

Essex Archaeology and History News



Summer 2009

THE ESSEX SOCIETY FOR ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

NEWSLETTER 158

SUMMER 2009

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COPY FOR THE NEXT ISSUE SHOULD BE SENT TO THE EDITOR AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS NO LATER THAN 23 OCTOBER 2009

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

Cover illustration:

The front cover of the first Girl Guides Gazette published in January 1914.

This September sees the launch of the centenary year celebrations for the Girl Guides. Who could have thought that 100 years ago a group of girls gate-crashing the first Boy Scout rally at Crystal Palace on 4 September 1909 and demanding to join would have had such an impact. This momentous event is being celebrated with a specially designed maze in Crystal Palace Park being opened in September as well as other events throughout the UK.

Today, as it did a hundred years ago, the movement provides a girl only space, promotes diversity and equality, is relevant to today's girls and, girls and women are given a voice. There are half a million members of the guiding movement in the UK with ten million members in 144 countries around the world.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I trust that members have safely received copies of volume 38 of the Transactions (2007) and the List of Members following despatch of the last newsletter. Once again, we owe an enormous debt of gratitude to our Editor, Dr Chris Starr, and his Deputy, Helen Walker, for seeing this bumper issue through the press. I hope that you approve of the introduction of colour which, in my opinion, greatly enhances the presentation. As previously reported, the editors are on schedule to produce volume 39 (2008) prior to the year-end. This will complete the catch-up process and will signify a significant milestone in the history of our Society. This edition represents the 150th volume and concludes the third series which commenced life way back in 1961. Exciting enhancements are under consideration for the first volume of the fourth series which it is anticipated will appear in autumn 2010. I hope to be in a position to elaborate on these plans shortly. However, what is crucially important is that future issues of the Transactions appear on a regular basis in the autumn of each succeeding year. I hope also that the accompanying List of Members proves useful. I am personally very encouraged by the considerable level of interest which this initiative has generated for it has prompted much welcomed and valued contact with fellow members. In this regard, I wish to congratulate our long-standing member, Professor Warwick Rodwell, on his appointment as an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (O.B.E. - Civil Division) awarded in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours List for services to ecclesiastical archaeology. Warwick, although now residing in Somerset, has consistently shown a keen interest in Essex archaeology.

Most notably with his outstanding work relating to the excavations and structural analysis of the churches at Hadstock and Rivenhall. I am especially indebted to our member, Adrian Corder-Birch, who thoughtfully brought this joyous news to my attention.

To my mind, people are fundamental to life and are the most crucial ingredient. I am delighted to report that recently we have enjoyed a considerable influx of new members. To each and every one may I extend a very warm welcome and an earnest desire that it will prove possible to greet you personally at one of our events.

In the context of events those members attending the Annual General Meeting last June were richly rewarded. Firstly, the enchanting location – the fifteenth century timber-framed Marriage Feast Room at Matching. Secondly, following the formal business, Anne Padfield and Alan Bayford captivated the assembled company with their knowledge so eagerly imparted. If this were not sufficient reward a sumptuous tea followed. It is a high risk strategy and often invidious to single out individuals but this aspect of the day was so very much appreciated that I must place on public record our gratitude to Ann and Ken Newman.

I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to the forthcoming Morant Lunch to be held on Sunday, 18th October. The Rev Philip Morant (1700-70) is, of course, renowned as the county historian. Morant's first major work was his History and Antiquities of Colchester published in 1748. This was followed by his magnum opus entitled The History and Antiquities of Essex, based on the manuscripts of the Rev William Holman, which appeared between 1760 and 1768. Morant held numerous Essex livings including Shellow Bowells (1733-4), Broomfield

(1734-8), Chignal Smealey (1735-43), St Mary-at-the-Walls, Colchester (1738-70), Wickham Bishops (1743-5) and Aldham (1745-70). In 1966 the Society removed, at its sole expense, the marble monument commemorating Philip Morant from the chancel of the old church at Aldham and resited it in the sanctuary of the new building erected in 1854-5. The east window of Aldham church also contains a memorial window financed by subscription in 1854. On the same March day in 1966 the Society also dedicated an oak tablet near the tower of St Mary-at-the-Walls church in Colchester to Morant's memory. The Society annually commemorates the life and work of Morant with a Lecture in the spring and a Lunch in the autumn. The guest speaker this year will be appropriately focusing on the nearby gardens at Easton Lodge immortalised by Frances Evelyn Maynard, "Darling Daisy", the Countess of Warwick who was the renowned mistress of King Edward VII. The venue for the Morant Lunch is the delightful fifteenth century Swan Inn at Great Easton. Here you will enjoy a comfortable environment, excellent sustenance and, above all, fellowship. Numbers are limited to thirty so please book early to avoid disappointment. Guests are welcome with tickets available at £23.50 from Pat Ryan (60 Maldon Road, Danbury, Essex CM3 4QL – telephone: 01245 222237).

I look forward to advising you on the developments regarding the Society's grant of arms and a new corporate identity in the next newsletter. In the meantime I hope that you enjoy the remainder of the summer season

H Martin Stuchfield

ADVISORY COMMITTEE IN ARCHAEOLOGY

The Committee met on 3 occasions in 2008-9 with County Councillors, archaeologists, museum curators and representatives of Archaeology Societies in attendance. The Committee stood in memory of the late James Fawn. On his retirement, the contribution of Cllr. Manning-Press to the Committee was acknowledged.

A visit was made to **Walton-on-Naze** Navigation Tower built 1720, Grade II*, where cliff-fall was endangering its future existence and adequate funding for protection was to date not forthcoming.

