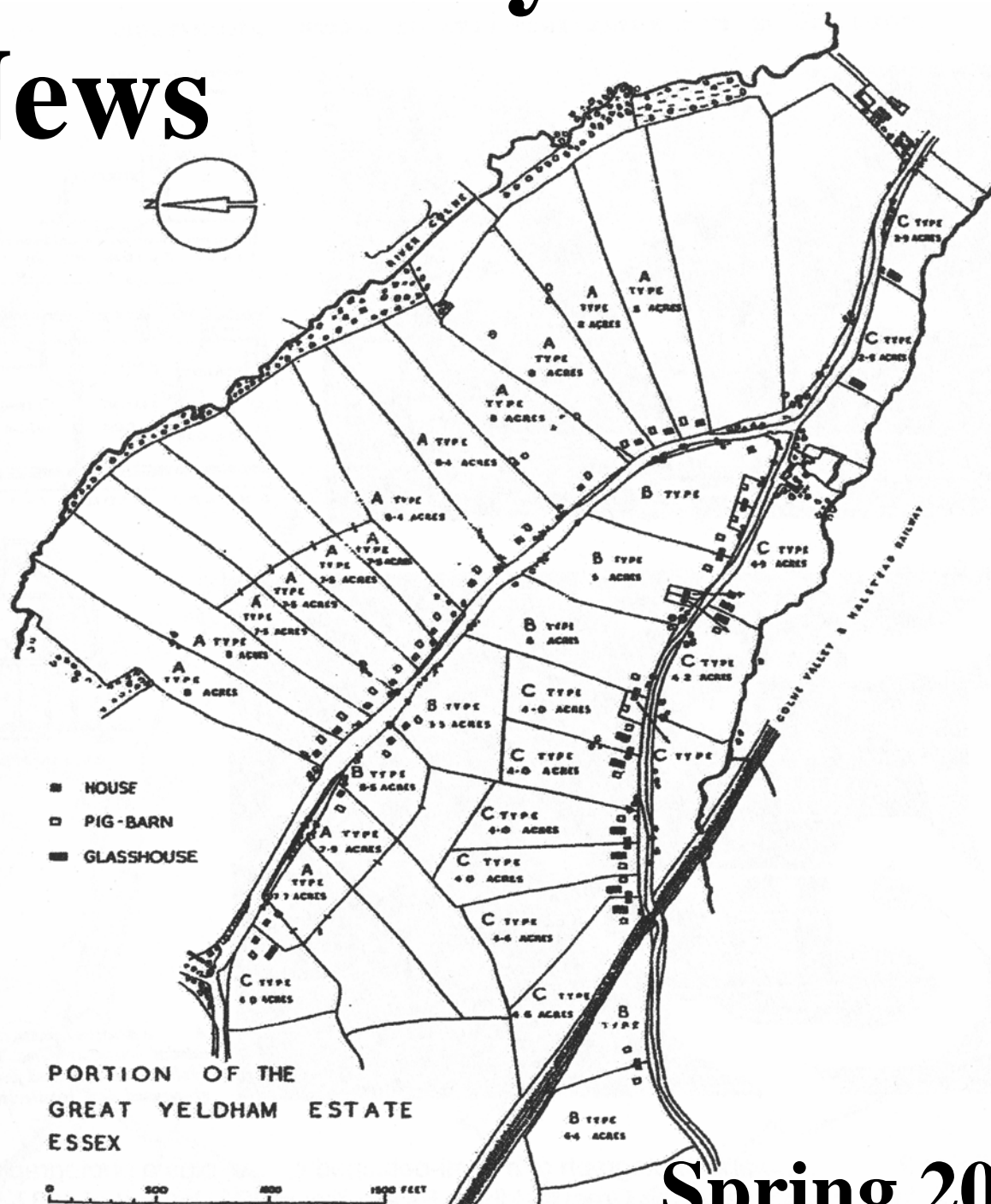


Essex Archaeology and History News



Spring 2008

THE ESSEX SOCIETY FOR ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

NEWSLETTER 154

SPRING 2008

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EDITOR: SALLY GALE

Historic Environment, Environment and Commerce, Essex County Council, County Hall,
Chelmsford, CM1 1QH

Telephone: 01245 437513 E-mail: sally.gale@essex.gov.uk

Assistant Editor: Michael Leach

COPY FOR THE NEXT ISSUE SHOULD BE SENT TO THE EDITOR AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS NO LATER THAN 27 JUNE 2008

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

Cover illustration:

A map showing part of the Land Settlement Association's Estate at Great Yeldham. This map shows a typical layout of full-time holdings. Taken from the journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects, 22 November 1937. See Essex Smallholdings on pp. 3-4 of this Newsletter.

A floor plan of a typical semi-detached house on the Great Yeldham estate can be seen on p.4.

More information can be found in the 'Market Gardening and Miscellaneous' section of the Industrial Housing in Essex report by Crosby, Garwood and Green, ECC Internal Report, 2006.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Over the course of recent years, many of us who are involved with the heritage and cultural services have become increasingly concerned about the damage caused by successive cuts. Here in our county, the Essex Record Office Users' Group was formed to voice concern and convey our feelings to the Essex County Council about the detrimental effects of some of its economies.

The problem is, however, by no means confined to our home ground. Throughout Britain, cutbacks are being made which are adversely affecting provisions designed to facilitate the appreciation and study of the cultural heritage.

With this in mind, I have been anxious to ensure that our concern is conveyed to the Government. Through the good offices of Bill Rammell, Minister of State for Higher Education and MP for Harlow, a number of us met Margaret Hodge, MP, Minister for Culture, Creative Industries & Sport, at the House of Commons on 24th January, to put our case.

The delegation consisted of Professor John Beckett (Director and General Editor of the Victoria County History), Vic Gray (President of the Society of Archivists and former Archivist at the Essex Record Office), Rodney Bickerstaffe (Chairman of the Modern Records Centre Advisory Committee at Warwick University and former General Secretary of Unison), and myself.

