (1907)

Letter from English Heritage to the Society dated 4 July 2006.

DR STUKELEY AND THE LEXDEN HEATH EARTHWORKS

Amongst Philip Morant's letters in the British Library is one from William Stukeley, dated 15 August 1758. It is clear that they had visited the Lexden earthworks together, and it is not surprising that Stukeley differed from Morant's view (expressed in his *History of Colchester*) that they were of Roman origin. The letter is as follows:

'After my thanks for your civility to me at Colchester, I have delivered your letter to Dr Ducarol. I have considered these works on Lexden Heath; great indeed, as all works of the Druids were. I have found them at large in my frd Warburton's map, & the admeasurements in your book, from the surveyors. I desire you to send me the drawing you show'd me, wh may give some little light more; & answer me at your leisure ths queres.

Pray my best respects to my good frd Mr Gray, & to the literary Society at the Castle.'

The 'admeasurements' referred to were printed in the History of Colchester, from a survey done in 1722 by Rev. T Lufkin and Payler Smith, recorded as measured distances from certain points, and compass bearings. Morant's drawing (which clarifies the interpretation of the survey, and must be the document that Stukeley wished to borrow), was discovered a century ago in Morant's own copy of his History, then in the library of the Royal Institution. A copy of this drawing was published in our Society's Transactions in 1909.

The individuals mentioned in Stukeley's letter can be identified. Andrew Ducarel (1713-1785) was an antiquary, and keeper of the library at Lambeth Palace (with whom Morant doubtless exchanged many letters); John Warburton (1682-1759), herald and antiquary, published maps of several counties, as well as a survey of Hadrian's Wall; and Charles Gray, MP and owner of Colchester castle, will need no introduction

Michael Leach

Sources

Letters of P Morant, British Library Add mss 37222 vol vii

Morant, P History of Colchester book 2, 28-29(1748)

Laver, H 'A Survey of Grymes Dyke...on Lexden Heath' in EAT xi ns 19-21 (1909)

Dictionary of National Biography – an epitome (1965)

FISHING ON THE RIVER STOUR

An Act of 4 Anne, c. 15, stipulated that 'for the preservation of the fishery of the River Stower in Essex and Suffolk, it

shall be lawful for the several game-keepers, and others authorized for that purpose, by warrant of any lords of manors, or owners of fisheries upon the said river between Maningtree and Sudbury, to enter into any boat upon the river, and search for and seize all nets and other engines for taking of fish, except such as shall be close packed up in boxes or packs, and carried only as merchandizes'

The Stour regulations were only a tiny part of a vast amount of legislation from the time of Edward I onwards, controlling all aspects of fishing (even the mesh size of nets). Anyone who believes that red tape is a modern phenomenon should study the 30 pages of small print summarizing the controls on fishing that were in place in 1791. Though over-fishing may have been a concern, it is likely that these regulations were framed to protect the landowners' assets, rather than purely for conservation.

Source: Williams, T W, A Digest of the Statute Law from 9 Henry III to 30 George III (1791) London

EARLY OBSERVATIONS OF CROP MARKS

Stukeley's observations of crop marks at Chesterford has already been noted (Newsletter 135) and it is clear that other C18 antiquarians followed suit. In 1765 Dr Foote Gower (?1726-1780), rector of Chignall St James, spent three weeks on horseback tracing the route of various Roman roads in NW Essex. One evening, he dictated a long letter about his discoveries to a young friend of his, Rev. Benjamin Forster, from which it is clear that Gower was familiar with the usefulness of crop marks for indicating buried features.

“In the ground between the encampment (at Great Chesterford) and the river is the spot supposed to have been an amphitheatre; there is no bank or inequality of ground remaining, but Mr Shepherd observed the corn to grow very thin in a circle of about 8 yards wide, including a space of 100 yards diameter. The traces of the streets, and the entrances to the camp, east and west, are plainly discernible by the thinness of the corn, when growing.”

Michael Leach

ESSEX PLACE-NAMES PROJECT SEMINAR

The next Seminar will be held at Maldon on Saturday 18th November 2006. The Guest Speaker will be Mr Edward Martin of Suffolk Archaeology, he will speak on “Medieval Landscapes”.

Tickets are available (price £5 payable to “ESAH”) from the Project Coordinator, 27 Tor Bryan, Ingatestone, Essex CM4 9JZ. Please enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope.