The Chelmsford Archaeological **Conference 2008** had been well-attended; papers should be published in 2010. Work continues on evidence about the proposed 2nd runway at **Stansted**. Clay-moulds for bronze castings have been recovered from **Springfield** Lyons Chelmsford. At **New Hall** Chelmsford, Tudor gardens and paths have been identified. **Stebbing** Park Barn is a 17th century reuse of a medieval aisled building. At **Hadleigh** Castle the impact of the 2012 Olympic biking event is under evaluation.

World War II defences: surveys Chelmsford, Clacton, Colchester and **Dengie** peninsula have been completed. Amongst others, a block-house near **Southminster** was discovered.

Work with **schools** continues to highlight East of England's **industrial** heritage. Secondary schools have received Parish books containing their local parish's documentary **place-name** records.

European Route of Industrial Heritage: In addition to **Waltham** Abbey Gunpowder Mills, **Duxford** War Museum has been added to the Route

Field Archaeology Unit: Roman gulleys at Anchor St, **Chelmsford**, contained a

human skull. Hall Barns, **Fyfield**, c.1600 barn and dovecote have been recorded. Development stagnation has led to a downturn in archaeology.

Colchester Archaeology: Urban streets had been revealed at Colchester Institute where funding for further work has now been withdrawn. The Roman City walls are being consolidated. Due to lease end, new premises were being sought urgently for the Colchester Trust.

Southend: WWII air-raid shelters survive at EKCO radio and TV Works and were recorded prior to destruction.

Prittlewell Priory refurbishment was to begin. A probable Neolithic cursus and houses have been found at **Nevendon**. The site for a new Museum which would house the "Prittlewell Prince" has been identified near the pier.

Uttlesford: Fieldwalking at Clavering has revealed a probable Iron Age enclosure. A Bronze Age hoard has been found at **Littlebury**. **Saffron Walden** castle is to be consolidated, and the new Heritage Quest Museum is due to open in 2011. A conference for metal-detectorists and landowners was well-attended.

Chelmsford Oaklands Park Museum extension is due to open in late 2009/early 2010.

The **Foulness** Heritage Centre was opening on first Sunday of each month in summer.

The **Harlow** Pottery Industry report has been published.

James Kemble

BETTER THAN A PERSIAN CARPET?

Lord Dacre (1717-1786), of Belhus at Aveley, antiquary and friend of Philip Morant, wrote to the Essex historian on 26 December 1762 about the recent

discovery of a Roman mosaic floor in Colchester:

'I wish you joy of your tessellated pavement. I know you will value it and step upon it with more pleasure than on the finest Persian carpet: as it raises.....up in your imagination Proconsuls, Generals etc... in all their Glory, who have been dead and gone above these sixteen hundred years.'

(Thanks to Mark Lockett for discovering this)

Source:

British Library Add MS 37220, f.46v

THE LINCOLN ORGAN AT THAXTED

Apart from church organ enthusiasts, and residents of the Thaxted district, few realise that this parish church possesses the oldest unmodified Georgian church organ in the country. Very few Georgian instruments survived the restorations and re-orderings on the later C19. The Thaxted organ also has the distinction of having been played by Gustav Holst and Vaughan Williams who, on occasions, would take turns in playing or conducting the choir.

The instrument started life elsewhere. It was built by the High Holborn organ builder, Henry Cephias Lincoln, in 1821 and was installed in St John's chapel, Bedford Row, London, at a cost of £500. Here it served well until one Sunday in November 1856 when the minister, with remarkable insight from the pulpit, realised that the building was in a structurally dangerous condition, and hastily evacuated the congregation. Soon after, the fittings were sold and the chapel was demolished. The organ was purchased by Thaxted church for £230, and installed in 1858. Remarkably,

although by that time it was a distinctly old-fashioned instrument, it was not modified in any way and continued in use (with minor repairs in the 1880s and in 1907) until the early 1950s when it finally succumbed to the accumulating problems of old age. Though replaced by a new organ, remarkably the old instrument was left in situ. Apart from the occasional attention of an intrepid enthusiast, it has slumbered in benign neglect in the north chapel ever since.

Recently its importance has been more widely recognised, and an appeal has been launched for £300,000 to fund its restoration. It has a fine Regency case in original condition, and the longer keyboard (with an extra seven notes at the base end) is typical of the period. Though it has a pedal keyboard of 20 notes, this is much smaller than on later instruments. Some pipes have been lost over the last century, wooden components have cracked, metal pipes have sagged and all the mechanical components are worn or clogged with dust. However it is exciting to know that we may again hear the authentic Georgian sound from such a rare survivor. Members who wish to know more, or are eager to contribute to the restoration fund, can obtain information from various websites, from which most of the information in this brief note was obtained.

Michael Leach

MUNDON CHURCH

The saga of the heroic rescue of this church by the Friends of Friendless Churches has ended. A photograph of the chancel, taken when FOFC took over responsibility for the church in 1975, showed that heave had already caused detachment of the panelling behind the altar. The primitive C18 painting on the

east wall, which depicted draped curtains around the east window, and simulated painted boards with the Creed, Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments, was in poor condition. The structural problems had become worse over the last three decades, with the upward thrust on the foundations threatening to break the back of the building. Underpinning had to be undertaken with great caution, due to the risk of precipitating collapse, but this delicate work has now been completed successfully. Also the trompe l'oeil paintings at the east end have been conserved; this work showed that though there had been some over-painting in the C19, the design was very much as originally executed in the C18.

