

Essex Archaeology and History News



Summer 2010

THE ESSEX SOCIETY FOR ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

NEWSLETTER 161

SUMMER 2010

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EDITOR: SALLY GALE

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

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

Assistant Editor: Michael Leach

COPY FOR THE NEXT ISSUE SHOULD BE SENT TO THE EDITOR AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS NO LATER THAN 12 NOVEMBER 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 'South End' of Prittlewell parish in the 1820's was a fashionable watering place for the wealthy. Its development as a popular resort began in the last quarter of the C19 after the second railway link with London had been built.

A colour version of this illustration dated 1820 is published in 'Essex and the Sea', ERO, 1959. This illustration is also available on the ERO online catalogue ref **I/Mb 321/1/11**.

There is an illustrated article 'Southend: 1760-1860' by William Pollitt in the Southend on Sea and District Antiquarian and Historical Society Transactions, Volume 3, Number 4, pp.212-249.

More can be found on the development of the Essex Seaside in a publication currently being prepared by Sue Tyler of the ECC Historic Environment team based on a series of individual 'resort' reports.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The presentation of the Grant of Arms at Ingatestone Hall on Thursday, 13th May was a huge success and will surely be remembered as a significant milestone in the history of our Society. Your support was truly magnificent with well in excess of one hundred members and their guests attending the occasion at Ingatestone Hall. Thomas Woodcock (Garter Principal King of Arms), attired in magnificent court dress (replete with sword and medals), duly presented the Letters Patent to our Patron, Lord Petre. As previously stated, a colour reproduction of the impressive Letters Patent will be reproduced in the forthcoming issue of the Transactions (volume 40 for 2009). We do, of course, owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Lord Petre and his son, the Hon. Dominic Petre, for permitting the presentation to be held at Ingatestone Hall. I would also like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the staff, principally Mrs. Gina Cordwell and Mrs. Carol Delafuente, who could not have been more helpful. They contributed significantly to a highly successful evening. The refreshments were greatly appreciated and consistently commended during the course of the evening. These were provided by Ann Newman, ably supported by her husband Ken. The Newman's were somewhat concerned about the task of catering for such a large gathering but exceeded the challenge in their inimitable way. These few words of appreciation inadequately reflect their outstanding contribution.

A further opportunity to inspect the Letters Patent was afforded at the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday, 19th June in the magnificent surroundings of the Grade I Listed

Council Chamber of Braintree Town Hall. Dr David Andrews provided a highly engaging talk following the formal business. David explained that the building was the gift of William Julien Courtauld who commissioned Vincent Harris as the architect with the brief that "I only want the best". Charlotte Andrews, who was responsible for the visit, subsequently guided the assembled company around several of the more interesting rooms to enable the municipal opulence to be appreciated at first hand.

The next important date in the Society's calendar is the Morant Lunch which this year will be held on Sunday, 10th October in the convivial surroundings of Reeves Restaurant in Felsted. Our guest speaker on this occasion will be John Drury, a local historian who was formerly clerk and chairman of the parish council. John published a valuable history of the village in 1999. It is still possible to book places by contacting Pat Ryan (60 Maldon Road, Danbury, Essex CM3 4QL). I greatly look forward to your company.

On Friday, 28th May it was my very sad duty to represent the Society at the funeral of Rev William J T Smith (1920-2010) which took place at Boreham. Mrs Eleanor Burgess, a member and parishioner, was also present. Mr Smith, who joined the Society in 1970, spent his entire ministry in the Diocese of Chelmsford where he was curate of Laindon-cum-Basildon (1956-61), rector of Stifford (1961-5) and vicar of Boreham (1965-90). All three churches contain monumental brasses. He was (with H.G. Worsley) the author of *Brasses: Thurrock & District* (1970). Smith also published *Else Byng and her Brass* in 1991 as part of his Boreham Histories Series. William Smith genuinely loved

Boreham church and village and wrote passionately on practically every historical aspect. I personally feel his loss acutely having known him since the age of eight when my aunt lived at Bulls Lodge and regularly worshipped at the church. William Smith was buried in the churchyard in a favoured location beneath the west window. Rest in Peace.

The Society also suffered another significant loss with the passing of Stephen Ripper of Sible Hedingham (1926-2010). Mr Ripper was the joint longest serving member (with our Vice-President, John Appleby) having joined the Society in 1947. Ripper was also a long time member of Sible Hedingham parish council - serving as Chairman from 1961-4. He was also a long standing member of Halstead and District Local History Society and enjoyed visiting museums. He took a keen interest in local and family history compiling a large archive and photographic collection relating to Rippers Limited, a company founded by his grandfather and which employed some seven hundred people at its peak. It is envisaged that his archive will be exhibited in the Village Hall at Sible Hedingham during the course of 2011. Stephen leaves a widow (Frances), two daughters (Anne and Catherine) and grandchildren. He was buried next to a third daughter (Susan) in the churchyard at Sible Hedingham on 9th August. Our member, Adrian Corder-Birch attended the funeral to whom I am most grateful for this brief biography. I am also delighted to report that his widow wishes to continue membership of the Society.

Finally, I referred to the unprecedented levels of public debt in the Spring newsletter which at the end of February stood at £741.6 billion (equivalent to

52.6 per cent of GDP). At the end of July the debt had risen to an eye-watering £816.2 billion (equivalent to 56.1 per cent of GDP). The political landscape has changed radically over the last six months. We now brace ourselves for the public spending review on 20th October. Many of the services that we cherish are non-statutory and, thus, are at considerable potential risk. I warned that we should remain vigilant. Now I am urging you to contact Michael Leach, our energetic Secretary, or myself in cases where services are threatened. Our Society has a proud record of making strong representation in the face of adversity. I sincerely hope that I am proved wrong but I fear that we will be called upon to try and defend what we value.