James Kemble

NATIONAL ICE AGE NETWORK

This is a new initiative funded through the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, through a grant scheme administered by English Heritage and English Nature. It is based on four regional centres, that for southeast England being at Royal Holloway College (Dr Danielle Shreve and Dr Barbara Silva). Their particular interest is the information revealed about the Ice Age environment and inhabitants revealed by sand and gravel extraction, and it is heavily dependant on feedback

from the aggregates industry, and local archaeologists. This would be of particular interest to any member who has an involvement with the industry, or with rescue archaeology. More details can be found on their website at www.iceage.org.uk or by e-mail on info@iceage.org.uk

Michael Leach

CHANGES IN SMOKING HABITS

In 1742, the archdeacon of Rochester had a considerable quantity of silver plate stolen, and posted a reward for its recovery in the *Daily Advertiser*. One of the items was a ‘small smoking candlestick’, which the commentator, writing in 1905, noted ‘has a displeasing sound. It was what is now known as a taper candlestick, placed together with the tobacco box on round top of a mahogany table. Dignitaries of the church then smoked contemplative long flat-spurred clays from Broseley, like gentlemen, in the quiet of their rooms, a procedure in pleasing contrast with that of the present time, when clergy may be seen with short wooden pipes in their mouths in every third class carriage, and on all public promenades. It is not edifying.’

The writer, Albert Hartshorne, clearly believed that smoking should only occur in the privacy of one’s own room. Elsewhere he noted disapprovingly that Lancelot Blackburne (archbishop of York from 1724 to 1743) was ‘a prelate notorious for the extraordinary freedom of his manners. It was reported that on the occasion of a visitation at St Mary’s, Nottingham, he ordered pipes and tobacco and liquors to be brought into the vestry for his refreshment after the fatigues of a confirmation.’ The rector of

the church remonstrated with the archbishop on the impropriety of his conduct and said that his vestry should not be turned into a smoking room. Blackburne's background was somewhat unconventional for an archbishop; he was said 'to have acted early in life as chaplain on board a buccaneer, and many unsavoury slanders were propagated concerning him, and readily credited by the town, and to which his free and easy manners gave colour.' Swashbuckling habits clearly died hard, but attitudes to tobacco have come full circle over the years. Doubtless Hartshorne would give posthumous approval to the recent proposals to ban all smoking in public places!

Michael Leach

Source: Hartshorne A (ed) 'Memoirs of a Royal Chaplain, 1729-1763' (1905) Bodley Head

GOUGH'S ROAD MAP

This map, dated to about 1360 and believed to be a copy of an earlier one, is the oldest surviving map to show roads. Nothing is known about its surveyor or the reasons for commissioning it; it was purchased by Richard Gough in 1774 for half a crown from another antiquary, Thomas Martin. Gough left it to the Bodleian, with much else from his collection, in 1809, and it remains there to this day. It is on two skins of vellum measuring in total 22 inches by 42 inches. Rivers are shown in green, towns (according to their status) are represented as houses, churches, castles or cathedrals, and roads as thin red lines, marked with the distances between the towns in the same way as a modern road map. Like most mediaeval maps, east is at the top of the page. The outline of England and Wales is

reasonably accurate and immediately recognisable. However, when it came to Scotland, the surveyor was clearly guessing and the country is represented as a long even tongue of land, cut by a few rivers and surrounded by a scatter of round or oval islands. The road system in England and Wales is tantalisingly incomplete. There is, for example, no road is shown between London and the Kent/Sussex coast, though the bridge over the Medway at Rochester is marked in red. Essex, too, is devoid of roads, though several towns are marked and Foulness is given unexpected prominence. Important roads must have existed (particularly between London and the coast) but the reason for their omission remains a mystery.

The map has now been digitised and can be viewed on line for a limited period. The image was quite fuzzy on my mediaeval PC, but members with better equipment may be better served. Those curious to see the earliest image of the county will find it on the interactive 'Mapping the Realm' site on www.qub.ac.uk/urban_mapping/gough_map/ or www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/guides/maps/heref_rme.htm

Full colour facsimiles can be bought from the Bodleian Library shop at £15 (post and packing extra).

Michael Leach

AN EARLY MEMBER OF ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S COUNCIL

