

Essex Archaeology and History News



Winter 2009

THE ESSEX SOCIETY FOR ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

NEWSLETTER 159

WINTER 2009

CONTENTS

FROM THE PRESIDENT	1
IN SEARCH OF THE HAVERING PALACE FISHPONDS	3
THE HARLOW POTTERY INDUSTRIES – A NEW MONOGRAPH FROM THE MEDIEVAL POTTERY RESEARCH GROUP	4
PROGRAMME OF THE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, ESSEX BRANCH	5
COUNTESS OF WARWICK'S TREE HOUSE AT EASTON LODGE	5
RECOGNITION FOR ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGIST	5
HAROLD CURWEN, THE CAREFUL PRINTER (1885-1949)	6
VISIT TO HOLBROOKS AND MOUNTNESSING MILL	8
GEOFF WOOD 1941 – 2009	9
VISIT TO TIPTOFTS, WIMBISH	9
VISIT TO HADLEIGH	10
CONSERVATION AT ST ANDREW'S, HATFIELD PEVEREL	12
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED	13
BOOK REVIEW	13
A SINGING COMPETITION IN 1773	15
ROMAN SALT PRODUCTION AT STANFORD-LE HOPE	16

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COPY FOR THE NEXT ISSUE SHOULD BE SENT TO THE EDITOR AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS NO LATER THAN 12 MARCH 2010

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

Cover illustration:

The Society's coat of arms in glorious colour.

The Letters Patent, authorising the Society to use the arms, will be presented to the Society early in 2010. See 'From the President' on p1.

The arms have three upright seaxes and three crowns to represent the Saxon origin of the county. The seaxes are upright to differentiate from the county's arms.

The crest consists of a griffin, representing knowledge above and below the ground, with its dexter foreclaw holding a seax and the other clasping a Roman helmet.

The motto 'Ducit Amor Essexiae' or 'led by a love of Essex' was suggested by Chris Starr.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I announced in the Winter 2008 issue of the Newsletter that the College of Arms had consented to the Society receiving a Grant of Arms. I am delighted to announce that the process of devising “arms which are pleasing, representative and heraldically correct” has now been completed. The Letters Patent (a colourful illuminated and decorated document) authorising the Society to use the arms for posterity has been prepared bearing the seals of the three Kings of Arms (Garter, Clarenceux and Norroy and Ulster). Classical scholars may be interested to learn that the Society has adopted the motto “DUCIT AMOR ESSEXIAE”, which is not subject to heraldic jurisdiction. It is very gratifying to be able to report that Her Majesty The Queen has appointed our agent, Thomas Woodcock, as Garter Principal King of Arms (the senior Officer at the College of Arms and a position which has existed since 1415) with effect from 1st April 2010. This is a well deserved promotion for Thomas Woodcock who has very kindly offered to present the Letters Patent to the Society early in 2010. Members will receive an official invitation to a reception which it is anticipated will be a memorable occasion in our distinguished history. Unfortunately, Mr Woodcock will not be wearing his highly elaborate heraldic tabard as these can only be worn in the presence of the Sovereign!

I am delighted to be able to report that volume 39 (2008) of the *Transactions* has been produced as forecast with mailing taking place during the first week of January. I stated in the last Newsletter (Summer 2009) that this volume (the 150th) would conclude the Third Series. Since that time our Editor, Dr Chris Starr, and his Deputy, Helen Walker, have

worked at such a prolific rate that it now seems highly likely that it will prove possible to despatch the 2009 issue of *Transactions* in spring 2010. In the light of these welcomed developments a decision has been taken to conclude the Third Series with volume 40. I hope you will agree that this is a rather more convenient number! As previously reported, future issues of the *Transactions* will appear on a regular basis in the autumn of each succeeding year. It is now proposed to introduce the exciting enhancements, to which I have already alluded, for the first volume of the Fourth Series (the entitlement for 2010) which it is anticipated will appear in autumn 2011.

I am also delighted to report that our Indexer, Peter Gunn, is working at a prolific rate to the point where he has almost completed the indexing of volume 28. It is hoped that during the course of 2010 it will prove possible to produce a further Index Volume for the Third Series covering volumes 21 to 30 (1990-9).

Whilst writing, it gives me great pleasure to be able to announce that Chris Starr has been appointed Project Officer for the Manorial Document Register (M.D.R.) for Essex, a major new project to put full details of Essex manorial documents on-line. The project constitutes a partnership between the Essex Record Office, The National Archives (T.N.A.) and Royal Holloway, University of London and is part of a wider national scheme. The Manorial Documents Register, maintained by T.N.A., is the official register of manorial documents in England and Wales and is a particularly useful source of information for those wishing to research manorial history. It has been estimated that Essex possessed more than 1,200 manors with one aim of the M.D.R.

project to locate the whereabouts of every known record relating to them. On completion of the Essex project, the M.D.R. database (which is accessible on the T.N.A. website) will have particulars of the nature and location of the county's surviving manorial documents, an exciting new resource for everyone with an interest in Essex history. The main funding for the project has been provided

by the T.N.A. and The Marc Fitch Fund. The Essex Society for Family History and The East of England Regional Archives Council have also contributed. I am pleased to be able to advise that the Society has donated the sum of £500 for the purchase of a notebook pc to assist Chris Starr with the task of researching Essex manorial documents for the M.D.R. project.

Your Society is structured on the basis of three separate committees, namely Library, Publication and Programme which each meet twice per annum and report to the Council. The Library Committee normally meets in March and October at Hollytrees in Colchester to consider such issues as acquisitions, book reviews and the management of the Society's Library which is housed on permanent deposit in the Albert Sloman Library at the University of Essex. The Library is our most important and valuable asset with a conservative valuation of £100,000 placed on it in the Society's accounts.