H. Martin Stuchfield

AN APOLOGY

We deeply regret that the financial statement included in the annual report (which was sent out with the last Newsletter) contained a number of errors (year-ending dates) and omissions (COIF income). We are extremely grateful to a number of assiduous members who tactfully pointed out these various errors. The only good news is that the overall healthy financial position of the Society is not altered by these errors. Corrected financial statements were circulated at the AGM, and have been forwarded to the Charity Commission for the Society's annual return. Any member who was not at the AGM, and who wishes to have a correct set of accounts, is asked to contact the Hon Secretary.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR ARCHAEOLOGY

The Advisory Committee met on 3 occasions in the year with County Councillors, archaeologists, museum curators and representatives of Archaeology Societies in attendance.

A visit was made to Wat Tyler Country Park, Pitsea, where considerable recreational and educational facilities have been made available under the auspices of Thames Gateway scheme, local councils and RSPB. The Thames riverside landscape includes preserved red hills, farmstead sites, animal enclosures, medieval and post-medieval field boundaries, river embankments and dykes.

Towards the end of the year there were signs of a slow increase in excavations and evaluations as development picked up. A drainage 'chunker' duct [see note] had been lifted for examination from under the River Chelmer. At Boreham a 12th /13th century farmstead had been excavated. At Bradwell-on-Sea a Roman masonry wall relating to outside the shore fort had been discovered.

At Colchester, Museum Street, the medieval castle barbican had been excavated. The Colchester Urban Archaeological Database was now part-available at www.heritagegateway.org.uk At Southend the Prittlewell Prince site geophysical survey was completed.

The extension to Chelmsford Museum in Oaklands Park opened early in 2010.

A Bronze Age ring ditch and a timber structure were found at Sandon.

The proposed Heritage Quest Centre at Saffron Walden was experiencing difficulties but progress was maintained. Proposals were in place for conservation work at the castle.

On Foulness the Visitor Centre was proving popular. Excavation at the

Workhouse site had been completed, revealing an encampment of the Rochford Hundred Volunteers.

Exhibition display panels to illustrate Essex's industrial heritage had been prepared for Braintree and Waltham Abbey Gunpowder Mill museums. The World War II Defences Survey for Maldon District had been completed.

Development Planning Advice to Thurrock District has returned to Essex County Council. The 2012 Olympic mountain bike venue near Hadleigh Castle was needing archaeological impact assessments.

The 17th century Stebbing barn reusing a medieval aisled structure and 17th century Garnons at Wormingford were recorded. A publication on Essex Seaside Resorts was being prepared.

James Kemble

Note: A 'chunker' duct, for those who don't already know, is a submerged culvert under a canal usually constructed of elm. These 'chunkers' were put in when the canal was originally constructed.

The Editor

BLACKMORE WAR MEMORIAL RECARVED

Blackmore's ninety year old War Memorial has recently been cleaned and re-engraved with the names of those who enlisted for King and Country during the First World War. In total there are 102 names recorded: 21 who died, plus a further 81 who served. The work was commissioned by the Parish Council, who is custodian of this edifice.

The War Memorial, which stands on The Green, was dedicated on 7th November 1920, four days before the second Anniversary of the Armistice when

people would have gathered and paused for two minutes to remember. The Essex County Chronicle reported: "The unveiling of the war memorial took place on Sunday afternoon, a very large number of people being present. The ceremony began with the singing of "O God Our Help In Ages Past" followed by the lesson read by the Vicar (the Revd. W L Petrie) and prayers by Pastor Francis. At the request of Mr Edmund Marriage, Lieut. Col. Gibbons D.S.O. then unveiled the memorial congratulating Blackmore for having sent 103 men out of a population of 600. He mentioned that one in every five had paid the supreme sacrifice – Mr J H Hull then asked Mr E Marriage as Chairman of the Parish Council, to accept custody of the memorial. The names of the fallen are inscribed on the front face, and on the other faces the names of the men from the village who served are inscribed" (1).

The work was undertaken because the names carved had weathered over time and become difficult to read. The Parish Council did not however have a workable transcription so a small group of local historians got together and worked on a project to investigate the lives of those commemorated, and to decipher the faded letters 'C' and 'G' in particular. Was the person remembered Charles or George?

The war casualties turned out to be relatively easy to identify, because many of the names are also included on a window in the village church. Also, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission has a lot of information on casualties, published on a website. As we looked at a number of sources we discovered the names of other men, not listed, who were said to be associated with Blackmore but died during the Great War, as it was known then. The Military Genealogy website gave a number of

names of individuals who were either born in Blackmore, Essex or were resident in Blackmore, not to mention Blackmoor and other misspellings of the parish name. After discounting Blackmore End, which is near Wethersfield in Essex, we had compiled a list of 45 men, not 21, who had fallen. The task was to verify whether these had a Blackmore connection. With the survivors listed, this was to be a family history research project on an epic scale with a list approaching 125 names.

We decided early in the project to advise the Parish Council that the War Memorial should be faithfully re-carved and that names should not be added: we would not tinker with history.