Richard Almack (1799-1875), a solicitor practising in Long Melford, was an enthusiastic and distinguished antiquarian, and an active member of

various learned societies. Not surprisingly, he was a founder member of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology. Less well known is the fact that he was also active in the formation of our Society, and was a member of its first Council. He contributed an article on the de Vere family to the first volume of our *Transactions*. Henry King, secretary of EAS from 1866 to 1893, knew him well and wrote 'I can bear testimony to his unwearied industry in archaeological pursuits, even at an advanced period of his life. I have met him in the Literary Department of the Court of Probate, working assiduously and laboriously in making excerpts from ancient wills for six hours at a time, with but a slight interval. He was always ready to impart any information that he possessed, and has frequently sent me notes and references, quite unsolicited, which he believed would be of use or interest to me.' He was an avid collector of prints, paintings (including a van Dyke portrait of the last Earl Dudley) and manuscripts. His eagerness to share his mss with others must have enlivened railway journeys on the Great Eastern. A writer in the *Suffolk and Essex Free Press* recalled, when travelling on a train with him, 'with what pride Mr Almack showed an original grant of land made to the grandfather of Oliver Cromwell.... and how his keen eyes glistened as he pointed to its fine preservation and the beauty of the calligraphy.' His obituary writer believed that he frequently travelled with manuscripts on his person, and remembered fellow passengers on another train being shown 'a receipt signed by the last abbot of Bury St Edmunds.' Perhaps his most important practical contributions were his successful efforts to restore the stained glass of Long Melford church, and his conviction of the authenticity of the

Paston papers which may have helped to ensure their preservation.

Michael Leach

Source: *Proceedings of Suffolk Institute of Archaeology & History* v, i-v (1875)

FOR SALE

Substantial, elaborately carved, wooden Victorian gothic chair, with large pierced finials and a nominally upholstered back. Provenance unknown, but possibly an ecclesiastical throne, 57" high, 28" wide and 26" deep. Needs some restoration, but complete apart from one boss. Not suitable for sybarites, or for those living in a small house, but would look great in a Victorian rectory or similar! Photos can be supplied to anyone interested in making an offer. Proceeds will be donated to ESAH. Please contact Michael Leach on 01277 363106 or family@leachies.freeseerve.co.uk

OVERDUE REPAIRS TO COLCHESTER TOWN WALLS

'Wee – like the Jewes in Jerusalem – with our swords in one hand and our trowels in the other, began to reparaire the ruins of our walls which were many, the towne being one of the antientest foundations of the kingdome, for if wee credit historie it was built by Coyle a chiefe king of the Brittaines, whose daughter was married to Constantius, father to Constantine the Great. But the walls are a sufficient record of its antiquitie, being builte after the old artlesse fashion, without flankers and scarce proof against arrows. Towards the north end of the town there was above 500 places without fortification at

all, which the enemy in their furie over sawe.'

[From an account of the 1648 siege of Colchester in the MSS of the Duke of Beaufort, printed in the Historic Manuscripts Commission's Twelfth Report, Appendix IX, 1891]

Michael Leach

VISIT TO MISTLEY

A group from the Society spent an enjoyable sunny and breezy afternoon at Mistley on 29 April, and were given a guided tour by members of the Mistley Local History Group. The present village occupies an attractive position on the River Stour. There is abundant bird life on the river and we enjoyed watching the swans at various times in the afternoon. Although the warehouses on the river-front have now been converted into flats, Mistley still serves as a port and may have done so since Roman times. Shipbuilding used to be an important industry; today the Maltings are still in operation and there are several artists' workshops.

Much of present Mistley dates from the eighteenth century when Richard Rigby planned to build a spa there. His father had made a fortune out of the South Sea Bubble and had built Mistley Hall (which has not survived), and a new church. Richard Rigby was appointed Paymaster-General to the forces in 1768, an office which proved lucrative to its holder. He appointed Robert Adam to make alterations to Mistley Hall and to plan the spa. Although the spa was never built, Adam was responsible for the Swan Basin in the centre of the village and the classical malting office below it. He is especially remembered for the neoclassical towers which he built at either end of the new church, and

which can still be seen as one comes into Mistley from Manningtree; the nave of the church was demolished in the nineteenth century. It was replaced by a new Victorian Gothic church, built further from the river in 1870-1, and this church now serves Manningtree as well as Mistley.

Many thanks to Ken and Ann Newman for organising the event, and to the Mistley Local History Group for taking us round.

Jenny Ward

DEVELOPMENT OF RAILWAYS IN ESSEX

The annual Morant lecture was given with great panache by Adrian Wright on 19 May. He emphasized the very rural nature of Essex in 1840 – Chelmsford's population was about 7000 and Colchester's about 17,000. Maldon and Harwich contained less than 4000 apiece and the rest of the county contained small scattered villages, hardly what a railway entrepreneur would have regarded as 'traffic significant'. The pioneers who built railways in Essex did so mainly to reach more important points outside the county and this is why, apart from the London-Chelmsford-Colchester route, very little was built in the county in the early years. The first proposal was made by H R Palmer in 1825 for a line from Whitechapel to Ipswich. The proposed route avoided Brentwood because of the problems posed by the high ground, and took a rather circuitous route to a station in the centre of Colchester, then crossing the Stour some way upstream from the route of the present-day railway, to avoid the difficulty and expense of a long river bridge. It was probably intended to take horse-drawn traffic, as steam power was

still regarded as somewhat risky. It was not till 1830, with the construction of the Liverpool to Manchester line, that the modern railway emerged – with double tracks, signalling, and separate trains for goods and passenger traffic, run and controlled by the company.