It is hoped that it will prove possible to hold the 2011 Annual General Meeting at the University of Essex with the intention of providing members with an opportunity to see the Library and learn more about its operations from both our Hon Librarian, Dr Jane Pearson, and Nigel Cochrane, the Deputy Librarian at the Albert Sloman Library. **I should, of course, remind you that the Society's Library is ordinarily available for your use during normal opening hours. In fact, members can obtain reader tickets permitting the use or to borrow books from all parts of Essex University Library upon application to the University Librarian.**

My purpose for providing this background is two-fold. **Firstly, we are eager to recruit new members to the Library Committee and secondly, we are anxious to create a panel of individuals to whom we can call upon for the purpose of reviewing books for publication in either our *Transactions* or *Newsletter*.** Jane Pearson (Cob Cottage, The Street, Great Tey, Colchester, Essex CO6 1JS drjanepearson@hotmail.com) or I (Lowe Hill House, Stratford St Mary, Suffolk CO7 6JX martinstuchfield@btconnect.com) would be delighted to hear from you if either of these areas are of interest.

H. Martin Stuchfield

IN SEARCH OF THE HAVERING PALACE FISHPONDS

Havering was a royal manor before the Conquest and, after passing through the hands of many royal consorts and subsequent tenancies, was finally sold by the crown in 1828. The park was divided during the Commonwealth and remained in divided occupation after the Restoration. Though James I had used the palace as a hunting lodge, by 1650 it was described as a 'confused heap of old, ruinous, decayed buildings'. Some repairs were done by its tenant after the Restoration (it was assessed for 58 hearths in 1670) but, by 1719, it was in ruins and uninhabitable. By the beginning of the C19, nothing remained, and an Italianate mansion was built on its site in the middle of the century. This in turn was demolished in 1925 and the gardens to the west were divided up and sold off as plotlands. The C19 stables and lodge, part of the wall of the vegetable garden, a stuccoed terrace retaining wall and a gate pier, and a still impressive Wellingtonia avenue from this period have survived within the present country park. The site, high on the angle of an 'L' shaped ridge, has spectacular views to south, west and north – that to the south now being fortunately screened by trees from the Romford conurbation.

In the early Middle Ages there were three royal fishponds in Essex – Newport, Writtle and Havering. The last appears to have been the most important. 3000 pike were ordered for restocking in 1245-51 and 400 bream were despatched to the royal households in London during the same period. Pike and bream were a popular mix, as the former reduced the prolific numbers of fry from the latter, enabling decent-sized

bream to be produced. There are records of gifts of smaller numbers of bream to the bishop of London and others. In 1260-67 the keeper was ordered to repair 'the pond outside the manor, the stew within the gate and the wall of the manor'. The stew would have been a small pond near the palace kitchens for short-term storage of fish destined for the table, but there must have been a substantial pond or ponds elsewhere with access to running water, essential for the breeding and fattening of substantial numbers of fish. The nearest possible site within the park would have been in the valley of the River Rom, over a mile away.

Fish were easily stolen and Oliver Rackham maintains that, for reasons of security, medieval fishponds were always near a dwelling. A map of the Liberty of Havering made in about 1618 shows, within the park, 'the greate poole' on the River Rom adjoining the Great Lodge. Further upstream, but still within the park, is the moated site of Little Lodge. There is also 'the newe pond' on an eastern tributary of the Rom but this has no building nearby. Neither lodge has survived but the modern map shows two areas of woodland, Roseberry Wood North and Roseberry Wood South which are approximately in the position of the moat and the 'greate poole' respectively. Roseberry Wood North is triangular in shape with the Rom running along the east edge on a gravelly bed. The wood slopes slightly upwards towards the west, making it an unlikely site for a pond, though a moat might have been possible. However, apart from a narrow east-west drainage ditch near its southern end, and what looked like the former line of the river bed near the present stream at the north end, there were no signs of embankments or moats within the woodland. The nearby Park Farm was built about 1869 as a model

dairy farm to supply the London milk market, so it is possible that any remains of Little Lodge and its moat were destroyed at that time.

Roseberry Wood South is roughly square, and the Rom takes a dead straight line diagonally across it, suggestive of a diversionary or re-cut channel. The river has been supplemented by a tributary and has a significantly greater flow than at Park Farm. There are several high earth banks at the edge of the wood at the southern end, but most are steep and regular, with scanty vegetation, and look to be of recent construction for farming or horse livery purposes. Some are surprisingly high, and could be on top of an older bank. Within the wood, near the southwest corner, is a short length of substantial bank of much more slumped form, and more mature appearance. The line of the river is 50 feet to the east but, as already noted, this might be a diversionary channel to take off surplus water, an essential protection for fishponds. There is a wet area on the western edge of the wood which may be part of the former channel leading to this old embankment, so there is a possibility that this is a remnant of the 'greate poole'. However a considerable amount of earthmoving has taken place relatively recently and it is difficult to be sure. The nearby buildings, marked as Lower Park Farm, are now used for light industrial purposes, and the farm house, perhaps the site of Little Lodge, no longer exists. To the south are the flat valley bottom and the urban fringes of Collier Row.