Researching the survivors presented a more difficult problem, but we still found a surprising number of useful sources of information. The 1911 census told us who was living in the village just before the outbreak of war. In 1918, for the first time all men could vote, so that told us who was living in the village at the end of the war. Then there are records of the medals that were awarded to all in the Army at the end of the conflict, which confirm which regiment people fought in. The early release of the 1911 census proved a godsend to our work. Personal possession of Blackmore's 1910 Electoral Register proved useful too as did the 1918 roll available online. Many absent voters listed revealed the identity of some of the survivors, and sadly positive identification of one of the victims, Albert Edward Barker, as landlord of The Bull public house who had been killed a year earlier. We made several visits to the excellent Essex Record Office, making lists of Blackmore male baptisms and marriages, looking at the Sunday School Admissions Register, and numerous other documents including the Ongar and District War Memorial Hospital Roll of Honour, which

we realised was the frequent source of errors in names of the fallen. The Vicar and churchwardens generously allowed us to make a transcript of the Burial Register dating after 1893, kept in the church safe and not housed in any archive anywhere. We 'enlisted' the help of the Essex branch of the Western Front Association and made regular contact with the curator at the recently reopened Essex Regiment Museum in Chelmsford. Above all we used the existing 'Blackmore Area Local History' website and partner blog to update the world on progress and encourage descendents to contact us – which they did in large numbers offering all kinds of useful information, and photographs of the people. We were able to share our work and help others fill in their family stories, which is always a pleasure to do. At the time of writing we have positively identified all but one name: S Ball.

War Memorials were, of course, erected because loved ones were either lost or buried in some foreign field. Very often the names inscribed are those who lived in the parish at the time. It came as no surprise to us to find names of those not remembered who were born in Blackmore but had moved away or were resident for only a short time in the village. These epitaphs are by no means then a definitive list of those who died in the Great War since there are errors of omission as well as commission. We find, for example, four names of the twenty-one commemorated also listed on the Doddinghurst War Memorial tablet inside All Saints' Church. The result of our work is now published online (www.blackmorehistory.co.uk) with work well in progress to reproduce a copy as a book running to around 150 pages for future reference by the Parish Council and researchers visiting the Essex Record Office. These will form a permanent record and the meagre

contribution of our generation to their remembrance.

"We will remember them".

Andrew Smith

Source

(1) ERO. T/P 181/2/11. A quotation taken from a newspaper cutting in the Cuttle collection, dated 12th November 1920, concerning the dedication of the War Memorial.

BOOK REVIEW

Reminiscences of an old Colonist, William Frost (with additional information by John Appleby, 2009 (originally published 1897), no ISBN, pp45, cover illustration, no index, available from John Appleby, Little Pitchbury, Brick Kiln Lane, Great Horkesley CO6 4EU for £3 including p&p..

One of 11 children, the author grew up in poverty in Great Bromley, Essex. In 1846, at the age of 22, he accepted a job as overseer on a sugar estate in Trinidad, necessitating a 5 day journey to reach Glasgow and then 60 days by sailing ship to Port of Spain. During the voyage, all the ship's lifeboats were swept away in a storm. Though Britain had abolished slavery in 1837, the trade was still being operated by other countries, and some of his workforce had been liberated from slave ships intercepted by the Royal Navy. There were also Indian and Chinese labourers, harsh weather, unpleasant parasites, too much cheap rum and readily available razor-sharp machetes to compound his problems as overseer. Matters were aggravated by the British free trade policy of 1848 which led to a sharp drop in the price of sugar, resulting in lower wages for the labour force. The plantation labourers disappeared into the

forests, and there was widespread arson of buildings and cane plantations. There is a lively account of his adventures and disasters, as well as the methods of growing and processing sugar cane. In 1860 he returned to England for the first time, the passage by steamship being reduced to a mere 19 days to Southampton. He returned five years later to purchase steam ploughs, and then four years after that for a prolonged convalescence. By this time he was managing several estates, including one of 10,000 acres, mainly growing sugar cane but also cocoa, limes and coconuts. In 1880 he retired but made several return trips to visit – and finally to sell at a considerable loss – his own estate in Trinidad. The price of sugar had collapsed and plantations in the West Indies had become uneconomic. Settling in Great Bromley, he involved himself in local government and was the first chairman of the parish council. He died in 1899. This is a lively and interesting personal account of a very different time, enhanced by the short appendices added by John Appleby.

ESSEX SEEN FROM ELSEWHERE

The Winter/Spring newsletter of the Ancient Monuments Society contains three matters of Essex interest.

a) The 'Jumbo' water tower, a notable Colchester landmark designed by the borough engineer (Charles Clegg) and built in 1882/3, has been redundant for several years. It is listed Grade II* and a public enquiry approved conversion for residential use which would have involved only relatively minor changes in the structure. It would have made a challenging dwelling with a superb view! However this scheme has fallen through,

and the owners now wish to convert the tower to office use. This will involve infilling the space between the legs of the tower, resulting in substantial changes to its external appearance. This proposal remains under discussion.

b) Brook House, 34 Maldon Road, Tiptree has suffered from serious subsidence (probably aggravated by a substantial tree much too close to the building), as well as attacks by vandals. Application for complete demolition has been made, but the AMS thinks that the tree should be removed to establish whether this would arrest the subsidence problems.

c) The National Lottery Fund has made a 'first round pass' award of £1.8M to Colchester Castle for repairs, and new displays of exhibits. The British Museum regards Colchester's Roman collection as one of the most important in Britain and Europe.

VISIT TO BLACKMORE

Members visited Blackmore church and village on 27 March 2010. The present village, which does not appear in Domesday, owes its existence to the Austin Canons priory, founded for five canons towards the end of the C12 by one of the Sanford family. The site was on low-lying land to the south of the manor of Fingrith which occupied the better, higher land. According to Reaney, Fingrith was the former parish name ('prieore ecclesie sancti Laurencii de Blakemora in parochia de Fyngreth' in the Registrum of 1310). The same authority derives the Blackmore place-name from two components meaning 'black swamp'. The River Wid runs nearby, feeding a large moated enclosure surrounding the site of the church and priory. The Augustinians

were a working order, with a tradition for improving difficult land. In 1232 they were granted the right to hold a fair on the vigil, the day and the morrow of St Laurence (9 to 11 August), and this was the origin of the present village green on which an annual cattle fair was held up to the end of the C19.