In 1834, the Grand Eastern Counties Railway's surveyor, John Braithwaite, proposed a different route from London to Ipswich, via Chelmsford. The company soon dropped the 'Grand' from its name. The Press was divided, and some landowners were bitterly opposed but royal assent to the bill (a necessity for the construction of any turnpike road, canal or railway) was obtained on 4 July 1836. Assent was given the same day to the Northern and Eastern Railway's line from Islington to Cambridge, with a branch, just south of the university town, to Newmarket. The Northern and Eastern soon realised that getting a line through the hilly area of Barnet would be very expensive, and decided to reach London by joining the Eastern Counties line in the Lea valley.

The Eastern Counties began building in 1837 and had considerable trouble with wet weather, flooding and the problems of crossing the marshy ground of the Lea valley, which required a substantial causeway. The Northern and Eastern had difficulties in raising capital; by 1840 it had only reached Broxbourne and was hiring rolling stock from the Eastern Counties. Landowners also caused difficulties with financial and other demands – at Boreham, the owner settled for reduced compensation in exchange for the right to stop any train at a wooden platform there. The mayor of Colchester threatened prosecution if any labourers worked on Sunday. In 1842 government inspectors were dissatisfied with the construction of the Stanway embankment whereupon the company summarily dismissed the engineer, Mr

Brough. There were numerous landslips and, in 1843 a special train carrying the directors from Shoreditch to Colchester had to be cancelled due to a further landslip at Shenfield. The fate of the feast awaiting them at Colchester is not recorded! However the line was ready for traffic the next day.

There were (and still are) some impressive structures on the line, including the massive viaducts at Chelmsford and Eight Ash Green. Ingatestone station, built in 1846, is a fine neo-Tudor building with diaper brickwork in burnt headers. However the company was in financial difficulties due to the unexpectedly high costs of construction, as well as an unfortunate and expensive mistake. The directors had been persuaded by Braithwaite to adopt a gauge of 5 feet (instead of the more general Stephenson gauge of 4' 8 ½"). He had argued that this would benefit the company by enabling them to run larger carriages and more powerful locomotives, though it is hard to understand why the directors thought that a mere 3 ½" would make a significant difference. By 1844 the company realised the importance of connecting with standard gauge lines elsewhere, and was forced to convert their system to allow through running. Half the stock of locomotives and carriages were taken out of service for modification to standard gauge, while the other half ran on single track, allowing the second line to be reduced to 4' 8 ½". A fortnight later, the modified rolling stock ran on the converted track, and the process was repeated with the remaining non-standard gauge carriages, locomotives and track; the entire conversion was completed within a month.

However it was a costly mistake and construction ceased at Colchester. Ipswich, growing impatient about the

lack of progress, floated the Eastern Union Railway which extended the line to Ipswich in 1846, to Bury in 1847, and finally reached Norwich in 1849. A few branch lines were built in the late 1840s, intended to exploit the coastal traffic. The North Woolwich branch of 1847 connected with a steamer to Gravesend to tap the Kent market, which was poorly served by the London, Chatham and Dover Railway. The extension to Colchester's harbour at the Hythe was laid in the same year. The Maldon and Braintree Railway (originally planned to cross the main line at Witham without connecting lines) was intended to bring agricultural produce to a newly dredged harbour at Maldon. This was a low cost railway, running up the river valley, with wooden trestle bridges which imposed a weight restriction on its traffic. The whole line was a modest affair, and the disproportionately grand neo-Jacobean station at Maldon East is a puzzle. It has been suggested that the promoter, anxious to be elected to Parliament, was keen to avoid local unemployment. The Harwich branch of 1854 was also built with the plan to transfer London-bound sea freight to rail, but these hopes were not realised and the branch lost money. Other projects also overstretched themselves financially - the Sudbury branch of 1849 (ultimately to be extended to Halstead) was crippled by the spectacular but very costly viaduct across the Colne valley - 1066 feet long, and containing 3 ½ million bricks. Remarkably it was built without loss of life, and the engineer was the same Mr Brough who had been dismissed by the Eastern Counties after the problems with the Stanway embankment. Traffic growth on the main line was slow. Speeds were low and the second hand locomotives were unreliable. Boiler explosions were quite common - one at Maldon in 1852 caused £2000 worth of

damage. Much of the Norfolk traffic chose the longer, but quicker, route via Cambridge. In 1862 the Eastern Counties amalgamated with a number of other East Anglian companies to form the Great Eastern Railway. This resulted in the design of standard station buildings, examples of which can still be seen on the Loughton to Ongar, and the Braintree to Bishops Stortford lines. However independent companies still continued to construct lines. The Tendring Hundred lines were built to exploit the growing tourist trade and, though the new company owned the track and stations, the Great Eastern ran all the trains. The London, Tilbury and Southend route remained a separate company till the 1923 amalgamation, and the Great Eastern built a rival route from Shenfield to Southend to attempt to take some of its business.