Michael Leach

THE WARRENER'S LODGE IN 1589

The Thorndon Hall estate had been acquired by Sir John Petre in 1573 and was to become the main family residence for three centuries. A glimpse of the other end of the social order is provided by an inventory of the warrener's lodge at Thorndon, made in 1589. The warrener's job was supervising the estate rabbit warren which provided fresh meat in the winter months, as well as being a source of valuable fur. Generally warrens were enclosed by walls, fences, hedges or ditches (or any combination of these), and the duties of the warrener would have included maintaining the enclosure, possibly feeding the rabbits in the winter months, building special mounds for them to burrow into ('pillow mounds'), dealing with vermin and poachers, and catching rabbits for fur or meat when required. Dealing with poachers could be

unpleasant, as they could be armed and were usually prepared to use violence to avoid being apprehended.

The warrener's lodge at Thorndon was a modest building of two rooms and a loft. Though there were bins for fuel (which would have been logs from the estate) in the two downstairs rooms, there were no cooking utensils, so the warrener may have eaten with the servants in the hall, or lived on whatever he could roast in front of an open fire. The loft had a lockable door (with a key) and was used as the bedroom. The bed was boarded (not even the luxury of a corded base), and the bedclothes were well used, from the 'thyn' featherbed, the 'verie olde pillowe peced with manye pece', an old rug 'full of holes newed at both the ende with blew, red & yellow' and an old mat. With a few other items of bedding, a plain press for clothes and four sliding windows, this completed the inventory of the bedroom.

One of the downstairs rooms, with a 'hanging' window, had what was probably a trestle table, a bin for fuel, a boarded door without lock or key, and very little else. The second room, with a sliding window, was lockable and contained a table, an old turned chair and a four-legged stool, as well as the tools of his trade. These included a yew bow 'with one band somewhat above the hande place', five watching arrows and one bolt. The latter must have been a heavy arrow with a piercing tip, more often associated with crossbows and probably for killing vermin or large game, rather than rabbits. The purpose of the 'watching' arrows is not clear. A bill, an axe and a spade, would have been used for maintaining the warren fence or hedge, and possibly for digging out recalcitrant ferrets. There were three hayes; these were long nets which were fixed with pegs or stakes so that rabbits could be driven into them by dogs or

men. One Essex example noted by F H Emmison was 120 feet long. A dozen purse nets completed the inventory. These tubular nets would have been pegged over the burrows to catch the rabbits which had been flushed out by ferrets.

Little is known about warreners who continued to be employed on Essex estates into the early C18, after which the importance of providing rabbits on gentry estates seems to have dwindled. Essex had a few commercial warrens on the metropolitan fringe, and pillow mounds for rabbits were still being constructed in Epping Forest towards the end of the C19. However it would have been difficult to compete with the massive warrens of Suffolk and the Norfolk Brecklands, some of which survived up to the Second World War. In the long shadow of myxomatosis, it is easy to forget that there was a substantial market for rabbit meat well into the C20.

Michael Leach

Sources:

Inventory of the warrens lodge 1589: ERO D/DP E2/14

Quarter Session Rolls up to 1714: ERO Q/SR

Emmison, F. G., 1970 *Elizabethan Life and Disorder*, ECC

Rackham, O., 1986 *The History of the Countryside*, Dent

Warren, H., 1927 'Excavations in pillow mounds at High Beech' in *Essex Naturalist*, xxi

Williamson, T., 2007 *Rabbits, Warrens & Archaeology*, Tempus

DEMOLITION REFUSED

Grade II listed buildings often do not receive the protection they deserve, so it is very encouraging to report that Epping

Forest District Council has refused listed building consent for the proposed demolition of Thrift Cottage in Waltham Abbey. The applicants had argued that this C17 house had deteriorated to such an extent that it no longer had any historical or architectural value. A supporting report from an engineer contended that, in view of the structural defects, demolition and rebuilding were the best option. The report, however, failed to show why the building was considered to be beyond repair, and the owners had not put the building on the open market to see whether anyone would be interested in taking on the challenge. The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings objected strongly to the proposal on the grounds that the proposal for demolition had not been justified, and that no proper survey had been carried out by a suitably experienced surveyor. The Society believed that detailed costings should have been provided if the building was considered to be beyond economic repair.

Epping Forest District Council is to be applauded. It had already shown its teeth over the unauthorized destruction of the interior of a listed building in Ongar High Street in 2008. It is to be hoped that its example is catching!

Michael Leach

Source:

Cornerstone, vol 30, no 1, 2009

**VISIT TO LAMBOURNE
CHURCH, STAPLEFORD
TAWNEY CHURCH &
RECTORY**

This outing started in the remote rural setting of Lambourne church, externally

a plain lime-washed church of C12 (nave) and C13 (chancel) date. An enormous cedar of Lebanon in the churchyard (estimated to be 250 years old) was the first hint of the unexpected. Entering through the west door (dated 1726) and passing under the elegant gallery of 1704, there is an elegant Georgian ornamental plaster interior. A three centred chancel arch rests on boldly enriched voluted brackets, and the medieval crown post in the nave improbably bursts into florid acanthus foliage. The chancel is covered with a faintly Gothic rib vault, with an ogee surround to the round-headed east window. Tie beams are enriched with decorated plasterwork. There are numerous C18 and C19 monuments, and a good collection of hatchments. A fragment of a medieval St Christopher wall painting (discovered in 1951) has survived, as well as the upper parts of the frame of the C18 painted Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments on each side of the east window. Perhaps its remote position and the close proximity of two family mansions (one now lost) explain its remarkable escape from Victorian re-ordering. The timber framed C15/16 belfry has an unusual decorated corbel table (to take an arched brace) on its SE post, just below the gallery. The next posts west at ground level have a vertical rebate, presumably for timber panels to close off the belfry at this level, perhaps removed when the west door was inserted in 1726. The upper parts of the belfry are an intriguing mix of original and reused materials, with eclectic repairs in various materials including plywood, galvanised mild steel brackets, and a sawn beam stencilled 'PRODUCE OF MALAYSIA'. Externally lime wash on lime plaster conceals the evidence of the extensive internal alterations, though the rusticated quoins, at the junction of chancel and

nave on the south side, probably date from the 1720s improvements.