The priory was not wealthy and was one of the first to be dissolved in 1525 when it was granted to Cardinal Wolsey to support the foundation of his college in Oxford, and his school in Ipswich. A partial inventory has survived, listing the images and (unusually) the lengths of the two aisles – Our Lady's aisle being 40 feet, St Peter's aisle being 52 feet. There was a nave altar, as well as the aisle and high altars. After Wolsey's fall the priory was granted, in 1532, to Waltham Abbey, in whose hands it remained until the final surrender of the latter (the last in England) in 1540. It is not known if the canons returned to Blackmore priory between 1532 and 1540, but after the final dissolution it was granted to John Smith. The house on the priory site (known at various times as Jericho) was sold in about 1714 by the descendants of John Smith to Jacob Ackworth who repaired and altered this building, giving it its present-day appearance. However its four projecting square corner turrets are suggestive of a building of mid C16 construction, albeit now covered in an early Georgian skin.

Two groups were taken on a guided walk round the village and returned to the church for a closer examination of the fabric. What remains of the priory is the nave and north and south aisles of the priory church of C12 date. There was probably an aisleless chancel for the monks, the evidence for this being two blocked and truncated fragments of C12 round-headed window openings (cut into by the later infilled east wall) which are below clerestory level. The east wall,

built after the demolition of the chancel, contains much re-used material, as well as the columns (still in situ) of the C14 chancel arch. There does not appear to have been a crossing tower. The arcade of the north aisle was rebuilt in the C14, and again in 1898 by Chancellor & Son who re-set the same stones. Much of the north wall was also rebuilt by Chancellor, incorporating fragments of chevron ornament and other worked stone. RCHM suggested that the south aisle may have collapsed in the C16 when the aisle arcade was rebuilt with plastered brick arches and octagonal piers (also originally plastered). Significant further movement to one arch has occurred since then, presumably due to treacherous foundations on the marshy ground. The south wall was rebuilt at the same time, probably after the suppression as there are no remaining scars of a cloister roof on the outside face. However extensive repairs were required in 1686 when this wall was ordered to be 'stopt up with bricks and stone, and alsoe at ye East end, and to be plaister'd over', so any scars might have been eradicated at this time. At the east end of the south aisle is a blocked doorway (surmounted by an unidentifiable carved beast) that may have led into the cloisters.

The easternmost arcade arches are very low, suggesting that the east end of the two aisles was originally of two storeys; RCHM thought that a pulpitum may have extended across the nave at this point. The south east bay now contains the organ and the fine 1592 tomb with recumbent alabaster effigies of Thomas Smith and his wife, much repaired and reconstructed. Fragments of the effigies of their children, and two decorated pilaster strips, found in the belfry have been incorporated into the modern base. When the RCHM published their report in 1921, the belfry was a veritable

chapel house of fragments of medieval worked stone, with more fragments noted in the churchyard.

The particular glory of this church is the massive timber belfry, the largest in Essex. Recent dendrodating revealed felling dates from the winters of 1397/8/1398/9 and 1399/40. All the medieval Essex timber belfries that can be reliably dated fall within a few decades of 1400.

At Blackmore the construction of the belfry blocked the original west entrance to the priory church, and dendrodating confirms that no entrance had been provided through the west wall of the belfry at ground level, as these timbers are contemporary with the rest of the structure. There are five bells (the same number as at the 1686 visitation), now mounted on a mid C18 bellframe. Drawings in the Chancellor collection include a very accurate drawing of the belfry, and indicate that the spire above the bell chamber was reconstructed in 1900. In recent years, woodpeckers have caused considerable damage to the cedar shingles on the spire. The holes are not made in search of food, but as a demonstration of the prowess of the male birds!

Though the nave roof appears to have been rebuilt (presumably during Chancellor's restoration) the evidence from the re-used heraldic shields on the inside indicate that it had been reconstructed at the same time as belfry. This flurry of re-building around the turn of the C14 suggests that this was a prosperous time for the priory.

Though the Society visited this church in 1903, 1915, 1930, and 1948, only very scanty reports appear in the *Transactions*. We are most grateful to our guides, Andrew Smith and Bruno Giordan, for a very interesting visit, and to Ann Newman and her team for the usual excellent tea that followed.

Michael Leach

[Additional information from VCH ii, 146; EAT x, 17, xxii, 324 & indexes; EAH v, 209; RCHM ii, 15; Reaney's *Place-Names of Essex*, 236]

THE HEREFORD MAPPA MUNDI

Many members will have heard of this map of the known world which was made for the monks of Hereford on a single sheet of vellum in about 1290. Like all maps of the period it placed Jerusalem in the centre, and England, Scotland and Ireland are tightly squeezed into the bottom edge, right on the limits of the known world. The map was discovered under a floor in one of the cathedral precinct buildings in the C18, still in its original medieval frame with a triangular head decorated with leaf shaped finials. This frame has subsequently been lost and not replaced. For reasons so far unexplained, one of the more surprising items in the Society's library is the photograph taken in 1868 by a Hereford photographer, Thomas Ladmore, showing the original frame. Though the photograph is faded and rather crudely trimmed, it is the only surviving close-up image of the map's decorative frame. It also shows the iron brackets which were used to fix the frame to the wall when it was displayed in the cathedral after its discovery. Perhaps woodworm or damp subsequently damaged the frame, or maybe a later generation felt that it detracted from the map itself, and had it removed. About a decade ago, the remains of the frame were found amongst rubbish in the stables of the bishop's palace but my informant from the Woolhope Club (our sister society in

Herefordshire) had no information about its present whereabouts.