Professor Beckett dealt with the serious threat to future work on the Victoria County Histories, which aim to provide a comprehensive account of history in every English county. In Essex, the County Council has halved its grant and Essex University is withdrawing support.

Vic Gray covered damage being inflicted on local archive services, quoting the closure of the ERO branch in Colchester and proposed budget cuts in Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire and elsewhere.

Rodney Bickerstaffe spoke about library closures, reductions in library opening hours, replacement of specialist staff by general assistants, redundancy threats and disposal of books. Waltham Forest has, for example, discarded or burnt about 240,000 books and vital reference books are being withdrawn elsewhere.

I raised the issue of the two-stage closure of the Family Record Centre at Myddelton Street, Islington, which provided central London access to the paper indexes of births, marriages and deaths from 1837, pre-1857 Wills, census returns, and other records. The Digitalisation of Vital Events (DoVE) Project, which was supposed to compensate for it, was not completed by the end of 2007, as originally promised, and the eventual date of completion is not known. Although much information can be accessed electronically, many would-be researchers lack access to a computer and the necessary computer skills. Family history is of interest to huge numbers of people – particularly following retirement.

I also complained about some museum cuts, e.g. the reduction of hours at the William Morris Gallery and the Vestry House Museum by Waltham Forest Council and the closure of Wandsworth Museum, etc.

In response to our concerns, Margaret Hodge pointed out that many of the services mentioned by the delegation are under the control of local authorities and she is not empowered to intervene. She listened to our arguments, however, and recognised the strength of the case we made.

I agreed to summarise all the concerns

expressed and to convey them by letter through Bill Rammell, MP, which I have done. We believe the Government should give a lead on these issues and seek to prevent further depredations. We do not accept that this is a matter on which Government can justify standing aloof.

At this stage, I am unable to say whether or not our efforts will produce any positive effect, but I believe it is of great importance to seek to win over the powers that be to prevent the rundown of the heritage and cultural services. It is right that sport generally and the Olympic Games should receive powerful public support. However, it is not acceptable for resources to be lavished on these without limit while aspects of the heritage are sadly neglected.

I believe that every opportunity should be taken to lobby, persuade by letter or otherwise influence our representatives on local councils, the County Council, in Parliament or Government of the importance of support for the cultural heritage.

We are defending our unique inheritance in this country, which is of inestimable value to the population as a whole.

Stan Newens,

PROF. GEOFFREY MARTIN

Members will be sad to learn that one of the Society's most distinguished members (and a Vice-president for at least 20 years) died just before Christmas at the age of 79. It is intended to do justice to his highly productive career in *Essex Archaeology & History*, and this short note is merely to record his passing with deep regret. Though his career was national rather than local, his formative education started at Colchester Grammar School and, at an age when many would be contemplating

retirement, he took up the post of Research Professor of History at the University of Essex with which he remained involved till the end of his life. Many will know of his substantial contributions to the new Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, though only a few were aware of his enthusiasm for an Essex biographical index, researched and published by the Society. A wide range of members will have been taught by him, or heard him lecture; others will have benefited from his generously given advice. He was the after-dinner speaker at the Society's Morant dinner in 1998, and those who attended will remember the vivid description that he gave of Philip Morant's last journey down the Thames which resulted in our county historian's final and fatal illness.

Though Prof. Martin was of considerable eminence and, on first encounter, somewhat intimidating, he was very generous in his support of the amateur historian, and a very good friend to the Society. He will be greatly missed.

Michael Leach

REVISION OF THE REGIONAL RESEARCH FRAMEWORKS FOR THE EAST OF ENGLAND

The Regional Research Frameworks for the East of England is currently being revised. They were originally developed over 10 years ago and were amongst the first to be published. The Frameworks were never intended to be a fixed point, but rather a dynamic process which could contribute to the understanding and management of the region's historic environment. The project comprises the East of England Region, that is the

Counties of Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire and the Unitary Authorities of Thurrock, Southend-on-Sea, Peterborough and Luton. Chronologically it covers the Palaeolithic to the 20th century.

The East of England has enormous research potential. For example, the nature of the region's geography and topography means that it is at the forefront of Palaeolithic studies in Britain. The region is probably one of the best places to consider the origins and development of agriculture, whether its inception and adoption in the Neolithic and Bronze Age, or the post-medieval developments of the Agricultural Revolution. The nature of the Anglo-Saxon archaeology is also of particular significance. The region has more market-towns than any other English region and is well-placed to study the origins and developments of urban life.

A Revised Research Agenda and Strategy is particularly imperative at this time, given the numerous development pressures on the East of England region, including in Essex the Thames Gateway area, the M11/Stansted Growth Areas and Haven Gateway. Also of significance in the East of England are issues of countryside renewal, integrated coastal zone management and flood-risk management, both in river catchments and around the coast.

Maria Medlycott

ESSEX PLACE-NAMES PROJECT

Over 70,000 names are now on the database, and there has been the addition of names from documents earlier than the Tithe Awards, c.1840. The website has been updated to

include entries up to October 2007 and will be again updated later this year.

A Volunteer is needed to help with the distribution to Secondary Schools of surplus Place-name Parish Booklets, currently in the ERO, for use as a teaching resource. A Volunteer is also required to assist with promotion of publicity of the Project. Please contact the Project Coordinator through the Society's Secretary.

James Kemble

ESSEX SMALLHOLDINGS

The account of Colin Stratford's talk on the Essex Plotlands at last summer's Annual General Meeting, reported in the summer issue of *Essex Archaeology & History News*, brings to mind other attempts to encourage small scale cultivation in Essex before the 1939-45 War,

At the start of the C20 there was increasing concern about the drift of agricultural labourers from the land and writers, such as Rider Haggard, took Essex as an example of these and other problems for farmers and farm labourers. Competition from foreign imports, transport costs and (even at that time) increasing red tape affected farmers, whether landowners or tenants, and were in turn affecting all farm workers, as well as the small suppliers and businesses dependent on farming.