Between 1993 and 1996, the hard cement render that had covered the external walls was removed, providing an opportunity to examine the fabric. This confirmed the RCHM dating of the chancel and nave (C13 and C12 respectively). Both roofs (hidden internally by ceilings) had been replaced in the C15. The brickwork of the C18 alterations appeared to date from a number of different periods, and included some London stock brick which is unlikely to predate 1800. This evidence suggests that the improvements took place sporadically over much of the century. The parish documents shed no further light on this, though there was a dispute over the churchwardens' accounts for the building work in the 1720s and this could have stopped work for a time. A detailed report will be found in *Essex Archaeology & History*, xxviii (1997) pp.250-55

A short migration under the M25 took the party to Stapleford Tawney church where Anne Padfield gave an introduction to the church and parish. Nave and chancel date from the C13 but there must have been an earlier building. During the construction of the parish room in 1998, the base of an earlier north wall was found. There are also two C12 stone coffins which flank the south nave door. The south chapel (dedicated to St Agnes) postdates the rebuild of the main church. The function of the blind arch in its east wall is not clear, possibly an altar recess. Its roof has been much altered and has a ridge board – some of the rafters are clearly of sawn timber, and the nailed soulaces vary in size and position. The timber framed belfry of C15/16 was inserted within the body of the church but was badly damaged by fire in 1968, necessitating extensive rebuilding of the upper parts by Bakers

of Danbury. The surviving original timbers have traces of red ochre paint. An aumbrey on the north side of the altar bears the initials RN and the date 1638 – perhaps Richard Nicholson, rector from 1637 to 1643. The living was sequestered after he was charged with being a 'common drunkard'. In the colourful language of the period, he was alleged to have said to have had 'three wicked and scandalous libels against the Parliament, found in his study and (that he) did sing one of them in an alehouse'. For these offences, he was committed to Newgate prison but was eventually restored to the living in 1660. The altar rails date from the C17 and examination of their construction suggests that they originally surrounded the altar on three sides. The present appearance of the church interior dates mainly from the 1862 restoration, with a few later features; the 'Father Willis' organ of 1873, the nave ceiling of 1882 and a mosaic reredos by Salviati & Co of 1883. Most of the C19 stained glass was destroyed in World War II, though a beautifully vivid piece remains in the north chancel lancet. Externally, some of the hard cement pointing (presumably of 1862) has fallen away, and one fragment of Roman tegula was noted in the south nave wall, east of the porch with its diminutive crown post roof.

In 1754, one of the younger Smythe sons from nearby Hill Hall became rector. The living, and the glebe, was combined with that of Theydon Mount, providing a rich endowment of about 150 acres of land. This was reflected by the surviving farm buildings sited round a yard, immediately north of the old rectory – stable for riding horses, chaise house, working horse stable (with central cottage), a granary on saddlestones and an open fronted cart shed. The tithe barn (shown on C19 maps) has gone. The old rectory itself wears a C18 brick front but

the irregular spacing and size of its windows, and a C16 concertina chimney stack rising through the roof, betray its earlier origins. Very little of the timber frame is exposed internally, but the roof is of late C16 side purlin construction and, behind the brick façade, the two cross wings can be identified. The canted bay on the south side was probably added c.1820. The garden looked magnificent in the early spring sunshine.

The Society is very grateful to Rob Brooks and Anne Padfield for their enthusiastic guidance, to the owners of the Old Rectory for allowing us to enjoy their garden, and to Anne Newman and her helpers for the welcome tea which rounded off the afternoon.

Michael Leach

ROBERT THE BRUCE, KING OF SCOTLAND, AN ESSEX BOY!

I wonder how many people are aware that Robert the Bruce, king of Scotland from 1306 to 1329, victor over Edward II at Bannockburn and architect of Scottish independence, was alleged to have been born at Writtle, in Essex, on 11 July 1274. I discovered this while indexing one of the volumes of *Essex Archaeology & History*. The article in question, recently revised, was originally written by the medieval historian J.H. Round in 1920, an expert in the family history of the period.

The English possessions had come into the Bruce family via Robert's great-grandfather, also named Robert, who had married Isabel, one of the sisters and co-heirs of John le Scot, earl of Huntingdon and Chester. John le Scot's father was David, earl of Huntingdon, a younger brother of the Scottish king,

William I ('the Lion'). When John le Scot died in 1237, the English king Henry III refused to allow his Cheshire lands to be divided amongst co-heirs, and promised them other territories in compensation. Thus, in 1241, Isabel received the Essex manors of Writtle and Hatfield Broad Oak, and the half hundred of Harlow. These sizeable estates were still in the possession of the Bruce family when Sir Robert, Isabel's grandson, died in 1304. His son and heir, Robert (believed to be the thirteenth Robert in the family) had little time to enjoy his inheritance as he forfeited his English lands on being crowned as king of Scotland in 1306.