The latter part of the nineteenth century was a time of consolidation and improved services. Parkestone quay, served by the unsuccessful Harwich branch, was developed to exploit the North Sea crossing to Belgium, Holland and Germany though, until the Hook of Holland harbour was built, the departure time of boat trains varied each day, being dependant on the tide. Locomotives and rolling stock were steadily improved, with corridor trains appearing in 1901. There were ingenious ways of providing new services; for example, a through train to Saffron Walden was made possible by the guard detaching the last coach from the end of an express. The 'slip coach' coasted into Newport, to be attached to a waiting locomotive which took it on to its destination.

The standard of railway construction in Britain was highly regulated. Unlike the continent, companies were obliged to fence their tracks, as well as to construct the track bed and bridges to high

engineering standards. At the end of the nineteenth century, it was realised that the high costs involved made it uneconomic to build rural lines which would only carry light traffic, and the Light Railway Act of 1896 reduced the engineering requirements for such routes, and permitted mixed goods and passenger trains at restricted speeds. The first light railway in Essex was a short branch at Corringham to serve a munitions factory, followed by passenger lines to Thaxted and Tollesbury. These lines often had ramshackle station buildings constructed from grounded railway carriages, and used a mixture of aged rolling stock. The term 'crab and winkle' was often used to describe them, even on routes far from the sea. It was suggested that the 'crab' referred to the awkward movement of aged locomotives on poor track, and the 'winkle' to the crowded and uncomfortable conditions for passengers. Many of these lines had a short life, and had ceased to operate before the Beeching closures of the 1960s.

The twentieth century saw substantial growth, and then the rapid decline of freight traffic, with most goods yards sold off, or converted to car parks. With increasing urbanisation, commuter traffic continued to grow, causing major problems with the mix of fast and slow trains on double tracks on the approach to London. This was solved by the quadrupling of various lines, and increasing speeds by means of diesel and electric traction. Branch lines disappeared, some before the Beeching closures, as railway economics require a regular supply of passengers throughout the day, seven days a week. A new branch was opened to Stansted airport in 1991; even there, the traffic to the north was very light and through trains to the Midlands were withdrawn two years after opening; even today, it only justifies

an hourly service. The only other major railway developments in Essex are Channel Tunnel link between Thurrock and St Pancras, and the proposed Crosslink which will allow through travel from Shenfield to Heathrow. Both are highly expensive projects, necessitating extensive tunnelling under difficult conditions.

Michael Leach

ARTHUR RACKHAM IN EAST ANGLIA

This is the title of an informative small book recently published by Alison Barnes, and describes a series of late C19 projects to promote, and capitalise on, holidays in East Anglia. The pioneer publication was *Poppy-Land* which appeared in 1886 and sparked an infectious enthusiasm for east coast holidays, as well as a host of other books, magazine articles, songs and postcards. A fourth illustrated edition appeared in 1894, and its publishers decided to bring out a more comprehensive companion volume entitled *Sunrise-Land*, and commissioned two young artists, M M Blake and Arthur Rackham, to draw the necessary illustrations. This was Rackham's first major commission, and he made two leisurely tours of East Anglia in 1893 and 1894 during which he produced over 100 drawings. 74 of these were published and, though the originals seem to have been lost, the excellent reproductions from *Sunrise-Land* printed in Alison Barnes's book have both a fresh and a very period character to them. Only 40 of those originally printed are reproduced her book, of which nine relate to Essex. Most are of the expected topographical nature, but there are surprises – one, for example, shows

women stripping seedpods at Messrs Carter's seed farm at St Osyth. Rackham's fame, from his association with J M Barrie's *Peter Pan*, and Kenneth Graham's *Wind in the Willows*, was yet to come, so it is of particular interest to see examples of his early work.

Alison Barnes has written a very informative introduction to her 64 page paperback book, obtainable through booksellers at £8-95. Its ISBN number is 0 946148 73 2.

Michael Leach

BOOK REVIEWS

We are indebted to Tony Fox, now of California, U.S.A., for sending us copies of two booklets he has produced.

