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Newsletter

Essex Society for Archaeology and History



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Copy for the next issue should be sent to the editor at the above address by no later than 16th February 2024.

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The illustration on the front cover is Stondon Massey.

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From the President

Nick Wickenden

I hope everyone is enjoying their summer. Although we may not be experiencing the current Mediterranean conditions as I write, for once that is something to be very grateful for. Surely nobody can deny the accelerating effects of climate change now. Let us hope that the next COP meeting can start to be more proactive. I am sure that you, like me, are also praying that the Russian war in Ukraine does not start to impact more heritage sites. The sight of the damage at the cathedral in Odessa was shocking, and I am mindful of what happened at Palmyra.

Heritage Open Day leaflets are starting to be produced, ready for the annual fest from 8th to 17th September. This is again a welcome opportunity to visit places, near and far, for free. It is interesting that the event is always so popular, whereas the events programmes organised by societies such as ours are in decline. We recently cancelled two events due to low numbers but have reprogrammed them for 2024. You will find a brief questionnaire in the newsletter, and we would be grateful for your comments. We are not alone in this. In Colchester alone, the Civic Society, and the Friends of Colchester Museums and the Archaeological Trust are cancelling events due to low numbers. The Friends of Southend Museums have sadly closed altogether. We are seeing if there is any merit in offering our events to other like minded society members, and vice versa. A huge amount of work does go into their organisation, Of course, a goodly proportion of people primarily join for our publications.

I would draw your attention to a forthcoming day of talks at the Essex Record Office on Saturday 16th September entitled 'Above and below : the archaeology and history of Essex castles'. This is something we have been pleased to support in our own programme, and it will be a great opportunity to catch up on recent work in a number of castles in our county, including Colchester, Pleshey, Hedingham, and Clavering.

Our AGM was successfully held at Broomfield Church on 17 June with 19 members present. We welcome Laura Pooley, a post excavation officer at Colchester Archaeological Trust, as a new Trustee, filling a gap caused by the untimely and sad death of our past President, Mark Davies. Our long time Treasurer, Bill Abbott, was also welcomed as a new Vice President. We would still welcome offers of assistance to understudy Bill in his role as Treasurer.

After the meeting, excellent talks were given by Neil Wiffen about the church history, and by Ros Mercer, about the church's project researching Rosemary Rutherford, whose fresco adorns the church tower. I am pleased to report that our donation to the church will be used for a further dendrochronological date.

Lastly, congratulations to Chris Thornton, our past Honorary Secretary , who has retired as Editor, succeeded by Dr Herbert Eiden. I hope he enjoys his retirement, but he'll probably find he's never been busier !

Have a good summer everyone.

William Byrd. From Tercentenary to Quartercentenary

By Andrew Smith

William Byrd (c.1540-1623) one of the greatest composers of the Elizabethan and Jacobean era spent the final twenty-nine years of his life in semi-retirement living in Stondon Massey. He was a recusant: a Catholic who refused to attend the Church of England when it was compulsory to do so.

The musical appreciation and historical knowledge of this great composer has grown immeasurably over the last three decades. It is now possible to purchase complete recordings of his work – anniversary releases being in abundance – and link Byrd's life and times in ways unimaginable when the Tercentenary was celebrated a hundred years ago and a tablet to Byrd's memory erected in St Peter and St Paul Church, Stondon Massey.

The memorial was placed due to the efforts of Reverend Canon Edward Henry Lisle Reeve who was the Rector of Stondon Massey from 1893 to 1935. Reeve was a keen local historian, member of the Essex Archaeological Society, and "great supporter as well as a sterling advocate of Byrd's music". He wrote copiously and published a parish history, and an article in 'The Essex Review' in October 1923 to mark the tercentenary of Byrd's death.