The Writtle website acknowledges the connection between Robert Bruce and Writtle, and even mentions the reputed site of his birth, Montpeliers Farm on the Margaretting road. These claims are rejected by the Bannockburn museum in Stirling, in favour of Turnberry Castle in Ayrshire as the site of the future king's birthplace (this was also part of the Bruce estates). Perhaps in the absence of further evidence there should be a twinning arrangement between Stirling and Writtle – respective local authorities take note! One intriguing thought – did Robert the Bruce have an Essex accent?

Peter B. Gunn

COLCHESTER'S 1909 PAGEANT AND COLCHESTER ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

The idea of a Colchester Pageant began in 1907 after a visit to Colchester from Sir Henry Howarth, President of The Royal Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, who in a speech said that *'the Corporation was perhaps without exception the oldest in England'*.

He also said that Colchester was "*perhaps, without exception, the oldest town in England*".

The challenge was taken up by The Mayor, Cllr William Gurney Benham, OC. and Ald William Marriage. There had previously been successful pageants at Sherborne, Warwick, Bury St Edmunds and Dover.

Benham invited the Earl of Warwick, Lord Lieutenant of Essex, to be the President; The Rt Hon James Round, a noted historian. Brig-General Robb, Commander of the Garrison, P. Shaw Jeffery, Headmaster of the Grammar School, became involved and the Colchester Town Council members gave full support.

Cllr A. M. Jarmin, and P. Shaw Jeffery, were enrolled to become authors with Gurney Benham of the book of the Pageant. The Staff, parents and scholars of CRGS were asked to become actors; together with the local Clergy and their wives and families; local firms and their employees.

On 23 September, 1907, at 3 p.m. the first meeting of the Pageant Committee members met in the Grand Jury Room in Colchester's Town Hall. There it was agreed that The Pageant House and Office would be at The Holly Trees in High Street, residence of the Round Family; the rent was agreed at £75 per quarter. A grandstand with seats at 2/6, 5/6, 7/6, 10/6 and 21/- was to be purchased from Dover at the cost of £1,200. The experienced Louis Napoleon Parker would be approached to become Pageant Master and Major E. A. Jackson would act as assistant. The poet James Rodes would be asked to write the choruses for the songs as well as the Triumphal Song.

A telephone, No 116, was installed at Holly Trees by the National Telephone Co., at the cost of £8 *with an unlimited number of calls*. Mr Rose offered the

Pageant Master a bedroom and a sitting room at 8/6 per night but the Cups Hotel in High Street offered the same terms which were accepted. Armour for the actors in Roman and Seventeenth scenes was obtained from Dover for £10. A chariot for Boadicea was bought from Gorleston for £10. The Northamptonshire Regiments band was willing to attend for £50. My own great grandmother Ellen Wilson of Clarkson and Wilson, Photographers of The Royal Studio, High Street, was appointed Official Photographer having paid £60 for this privilege.

Posters were designed by W. Gurney Benham. Coloured postcards with images of the actors were by Miss M. Irvin from St Mary's Church Rectory. Souvenirs were designed by H. Elwes and sold by Cheshire's China Shop at St Botolph's Corner.

Advance ticket sales made £6,000, which shows the interest of the public.

Rehearsals were held from 26th April, 1909 and the first dress rehearsal, to which the local schools were invited, was on Saturday, 12th June.

The Pageant was presented to the public from 21st to 26th June, 1909. The total attendance was 55-60,000 of which 5,000 per day paid for Grand Stand seats. Performances lasted from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. The Great Eastern Railway Company offered tickets at a fare and a quarter for return tickets from anywhere up to 150 miles from Colchester on production of a Pageant Ticket slip. These tickets were available from Saturday 19th June to Saturday 26th June, the last day of the performance.

The model of the Temple of Claudius was 60' by 30' and built up in "Lego" fashion by "slaves" in the sight of the audience.

Banners were used and made by Misses Bawtree and Montague, Mrs Reginald Beard and Mrs Edward J. Sanders and

Mrs R. Stanyon, mother of Miss Stanyon, a mistress in the Prep Section of the Grammar School, between 1907 and 1909. It was the first time the House Banners were on display.

Dr Salter of Tollesbury noted in his Diary, "Colchester Pageant - Wonderful but very wet". In fact there was rain every day. On Wednesday, 23rd June, Princess Louise and the Duke of Argyll attended. Despite bad weather and the London Church Pageant a profit was made of £653 9s 1d.

The Colchester Central or Blue Coat School scholars sang "Old King Coel" and the Royal Grammar School scholars sang for the very first time in public "Carmen Colcestriensis". The words were by P. Shaw Jeffery, the Headmaster, and the music by Mr Cuthbert Cronk, ARAM, the music master. Boys and girls from The Colchester High School took part in dances which their Headmaster Mr C. Harold Watkins composed.

Many members of The Old Colcestrian Society took their place among the organisers or cast.

At the end of the final day, 26th June, 1909, everyone turned to the Pageant Master's box and cried "Hail" Louis Napoleon Parker was then put into Boadicea's chariot and pulled by the Grammar School Scholars to the Town Hall for a reception.

It was not until the issue of THE COLCESTRIAN No 24 New Series in August 1909 that any mention is made to the part played by the Grammar School scholars in the Pageant. The Editorial is then full of the matter.

Opinions may differ as to the merits or demerits of Pageants in general, but that the Colchester Pageant was the one outstanding feature of the Summer Term is a position admitting of no difference of opinion whatever King Willow had

perforce to abdicate the School actually made an extra attendance in Pageant week, it is a record to be proud of, unequalled nay! unrivalled in the whole history of the revival of Pageantry.

Moreover in the arena the School made a brave show, the purple tunics and scarlet cloaks of its present boys formed a brilliant group, even amid that brilliant spectacle.