The photograph is not listed in the Society's 1923 library catalogue and any information about how it was acquired would be very welcome. Council felt that this unique record, which is of no direct relevance to Essex, should be reunited with the Mappa Mundi at Hereford, and it has recently been donated to the cathedral. Though the cathedral library has other Ladmore photographs of the Mappa, it did not own this one, which shows the map in close-up, still attached by nails to its backboard. A letter of appreciation of our gift has been received from the cathedral librarian and a copy of the photograph has been kept for the Society's library.

A magnificent facsimile of the Hereford Mappa Mundi, with the original colouring restored, has been made for the current map exhibition at the British Library.

Michael Leach

WILLIAM BYRD'S LIBRARY

William Byrd, the Elizabethan composer, lived at Stondon Massey for the last thirty years of his life, dying in 1623. He was a Catholic but avoided the severest penalties because of his association with the Chapel Royal and the sovereigns: Queen Elizabeth I (who loved his music) and James I. Recently evidence has come to light which provides an insight into this composer's life as well as his music.

Two leading Byrd scholars, Kerry McCarthy and John Harley, have announced in the *Musical Times* (Winter 2009) the discovery of ten books containing Byrd's signature which had hitherto eluded nearly all other scholars. These books are in libraries spread across the United Kingdom and the United States of America but the authors

have inspected each one and confirmed the identifications of the signatures to be genuine.

It is thought that Byrd may have collected books because of his association with the publishing trade. Alongside Thomas Tallis, Queen Elizabeth granted him exclusive right to publish music.

The discovery of these books is important because, like any personal library, they reflect the tastes of the owner. Nine books are about religion, but more accurately the politics surrounding the Catholic and Protestant situation of the time, taking the Protestant side of the argument. One, 'The unmasking of the politike athiest', published in 1602, is a violent attack on the Roman Catholic religion by J. Hull. He condemns musical and liturgical practices of English Catholics, describing the 'Ave maris stella' (Hail Virgin Mary) as blasphemous and denounced the use of organs and other instruments of the church. 'Superstitious' holidays such as Candlemas, All Saints and Corpus Christi did not escape Hull's tirade. What is curious is that Byrd should own such a book which was against everything he held dear. We know that Byrd composed many settings for such festive occasions. The authors suggest that Byrd was wily in his choice of books on public display and attempted to deceive those who browsed his bookshelves or those who were instructed, as in May 1585, 'too send for byrd of the chappell and that his howse be diligentely searchyd'.

The tenth book is one typical of the age. It is a sixteenth century travel guide covering everything from what to see, eat, wear and observe as customs "so that the traveller after his rangings and peregrinations shall retire himself a man of skill". Byrd though was an armchair traveller believed to have never left

these shores, unlike his brother John who was a London merchant and ship owner who frequently exported wheat to Spain and traded as far a field as West Africa and Brazil.

These fresh insights reveal that history is not a dead subject. Our modern age with its worldwide web is adding to the stories of our forbears. It's a great time to be a local historian!

Andrew Smith

A VISIT TO LEYTON IN 1709

From *The Diary of Ralph Thoresby* 1677-1724, published in London in 1830:

"20 January 1709.....rode to Mile End, Stratford, and Bow, to Low Leyton, rightly so called from its situation, the meadows being covered with water, like an arm of the sea, but we found the road good, and were kindly received by the worthy Mr Strype, a pious divine, and indefatigably industrious historian, as appears by the many volumes of his handwriting, and some of them prodigiously large folios, which I was really surprised with the sight of, and with his noble collection of original letters of King Henry the Eighth, and several of his Queens, Edward the Sixth, Queen Jane, Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, with Cardinal Wolsey, Pole, and others of the most eminent clergy, both before and after the Reformation, with the most eminent statesmen, divines, and historians; which, I perceived, had been the collections of the famous Lord Treasurer, Burleigh, to whom most of the later letters were directed, and particularly those of the Lord Chancellor, Earl of Essex, Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Walter Mildmay, and Secretary Wilson that he presented me

with. Returned very well and in good time."

[Biographical note: Ralph Thoresby (1658-1725) was a well travelled historian and topographer of Leeds, in contact with many of his contemporary antiquaries and historians. John Strype (1643-1737), was minister of Low Leyton for 68 years where he rebuilt part of the church and provided himself with a new rectory, stables and outhouses, and 'new-planted and trenched the Gardens and Orchards'. He was a distinguished ecclesiastical historian and biographer, and a prodigious collector of pre- and post- Reformation MSS. It was through the good offices of a parishioner, Sir William Hicke, that Strype obtained access to Lord Burleigh's papers, some of which he had managed to acquire for his collection. The old DNB entry noted that many of the Burleigh MSS were obtained 'by questionable means', but the 2004 ODNB entry exonerates him to a large degree. The MSS had been loaned to Strype, by Hicke and by a publisher, in order that Strype could edit them for a printed edition. Before this had been completed, Hicke had become insane, and the publisher, having already decided that the project would be too costly, had died leaving his debts to Strype unpaid. Though he might reasonably have been entitled to keep the MSS in lieu of payment for his work, Strype, in his will, identified the material that was to be returned to the publisher's heirs. It is not clear if these intentions were honoured, as Strype suffered from a stroke in 1720 and the acquisitive Humfrey Wanley (acting on behalf of his master, Robert Harley, first Earl of Oxford) instructed a London bookseller to keep a sharp eye on Strype's health and the prospects for acquiring his collection. Although Strype, contrary to expectation, outlived both Wanley and

Robert Harley by more than a decade, much of Strype's collection passed into the second earl of Oxford's library and is now amongst the Harleian MSS in the British Library.]