Michael Leach

Sources:

Powell WR (ed.), 1978 *Victoria County History of Essex*, volume vii
 Pevsner N et al., 2005 *Buildings of England: London 5: East*, Yale UP

Rackham O, 1993 *The History of the Countryside*, Dent

OS Pathfinder map 1:25,000 (1976, from surveys dated 1954-73)

THE HARLOW POTTERY INDUSTRIES – A NEW MONOGRAPH FROM THE MEDIEVAL POTTERY RESEARCH GROUP

A study of the Harlow pottery industry (centred on the appropriately named Potter Street) has been long awaited. This industry was active between the C13 and C18, though it is the C17 wares that are best known, particularly Metropolitan slipware which found its way as far afield as the North American colonies. The kilns and their products have been researched, recorded and collected by dedicated enthusiasts since the 1950s, in particular by Wally Davey. This new monograph is compiled in collaboration with Helen Walker, the pottery expert at the ECC Field Archaeology Unit at Braintree. It classifies four groups of Metropolitan slipware to assist identification and dating of finds from excavations. There are also other sections on earlier products, as well as the technology and organisation of the Harlow potteries. This important monograph will be reviewed in *Essex Archaeology & History* in due course.

Meanwhile copies may be obtained from Lyn Blackmore, Museum of London Archaeology, Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7ED or www.medievalpottery.org.uk/occpap3.htm through www.medievalpottery.org.uk/occpap3.htm It is in A4 format, has 198 pages and costs £16 including p&p.

PROGRAMME OF THE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, ESSEX BRANCH

Meetings are held at The Link, Trinity Methodist Church, Chelmsford and are open to visitors and prospective members. A donation of £2 is requested.

Saturday, January 9 at 2.30pm: Anne Curry, professor of history at Southampton University and president of Historical Association, "Women and work in the Middle Ages"

Saturday 6 February at 2.30pm: Dr Colin Haydon of University College, Winchester, "Robespierre"

Saturday 6 March at 2.30pm: Prof Hugh Brogan of Essex University, "Tammany Hall, the historical implications"

Saturday 10 April at 2.30pm: Dr Bob Bushaway of Birmingham University, "1830-33: Captain Swing and the rising of agricultural labourers in southern England, and Sam Sharpe and the largest British slave revolt in Montego Bay, Jamaica: free and slave labour – a case of mistaken identity"

Friday 14 May at 7.30pm: Dr Herbert Eiden of the Victoria County History of Essex, "The hurlyng time: the Peasants' Revolt of 1381"

COUNTESS OF WARWICK'S TREE HOUSE AT EASTON LODGE

Those familiar with the gardens at Easton Lodge may remember that the Countess of Warwick commissioned the architect, Harold Peto, to design a rustic thatched tree house as a suitable place for adults to partake of afternoon tea. Not surprisingly, with the decline and post-war demolition of the mansion itself,

the tree house fell into serious decay and, about 20 years ago, all that remained was the twisted frame of one wall perilously perched in the dead oak tree. However a professional enthusiast for timber-framed buildings was intrigued by the possibility of restoration and discovered much of the rest of the frame stacked on the ground nearby, covered in moss but in remarkably good condition. Surprisingly the original carpenter's assembly marks were still legible on the bottom tenons of the posts, as well as on the corresponding cill mortises, and it was relatively easy to assemble two of the original six walls. These, together with one surviving roof rafter, contemporary photos and Peto's original sketch, provide enough information for a complete restoration. Realisation of this will depend on finding funds, but in the meantime the partially assembled tree house has found safe and secure shelter in a barn on the Writtle College campus. The prospect of its ultimate restoration is eagerly awaited, though much will depend on resolving the problems which have led to the regrettable closure of Easton Lodge gardens.

Michael Leach

Source:

Cornerstone (the magazine of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings) xxx, no:2, 2009.

RECOGNITION FOR ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGIST

The name Tony Wilkinson will be familiar to members of the Society for the contribution that he has made to the archaeological study of Essex. Following many years on the staff at the University of Chicago he recently

returned to Britain and is now professor of Archaeology at Durham University. Two years ago he was elected a fellow of the British Academy and now the Academy has recognised his contribution to landscape archaeology by awarding him one of the medals which it gives for academic excellence in the humanities and social sciences to reward those who make an outstanding contribution or achievement in their particular field of research. At the award ceremony on 30th September 2009 Tony received the John Coles Medal for Landscape Archaeology which is given for "distinguished achievements, by any scholar based in Britain and Ireland, in landscape archaeology in any part of the world and in any period". The explanation for the reward was as follows:

"Tony Wilkinson has carried out over many years fundamental and innovative research on landscapes, including dry lands and submerged landscapes. His work ranges from temperate Europe to the arid zones of the Near and Middle East. In the UK, he investigated a submerged landscape on the Essex coast and related it to long-term trends in sea level change. In Iran, he demonstrated that the Gorgan wall of baked brick was constructed in conjunction with major water supply systems, and cut through a heavily populated landscape. In Syria, he illustrated the fundamental landscape changes that took place between the city states of the Syrian Bronze Age and the territorial empires of the Iron Age and later. He has shown how early cities co-evolved in an intimate relationship with their environment, involving the aggregation of smaller household units. His recent book *Archaeological Landscapes of the Near East*, (University of Arizona Press, 2003) won several major prizes. He has set the agenda for

landscape studies in archaeology, setting the highest standards of practice, indicating the many outstanding problems, and pointing the way for future work."

His contributions to Essex archaeology include a review of the development of the landscape of South Essex based upon rescue excavations in advance of new road construction (Wilkinson 1988) and the fieldwork referred to above carried out on the Essex coast which was designed to investigate its evolution since the end of the Ice Age (Wilkinson and Murphy 1995): Wilkinson et al forthcoming).