The object of Pageantry is to diffuse a knowledge of a town's peculiar past, and thereby to foster a local patriotism.

We have seen with our eyes Boadicia driving the legions of the oppressor in headlong route; we have seen OUR SCHOOL and the first Master presented to Queen Elizabeth, the Good Queen Bess, who granted the charter, and Dr William Gilbert of Colchester striking forth the spark which has transformed the world; we have seen the quixotic loyalty of Lucas and Lisle quenched in blood, and Cromwell's East Anglian Ironsides charging home whose name and honour must be kept untarnished and augmented in the future to which we, as schoolboys, belong then Colchester Pageant will not have been in vain.

John S. Appleby
Old Colcestrian

SWEARING OATHS & SIGNING PETITIONS

The Morant Lecture was given on 15 May by Professor John Walter at the Methodist Church hall at Colchester. He opened his stimulating account by reminding us that Morant had attracted both praise and blame for cutting up some of Colchester's records and pasting them into his scrap book - praise because the material might

otherwise have been lost, blame because of what he threw away. As a loyalist Anglican, he was troubled by the 'spirit of sedition and disloyalty' shown by C17 Colchester's support of Parliament. Today, the county's role in the politics of the early 1640s is seen in a very different light, and this lecture focused on the period from May 1641 and August 1642.

Charles I had governed without Parliament for 11 years, but was forced by events north of the border (and a serious lack of money) to recall Parliament in 1640. Initially this was greeted with joyous celebrations but things quickly turned sour. It was feared that the king was intending to impose a political settlement, possibly by using the army, who were still in arms in the north, to dissolve Parliament. With a Catholic wife, and an Arminian-dominated episcopacy, it was believed that he planned the imposition of the Catholic religion by stealth. There was a considerable amount of communication between London and the provinces, but with Essex in particular. There were three reasons for this a) Essex was noted for its godliness b) Essex had experienced great hardship from the disruption of continental trade (particularly cloth manufacture), a problem which only central government could put right and c) many Essex leading families were key Parliamentary supporters.

In May 1641 the Commons, with the earl of Warwick of Leez Priory as a key player, drafted the Protestation Oath to be taken by MPs to show their allegiance to 'the true reformed religion ...against all Popery and Popish innovations'. It also pledged support for the king, defended the rights of Parliament and the liberties of the individual. Most of the Lords also subscribed, and copies, official and unofficial, were widely

circulated. The enthusiasm in Essex was quite extraordinary, and copies were signed during the Sunday services in parishes led by the godly ministers of the county. Fourteen parish copies listing the signatories have survived, and they are remarkable documents. In an age when only male householders had a political identity, the Protestation was signed (or marked) not only by women, but also by young unmarried men. It is difficult now to appreciate how radical this was.

In January 1642, Charles I tried unsuccessfully to arrest the leaders of Parliament. This led to Parliament's insistence that all must subscribe to the Protestation. Unfortunately much of the material from this period was burnt in the C19 fire which destroyed Parliament, but 45 local parish lists survive for Essex. Again analysis of the signatories shows that unusually large numbers of women subscribed – 100 in Sible Hedingham, for example. Not everyone was in support, and in Radwinter the minister Richard Drake (whose living was later sequestered) did not sign. Different versions of the petition went to the king, the lords and the commons, the wording of the first two being tactfully adapted. The Essex roll was the first to be submitted and contains signatures (about 7000 in total), sometimes with short comments, were cut up, shuffled and stuck onto the document with no parish identification. Professor Walter has been trying to unravel this complex document in the House of Lords library for several years by tracing names of signatories to particular parishes. Some names are unusual enough to be linked with confidence, others (such as Silence Moulwood) have so far defied identification. When finally unravelled, this roll will provide a considerable amount of information about the inhabitants of Essex and their views in 1642.

There is other evidence of the radical views that were held in Essex, and Professor Walter gave a few examples. In August 1641, Ralph Josselin, rector and diarist of Earls Colne, had trouble with Thomas Harvey, a weaver. He entered the church, took the book of common prayer and threw it into the village pond. The next day he tried to burn it – not an obviously logical sequence, but possibly akin to a witch trial – if the book floated, it was guilty and needed to be burnt. Puritans believed that this edition of the prayer book was seriously contaminated with popery.

There were various disruptions in Radwinter where the minister, Richard Drake, had refused to sign the Petition. One of his curates was attacked, during a burial service, by several women armed with shears; their intention was to snip off his surplice which was regarded as an attribute of popery. There were several incidents at baptisms, in one of which the curate was prevented from making the sign of the cross (regarded as 'the mark of the beast') by a cloth being thrown over the infant. Much information comes from the accusations laid against Drake by his parishioners, which were recorded in his diary together with his refutations.

There was another petition, in June 1642, from the train bands which had been called to Dunmow by the earl of Warwick. This noted that the king had been 'seduced by wicked counsels' and affirmed its willingness to defend Parliament against any threat.

Morant gives an account of Sir John Lucas's attempt to leave Colchester, to join the king early on the morning of 22 August 1642. A large crowd surrounded his house at St John's Abbey, which they plundered, and 'barbarously used his mother' who was held at sword point. Lucas and his chaplain were taken off to

London as prisoners and elsewhere in the area, there was a series of attacks on Catholic families, generally known as the Stour valley riots.