A Smallholding Act of 1908 gave county councils powers to provide land for renting out in small acreages. Eventually the Essex smallholdings owned by the county council amounted to more than 8,000 acres over 31 parishes, further increased by land acquired for the use of ex-servicemen after the First World War. The average size was then 5 to 7 acres, intended mainly for soft fruit and orchards. North Essex has long been a

fruit growing area. Peter Wormell's *Essex Farming: 1900-2000* gives details of the main areas chosen; Broxted, Braxted, Eastwood, Great Oakley, Beaumont and Romford.

At Romford, visible (at least till recently) from the railway, were houses built to the same pattern, spaced at regular intervals and each surrounded by cultivated land. These were the county council smallholdings.

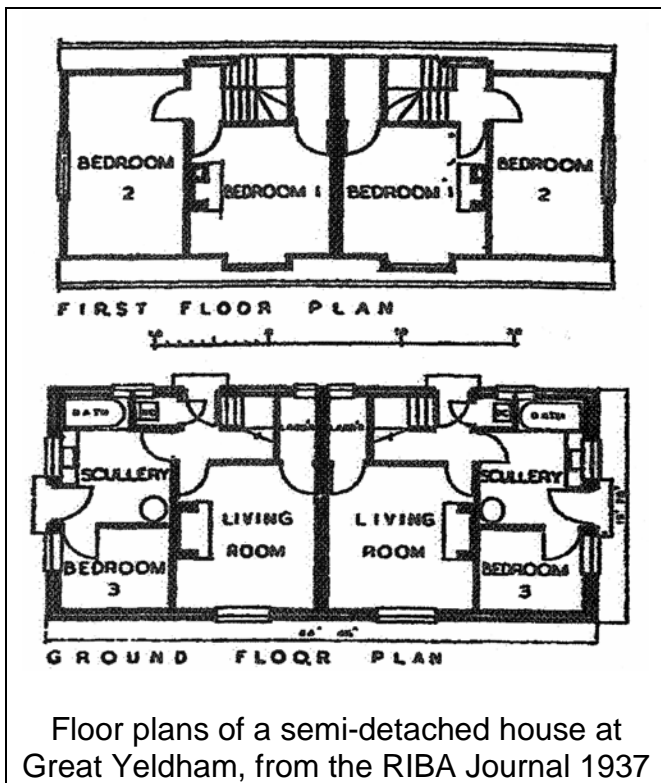
also included pig raising. The Association provided a packing station at Lawford, with offices, stores and a propagating unit. The miners had little, if any, experience of horticulture, and at first there were failures. By 1970 some of the tenants were former farm workers. They became a cooperative organisation for marketing purposes, and still exist. This was an entirely separate venture from the official county smallholdings, but both had statutory bases and were not commercially based, as the Plotlands seem to have been.

The smallholdings were assisted by expert advisers when needed; some have published memories of their work. The *Essex Farmers' Journal* of June 1983 contains Ralph Sadler's record of work as an agricultural adviser in the mid 1930s in Lawford. High Barrett's *A Good Living* (2000) describes his work as an assistant pig warden.

Angela Green

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- Haggard, H Rider, 1902 *Rural England*, i (Essex)
- Orwin, C S, & Whetham, E H, 1971 *History of British Agriculture, 1846-1914*
- Prothero, R E, 1912 *English Farming, Past and Present*
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Floor plans of a semi-detached house at Great Yeldham, from the RIBA Journal 1937

A similar sight, but funded differently, can be seen by drivers on the A137 on their way to Dedham or Flatford Mill as they pass close to the Foxash estate in Lawford. Here houses, much the same as those at Romford, were built by the Land Settlement Association, a country-wide scheme set up about 1934 under the provident and Benevolent Societies Act by the Carnegie UK Trust to provide smallholdings of 4 to 7 acres for unemployed miners from the North and Wales. There were 59 smallholdings there, and some smaller ones at Yeldham. Intended for horticultural crops, mainly tomatoes and lettuce, it

ESSEX JOURNAL

In the summer 2007 edition of *ESAH News* I drew attention to the problems confronting the *Essex Journal*, which was failing to pay its way despite all the hard work put in by the late Michael Beale as Editor and the dedicated Distribution Manager, Martin Stuchfield. I also outlined the plans that were afoot

to cut costs by having copy set by computer and to boost subscriptions.

Our new Editor, Neil Wiffen, MA, produced the first copy of the revamped *Journal* last autumn and it was re-launched at a well-attended event at Ingatestone Hall on 26th October.

So far – particularly thanks to our new Editor – everything has gone according to plan and the future for the *Journal* is bright.

However, we still need to increase the number of subscriptions. At £10 p.a. (post free) for two issues containing a wealth of information on Essex history and archaeology, the *Journal* is a 'must' for everyone interested in our county. I hope that readers of the *News* will take out a subscription, if they have not already done so, and will mention the *Essex Journal* to friends.

Would-be subscribers should send £10 to the *Essex Journal* Hon. Treasurer at 11 Milligans Chase, Galleywood, Chelmsford, CM2 8QD.

Stan Newens

MALDON CEMETERY AND THE 85TH CANON

Maldon's attempts to provide a cemetery for the town were attended by a variety of frustrations. In April 1850 a committee was established and was offered a 2 acre site near the Fambridge Road for £260. This was to be financed by a loan from the Church Commissioners, with a penny in the pound rate to cover interest charges and repayment of the capital. A chapel was to be erected, paid for by public subscription. However these plans were dealt a double blow; the Commissioners refused to make a loan on the grounds that half the site was to be leased to trustees for non-conformist burials, and the Recorder of Maldon

advised that it would be irregular to raise a rate to purchase a site, part of which was to be leased to dissenters. It was clear that, under existing legislation, no further progress could be made, and the committee was disbanded.