David Buckley

Wilkinson T. J., 1988, "Archaeology and Environment in South Essex: Rescue Archaeology along the Grays By-pass, 1979/80" *East Anglian Archaeology* No 42

Wilkinson T.J., and Murphy P.L., 1995 "The Archaeology of the Essex Coast, Volume 1: The Hullbridge Survey" *East Anglian Archaeology* No 71

Wilkinson T. J., et al Forthcoming "The Archaeology of the Essex Coast Volume II" *East Anglian Archaeology* No xx

HAROLD CURWEN, THE CAREFUL PRINTER (1885-1949)

On 27 March 1973, members of the Double Crown Club were addressed after their dinner by Herbert Simon of Chipping Ongar. His speech was later published as a booklet in a limited edition of 120 copies and was, most appropriately, printed by the Curwen Press of Plaistow (formerly in Essex, in the extreme south west corner of the historic county).

In 1863, Harold's father, founded the Plaistow printing works (later J Curwen & Sons Ltd) to print music. A former Congregational minister, he had devised (from other systems) the Tonic Sol-Fa system for teaching singing to amateur church choirs. He was an unconventional man, an admirer of William Morris, and a believer that happiness came from the production of good and useful work. Harold himself was born in 1885 in the family home of Upton House, Loughton (which had been the birthplace of Joseph Lister) and in due course was sent to the New School at Abbotsholme, a pioneer public school where the teaching of handicrafts went hand in hand with the more usual subjects. Here he excelled in metalwork and furniture making, and was introduced to the Arts and Crafts movement. After a brief spell with his father's firm as an unpaid assistant, he worked for a year for a music printer in Leipzig, after which he returned home and attended Edward Johnston's classes at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London. Johnston was a fine printer, and subsequently the designer of the sans serif typeface still used on the London Underground. He brought an almost religious zeal to printing, sharing the Arts and Crafts view that making beautiful things would improve both individuals and society, and would make England a better place to live in.

Harold worked full time at Plaistow from 1908 and was made a director in 1911. He brought Johnston's zeal to the works, encouraging the staff to take an interest in good design, and generally to improve standards of typography. He was influenced by Emery Walker (who had assisted William Morris at the Kelmscott Press) and was an expert in the technique of spacing. Much printing at that time was disfigured by 'rivers', serpentine white spaces snaking down

the page between the type. This could be overcome by careful adjustment of the spacing between letters, but these skills took some time to master and the Curwen Press did not entirely avoid 'rivers' until the early 1920s.

The firm had a wide range of badly designed typefaces of poor legibility. The First World War brought an unexpected bonus – due to the scarcity of metal, the Ministry of Munitions were willing to buy any unwanted type metal, and Harold persuaded his co-directors to dispose of large amounts of the old stuff, and to replace them with a limited range of well designed types such as Caslon and Garamond. Not all their customers were pleased with the result. One of their best clients, the West Ham Corporation Tramways, was furious to find their accounts sheets clearly and legibly laid out in Caslon Old Face without due notice, and promptly took their custom elsewhere. The war also solved another of Harold's problems. The firm's traveller, who brought in all kinds of unwanted work such as boot polish labels and Jeyes Fluid posters, joined the Royal Naval Reserve and, after war service, emigrated to Australia.

Harold brought an infectious enthusiasm to his work, and his promotional material must have startled his more conventional clients. One of these stated 'It is a great pleasure to arrange fine type, and still finer artistry, to convey the spirit of your message. And work that is a pleasure is usually a success. Will you allow me to arrange and execute your printing at the Curwen Press, Plaistow, E13?' Another leaflet must have been even more surprising to East London manufacturers. Headed with an image of a boy and girl dancing wildly, the text exhorted clients to 'Get the Spirit of Joy into your printed things. The World's dead tired of drabness in Business Life. Give your customers credit for a sense

of humour and some understanding. Take courage in both hands and have your printing done cheerfully. I arrange and make courageous printing at the Curwen Press.' Even today, such an approach would have the ability to astonish! His enthusiasm also extended to the design of new typefaces – a sans serif (some years before Johnston's Underground Sans) and a particularly beautiful poster type, cut in wood and patented in 1919.

In the second quarter of the C20 the Curwen Press established a formidable reputation in the world of fine printing, entirely due to Harold's drive and vision, and it deserves to be much better known. It had a strong influence in pushing up the standards of printing throughout the industry. Harold retired in 1940 to the West Country, having lived for most of his working life in Loughton. In the 1970s the Curwen Press abandoned letterpress, and moved to Cambridgeshire to specialise in the production of high quality prints.

Michael Leach

Source:

Simon, H., 1973 Harold Curwen, the Careful Printer, The Curwen Press

VISIT TO HOLBROOKS AND MOUNTNESSING MILL

On July 4 members visited this interesting house not far from the mill. Brenda and Elphin Watkin explained that its unexceptionable external appearance belies much of interest within. Originally it faced east onto what is now a short drive which dwindles into a public footpath running north/south down a shallow valley. The present building is the service crosswing of a vanished hall

house which would have had a second crosswing at its southern end. There is internal evidence of a garderobe stack attached to the north side, accessed by a narrow and low-headed doorway on the first floor. There is also another unusual feature, a room under the jetty on the east side of the present building, originally with no access from inside the house. It had an external doorway in the north wall, opening near the lane. It is unlikely that this was a shop in such a rural location, but it must have had some special and clearly defined function. Nothing is known of the early history of the house but it, and its surrounding land, were not tithe-free so it would appear that it was not owned by the nearby Thoby Priory in the medieval period.

Internally, the removed partition between the two service rooms is marked by a line of mortice holes in the underside of one of the large cross beams, and slots for wattle housing in the upright posts. Part of one of the four centred arched doorways into the lost hall, as well as the opening of the other door, is visible. There was a third door from the hall, to provide access to the original staircase leading to two upper chambers. The square section ceiling joists have central tenons, dating the construction to about 1400. Most rooms have evidence of the window shutter grooves (some partly filled in) with mortices for substantial diamond mullions.