Upminster Hall, its Barn and its Estate, Tony Fox (2002), pp 24; available Swan Books, 27, Corbet's Tey Road, Upminster.

This is a lucid and succinct account, well illustrated, of our present knowledge of the origin, evolution and current fate of these Essex embodiments of deep history. An estate for 1,000 years (at least), 500 under Waltham Abbey, the present barn and hall both date from a re-build in the 1450s. Today the hall is a gold club, the barn a splendid museum, wedged in a posh enclave of Estuary England. And, happily, they are both still there.

The Life & Times of Two Georgian Gentlemen, Tony Fox (2002) pp 40, available Swan Books, 27, Corbet's Tey Road, Upminster.

Tony Fox draws together the separate stories of William Derham, 1657-1735, Rector of St Lawrence's Upminster, a Fellow of the Royal Society who accurately established the speed of sound and published the papers of

Robert Hooke AND James Oglethorpe, 1696-1785, soldier of fortune, who founded the United States colony of Georgia and inherited (from his wife) Cranham Hall, near Upminster, where he lived for the last 41 years of his long life. This is a good read of biographies not otherwise available.

More Roxwell Revealed (2005) pp 390, published Roxwell Revealed, Sherwood House, Roxwell; is a second anthology of village history compiled by the energetic Roxwell Revealed Group (authors of *Roxwell Revealed* – see review in an earlier Newsletter).

Chapter 1 provides some authoritative early history, notably by Pam Studd, Mike Roper and Ailsa Wildig, all the more valuable since no VCH volume has covered this district. Chapter 2 looks (topically) at the natural environment, changes in the landscape and declining biodiversity.

Chapter 3 covers recent (i.e. 20th century) farming and is an invaluable contribution to this important Essex subject, only thinly covered in most similar books. Chapter 4 covers the church, its early history, its organisation and organisations in the 19th and 20th century: the workhouse, reading room, Sunday School – and the Congregational Church. Another chapter covers education. Roxwell's (important) families, Roxwell memories, village organisations from hunting to the Produce Association – the later chapters of the book come from many contributors, giving the feel less of an encyclopaedia, more of a miscellany. Great credit therefore goes to the editor, Mike Roper, who has woven together a range of styles and topics. His careful cross-referencing makes small repetitions not only tolerable but helpful. This reviewer moved in 390 pages from

reluctant reviewer to engrossed reader. Now it is your turn.

Our ESAH reviews would not be complete without two more additions from the fertile pen of Noel Beer to his studies of Rayleigh.

Rayleigh Parish Room 1863-1981

follows the ever-changing fortunes of the modest premises built in Victorian gothic in 1863 as a National School adjacent to Rayleigh Parish Church. Beer traces its change of use from school to *de facto* village hall, hosting a literary society, theatrical performances (the 'snowdrop minstrels'), cubs, guides, World War I troops and a range of activities for 'young people'. Twice – in 1912 and 1934 – the parish room was asked to serve as the church while that building was undergoing renovation. And it was always there for ambitious summer events 'in case of inclement weather'. Requisitioning by the War Office in 1939 it needed extensive refurbishment in 1945. During the 1950s the rooms were yet more widely used, but age took its toll. Cracks appeared in the walls. Should the Parish Room not be replaced? The 1970s saw a bureaucratic wrangle between vested interests until the district council refused demolition. Casual vandalism culminated in arson and the near destruction of the complex in April 1980. Carefully restored, in 1981 it began a new life as a restaurant.

An Account of Brickmaking in Rayleigh & District

mainly consists of a manuscript account left by R.K. Clover, a member of the local brick-making family, with an explanatory introduction by Noel Beer. This is a most useful document outlining the technical details of brick manufacture in the 1900-1910 period, as the obliging author not only supplies some original illustrations, but explains the vocabulary peculiar to the trade. It

was hard and irregular work, concentrated into the warmer months of the year, in demand as Rayleigh expanded after the arrival of the Great Eastern Railway in 1889. Brickfields like this flourished all over Essex. Only a handful survive today.

Andrew Phillips

OBSOLETE WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

Readers of this newsletter will recall John Warbis's particular interest in obsolete units. This was stimulated by his scepticism about claims that prehistoric standing stones were laid out to very precise measurements. While there seems little doubt that the rod is an ancient measure, it is equally certain that its length varied from place to place, and that ingenuity can make almost any system of measurements "fit" an ancient site. He proceeded to establish when measurements were standardised, with English attempts in the C13 based on the size of a grain of wheat. Thus 32 grains was the weight of a silver penny, from which the ounce, the pound and the gallon were defined. Length was also defined by the grain – 3 making an inch – though many measures of length (possibly much more ancient) were based on the human body (digit, palm, hand, span, cubit and so on). He has traced the legislation which evolved through the Middle Ages to define weights and measures, and prepared a useful summary.