The 1853 Burial Act established the basis on which vestries could establish burial boards for the provision of cemeteries for all denominations, financed through the poor rates. The vestries of St Peter's and All Saints formed a joint burial board in September 1854 and placed advertisements in the county papers inviting tenders for possible sites. By the end of the year they had agreed in principle to purchase a 4 acre field called Middle Winterslade on the London Road for £450 from Rev. R Burls. An official from the Office of the Inspector of Burial Grounds visited in December, and approval for a cemetery of 2½ acres was granted by the Secretary of State, Lord Palmerston, early in January. 1½ acres was to be consecrated, with the other acre reserved for non-conformist burials, and the surplus land was to be sold by auction. On this occasion the loan was provided by a private individual, Mrs Anne Bourne of Latchingdon; £1000 at 5%, repayable over 20 years and secured on the poor rates. The burial board and its building committee met weekly, and rapid progress was made with building boundary walls, and planning the drainage, the layout and the necessary buildings. Initially two 'waiting rooms' were planned, but these were soon upgraded to chapels, one for the Church of England, one for the dissenters.

In April 1855, an unexpected difficulty arose. The chairman of the burial board, Rev. E R Horwood, and the clerk, paid two visits to the bishop of Rochester to discuss layout, fencing and the chapel. The bishop approved the chapel but

indicated that, in his opinion, the Ecclesiastical Court would require a wall or substantial fence on the west side of the cemetery before it could be consecrated. He also stipulated that a wall or 'iron palisade fence' must be provided to separate the consecrated from the unconsecrated ground. He explained that this did not arise from any 'unkind or disrespectful feeling' towards dissenters, but from his belief that it was a requirement of the 85th Canon and was needed to 'protect the officiating clergyman from disturbance in the performance of the Burial Service of the Church of England by disorderly proceedings that might arise from the unconsecrated ground'.

The burial board was clearly unwilling to accept this stipulation. The clerk promptly wrote to about 20 burial boards in various parts of the country, requesting information about the views of their particular diocesans. Carlisle and Great Torrington, who were known to have refused to comply with their bishop's demands, were also approached. Within a week, replies had been received from most of them – a testimony to the efficiency of both the clerks and the Victorian postal system. These responses revealed considerable variations in requirements, but a Gravesend cemetery, which had been recently consecrated by the bishop of Rochester himself, was only divided by 'small iron posts with crowns only just above the turf'. Carlisle had asked for its reply to be treated as confidential, as they were considering seeking a legal opinion on the matter.

Early in May, it was agreed to send a delegation to the bishop to ask him to reconsider his demand. Though they were courteously received, the bishop remained adamant that Canon Law required the partition of the ground, as it was, in effect, a new churchyard. He

dismissed the other examples as being either extensions to old churchyards, or cemeteries provided by joint stock companies, over which the diocesan had no authority. He stated that, unless a fence strong enough to exclude pigs and dogs was provided, he would refuse to consecrate the cemetery. After further discussion, he agreed that a fence of 'close work iron hurdles' would suffice. He wished the burial board to understand that his requirement did not arise out of any disrespect for dissenters, and that he acted 'solely under a conviction of duty'.

In spite of this minor concession, the burial board passed a unanimous resolution that the fence was not necessary. A letter was sent to the Secretary of State, asking if he could induce the bishop to change his mind. In the meantime, a reply had been received from Great Torrington inviting Carlisle and Maldon jointly to seek a legal opinion in this matter, and this was agreed. A further seven meetings passed before the clerk was able to report further on this difficult problem.

Counsel's opinion was that the existing enclosure of the cemetery site met the requirements of the 85th Canon. However, the Burial Acts did give the bishop discretionary powers to insist on an additional fence separating the consecrated from the unconsecrated ground. Such a fence would not affect the burial board's right to use the poor law rates to purchase the whole cemetery. If the bishop's concessionary powers were not agreed to, there was no process in common or ecclesiastical law to oblige him to consecrate the cemetery. Equally neither the churchwardens nor the board members themselves would be liable to proceedings in the ecclesiastical courts if the bishop's demands were resisted. However failure to have the cemetery

consecrated would create an insuperable problem; any clergyman performing the burial service of the Church of England in unconsecrated ground would be subject to admonition, and to subsequent suspension or deprivation.

Clearly the burial board was left with no choice if the cemetery was to be used for Church of England burials. On 14 June 1855, they agreed to provide an iron fence on each side of the driveway that separated the two parts of the cemetery and on 27 September 1855 the bishop consecrated that part which was to be used by the established church. This was by no means the end of the burial board's problem, but the subsequent difficulties were less arcane ones, arising from poor workmanship, a £500 overspend, the need to raise a further loan, and an dipsomaniac sexton. There was also a vehement debate (which nearly split the board) over a proposal to toll the church bell for dissenters' funerals.

Today there is no sign of the bishop's iron fences – indeed most of the wall, deemed necessary to exclude pigs and dogs, has disappeared, and much of the original cemetery has been reclaimed by nature.

Michael Leach

Sources:

Burial board minutes: ERO D/B 3/19/1 & D/DCf/B905-6

ESSEX SEEN FROM ELSEWHERE

The autumn 2007 newsletter of the Ancient Monuments Society and the Friends of Friendless Churches notes the following:

a) the church of St Mary's, Mundon: attempts to reach a consensus with English Heritage, over the problems caused by major structural movement in the C18 chancel, are continuing.

b) a stained glass window has been installed in the east end of Wickham Bishops church, designed by Benjamin Finn, a stained glass artist and tenant of this redundant church.

c) AMS and SPAB presented a joint case against the conversion of Tilty Mill at the public enquiry at the end of October. Though the proposed conversion retained some of the machinery, most of the fittings would be lost and the conversion involved "opening up" the interior to link it with a new house which was to provide the enabling development. These proposals were seen as much too damaging.

d) Heritage Lottery Fund has offered £4,760,000 for conservation projects in Epping Forest, the most ambitious of which are the re-introduction of grazing by cattle, and the construction of a new visitor centre adjacent to Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge at Chigwell.

e) the tradition of serving tea in non-conformist chapels (more recently adopted by the established church) led to the production of numerous items of special crockery, often decorated with images of the chapel. A substantial collection of these has been donated to the History Centre at the URC church, Little Baddow.

f) Essex County Council have published "Mr Pink: The Architectural Legacy of W F Crittall". Walter Crittall was architect of buildings in Braintree, Great Easton and Silver End (the last in collaboration with Charles Quennell). This publication is available from Katie Seabright, Historic Buildings & Conservation, County Hall, Chelmsford CM1 1QH at £10. There is also a recent biography of Quennell in volume 50 of *Architectural History*, which

includes some of his very attractive sketches of Castle Hedingham.