Michael Leach

Sources:

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A CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNT OF C16 & C17 BUILDING PRACTICES

Robert Ryece of Preston near Lavenham compiled his *Breviary of Suffolk* during the first two decades of the C17. Though it relates to Suffolk, his home was near enough to the Essex border to think that his account may have some relevance to Essex. Sandwiched between accounts on 'Sea Fowle' and 'Entercourse' (by which he meant highways and bridges) are sections on 'Castles', 'Mansions or dwelling houses' and 'Tenements'. The section on castles is largely historical and political, but the other two focus much more on the practical construction of these buildings. He noted that the oldest houses 'for their more security and quiet against all worldly accidents....were environed with a deep ditch or moat and to that end....they were enforced to low valleys, that they might the more easily draw water from the next river...' This is no surprise; thirty years ago, Aberg noted that Essex and Suffolk had the largest number of moated sites of any other English county by a large margin, though the modern

view is that the function of most of these moats was not defensive.

He described the old houses having thick walls, small windows and 'their chimneys large, or instead of them to have round harthes in the midst of their great hals or roomes, with round holes or lovers aloft in the roof, which carried away the smoake never offending.' In contrast the newer buildings were placed where 'they may bee furthest seen, have best prospect, sweetest air, and greatest pleasure, their walls thin, their lights large, all for outward show....' The large windows would have been encouraged by the general availability of glass by the C17. Also the insertion of new internal floors in hall houses created new rooms which needed to be lit. Surprisingly Ryece noted that the new buildings were often three or four storeys in height, though this may have included cellars, as well as dormers which, by the C17, were being inserted to make the roof space habitable. Suffolk houses changed in style earlier than those in Essex, and tended to be longer and narrower, with steeper roof pitches (the last feature probably reflecting the dominant use of thatch in that county). Also houses in Suffolk were plastered externally at an earlier date than in Essex, and this could go with thinner walls – it certainly did so by the C18.

Ryece made a curious observation about more recent roofs, noting that they were 'square, and so slender that they are enforced often to repaire, and in all buildings this one thing is observed, spare of stufte scarcity of timber (which is too general) and that workman that can doe his worke with most beauty, least charge, (albeit not so strong) hee is most required.' By the time that Ryece was writing, the crown post roof had been abandoned in favour of the side purlin. This type used less timber, and was a little less stable, particularly as

hips and gablets, which brace and strengthen roof structures, had fallen out of fashion. The other factor is that pantiles from the Low Countries had begun to replace thatch by the early C17, resulting in heavier loads on the roof.

Though Ryece lamented the 'carelesse wast of this age of our wonted plenty of timber, and other building stuffe', there is no real evidence of a shortage of timber, though it was used in different ways and was probably of lower quality through a decline in woodland management, resulting in the use of smaller sections with much sap wood content. It is apparent from passages elsewhere in his account that he had a theological axe to grind about waste, profligacy and extravagant display, so this may have coloured his views on the availability of timber and other building materials.

Suffolk building practices did differ somewhat from those in Essex, but Ryece was most familiar with the area of his county nearest to Essex, so it is likely that his observations will have some relevance to our county.

Michael Leach

(with grateful thanks to Elphin Watkin for the technical background)

Sources:

Aberg, F A, 1978 *Medieval Moated Sites*, CBA Research Report 17

Clifton-Taylor, A, 1972 *The Pattern of English Building*, Faber

Ryece, R, 1618 *The Breviary of Suffolk* (1902 edition, John Murray)

ESSEX NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

Members of ESAH are welcome to attend meetings of the Essex Numismatic Society which meets on the

fourth Friday of each month at 7.30pm for 8.00pm at the Chelmsford Museum in Moulsham Street. The programme so far is:

2010

24 September: 'Emergency issue banknotes' by John Cowlin

22 October: 'Suffolk tokens' by Nigel Clark

26 November: 'Coins of the Knights of Malta' by Tony Holmes

2011

28 January: Short talk and exchange & mart

25 February: 'Medieval half groats' by David Greenhalgh

25 March: 'The Viking coinage of York' by Megan Gooch

22 April: AGM and annual exhibition

TWO FORGOTTEN ESSEX ANTIQUARIES: JOHN & THOMAS LUFKIN

Gibson's 1722 edition of Camden's *Britannia* contains a list, arranged by counties, of 'Books and Treatises relating to the Antiquities of England'. Apart from two, all the Essex authors are familiar names whose biographies are already well known. The exceptions are Thomas and John Lufkin.

Nothing is known about John Lufkin who, in 1700, wrote a letter to the *Philosophical Transactions* (xxii, 924-6) about some large bones found in a gravel pit near Colchester. According to Samuel Dale he gave an account in the same article of bones found in a cliff at Harwich, which he had identified as those of an elephant.

According to Foster, Thomas Lufkin was born in Colchester on 22 February 1678/9 His father was John Lufkin, an apothecary in the town. He matriculated at Christ Church College, Oxford in December 1700, aged 20, and

proceeded to BA in 1704, and MA in 1707. His date of ordination is not stated, but he was appointed rector of Frating in 1709 and rector of Layer de la Haye and Berechurch in 1711. Though Morant agrees with this date for the Frating living, other sources give somewhat earlier dates for his preferments, but he appears to have held all three until his death in 1745. The visitations of 1727 and 1738 noted that he was partly resident in Frating, and partly in Colchester.