Upstairs the position of the window in the west chamber shows that the hall would have been of single story height which is usual for Essex (unlike neighbouring Kent or Suffolk). The crown post roof has substantial foot braces, and was originally open above the tie beams. There are also axial braces to the crown post.

The party then moved on to Mountnessing windmill for an informative

and entertaining guided talk by Geoff Wood who looks after the other mills in the care of Essex County Council. In 1850 almost every Essex parish had its own water or windmill, but exactly a century later the last windmill in the county ceased working after a fatal accident to its miller. The trade was arduous and hazardous, and constant vigilance was required to avoid potential disaster to the mill, including the need to keep it facing into the wind at all times. At Mountnessing this had to be done by lifting the access ladder off the ground, and manually rotating the entire mill on bearings which were liberally greased with tallow. The mill, which is in working order, was a joy to see with everything neat and tidy, and in good order. After doing some real milling, though, it takes several days to clean up – “Dusty” was an apt soubriquet for the miller!

One of Ann Newman's excellent teas followed. The Society is ever grateful to her and her helpers, as well as (on this occasion) to Geoff Wood, Brenda and Elphin Watkin, and to the owners of Holbrooks for allowing us to look all over their house.

Michael Leach

GEOFF WOOD 1941 – 2009

It is with deep sadness that I write of the death of Geoff Wood, Essex County Council's Mills Support Officer. Geoff joined the County Council Mills team in 2001 and with his antecedents being millers he had a wealth of knowledge and experience which he endeavoured to pass on to all who met him. His enthusiasm and sense of humour will be much missed by all who worked with him and those who had the pleasure of meeting him on a visit to a mill.

Sally Gale

VISIT TO TIPTOFTS, WIMBISH

On 15 August 2009, members visited this exceptionally interesting house on a perfect summer's day. Tiptofts is a timber-framed manor house with aisled hall and two cross-wings, and is on a moated site, the moat surviving on all four sides. The southern cross-wing has been tree-ring dated to 1287-1329, and the hall's west spere post has given a similar date. This is the earliest dated English house of its type.

Much of the aisled hall survives, including the west aisle and the head of a fourteenth century window. The hall is open to the roof, with a hammerbeam centre truss and moulded spere posts. Originally there was a hearth in the centre of the hall, the smoke escaping through a barrel type louver. A brick chimney was inserted in the sixteenth century. One of the three doors into the service wing (the southern cross-wing) survives; traces remain of the other two. At the dais end of the hall, the line of an oriel window can be seen on the exterior. The southern cross-wing was built by a different carpenter, with widely spaced timbers, infilled with planks rather than with wattle and daub. Extensions were made in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries which conceal much of the medieval front of the house.

The decoration in the hall on the aisle piers, crown posts and spere posts indicate that the house was intended to impress the local gentry. It is not known who was responsible for the building. At some point, it was in the hands of Sir John de Wauton (d.1347) who was a knight of the shire for Essex in the parliaments of 1330 and 1341, served as sheriff in 1330-2, and at other times acted as a commissioner of array and keeper of the peace. He fought as a

member of Earl William de Bohun's retinue early in the Hundred Years' War, was at the battle of Crécy, and died at the siege of Calais in 1347. His funeral took place at Wimbish church where his brass can still be seen.

After looking at the nineteenth century barns, we went on to Radwinter, and after tea, provided by the Radwinter Women's Institute, looked at the church. Much of it was restored and rebuilt in the second half of the nineteenth century, with several High Church features. The central part of the reredos, originally carved in Brussels in about 1510, was purchased by the rector in 1888. It depicts scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary, and sets her life in the midst of fifteenth century people.

The afternoon was extremely interesting and varied. Many thanks to John Walker for guiding us at Tiptofts, and to Ann Newman and Pat Ryan who organised the visit.

Jennifer Ward

VISIT TO HADLEIGH

Members of the Society visited Hadleigh on 19 September 2009 in a perfect early autumn weather, meeting at the reconstructed Iron Age roundhouse in the country park. It was closely based on the building excavated by Paul Drury in the 1970s at Little Waltham, modified slightly to meet modern requirements (a second door for a fire escape, for example, and a wider porch for practical reasons).

Gary King described the reconstruction. The timber came from ECC country parks (apart from the chestnut from Norsesey Woods, Billericay) and the thatch from Great Yarmouth. Setting out was done with rope anchored to a central peg, and the six posts of the inner ring were erected. The post holes for these

were three feet deep to ensure stability during construction. The bridging pieces across the top of these posts were notched to get a better fit, and then secured to the tops of the posts with seasoned 2" oak pins, driven into the posts to a depth of 18 – 24". Then the outer ring was marked out, and the frame of the porch constructed.

The next stage was the erection of the posts of the outer ring, and weaving of green hazel rods between. The wallplate was fixed to the top of these posts with oak pins. Having a stable outer wall, the roof timbers (at 45° pitch) could be put in place, lifted by machine and lashed into position with rope, and pegged to the wall plate. Considerable physical strength would have been required to do this manually. The rafters, being slightly irregular, had to be jiggled into position to get the best fit over the wall plate and bridging pieces to meet neatly at the apex. A woven hazel ring was made up on the ground between pegs, and then roped into position half way between the bridging pieces and the apex to give greater stability.

Daubing the outer wall came next. Suitable clay needs to be exposed for several months to make it workable, and as this was impractical, ready-mixed daub, containing small amounts of chopped straw and sand, was bought in – 22 tons of it, at about £100 a ton. For health reasons, dung was not added. The daub was made into balls and hurled the wattle wall, and this required a team of one thrower and three ball makers each side.