THOBY PRIORY, MOUNTNESSING

The Society has been concerned for some time about the fate of these monastic remains. As one of the minor houses, it was dissolved in 1525 and the western part of the claustral buildings was incorporated into a house. By the early C19 the only other surviving fragment was part of the south wall of the church, with two arched openings. The house was reconstructed in the 1890s, after being gutted by fire which probably destroyed any surviving mediaeval woodwork. Members of this Society visited on 29 June 1915 and had lunch in the 'picturesque grounds'. However, like many other country houses, its fate was sealed by its requisition by the army in World War II, and its subsequent use as a prisoner of war camp. By 1950 it was in very poor condition and unoccupied, and was completely demolished a few years later. A small modern house was built in a different position, south of the standing fragment of church wall, on the site of the monastic cemetery.

The site is remote, and is little known in its rural setting; it is surrounded by trees and invisible from the nearest road. It is also in border country on the fringe of local authority boundaries and, like an unwanted child, was transferred from Chelmsford to Brentwood in one of the reorganisations. Before this occurred, Chelmsford gave planning permission for the site to be used for industrial and commercial use, and it is currently used by a car breaker, and by a scaffold and plant hire firm. The area of the former monastic buildings, including the standing fragment of the church wall, is

now unoccupied, but the owner is seeking commercial tenants. The utilitarian 1950s house, also derelict till recently, has new owners who have begun to clear the immediate area of decades of industrial rubbish. The only clues to its much grander past are a few fine surviving specimen trees.

The standing ruin, covered with (and probably held together by) a heavy growth of ivy, is on the 'buildings at risk' register, and one of the arches has collapsed in recent years. The remaining mediaeval masonry is heavily patched with C18/C19 bricks, and is abutted by a prefabricated concrete building on one side, and tipped rubble and numerous sycamore saplings on the other. It is clearly in a very perilous state.

Attempts to get planning permission for an enabling development to repair the ruin, and to enhance its setting, were rejected by Brentwood Borough Council. The site is in Green Belt (though clearly 'brownfield' under its present industrial use) and the BC considered that the housing density was too high. Two of the present owners (covering about six acres of the site) wish to sell, and, in the absence of consent for housing, their only option is to sell piecemeal for industrial use. There is a considerable demand for this, resulting from the displacement of light industry from the East End of London connected with the development of the Olympic site. This is likely to result in multiple ownership which would make any beneficial development of the monastic site impossible.

We arranged an on-site meeting on 2 November 2007 with three of the present owners, and the chairman and clerk of the parish council, to discuss possible solutions. It was agreed that housing development would be a better outcome, that the original developer should be contacted again, and that Brentwood

Borough Council should be lobbied by the parish council to adopt a more flexible approach to the particular problems of this site. The Society undertook to establish English Heritage's position on the best approach to securing the preservation of the standing ruin. It would seem that this may be the last chance to find a satisfactory solution for this severely degraded monastic site.

Michael Leach

THE WILL OF SIR JOHN ROUS

Almost a century ago, the Essex Review published an enquiry from Ernest Francis about the significance of the will of Sir John Rous of Great Waltham (ER Vol. XXI, pp.41-42. 1912). This will - made in 1627 and proved in 1630 - provided for his burial in the chancel of Felsted Church and for a range of gifts to the 2nd Earl of Warwick and his children, to Sir Nathaniel Rich, to Hugh Everard and his family in Great Waltham as well as to the poor of the parishes of Felsted, Little Leighs and Great Waltham itself. The explanation for the contents of the will is relatively simple. For most of his adult life, Rous was a servant of the 3rd Lord Rich, who became Earl of Warwick in 1618 before dying the following year, and one of the key officers administering his estate in northern central and south-eastern Essex. Sir Nathaniel Rich had played a similar role while Hugh Everard, who held Great Waltham manor and other properties on the Rich estate as a tenant, was as receiver of the money rents on the estate in 1605-1610 one of Rous's subordinates. The will is informative about Rous's personal preferences within the Rich family circle - the 2nd Earl's daughter Anne, wife of Lord Mandeville, was clearly his

favourite while Warwick's second wife was left no token of his regard - and of the care he took to provide for his relatives and servants after his death.

C. Thompson

REV EDWARD LEWES CUTTS (1824-1901)

A recent e-mail from a Canadian descendant of the Society's first Honorary Secretary and Editor provided some information about Edward Lewes Cutts to supplement Ray Powell's article in *EAH* xxxii. The son of a Sheffield optician, he graduated BA at Queens' College, Cambridge in 1848 and was ordained the same year. Apart from a brief curacy at Ide Hill in Kent, he lived and worked in Essex for 15 years from 1850, though his antiquarian interests had already developed before his arrival in the county. He had published his *Study of Sepulchral Slabs and Crosses of the Middle Ages* in 1849. Cutts must have become an active member of the archaeological branch of the Colchester Literary Institution, as in 1852 he was appointed joint secretary of a committee to establish a county archaeological society. Later in the year, at the inaugural meeting of the Essex Archaeological Society, he was appointed its Hon Secretary. The precedent of members exhibiting 'objects of interest' at their gatherings was established at this first meeting where Cutts (amongst others) displayed some of his brass rubbings.

In 1853 he was involved in an antiquarian dispute with the Rev. Henry Jenkins who had published a lecture in which he had asserted that Colchester Castle was built as a temple to the deified Emperor Claudius. Cutts reviewed this lecture, and published

Colchester Castle not a Roman Temple. Jenkins then retaliated in print with *An Appendix to the Lecture on Colchester Castle; together with a Reply to the Animadversions of the Rev. E L Cutts*. This seems to have been the end of the dispute.