His scientific and antiquarian interests were developed early in adult life. In 1699 his letter to Dr Wallis was published in the *Philosophical Transactions*, describing an inscription on a carved wooden window cill in a house in Colchester. This appeared to bear the date 1090 in Arabic numerals and led to a great deal of discussion over the following decades about when such numerals were introduced into Europe, and whether the date had been misread, or was a forgery. This controversy was aired over a century later in Thomas Cromwell's *History of Colchester*. In the same letter, Lufkin described his proposal for the 'Application of a Pneumatic Engine to Cupping-Glasses'. A separate letter on the same subject, to Sir Hans Sloane, was published in the same journal.

The next reference to Lufkin is found in a letter of December 1712 from Nicholas Jekyll to William Holman. The writer advises a further visit to 'Mr Lufkin of Colchester' in connection with material that Lufkin had contributed to the new edition of Camden's *Britannia*. Jekyll doubted whether Lufkin would ever get round to publishing anything on his own account, but thought that his notes (possibly on his collection of coins) might be suitable as an appendix to the book that Holman was working on. Jekyll also thought that Lufkin might be able to point

Holman to some useful manuscript sources.

In 1722 Lufkin organised a careful survey of the Lexden earthworks. This project is mentioned both by Philip Morant and by Thomas Cromwell. A professional surveyor, Payler Smith, was used to take the measurements, and perhaps Lufkin acted as his assistant (and presumably paid his fees). Payler Smith's plan, if it was ever drawn out, does not seem to have survived. Morant recorded the bearings and the measurements taken by the surveyor, and also made a rough sketch plan in his own annotated copy of *The History of Colchester*.

As both men lived in or near to Colchester, it is not surprise to find that, towards the end of Lufkin's life, he collaborated with Morant in editing an edition of Matthew Carter's *True Relation of that honourable tho' unfortunate expedition of Kent, Essex and Colchester in 1648*. This was printed by J. Pilborough in Colchester, probably in 1745, and there is an imperfect copy in the British Library. No library in Essex appears to possess this book.

Though Thomas Lufkin is dwarfed by his other contemporary antiquaries, nevertheless he seems to have been well regarded by them, and was regarded as a useful potential source of information. John Lufkin was presumably a relative (possibly his father) but nothing further has been discovered about him.

Michael Leach

Sources

Pearson, Dr J, unpublished database of Essex clergy

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Cromwell, T, 1826 *History of Colchester*, 195-8, 241

Morant, P, 1748 *History of Colchester*, ii, 25

Laver, H, 1902 'Oliver's Thicks Ramparts: an Earthwork near Colchester' in *EAT* ns viii, 369-372

Foster, J, 1891 *Alumni Oxoniensis*, Oxford

Letter dated 2 December 1712 from N Jekyll to Rev. W Holman: ERO D/Y 1/1/111/16

Philosophical Transactions, xxi (1699), 287-8, 408-10

VISIT TO EAST DONYLAND HALL

Members visited this house on 17 April under a perfect spring sky, completely free of aeroplanes due to the volcanic eruption in Iceland.

The owner warmly welcomed us, and explained that the manor had come into the hands of Queen Maud who had granted it to St John's Abbey, Colchester. By the time of the Dissolution, the abbey owned most of the parish which then passed through various hands until its purchase, in 1730, by David Gansel. He was an amateur architect who had already been active in altering his house and grounds at Leyton. He made extensive improvements to his new acquisition at East Donyland, and laid out the surrounding park. He encased the early C17 U-shaped timber framed house in a brick skin, filling in the courtyard on the south side to form a rectangular building. The bewildering changes of levels internally at first floor level may reflect a series of piecemeal alterations carried out while the family continued to live in the rest of the house – not an uncommon situation. On the main east elevation Gansel raised the parapet to hide the dormers, and inserted false windows in the brickwork to give the

appearance of an extra storey. The sash windows on this elevation are unusually narrow (two panes wide, rather than the usual three) effectively making the façade look higher than it really is. The appearance of height was enhanced by the rusticated brick pilasters. A broad moat survives on three sides of the house; a small spur at the southeast end suggests that it originally existed across the east side as well, but it was probably filled in by Gansel.

The next development – at an unknown date – was the bizarre addition of a huge double height ballroom on the north side, which is shown in a painting by John Vine dated 1838. By the end of the century this had disappeared and had been replaced by a modest single storey lean-to which is shown in the RCHM photograph.

In 1945/6, most of the high parapet with its false windows was removed and a new single storey extension added to the north, with a matching screen wall on the south side. Stone urns were placed at strategic points on the reduced parapet where, however, the faint scars of the lower part of the false windows are still visible. There have been various internal alterations since, including the removal of a chimney breast and the servant's staircase to enlarge the room in the south east corner. Alterations upstairs revealed a very low doorway opening into what had been the open courtyard of the earlier house – almost certainly the garderobe door.

East of the house, on the opposite side of the large oval turning circle, are three low pedimented ranges of outbuildings, end-on to the house, dating from David Gansel's time. The elevations facing the house are built in extremely fine brickwork with a very smooth white lime mortar, and each has an elegant doorcase with broken pediment, belying the utilitarian function of the buildings

behind (brew house, dairy and stables/ chaise house respectively). What is puzzling is that the side walls of two of these buildings are about 5° off the right angle to the front wall and are of much inferior brickwork. No explanation could be found for this curious arrangement. Further east are two walled gardens (the northernmost of which has a large blocked gateway, perhaps originally the main axial access to Gansel's improved house) and some later brick farm buildings with dentilated eaves. Southeast of the walled gardens, now partly hidden in woodland, are three ponds in line, two of which are at a higher level. They are retained by substantial embankments and are said to be medieval fishponds dug by the monks of St John's. However the abbey owned, from the early Middle Ages, two fish ponds at Bourne Mill, much closer to their main premises in Colchester, and the East Donyland ponds, with their broad banks and fine views across to Wivenhoe, are more likely to have been part of Gansel's ambitious landscaping scheme.