Musicologist and current Byrd expert Richard Turbet, in his Third Edition of 'William Byrd. A Research and Information Guide' published in 2012, mentions: "That there have been only seven years between the terminal dates for inclusion of material in the second and third editions of this book, compared with eighteen between the first two, is a measure of the continuing acceleration in Byrd scholarship since the twentieth century". This American-published 286-page work is largely an addition, not repetition, to the previous volumes. Turbet also mentions conferences devoted entirely to Byrd and the continuing 'Byrd Festival' held almost annually since 1998 in Portland, Oregon, an indication of the large following Byrd has established in the United States. The acceleration in research and literature may be gauged by the 41 pages which provide a complete list of material since 1826. Reeve's entry in the Essex Review, amongst a flurry of activity in 1923, occupies the sixth page; the final 16 pages cover items published since the turn of the millennium (to 2012).

Nothing has been written in the Society's journals about Byrd since Reeve's time when in autumn 1924 the Society made an excursion to Stondon Massey Church. Reeve referred to the memorial "recently erected to the memory of William Byrd". It reads:

"A Father of Mvsick"

"To the Glory of God and Memory of William Byrd

Who lived at Stondon Place In this Parish for the last Thirty Years of His life.

He died 4 July 1623 Aged Eighty

This Tablet was erected in 1923 in Celebration of the Tercentenary of His Death".

The Byrd Memorial was funded from money raised from the London Tercentenary celebrations which Richard Turbet comments "was the most sustained and widespread celebrations yet attempted of a native early English composer".

The Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, where Byrd was a member from 1572 until his death, attended the Dedication Service at Stondon Massey in March 1924.

Richard Turbet wrote, "If it is important for the greatest artists, such as Byrd or Shakespeare, to be the right people in the right place at the right time, at a less elevated level it is important that their supporters in posterity be similarly well placed. Reeve was such a one. Reeve was energetic, capable, literate, personable, well off and well connected. He liked music generally and that of Byrd particularly, and he used his position as rector of Stondon to write articles and organise events that would advance Byrd's cause. With no trace of self-aggrandizement, he was successful".

Through his connection with William Barclay Squire, Head of the Music Department at the British Museum, who did “much to re-instate Byrd in the public interest, and incidentally established the fact of the long connection of the composer with Essex” through an entry in the Dictionary of National Biography, and Edmund Fellowes, musicologist, who rediscovered the ‘Great Service’ in the Library of Durham Cathedral in 1922, Reeve received a copy of Byrd’s will, which still is in the Vestry. It reads:

“In the name of the moste glorious and undevided Triniyte Father sonne holy Gost three distinct persons and one eternall God Amen

I William Byrde of Stondon Place in the p[ar]ish of Stondon in the Countye of Essex gentleman doe nowe in the 80th yeare of myne age

... my body to be honnestly buried in that p[ar]ish ... of Stondon wheire my dwellynge is: And then to be buried neare unto the place where my wife lyst buried. ...

In wittnes theirolf I the sayd william Byrd have sett my hand & seale the Fifteenth day of November ... 1622”.

Byrd’s death in 1623 is recorded in the Chapel Royal Cheque Book: “Will[ia]m Bird, a Father of Musick died the iiiith of July, And John Croker, a co[u]nter ten[o]r of Westminster was admitted [th]e 24th of December following”. He probably died at Stondon Place or at the Earl of Worcester’s house in London and is thought to have been buried in Stondon Massey churchyard”.

Stondon Massey’s Parish Registers before 1708 have been lost. “Surviving parish records do not record that “any objection was raised to the burial of a Catholic in the churchyard at Stondon”.

“We can claim Byrd for a Stondon man”.

We now know that William Byrd was about 82 years old when he died. In one of many legal disputes (Byrd was often in Court as prosecutor or defendant) where he acts as witness, “Apparently set down in his own hand on 2nd October 1598 ... he gave his age as fifty-eight” at a time when he was “mentally vigorous ... making his youthful compositions seem less precocious than they would if the date derived from Byrd’s will were accepted”.

His family moved to Stondon Massey around 1594. One hundred years ago there was little known about our Essex composer apart from the research of Revd. Reeve and a handful of others.

Revd. Reeve in his Parish History of Stondon Massey (1900) describes Byrd as “a remarkable man, and it is well known in musical circles as one of the great composers of his time”.