In the following year the first of his many religious publications appeared in print. Some covered the practical aspects of religious furnishing and decoration (including his popular *Essay on the Christmas Decoration of Churches*), others were studies of various aspects of church history, as well as educational material for children. Some went into several editions. His last publication, *Augustine of Canterbury*, was printed in 1896. It was probably his publications which brought him to the notice of the archbishop of Canterbury who, in 1876, sent him abroad to report on the Assyrian church in Turkish Kurdistan and Persia.

While living in Essex, apart from running the affairs of the Society, he organised, in 1865, the opening of two 'British' tumuli in Norseby Wood, Billericay. His finds of six cremation urns were described in the *Transactions* by his son J E L Cutts. The report suggests that this excavation was typical of the period, with the physical work done by hired labourers.

After leaving Essex in 1865 he maintained his connection with the Society; he was on Council for the rest of his life, and acted as the 'mediaeval Secretary' for a period. Though he contributed no further articles to the *Transactions*, he was the author of *Colchester* (one of Longman's historic towns series) in 1888.

Sources:

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van Goozen D E: pers inf

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GENERAL VIEW OF ESSEX AGRICULTURE 1794

In January 1794 'Messrs Griggs of Hill House, near Kelvedon' published their pamphlet, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Essex*. At first glance, the format is oddly generous, even by late C18 standards. The page is 8" wide and 9½" long, and the print barely occupies half this space. However the opening memorandum explains the reason for the unusual layout of this pamphlet, 'now printed... in order that every person, interested in the welfare of (the) county may....examine it fully before it is published. It is therefore requested that any remark, or additional observation which may occur to the reader... may be written on the margin, and transmitted to the Board of Agriculture, at its Office in London, by whom the same shall be properly attended to.' The deadline for the return of the comments was 1 March, and it is clear that every other county in the country was involved in a similar exercise.

Though little is known about 'Messrs Griggs', the reasons for canvassing public opinion at this time are clear. During the second half of the C18, Britain had ceased to be self-sufficient in grain and was increasingly dependant on imports, particularly problematic when the country was at war with its

neighbours. Scanty crops in 1789, and a poor harvest in 1790 created much concern, and an outburst of political pamphleteering. The government responded with a new Corn Law in 1791 to regulate the import and export of grain, but it proved unworkable. The following year's harvest was another poor one, and an embargo on the export of grain was imposed. A further poor crop in 1794 was followed by a particularly bad one in 1795, and the price of wheat – 43 shillings a quarter in 1792 – rose to over 108 shillings during 1795. The problem was becoming very serious; the shortage of food, and its high cost, had led to a number of food riots, some of which had required the militia to put them down. With the uncomfortably recent memory of the French revolution just across the Channel, the government urgently needed a solution to this potentially dangerous situation. In 1793 it set up the Board of Agriculture to advise; this body was what would now be termed a quango, a private organisation of gentry, farmers, writers and other agricultural professionals, funded by the government. The Griggs' pamphlet, and similar surveys in other counties, were initiated by the newly formed Board in order to establish how the country might improve the efficiency of its food production. In 1795, recognising the seriousness of the situation, the government imposed restrictions on the use of wheat for making starch, hair powder and various alcoholic beverages. Members of Parliament made their own contribution by pledging to limit the quantity of wheaten bread eaten by their families.

Little is known about 'Messrs Griggs'. The ERO index suggests that the authors were Golding Griggs and (probably) his son John. Golding Griggs (c.1721-1806) was a subscriber to

Chapman and Andre's 1777 map, and his name is inscribed in copperplate under the title of Hill House, at Messing. He rebuilt the house after 1775 in gault brick and, by the C19, the road had been diverted away from the house to create parkland, and the name of the mansion had been upgraded to Messing Park. He was steward to the Honnywoods of Marks Hall, and would have had a good working knowledge of agriculture in the area, as well as contacts with other landowners and their agents. He was an obvious choice to comment on the state of agriculture in the county. Even less is known about his son John; he died in 1839 leaving property, said to be worth the enormous sum of £100,000, to Rev Robert Eden, vicar of Leigh.

Messrs Griggs pointed out that the open field system (generally seen as inefficient and inflexible) was unusual in Essex, but estimated that there were 15,000 acres of forest and waste which could be usefully brought into arable production. They described in detail the various forms of crop rotation (and the crops grown) on the different Essex soils, without advocating any particular system, though fallowing was recognised as essential on a two to five year cycle, depending on the type of soil. The substantial increase in poor rates caused by the collapse of the woollen industry due to the war was recognised to be a serious burden to farmers. The Griggs were concerned that the stocks of 'promiscuous' cattle (i.e. a mixture of breeds) suggested that not enough was known about the best animals for purpose in various parts of the county. Epping was noted for its creameries, and the Ilford area for growing potatoes year after year, though the latter could only be achieved with the ready availability of liberal quantities of 'town manure' to keep the land in good condition. A crop peculiar to Essex was described;

coriander, teasel and caraway were sown together and then cropped over a three year cycle. The relative merits of horse and oxen (the latter ready broken to the yoke by Welsh drovers) were discussed – the former were preferred for ploughing, due to their livelier nature, as well as causing less damage on wet ground – the latter for general carting, being less expensive to feed and easier to look after. The merits of land drainage (the technique was described in detail), properly drawn-up leases and the commutation of tithes was discussed. The writers also felt that farming was disadvantaged by labourers being tied to their 'parish of settlement', which prevented them from seeking work elsewhere. Woodland management was seen as far too short term to produce the timber needed for ship building, and it was felt that coppice stools would regenerate better if cut close to the ground, rather than the normal practice of cutting them a foot or two higher. Church lands (presumably this meant glebe) were regarded as unproductive and the church should be encouraged to grant leases to tenants for reasonable terms. The pamphlet contained a plea for the more efficient maintenance of sea walls which were, at that time, the responsibility of individual owners – an unsatisfactory situation whereby the neglect of one owner could cause serious long term damage to the fertility of the properties of adjoining landowners. Finally they extol an Essex practice ('not known in every county in the kingdom') which resulted in a more equitable deal for a labouring man on limited wages – two inspectors of weights and measures paid £25 per annum to check the weights of millers and shopkeeper, and to prosecute those found giving short measure. Curiously the Essex report had none of the sense of urgency which the

government must have felt about avoiding the double threat of starvation and revolution. It had the doubtful distinction of being, at 26 pages, the shortest of all the county reports. Most were regarded as so inadequate that another enquiry was instituted in 1796, and Messrs Griggs were replaced by Charles Vancouver (the author of a much more detailed report for Cambridgeshire in the 1794 enquiry) for the Essex survey. However this second attempt suffered from inadequate financial support from the Board, as well as the landowners' strong suspicions of possible hidden motives. The main contribution of the Griggs' Essex report of 1794 was to identify 15,000 acres of waste which might be put under profitable cultivation.