We are deeply indebted to the owners for their very warm welcome, and for allowing us free access to their delightful house and grounds – and, of course, to Ann Newman and her helpers for an excellent tea.

Michael Leach

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, ESSEX BRANCH

Meetings will be held in The Link, Trinity Methodist Church, Chelmsford.

Followed by tea/coffee and biscuits

Free parking at the Church or in the Essex County Council car-park opposite

Visitors and prospective members warmly welcome - a £2 donation is requested.

www.essexinfo.net/essex-branch-of-historical-association/

PROGRAMME 2010 - 2011

SATURDAY, 2ND OCTOBER 2010; *The Italian Renaissance and links with France and England* [illustrated], AGM followed by Glenn Richardson, Reader in Early Modern History & Academic Director, School of Theology, Philosophy and History, St Mary's University College, Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, a college of the University of Surrey:

SATURDAY, 30TH OCTOBER 2010; *Using Original Historical Documents with Schoolchildren and "Children" of all Ages!* [illustrated], Ian Mason, Programme Secretary, Cumbria branch of the Historical Association: **Ian's lecture will be a personal memorial by the branch to the late Nancy Edwards, who played such a key role in the life of the branch for so many years.**

SATURDAY, 4TH DECEMBER 2010; *Members' Meeting*, This is a chance for any member to present a short talk on any subject they may be researching or simply have an interest in. Alternatively, we choose a theme and members select which aspect they would like to talk about. Whether the talks are on serious subjects or (usually) not, this is always great fun afternoon. We are still discussing the format for this meeting.

SATURDAY, 8TH JANUARY 2011; *Mountbatten: Hero of our time*, Dr Adrian Smith, Senior Lecturer in the School of Humanities, University of Southampton

SATURDAY, 5TH FEBRUARY 2011; *Women and Work in the Middle Ages.*

[illustrated]; Anne Curry, Head of the School of Humanities and Professor of Medieval History, Southampton University, and President of the Historical Association.

SATURDAY, 5TH MARCH 2011; *The Strategy of the American Civil War*, Professor Brian Holden Reid, King's College, London.

SATURDAY, 9TH APRIL 2011; *Colchester's Roman Circus: Past and Future*, Philip Crummy, Director of the Colchester Archaeological Trust.

SATURDAY, 7TH MAY 2011; *Witchcraft - How 'bad' were the East Anglian Witch-Hunts of 1645-47? Mid-Seventeenth Century English Witch Persecution in Comparative Context*, Alison Rowlands, Senior Lecturer in European History, University of Essex:

LANDSCAPE CREATION AT MUCKING

This exciting project is spearheaded by the Essex Wildlife Trust with backing from various other commercial organisations, the relevant local authorities, the Port of London Authority and the Thames Gateway Corporation. Mucking marshes have been exploited in the past for sand and gravel extraction, and more recently as a landfill site for six of London's boroughs. The waste has arrived at Mucking Flats by barge for off-loading by crane and this will cease once the final top soil restoration is completed. A new visitor centre will be built overlooking Mucking Flats and Stanford le Hope marshes, and a wide range of different habitats will be created on the (ultimately) 1300 acre site – a variety of grassland (some grazed), salt marsh, reed beds, scrapes, mud flats, woodland and scrub. The area includes Stanford

Warren to the north which already has the largest reed bed in Essex, as well as a small area of ancient woodland (with a rookery) on the west side of the site. A new footbridge over Mucking Creek will improve access. Obviously all this is dependant on successful fundraising and will take several years to come to fruition, but the potential success of this form of landscape re-creation has already been well demonstrated by the RSPB at their new reserve on the former military firing ranges at Rainham Marshes – well worth a visit for those who are not already familiar with it.

Michael Leach

Source: *Essex Wildlife*. Spring 2010, 10-13

ESSEX HERITAGE AT RISK!

The Buildings at Risk Register compiled by Essex County Council has changed to Heritage at Risk and will be available from September 2010. The new register will show a much greater picture of the risks to heritage in Essex by including scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens and conservation areas as well as buildings.

Do you know of a designated heritage asset that should be included on the register? Or would you like more information on the 2010 Heritage at Risk Register? If so, please contact Laura Belton at ECC Historic Environment telephone 01245 437613 or e-mail laura.belton@essex.gov.uk

MEMBERSHIP - Subscriptions due on January 1st each year

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NAMES AND ADDRESSES

Secretary

Dr. M. Leach

2 Landview Gardens

Ongar

Essex CM5 9EQ

Tel. 01277 363106

Membership Secretary

Miss Ann Turner

1 Robin Close

Great Bentley

Essex CO7 8QH

Tel. 01206 250894

Librarian

Dr Jane Pearson

e-mail

DrJanePearson@hotmail.com

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

APPEAL FOR THE PUBLICATION AND RESEARCH FUND (PRF)

This fund replaced the Publications Development Fund in 2004. It supports the publication of articles in each Volume of *Essex Archaeology and History* as well as Occasional Papers. Donations are placed into an INALIENABLE account, which cannot be spent. It is the Interest thereon which is distributed by awards granted by our COUNCIL. As at December 2009 the projected value of the fund (including interest) stands at £47,715

Donations payable to: The Essex Society for Archaeology and History

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Bill Abbott, 45 Cambridge Road, Colchester C03 3NR

Tel. 01206 369948 or e-mail bill.abbott@btinternet.com

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.

THE ESSEX SOCIETY FOR ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 161

ISSN 0305-8530

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