We now know that William Byrd was born in London but descended from a Robert Byrd and William Byrd, his four- and three times great grandfather who came from Ingatestone. He was probably a chorister at St Paul’s Cathedral, following in the footsteps of his brothers Simon and John. Byrd was organist at Lincoln Cathedral from 1563 where he wrote music for the new Anglican Church but got into trouble for over-embellishing the music and, for a while, had his pay suspended. He married Julian[a] Birley at Lincoln on 14th September 1568, a marriage which lasted about 40 years until her death.

The Byrds were frequently named before the archdeaconry court for non-attendance at Church. The Byrds later moved to Harlington, West London, where there are frequent presentments, as at Stondon. These presentations name William’s wife as Julian. At Stondon, Byrd’s wife is named Ellen, but she is the same person. John Harley (1997) says that this is an error on the part of the ecclesiastical court in Essex, assuming Byrd’s wife to be Ellen or Helena, and claims Byrd did not remarry. This is supported by Byrd’s family tree contained in Visitations of Essex dated 1634 (ERO D/DQs/43).

He was appointed as a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, which served the religious needs of the Queen and her household. Latin text remained acceptable in the Chapel Royal and the Queen was said to keep crucifixes and candles. The Queen may have been a secret Catholic and Byrd had a sympathetic patron at the highest level. The Queen was his greatest supporter and since professional music making was largely confined to the Church this was a perfect arrangement.

In Reeve's Parish History he tells of the monopoly right Byrd and Tallis secured from the Queen over the printing of music for 21 years, of Tallis' death and the Byrds later move to Stondon Massey where he secured, around 1593, from the Queen a short lease of Stondon Place which had been in the possession of William Shelley. This, with Shelley's other property, had been confiscated. Shelley had been found guilty of treason following his involvement in the Throckmorton Plot. Shelley was sentenced to be hung, drawn, and quartered, but he died a natural death in April 1597.

More recent documentary evidence suggests the Byrds were still in Harlington in July 1594. "A report dated 3rd July 1595 states that they had not been to church in Stondon during the previous six months".

"In 1595 Byrd obtained a grant from the queen of Stondon Place for the lives of his three children, Christopher, Elizabeth and Rachel successively".

Reeve records the long running dispute with Shelley's wife and widow Jane. Reeve says: "Till his own decease in 1597 ... his estates everywhere lay confiscated. Both Mrs Shelley and Byrd were evidently born litigants and never so happy as when they were giving work to Judge and to Counsel ... suits of Shelley v. Byrd being varied by countersuits of Byrd v. Shelley. She encloses eight grievances against her tenant ... 'the said Byrd did him vile and bitter words: that when told he had no right to the property, he replied that if he could not hold it by right, he would hold it by might' [also] 'that he had cut down much timber, and for six years paid no rent'".

Following Jane Shelley's death Reeve records that in 1610 Byrd purchased Stondon Place. Reeve writes of the Shelley's: "It must have somewhat nettled the Shelley family to reflect that, while Elizabeth had dealt so severely with them, she had filled their place at Stondon with one who, at any rate so far as his religious opinions were concerned, would have rejoiced equally with themselves in seeing her throne occupied by a papist queen, Mary of Scotland".

Byrd might have been a subversive, but he was no terrorist.

What is not recorded by Reeve is Byrd's patronage from Sir John (later Lord) Petre of Ingatestone Hall and Thorndon Hall. Such records only became publicly available in 1939 when the Petre family deposited their large and important collection of family documents at the newly opened Essex Record Office. These include references to Byrd which a later generation of writers, Frederick Emmison and A. C. Edwards, were to publish in their biographies of the Petre family.

Reeve also seems to have overlooked Byrd's association with Jesuit priests although it was known that Byrd attended the reception of Father Henry Garnet at Hurleyford, near Marlow, in 1586 but there must be a word count or limit to investigations.

Byrd, the celebrity who is as well-known as his contemporary William Shakespeare, is the only visitor named. Incriminating evidence such as this does not come before the authorities.

William Byrd is an interesting character who treads the fine line between knowing the most influential people as well as the most wanted men in England. For more information on Byrd search for the 'Composer of the Week' podcast, which includes highlights from the broadcast on BBC Radio 3 during week commencing 3 July 2023. It includes interviews at Ingatestone Hall and Stondon Massey.