Michael Leach

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HAVERING-ATTE-BOWER'S MISSING COURT LEET BOOK

Our President, in the Winter 2006 newsletter, reported his success in recovering some of the missing manorial documents for the manor of North

Weald. It is encouraging that these important records are still coming to light. The editor of the Essex VCH recently received an e-mail from a benefactor of local history who had found, and purchased, the court leet book (1830-1896) for the manor of Havering-atte-Bower on e-bay – missing since 1925, somewhat damp, but generally in good condition. With admirable altruism, she has generously deposited it in the Essex Record Office.

This volume may be of particular interest. The manor of Havering-atte-Bower was owned by the Crown until its sale in 1828 to Hugh McIntosh, a contractor who had built the East India and London docks. Until it was amalgamated with the newly formed Essex County Council in 1888, the Liberty of Havering was an independent administrative entity with its own courts, prison and gallows. As ownership of the manor carried with it the right to appoint the high steward (who was *ex officio* justice of the peace), the sale of the manor created the unusual situation of the Crown losing control of its right to appoint justices for the Liberty. It was not until 1892 that the Havering justices were merged with the Essex bench.

Michael Leach

Source:

Powell W R (ed), 1978 *Essex VCH*, vii, 6

REVD. E H L REEVE: CHRONICLER OF THE GREAT WAR

Edward Henry Lisle Reeve (1858 - 1936) was Rector of Stondon Massey in Essex from 1893 until 1935. In his spare time researched and published from 1900 what many regard as a model parish history. His last volume was published

in 1914, on the eve of the First World War.

While researching for an historical event at Stondon Church*, I discovered that Reeve did not stop recording events in his parish on publication of his work but kept notes through to 1929. (His notes are held in Essex Record Office: ERO T/P 188/3). We therefore have a fascinating and unique local insight to the First World War (1914–18) as events unfolded.

Reeve lived with his sisters at the Rectory (now Stondon Massey House) where he penned the local history. I understand that his father, whom he succeeded as Rector, forbade him and his sisters to marry. He died, a bachelor, in 1936.

On Tuesday, 4th August at 11pm Great Britain declared War on Germany. Very quickly soldiers were called to arms. With an invasion of England anticipated Reeve wrote in October that, "Artillery and Engineer Officers have been busily surveying the district during the past three weeks with the purpose, I believe, of deciding on the best method of obstructing a possible raid on London. An outer line of defence appears to run through Ongar, Stondon and Doddinghurst: and my little field has received attention. Field guns I think would, on necessity, be brought here, and would range eastward in the direction of Chelmsford".

In November Reeve observed that, "It would hardly be too much to say that Stondon is becoming honeycombed with trenches, and the Church, owing to its being set upon a hill, is a prominent centre. The slopes declining from the Hall to the brook contain a network of passages, giving shelter to riflemen who will give, if necessary, a stern reception to the enemy coming down the opposite hill from Paslow Common. Flanking trenches face toward the Rectory, while

others are taken southward along the course of the brook to the village. In adjacent parishes the same work is observable. On the slopes of High Ongar, and on the confines of Blackmore and Doddinghurst towards Swallows Cross bodies of men are busily engaged”.

Huge numbers of men were billeted in Stondon and the neighbourhood. “Some 600 navvies arrived on the morning of November 2nd, some by railway to Ongar, and some by road in motor omnibuses. The plan being somewhat unexpectedly adopted, little or no preparation had been made in the locality for the reception of the men. Some 400 were to commence work at once in Stondon. In the event, at the cost of considerable discomfort, the first few days were successfully surmounted and then tents were erected here and there for the accommodation of the men, or they contrived to find themselves temporary billets. A canteen was put up at Brook’s and Cannons Farm, which to some degree supplied the place of shops. This was afterward moved to a centre at Hooks End, Blackmore. The appearance of a canteen was hailed with delight by the villagers, publican, and all: for it was becoming a real difficulty to know how to meet the wants of the invaders”.

December’s rains caused the trenches to become saturated and caved in. A different strategy was adopted in early 1915 due to the changed nature of warfare in France. “A Guardsman whom I met lately told me that constantly our trenches in France had been no more than 30 or 40 paces distant to those of the enemy: and it had been possible to throw hand-grenades from one to the other. My Guardsman acquaintance told me that Germany is a beaten nation; and it is recognised that an invasion in force becomes daily less likely”.

We know the War to be far more protracted than thought at the time. Men up and down the country joined up. Reeve comments in July 1915, when 44 year-old Ernest Baines signs up, that “he hopes that his example may lead some of the single men who are still holding back to come forward and enlist. So far the Government have procured the services of a vast army without conscription”.

Looking in retrospect, we know that conscription was introduced in 1916 and the events of the Somme caused a tremendous loss of life: the Government deliberately understating the number killed or wounded. Reeve describes the opening day of the Somme offensive (1st July 1916) thus: “As I write, the reverberation of the great guns and explosion of mines are shaking the windows of the Rectory and of all the other houses, I suppose, in the southern and south-eastern counties of England. There is evidently a very heavy bombardment in progress”.