Fixing the hazel rod battens across the rafters proved tricky, as the lashings tended to work loose, allowing the battens to slip down. This was solved by screwing the battens into position, though lashings were used as well, consuming about 1½ miles of rope! Half a mile had already been used, a

reminder that adequate supplies of rope would have been essential (probably originally made from retted lime tree bark). Finally the roof was thatched professionally, using about 5 tons of Norfolk reed. This was chosen as being more durable and more fire resistant than straw, and was expected to last at least 30 years.

The kitchen area was placed inside the door on the left, the traditional place in round houses throughout the world. A central fire pit was deemed unsafe, so a raised hearth was formed from left-over daub in a timber box, and is now as hard as brick. No smoke hole was provided as it is thought that a hole in the thatch would have made that part of the roof vulnerable to sparks from the fire, and to weather. High levels of smoke would have fumigated the thatch and assisted its preservation. Perhaps burning dry seasoned wood might have made conditions a little more tolerable for the occupants.

The party then moved on to Hadleigh castle. David Andrews briefly outlined its history, Susan Westlake from English Heritage described recent work on the surrounding landscape (potentially threatened by the construction of a cycle track for the 2012 Olympics), and Ken Newman outlined the reasons for the geological instability of the site. Deep cracks in the approach path had already hinted at the unstable nature of the ground on which we stood. Hubert de Burgh was granted the land in 1215, and it seems likely that the castle was largely complete when a licence to crenellate was granted in 1230. The castle, characterised by square towers, was acquired by the crown in 1239, and Edward II made internal improvements in 1311-1312.

Edward III, in a period of peace and considerable affluence, undertook major reconstruction between 1360 and 1370,

with round and 'D' shaped towers. This building was largely for spectacle and for the display of power, rather than for defence, and was matched by a similar (but now lost) castle on the other side of the Thames at Queenborough. Unlike the latter, Hadleigh is asymmetrical, probably due to the difficult topography of its site. The east entrance was blocked, and a new barbican formed on the north side. The castle mill and wharf (with a sunk boat full of Kentish ragstone) had been identified, on the now drained marsh near the railway line. It is not clear if the mill was powered by the nearby stream, or by the tide. There were royal hunting parks at Thundersley, Rayleigh and immediately adjoining the castle itself. No pales survive for Hadleigh park, but Park Farm, on high ground, has been suggested as the site of the park lodge. The stream, running diagonally north-west/south-east through the park, was found to have three dams along its length. Map evidence shows that one is of C19 date, the other two may be medieval fishponds. The dry valley running to the west of the castle was probably formed by human activity (a road from Hadleigh to the quay, deepened by natural erosion) rather than by a stream. It is marked as Castle Lane on a late C19 map. The extensive excavations and tramways of the brickworks were further to the west, and do not appear to have intruded on this valley.

In 1552 Edward VI sold the castle to Richard Rich and large scale demolition followed (some of the stone may have been used to build his mansion at Rochford Hall). During the C17 and C18 the cliff face below the castle became well vegetated but, though the south wall was still in place in 1863, the 'D' shaped tower on this side had already toppled. Between 1890 and 1895 there was a major landslip which carried away the

entire south side of the castle ruins. Another slip between 1930 and 1955 split and tilted part of the north-east tower. Construction of a counterweight berm in 1965 failed to stop a further partial collapse of this tower. There was a further slip on the west side under heavy snow in 1969. Spoil from the 1971/2 excavations inside the castle, dumped on the true rear scarp to the north, caused further slippage in 1975. In 1973 vegetation was removed from the south slope by bulldozer and, within two years, there was further movement along the line of the 1890s landslide. There were further slips on the south slope, and on the west side, in 2001/2. It is clear that the castle site is being slowly disembowelled from the south, and that it will only be a matter of time before the south-east tower collapses down the slope.

The reasons for this progressive instability are complex. The hill on which the castle stands is London Clay, dipping about 1° to the south, and containing small amounts of altered volcanic ash liable to expansion and contraction during wet and dry periods. Movement of the River Thames and changes in climate and sea level in geological time have caused erosion and slipping of the cliff. However it seems that the cliff has remained relatively stable from about 2000 years ago until the mid C19. There is no simple or single explanation for the 1890s slip, but probable factors are a) natural weathering of London clay on slopes, which decreases stability b) creep on the steep face of the slope at 17-20° (fully stable at no more than 8°) c) some unrecorded event at the base of the slope d) cool wet weather in the 1890s lubricating and destabilising the upper slope e) an extreme local event, such as the 1884 Essex earthquake, floods in the 1880s and 1890s, and vibration from explosions, or low

atmospheric pressure, or tidal bounce in the nearby estuary f) human disturbance, such as the nearby Salvation Army brickworks in the late C19 and g) clearance of vegetation from the slope in the latter part of the C19.

It is clear that little can be done to prevent the eventual loss of the south-east tower.

Michael Leach (with many thanks to Ken Newman)

Source

Hutchinson, J.N. & Gostelow, T.P., 1976 P.T.R.S.L. series A 283, pp.557-604

Ryan, P., 1999 *Brick in Essex: a Gazetteer of Sites*, Pat Ryan

CONSERVATION AT ST ANDREW'S, HATFIELD PEVEREL

The complex conservation of the west nave doorway of this church has recently been completed by Bakers Conservation of Danbury, and achieved national distinction as runner-up in the SPAB John Betjeman Award 2009. The Norman door arch had been built with alternating blocks of Caen and Reigate stone, with clunch columns and imposts below. Bath and Ancaster stone had been used for subsequent repairs. The principal problem was in the arch where the Reigate stone had decayed far more than the adjoining blocks of Caen stone, with almost total loss of the chevron pattern in places. Problems had been exacerbated by the use of a cement-based mortar for pointing the doorway, as well as the surrounding rubble walls, causing damage from water retention and efflorescence of dissolved salts.