It was a time of extraordinary political ferment, with Essex very much in the forefront. There was also an explosion in the number of printed publications at this time – more were published in 1642 than had been printed since the invention of moveable type, and it included pieces of polemic Royalist propaganda such as *Mercurius Rusticus*. Many contemporaries felt that the people were not to be trusted, that the rabble were a serious threat to social order, and that king and church were the only defence against chaos. Others were equally convinced that the king had been seriously misled, and that there was a real threat of the re-introduction of Catholicism and the curtailment of Parliament and English liberty. The part played by Essex in the political and religious debate which set the scene for the Civil War was extremely significant.

Michael Leach

ESSEX ELSEWHERE

As usual the Ancient Monuments Society newsletter contains brief items of interest to Essex members.

The Friends of Friendless Churches now have funding to conserve the early C13 wall paintings at Wickham Bishops church (now in use as a stained glass studio). The newsletter contains a photograph of a reconstruction of the original bold and complex geometrical design, now only faintly visible on the north wall.

AMS reports hopeful news about the Petre's cemetery chapel at Thorndon. Though it is little known and not accessible to the public, it has suffered from serious vandal damage over many

years. It is a spectacularly decorated building of 1854 by the Puginian architect, William Wardell with much carved stone, and a hammerbeam roof heavily ornamented with gilded and painted angels. Most of the stained glass has been destroyed, but recently agreement has been reached between Lord Petre, the Roman Catholic diocese and the Historic Chapels Trust for its preservation and possible re-use. This is excellent news.

Michael Leach

LOOKING FOR A GOOD HOME

There comes a time when the bibliophile with finite shelving has to grow ruthless. The Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society (2002 to 2008 inclusive) and Industrial Archaeology Review (1996 to 2008 inclusive) now need to find new homes, and will be given to anyone willing to collect from Ongar (or pay postage). Please contact Michael Leach 01277 363106 or leach1939@yahoo.co.uk

AGM AT MATCHING

The 2009 AGM took place in the magnificent Marriage Feast Room at Matching. After the conclusion of the formal business, two speakers told us about the history of Matching.

Alan Bayford spoke first about the history and landscape of the parish. Matching was large parish of 2417 acres, with a detached 1½ acres in adjoining Sheering. At Domesday there were six manors (later reduced to five), wholly or partly in the parish. Some of their boundaries are probably very ancient. Most of the manors are near the parish boundary, many would have had

their own chapels (Housham Hall's was noted in 1720). There were scattered settlements throughout the parish (named greens, ends and tyes) which were probably fully formed by the C13. Domesday arable acreage is below average, as is the amount of woodland, so there were probably common fields on the higher ground in the south of the parish. Many of the major farms scattered across the parish, and some of the smaller houses on the greens, have moats.

Sue Oosthuizen, of Cambridge University, advocates the use of contours when studying landscape history. There is an E/W watershed running across the southern half of the parish (but not forming the parish boundary) and almost all the manors are situated on the 250 foot contour line, with the arable land below. This is practical, being the spring line where the high level gravels rest on the head deposits.

Though Matching is now at the end of the road, footpaths radiate out from the church and probably represent former roads. A pond just to the north was not shown on the 1777 map, though the avoiding kink in the road is present. It is fed by an iron-rich spring, and the kink probably indicates that there was a pre-existing pond which was remade after 1777. The moat round the hall is not symmetrical and was probably fitted round the existing buildings and orchard when moat building became fashionable. Map evidence suggests that there was also a small attached green. John Hunter had commented that these attached greens were not unusual with other Essex manors. The church, as usual, adjoins the manor, but it is interesting to note that it is well adrift of an E/W orientation.

Anne Padfield then spoke about the buildings of Matching itself. The church

is the least interesting, having had a very heavy restoration (and a rebuilt chancel) by A W Blomfield in 1875. An octagonal Perpendicular font, a Jacobean pulpit, two brasses a C15 tower and the nave arcades survive.

The nearby Hall is a large farmhouse with two crosswings of varied C16/17 dates, with a central façade gable added later. At the back is a corner-to-corner addition (overlapping by a door width) which is half of a crosswing from another house, modified, re-erected and provided with a pyramidal roof. This "backhouse" would have been a combined kitchen, brewhouse and washhouse. There is a second free-standing building nearby, also with a pyramidal roof. Dating is impossible as it is plastered internally, and its original function is unknown.

The Hall has a fine collection of outbuildings, starting with an aisled barn (probably for the lay rector's tithes) of 8 bays of C16/17 date, with two wagon porches. There is a marked deterioration in the quality of the timber from one end to the other. Though the reason for this is unknown, it is not an uncommon finding in Essex. C19 shelter sheds were added to maximise manure production for use as a fertiliser – a priority on farms at that period. There is also a modest thatched stable built of re-used timber, a granary and a C18 brick dovecote.

The vicarage is probable mid C16, originally jettied but subsequently underbuilt. A diagonal dragon beam internally shows that the jetty originally ran round the side. It is a small house with basic parlour, hall and service wing, reflecting the poverty of the living. The incongruous brick crosswing, which dwarfs the timber framed building, dates from 1884, and there is a little barn for the small tithes, probably C17 in date.

The Marriage Feast Room is late medieval in date, of four bays and with a crown post roof. The two floors have separate access, though there is structural evidence that the stairs to the first floor were originally at the other end of the building, facing the church. The first floor windows are in their original position, and the shutter grooves can still be seen. There is evidence that suggests it was originally built against another building, a crosswing perhaps containing the chimney (the present chimney being a later addition). Though Morant described it as a marriage feast room, it was probably originally the hall of a guild with an upstairs meeting room, and provision downstairs for storing equipment, catering and the brewing of "church ales". In the C19 it accommodated the church clerk, and part of it was lived in until the 1970s.