He has also collected a large number of special trade measures which persisted till recently, at least one of which still survives on the nature reserve where I work – the cord of firewood. They were complex and confusing, possibly jealously guarded as part of the mystery

of the trade. Who would have known that a bundle of 4 foot oak heart laths contained 120 laths, and that 37 ½ bundles comprised a load? In the wine trade a hogshead contained anything from 43 to 60 gallons, depending on the type of wine or spirit. Even the greengrocer's peck varied from 9 to 20 pounds. There were more than 25 different sizes of sheet paper, from 'emperor' to 'pott', with different sizes, and names, for writing paper, printing paper and brown paper respectively! Metric units have simplified matters, even if they have removed the poetry, but even now the system remains full of anomalies – the diameter of motor car wheels is still measured in inches, for example, and is encoded on the wall of every tyre.

John Warbis has collected a rich mass of information in a booklet which will be deposited in the Society's library at the university. I have already found it useful. A folding boxwood rule inherited from my wife's grandfather was stamped with the letters HN. These were not his initials, but I had assumed that they were those of an earlier owner. Recently I noticed – partly hidden by a heavy stain – the single letter N, exactly twice the distance along the rule and 2 ¼ inches from its end. John's booklet revealed that the nail was 2 ¼ inches, HN being half a nail rather than someone's initials. The nail is an archaic unit based on the human body – the distance between the proximal inter-phalangeal joint and the nail of the middle finger. I hope that others will find this collection a very useful source of reference.

Michael Leach

ST MARY'S, MUNDON

This redundant Essex church is in the ownership of the Friends of Friendless

Churches – which is just as well, considering its present desperate structural condition. RCHM dated the nave to the C14, and the timber tower and north porch to the C16. The latter was described by Cecil Hewett as the finest of its type in the county. The chancel was rebuilt above the plinth in the early C18 in red brick, with a large round headed oak-framed east window. Recently, funding was obtained from English Heritage towards the costs of repairs to the timber-framed tower. In the meantime, the chancel has developed serious structural problems, with substantial cracks appearing in the east wall of the chancel and serious distortion of the window timbers. A complex scaffolding structure has been installed to prevent the chancel from breaking its back and, understandably, the church has had to be closed to visitors. Underpinning is planned (and may already have been started).

Michael Leach

Sources:

Royal Commission on Historical Monuments – Essex vol iv (1923)

Ancient Monuments Society/Friends of Friendless Churches Newsletter

Summer 2006

Hewett C A *Church Carpentry* (1982)
Phillimore

NORTH WEALD MANORIAL RECORDS

When I was engaged in research for my book *A History of North Weald Bassett and Its People*, published in 1985, I was unable to locate the records of the Manor of North Weald (the principal manor) after 1793, although earlier records were in the Essex Record Office. However, in 1982 I noticed that Messrs.

Strutt & Parker were offering for sale the Lordship of the Manor together with documents, including the archives I was seeking, at the price of £4,500.

Although I was unable to buy, I entered into correspondence with the firm about access to these records and was assured that the purchaser would be informed that the Master of the Rolls had a statutory responsibility for the care and safe custody of Manorial Records, as defined by the Law of Property Act 1922, Section 144A. I was further informed, after the sale, that the purchaser intended to abide by these rules and had intimated that he would like the documents to be passed on to the Essex Record Office.

They never were, and in 2003 I resolved to discover what had happened to them. Strutt & Parker informed me that, after twenty years, they did not have the name of the purchaser. The solicitors representing the vendor in 1982/3 gave me the name of the purchaser's solicitor but, sadly, the firm had gone out of existence and its successor did not provide any help. The National Archives Historic Manuscripts Commission, which maintains the Manorial Documents Register (MDR) had no record of the documents later than 1955. It seemed as though I had reached a dead end.

Out of the blue, however, in December of last year, it came to my notice by a circuitous route that two old volumes on the Manor of North Weald were due to be auctioned. I attended the auction and managed to purchase the volumes, which turned out to be the court books for the Manor, 1793 - 1854 and 1855 - 1884. They were in a very parlous condition, although I have now had them repaired as far as possible.

What happened to the other records sold with the Lordship of the Manor in 1983, including another court book (1884 - 1933), rental rolls 1694 and 1702, rental

books, a terrier, a draft abstract of court rolls 1793 - 1818 and an index of court rolls to 1778, however, is still unknown - although I am still pursuing the matter.