As the contrast between the mouldings on the alternating stones used in the arch was so severe, it was decided to

build up the eroded detail using a colour-matched lime mortar over a fine stainless steel armature. This was then tool-finished to match the worked stone, and given an appropriately coloured shelter coat of lime wash (which will need to be repeated every few years). Loose cement mortar was removed, but the sound areas were left to avoid damage by hacking out this hard material. The end result, which belies the considerable skill which went into this repair, is of a naturally weathered doorway, without the previous sharp contrast between the severely weathered Reigate and the sharp detailing on the Caen stones of the arch voussoirs.

Michael Leach

Source:

Cornerstone (the magazine of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings) xxx, no:3 (2009)

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Essex County Council requires volunteers to help with a survey of railway architecture. Volunteers are especially needed for the south west, north east and central areas of the county. Please contact Laura Belton on 01245 437613, laura.belton@essex.gov.uk.

BOOK REVIEW

Havering Village, Ardleigh Green and The Harolds: a Pictorial History, Chris Saltmarsh and Norma Jennings, Phillimore, 2009, ISBN 1860775527, pp120, Illustrated and Indexed, £16.99
Books consisting of old photographs of particular localities have multiplied greatly over the last two decades, driven

by a curiosity about the past as seen through the lens of the camera. This well-presented hardback is a sequel to *From Havering to Harold Wood* which was published about 15 years ago, which stimulated the offers of previously unknown photographs and led to this publication. This in itself is a useful function of such books and one hopes (possibly over-optimistically) that the better images will find a permanent home in a local library or record office, as the reproductions suffer an inevitable loss of quality. This book has a useful and thoughtful introduction, covering the social history and development of the area in the C20. It includes some non-photographic illustrations, such as maps, which are very welcome, but also some rather odd choices, such as a Great Eastern Railway parcel label. The photographs vary considerably in quality and, while appreciating the need to appeal to local purchasers, one feels that there are too many stiffly posed and amateurish group photos. Not unexpectedly, the skilled photographer stands out, and those of the magnificent Mr Bell of Leigh-on-Sea (usually with his trade-mark 1930s box saloon parked in view) deserve a volume of their own. To its credit, the book does have an index though it is an inconsistent one, lacking (for example) an entry for railways while having group entries for churches, clubs, parks and so on. Neither is the splendid Mr Bell included. However this book will have a strong appeal to those familiar with the area.

Rayleigh in 1809, Noel Beer, HTR Publications, 2009, pp52.

This latest booklet from the fluent pen of Noel Beer recreates the distant world of Rayleigh in 1809. After a succinct village topography, he begins with the nation's war with France and the effects it had on Rayleigh to supply troops and to man the

militia; on the profits of grain farmers and the lot of the poor. This leads to a discussion of the work of parish officials, making good use of surviving parish records: churchwardens, overseers of the poor and the pressing issue of the poor house, as poor rates rose and poverty increased. The four constables were busy people with the increased movement of people during the war. Thence to the work of surveyors, the difficult job of road maintenance, helped by the spread of Essex turnpikes. Two inns housed overnight travellers. Coaches, carriers' carts and slow wagons made London in a day. Rayleigh was not quite at the end of the world. And their children went to school. There was a Church school, a Baptist school and a Sunday School. Of those married in Rayleigh in 1809 39% signed their name.

In 1809 Rayleigh (and the nation) celebrated the Jubilee of George III. Military displays, a church parade, feasts (with toasts) and fireworks, for which 'the poor of the parish appeared to outvie each other in gratitude.'

Two useful appendices cover the work of the Manor Court and the details of the 1809 rate books.

As ever, this is a good read and a must for all Rayleigh citizens.

The guide to Suffolk churches, D.P. Mortlock, Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2009, ISBN 0718830762, pp607, Illustrated and Indexed, £30

For Essex buildings, we are fortunate to have James Bettley's new edition of Pevsner. On the subject specifically of churches, we have the benefit too of older publications, not least John Fitch's 1996 *Select guide* published by the Friends of Essex Churches. We await, however, an enterprise on the scale of D.P. Mortlock's *Guide to Suffolk churches*. (Suffolk, it should be noted,

has about 100 more medieval churches than Essex). This book contains what was originally a three volume work published from 1988-92 in a single volume, which has been revised to include, *inter alia*, more information on bells. One change the author notes that has occurred in the intervening time is the way churches have increasingly become community buildings, provided with kitchens and toilets to service what Private Eye has called the 'rite of coffee' and some clergy the 'ministry of catering'. A change he does not comment upon, one which will frustrate users of his book, is the growing number of churches which are kept locked and without information on where to obtain a key.

Mortlock describes himself as 'an enthusiast rather than an expert'. Enthusiasm makes the text a lively read, and as to not being an expert, that is false modesty. True, a crown post may be described as a king post, but the author's knowledge of churches and local history is profound. Each church entry is a comprehensive vignette, a model of observation and a miniature guide book in its own right, covering everything from its setting to architectural features to woodwork, glass and monuments. Mortlock is keen on monuments, and often quotes the more interesting and curious verse epitaphs. The only limit to the scope of the book is that it is confined to Anglican churches. There are brief notes on the styles of architecture, and a combined glossary and index provides further technical explanation and also makes it possible to search for architects and artists. But in a book of this length, an introductory overview would have been welcome, as would a bibliography to point to where that information might be found, such as the excellent old one published by the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust, or the

work of Munro Cautley, or the books by Birkin Haward on Suffolk roofs and arcades.