In his privileged position as community leader, Reeve learns of letters home to families. Reading his notes one wonders whether this was a cathartic release of all he had learnt. We learn the names and professions of the men of Stondon who went to war. For example, “Mr John White, lately serving as butler and valet at Stondon Place is with the Fusiliers and writing to his wife reports that he is well so far but that a party to which he belonged were lately all but “wiped out”, two officers being killed out of four, and two wounded. This is an astonishing experience for a man not fashioned for a soldier’s life either physically or in temperament”. Gardener at the Rectory, William Penson, was “drafted from Gosfield to Wendover where he will join a class for practice in “bombing and bayoneting”! Strange work for a peaceful citizen!” In all, six

Stondon men were killed in the War including three Hasler brothers. Two of the men died after the end of hostilities from the effects of gas inhalation.

We learn of Leonard Hasler's mother visiting Boulogne in October 1918 to find her son injured by a shrapnel wound to his head. "He was not, however, to live long, and died within a week of her arrival. Leonard was buried with five other soldiers, with military honours: Mrs Conn herself and one other English woman being the only near relatives present. The day previously the funeral service had been read over 60 poor fellows at one time. These are the harrowing accompaniments of the war. Up and down the neighbourhood we are constantly hearing of sad losses".

The "enemy" never made an assault on England on the ground, but carried out a number of Zeppelin bombing raids. Reeve describes these, and the later raids by aeroplane on London, in some detail. As allies gained air supremacy there was success in defence from attacks. Reeve, on 2nd September 1916, witnessed the end of the Zeppelin shot down over Cuffley as the "whole sky for miles around was illuminated with a pink glow which grew brighter and more brilliant as the vessel neared the earth in her fall of some 2½ miles"; and the aftermath of another at Great Burstead (23rd September 1916) when "the numbers of sight-seers was so great that it was difficult, even on foot, to get within distance".

Reeve also saw the craters of bombs which were dropped over Blackmore on 31st March 1916. He provides the location of the dropped bombs: "between the Soap House and the corner of Blackmore between the Church and Miss Barrett's house" adding to my notes prepared for an earlier article for this Newsletter (No 148, Spring 2006 p16).

Eventually the might of the Americans

was brought to bear and the War, which seemed "a draw" in 1917, according to sportsman Capt. Fred Fane, ceased with an Armistice on 11th November 1918. In days before radio, the village learnt of events by "the hooting of sirens and the noise of maroons. Some in Stondon heard the distinct bells at Brentwood. But it was not till the afternoon that definite tidings reached the villages and then it filtered through chiefly the form of private messages. News came to Stondon that flags were being hoisted on the Military Hospital at Ongar, and that the veteran Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood VC had visited the place and communicated the splendid message to the wounded men. As soon as I had this official intelligence the Stondon Church bells were chimed with all the old vigour by Ernest Baines, our sometime sexton". In one sense the War was over.

As a postscript I found that Reeve was a Society member: "4 July 1918. I went by cycle to Romford to a meeting of the Essex Archaeological Society, and passed a large camp the "Hare Hall Camp" about a mile before entering the town".

Andrew Smith

MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE?

On 28 February 1586/7, an inquest was held on William Rayner of Woodham Walter who had died eight days earlier after an accident involving the four horse cart that he was driving. One wheel hit a 'hackethorne stub' and threatened to overturn the cart which was laden with beer barrels. While he was trying to free the wheel, one of the barrels fell and broke his right leg. John Fysshier of Brentwood, yeoman, also described as a 'common surgeon, exercising the art of surgery', undertook to cure Rayner's leg for an unnamed sum of money which

was paid on the spot. Fysshier 'warranted the right placing of the bones... and the perfect health of the leg'. Rayner was obviously impressed by this promise and did not seek a second opinion from another surgeon though probably, in the circumstances, he had little choice.

The inquest heard that Fysshier 'neglected the cure according to his duty in that behalf, (and) wholly absented himself from the said William by reason whereof the leg swelled and was internally corrupted'. The jurors decided that Rayner came to his death 'by misfortune, and by the neglect and bad behaviour of John Fysshier'. It was also noted that the offending barrel of beer, worth 4s., was in the hands of the sheriff. Presumably it had been seized as a deodand.

This case probably had much more to do with the unwritten contract between two men rather than what we would now call medical negligence on the part of the surgeon, but it is interesting to note that Fysshier's warranty implied that some form of follow-up care was expected. From a C21 perspective, it seems likely that the injury would have been fatal, as there was probably a substantial crush injury to the lower limb which C16 surgery would have been unable to deal with – except, perhaps, by amputation, which the victim would doubtless have preferred to avoid.

Michael Leach

Source:
Coroner's inquest ERO Q/SR 100/27

FULL CIRCLE AT WALLASEA ISLAND

Readers may recall Ellen Heppell's article on Wallasea Island (on the River

Crouch, inland from Foulness) in a recent volume of *Essex Archaeology & History*. Her study was prompted by proposals to build a new sea wall along the north side of this island much of which lies about 2 metres below sea level. The island was probably embanked in the C13 or C14 as a series of small islets, some evidence of which can found on old maps. In spite of major floods in 1736 and 1897, the island supported mixed agriculture and some 13 farms in the C19. Though the number of farms dwindled in the C20, the landscape remained largely unaltered until the disastrous flood of 1953 which covered the island in seawater for several months. After this catastrophe, most of the farmhouses were demolished and, over the next two decades, the landscape was flattened with the removal of banks, ditches, drainage channels and almost all the field systems.

Rising sea level, combined with the general loss of the buffer effect of salt marsh on high tides, means that maintaining sea defences will become uneconomic. The RSPB now has an option to buy the Wallasea Island and plans to reverse 700 years of land reclamation by breaching the sea walls and creating about 1800 acres of salt marsh. Some inland embanking will recreate the original pattern of islets and the area will be managed for the benefit of wildlife. This will, presumably, involve some seasonal grazing in the traditional way, and should considerably enhance the landscape of this part of Essex.

Michael Leach

Sources:
The Guardian, 8 October 2007
Heppell, E, 2004 'Wallasea Island: the history & archaeology of a marshland landscape' in *EAH* xxxv, 98-113

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Michael Leach

THE ESSEX SOCIETY FOR ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 154

ISSN 0305-8530

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