After an excellent tea, members were free to explore the immediate vicinity, and to enjoy the efforts of a team of bell ringers who had fortuitously arrived.

Michael Leach

COURSES IN NAVAL & MARITIME HISTORY AT UNIVERSITY OF GREENWICH

The University of Greenwich, in the superb setting of the Old Naval College, offers a number of interesting courses on these topics, two in the autumn term and another two in the spring/early summer, for 2 hours weekly over 12 to 15 weeks. The focus is mainly on the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy from the C18 to the C20. There is also a full time or part time MA in maritime history. Further details can be found on their website at www.gre.ac.uk/gmi

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Essex County Council requires volunteers to help complete a survey of all railway lines in the County. The project aims to record all remaining architectural features along the lines and is therefore a substantial task. Any help would be appreciated.

Routes already recorded include the Flitch Way, the Saffron Walden Branch Line, the Shenfield to Southminster Line, the Woodham Ferrers to Maldon East Line and the Witham to Maldon Line.

If you would like further information, please contact Laura Belton on 01245 437613, laura.belton@essex.gov.uk

PUBLICATION & RESEARCH FUND

The Publications Development Fund was set up in 1992 to provide financial support for the Society's publications. Due to the energy and enthusiasm of its first secretary, Major Bill Hewitt, and the generosity of members of the Society, the capital raised over the first ten years exceeded Council's expectations by a considerable margin. The Fund was further augmented in 2003 by the incorporation of other funds held by the Society, and it was decided to expand the scope of the fund to provide for the possibility of making grants towards members' research projects. It was accordingly re-named the Publication & Research Fund but it is still operated in the same way, granting only the interest which is generated by the capital. It was agreed that the first call on the Fund should always be the Society's publications, and over the years only one small grant has been requested to assist in the publication of a member's research report.

Members may not be aware of the broader nature of the PRF, but it can make grants towards the cost of collaborative research projects organised by, or run in association with, the Society. It can also be made to individual members to assist research, or the publication of research, on Essex history or archaeology. Applications should be made in writing and supported by two referees. Grants may be allocated in advance, but will only be paid when the project is in corrected proof for publication (or its electronic equivalent), and will lapse after three years if not claimed. Applications should be made to the Hon Secretary of the Fund, Dr Chris Thornton at 75 Victoria Road, Maldon CM9 7HE.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE – THE CREATION OF A HISTORICAL MYTH?

Everyone knows about the angel of Scutari, the genius behind much C19 medical reform and the principal driving force behind the creation of nursing as a respectable profession. It is therefore surprising that examination of the primary sources provides a very different picture. Florence Nightingale's reputation was largely created by the press at the time of the Crimean war (she was, perhaps, the world's first 'media celebrity') and was further boosted by E. Cook's biography of her, commissioned by her family soon after her death in 1910. This was reinforced by Cecil Woodham-Smith's *Florence Nightingale*, published in 1950. This was one of the formative influences of my childhood and I vividly remember its blue cloth binding, with elegant silver lettering on the spine.

A recent article in the British Medical Journal looks more critically at her

career. She came from a very well connected family with close links to Lord Palmerston (prime minister during much of the Crimean War) and was a close friend of Sidney Herbert, who was a strong ally, as well as secretary for war. She was imbued with her class's attitude towards any who rose above their station in life and had a very poisonous relationship with army doctors, of whom nearly three quarters were Scottish or Irish, many from humble backgrounds. She took a particular dislike to 'that old smoke-dried' Dr Andrew Smith, director-general of the army medical department, whose father was a shepherd. She was bitterly scathing of Dr John Hall, principal medical officer in the Crimea, whom she incorrectly accused of having no medical qualifications (in fact, he was an FRCS by examination, unusual at that time); when he was later honoured with a KCB, she sourly observed that this stood for 'Knight of the Crimean Burial-grounds'. It is suspected that much evidence of her prejudice and her antipathies would have been found in her letters and papers, but these were destroyed later in her life, perhaps in the interests of protecting her reputation.

The press had a very considerable influence in creating her image. This was the first war that had had extensive press coverage, the first to attract war 'tourism' and the first to be recorded photographically. The press, then as now, was eager to extend its influence and to expand its readership with sensational stories, and accounts of scandals, and appears to have been largely responsible for establishing the Nightingale canon. Her recruitment by Sidney Herbert was part of the government's attempt to assuage the public criticism whipped up by the press, but her actual contribution, with only 38 nurses to help her, must have been very

thinly spread amongst the 5000 patients awaiting them. There is some evidence to suggest that she may have done more harm than good, but the image of the 'angel of Scutari' – largely a creation of the contemporary press – still has a strong hold on popular belief.

Even her proposals to reform army medical practices, as well as the training of nurses, appear to have been significantly exaggerated by the press and her adoring public. Her idea of establishing a Medical Staff Corps (mentioned in a letter to Sidney Herbert in January 1855) had already been suggested by the detested Dr Andrew Smith, and agreed by the War Office. Similarly her proposals for a medical statistical branch had been pre-empted and already put in place by Dr Smith, and her suggestion for the need of an army medical school had been recognised half a century earlier (though she did provide active support to this enterprise). As for nurses, the British army had employed women in this role from the beginning of the C19.

Though this has little to do with Essex, it has a great deal to do with the understanding and interpretation of history, as well as the need to evaluate facts critically, and to be very cautious about accepting established traditions.

Michael Leach

Source:

Williams K, 2009 "Reappraising Florence Nightingale" in *British Medical Journal* vol 337, 1461-1463

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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 2008 the projected value of the fund (including interest) stands at £48,930

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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.

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