Michael Leach, Andrew Phillips and David Andrews

A SINGING COMPETITION IN 1773

On 6 November 1772 an advance notice appeared in the *Chelmsford Chronicle*: 'To all LOVERS of MUSIC. AT Mr. WILLIAM KIRKHAM'S, at the Sign of the *Horse and Jockey*, on WARLEY COMMON, near Brentwood, Essex, on THURSDAY in *Whitsun-Week*, 1773, will be GIVEN GRATIS a fine large CHINA PUNCH BOWN and SILVER PUNCH LADLE, to be sung for by any Company of Singers in this County, each Company to sing three Songs in two Parts, and three Catches, in three Parts; the Catches to be sung out of Mr. ARNOLD'S *Catch Club Harmony*; Sold by Messrs. Longman, Lukey and Co. No. 26, Cheapside, and by Messrs. Hawes, Crowder, and Buckland, in Pater-noster Row, London; also by Messrs. Clachar and Frost, and Miss Hassall, Booksellers, in Chelmsford. A good Ordinary will be provided, and Dinner upon Table at One o'Clock precisely; the Singing to begin at Two, and to be decided by three proper Judges of Music; After which will be a CONCERT of *Vocal and Instrumental Music*, by some Gentlemen Performers.'

Thursday in Whit Week was a holiday in this part of Essex and in 1773 it fell on 3 June. Expanded descriptions of the competition were in the *Chelmsford Chronicle* and the *Ipswich Journal* in May. Each choir was to have at least six singers, dinner was to cost 2s. 6d and 'half a Dozen Drinking Glasses, Ornamented with Musical Trophies' had

been added to the prize. Choirs now had to choose only two of their three catches from *Catch Club Harmony*, but two of their songs were to be from the first and second volumes of Arnold's *Essex Harmony*. 'Great variety of Singing by several Country Choirs' was to be heard afterwards, in addition to the music by gentlemen performers. It seems likely that each choir limited itself to its six best singers for the competition, but all members got a chance to sing later in the day.

John Arnold (1720-1792) lived all his life in Great Warley, near Brentwood, where he was a gentleman farmer, a member of the vestry from the age of 21 and a church warden for many years. The *Horse and Jockey* was re-named the *Horse and Groom* when there were no longer annual race meetings on Warley Common. It lay just outside the parish boundary, on the road to Brentwood, and presumably had better accommodation for the competition than Great Warley's two public houses, the *Thatchers Arms* and the *Magpie* (now the *Headley*).

Arnold is generally described as a psalmist, because of his very successful compilation *The Complete Psalmist*, which included tunes for all 150 psalms, some composed by himself, and went into seven editions between 1740 and 1779. However, his church choir, like other 18th century companies of singers, also enjoyed more secular fare, for in 1753 he published *Essex Harmony*, containing 32 convivial part songs and 14 catches. Three of his own songs appeared, with works by 15 other composers from Henry Purcell to Maurice Greene. By the time of the competition a third edition, with almost twice as many pieces, had been published, and the first edition of the second volume had come out in 1769. So the competitors had plenty of choice for their two songs from *Essex Harmony*.

Arnold's *Catch Club Harmony, being an entire New Set of Catches, &c. for Three and Four Voices* contained another 74 pieces and had been published three years before the competition. The only known surviving copy is in the Danish Royal Library and has Arnold's signature and the control number 205.

In the 1760s Arnold had begun organising concerts at the new music room he had added to Hulmers, his home in the south of the parish. Stabling and hay were included in the ticket price and refreshments were provided by William Kirkham of the Horse and Jockey. It is clear that the competition was designed to increase the sale of Arnold's books, but he also seems to have had wider social aims. In the preface to the second volume of *Essex Harmony* he had described how 'in some Places are given gratis, by Gentlemen, a Silver Cup, &c. to be sung for by Country Choirs, on Holidays, at some Inn, or Publick House ... which provided this was more encouraged and pursued, it would not only prevent the many Accidents, Mischiefs, and other bad Consequences, generally attending those Diversions of Heroism, Cudgeling, Football Playing, &c. but would be a means of encouraging the Practice of one of the greatest of Sciences; and what can be more agreeable or commendable for Country Choirs, than to meet once a Week, Fortnight, or Month, and thereby entertain themselves and Friends, with such harmonious and inoffensive Mirth; which may not only introduce Peace and Tranquillity in a Neighbourhood, but the Practicing of Part Songs and Catches, will be a means of greatly improving several Country Choirs in their Knowledge of Musick'.

Eighteenth century newspapers seldom report local social events, being more interested in robberies, suicides and

murders. So we do not know who won and we wonder if any readers have found a reference to this event in their local records or know the whereabouts of the china punch bowl, silver ladle and glasses adorned with musical trophies.

Olive Baldwin, Thelma Wilson

Sources:

Chelmsford Chronicle, 6 November 1772, 14 and 28 May 1773

Ipswich Journal 15 and 22 October 1763, 12 May 1764, 15 May 1773

Minutes of the Vestry of Great Warley: ERO D/P 195/8/1 and 195/8/2

ROMAN SALT PRODUCTION AT STANFORD-LE HOPE

Rescue archaeology by Oxford Archaeology on a 40 hectare site (in advance of the London Gateway port development) has revealed the largest salt-working complex of over 300 known sites in Essex. A range of large drying tanks, and the foundations of a Roman roundhouse and a boathouse (radiocarbon dated to between 40BC and 240AD) have been uncovered. The site may have late Iron Age origins but remained in use into the C4, when a large hearth was constructed from second-hand tiles. It is suggested that this was used to heat lead pans for the final evaporation. The site is destined to be flooded to provide a wetland area to replace that which will be lost to the new port.

Michael Leach

Source:

Current Archaeology Nov. 2009, issue 236, pp.8-9

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