This story illustrates the fact that valuable historic archives going back centuries can still, in our day and age, be lost or stored in conditions which allow them to rot. It also suggests that more attention should be paid to keeping the Manorial Documents Record up to date, which is the task of National Archives Historic Manuscripts Commission. This is particularly important when lordships of manors are sold. We also, however, need to ensure that solicitors are kept informed - particularly when practices change hands - that records which appear to have little modern relevance should still be preserved and offered to the Essex Record Office or some other safe repository.

The story of North Weald Manorial Records is a cautionary tale which almost certainly has relevance to other historic archives.

Stan Newens

HERTS & ESSEX ARCHITECTURAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

Ruth Wilcock has asked for the following meetings of HEARS (Herts & Essex Architectural Research Society) to be brought to the attention of ESAH members.

Our winter programme starts
29 Sep 2006. Jane Pearson & Richard Shackle - *How the House was used: evidence from structures and documents.*

27 Oct. Brenda Watkin - *St. Osyth: The 'Time Team' experience*

Charity Number 213218

Summer 2006

24 Nov. Alan Bayford - *The Vernacular Architecture Group's visit to Somerset*

34 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY
j.sidell@ucl.ac.uk

Please make cheques payable to: UCL

In 2007 meetings are planned for 26 Jan, 23 Feb, 23 Mar, 27 Apr (in Bishop's Stortford) and 25 May (AGM).

Meetings, unless stated otherwise, are held at Loughton, in Room M6 at Roding Valley High School, near Loughton Station at 8pm.

Further information available from the Hon. Sec. 01708 473646.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF THE GREATER THAMES ESTUARY

Saturday 30 September 2006 10.30am at the Lecture Theatre, Institute of Archaeology, UCL, 31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1. Cost: £3.00

The Provisional Programme of talks on work over the last two years in Essex, Kent and London includes;

Modelling the Lower Lea Valley for the Olympics and beyond - Graham Spurr, MoLAS,

Marvellous Marshland: the historic environment of Essex grazing marshes -

Adrian Gascoyne Essex County Council
Coastal zone surveys in Essex - Ellen Heppell Essex County Council

Elizabethan shipwreck from the Thames estuary - Deanna Groom, Wessex Archaeology

The industrialisation of the Thames riverside in historical Essex - David Morgans, ERIH Project East of England Essex County Council

There will be a one hour break for lunch For advance tickets please contact Jane Sidell, Institute of Archaeology, UCL, 31-

BRONZE AGE CONNECTIONS: CULTURAL CONTACT IN PREHISTORIC EUROPE CONFERENCE 2006

Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 October 2006 at Cruise Terminal 2 in Dover. On Saturday evening there will be a chance to view the Dover Bronze Age Boat Gallery in the Dover Museum including the Ringlemere Gold Cup which will be on loan from the British Museum.

The cost of the conference including a buffet lunch each day is £80 per delegate exclusive of accommodation. Students get a reduced fee of £50.

Further information, including the conference programme and accommodation details can be found at <http://www.dover.gov.uk/museum/babconference.asp>

ZERO TOLERANCE, TUDOR STYLE

This penitential litany, to be repeated daily by children, was printed in "Worke for Householdiers" published in 1531.

If I lie, backbite or steal,
If I curse, scorn, mock or swear,
If I chide, fight, strive or threat,
I am worthy to beat
With a new rod and fine
Early naked before I dine
Amend me with a scourging.

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Enquiries about delayed or missing publications and about the supply of recent back numbers should be addressed to the Secretary.

APPEAL FOR THE PUBLICATION AND RESEARCH FUND (PRF)

This fund replaced the Publications Development Fund in 2004. It supports the publication of articles in each Volume of *Essex Archaeology and History* as well as Occasional Papers. Donations are placed into an INALIENABLE account, which cannot be spent. It is the Interest thereon which is distributed by awards granted by our COUNCIL. As at December 2005 the projected value of the fund stands at £33,671.

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DATA PROTECTION ACT

In order to run the Society it is necessary to keep paper and electronic records of members' names and addresses. It is the Society's policy to keep members' names, addresses, telephone numbers and subscription status only. This information is disclosed to no one, inside or outside the Society, other than those officers and members of Council who need it in order to run the organisation.

Members do have the right to refuse to allow any information about them to be stored on computer, and they should let me know if this is their wish. However, we hope that this note will reassure members that the very limited information held about them is secure and will not be used for any purpose other than the efficient running of the Society. Anyone requiring further details can contact me, or the Newsletter Editor.

Michael

Leach

THE ESSEX SOCIETY FOR ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 149

ISSN 0305-8530

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