Finally, in this 400th anniversary year the small congregation of Stondon Massey plan to mark the occasion with a plaque on the outside wall of the church so that Byrd is remembered to passers-by as a great composer, musician, and former resident. Money is being raised for the purpose and Faculty application made.

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Rabies, Vaccination & Public Health Measures in Essex

By Michael Leach

The chance discovery of a clinical account by the Ongar physician, Dr Grattan, of the death from rabies (hydrophobia) of a local 21 year-old veterinary assistant in August 1877 of a deadly disease, now largely forgotten. There had already been increasing concern about rabies before this date, and measures were already in place to destroy stray dogs as the suspected vectors. In the same month as Dr Grattan's report the Essex Standard reported a rabid dog attack in Chelmsford, resulting in the death of a 15 year-old boy, in spite of attempts to treat him with laudanum and chloroform. However, the dog lobby did not remain silent and in November 1877 the Southend Standard reported to a protest about the destruction of strays from the proprietor of what later became the Battersea Dogs Home, indicating that, of the 200,000 animals taken in by his organisation, not one had subsequently shown any signs of the disease.

Though Dr Grattan's very graphic account may only reflect increasing concern about this disease, it is possible that his description of the fatal Ongar case influenced the launch of the British Medical Association's enquiry later in that year. This asked for case reports from medical men and (if possible) post mortem material, including the brain and spinal cord of victims. The Southend Standard seems to have had a particular interest in rabies, publishing a report in March 1881 on the work of Louis Pasteur. He had recently established that rabbits, inoculated with blood and saliva from a boy who had died from rabies, developed the disease, and he correctly concluded that a micro-organism was responsible for its transmission. By the summer of 1885, Pasteur had developed a vaccine from the spinal cords of infected rabbits, and had proved its efficacy in a boy who had badly bitten by a rabid dog. Initially the vaccine seems only to have been available in Paris, as in 1889 the Essex Weekly News reported that a gamekeeper at Broomfield Lodge, Chelmsford had to travel there to obtain the treatment, with his employer generously footing the bill. The Chelmsford Chronicle of December 1897 reported a Bardfield victim of a dog attack who also had to go to Paris for treatment.

Vigorous public health measures were brought in to limit the disease, with Parliament passing a series of Rabies Orders in 1887, 1889, 1891, 1892 and 1896, the last of which gave the new county councils powers to impose dog muzzling orders in areas where a case had been reported, and powers to exterminate infected or out-of-control animals without payment of compensation to the owners. Initially it was the responsibility of the local petty sessions to impose the dog muzzling orders. But by June 1896 Essex County Council was responsible for issuing these orders, though it was hesitating to do so after the destruction of two rabid dogs at Norton Heath, perhaps due to their unpopularity with dog owners, as well as the risks of generating local anxiety.

Astonishing numbers of stray dogs were rounded up and destroyed, particularly in urban areas. The Essex Newsman of 8 December 1901, for example, claimed that 11,248 strays had been destroyed in the Becontree division since the most recent Rabies Order of 1896 had come into effect. At the same, Essex County Council's Contagious Diseases (Animals) Committee received quarterly reports of numbers of stray dogs caught – most were killed, but a few were re-homed or reclaimed by owners. The rounding-up and destruction of dogs continued well into the first decade of the twentieth century, even though the Essex Weekly News proclaimed in December 1901 that 'rabies had ceased to exist in any part of the kingdom'. For reasons unexplained, Becontree continued to lead the county in dealing with stray dogs. The Essex Newsman in March 1903 reported that, over the previous 12 years, some 13,000 animals had been destroyed. By March 1907 Becontree's last report, before handing responsibility to the Metropolitan Police, showed that the grand total had risen to the astonishing figure of 21, 867.

Though rabies appeared to have been eliminated in the first decade to the twentieth century, small numbers of new cases began to be reported again from late 1918, perhaps the result of a relaxation of vigilance during the war. In May 1919 the Chelmsford Chronicle reported that a muzzling order was in place for the southern half of the county for all dogs in public places, and that all animals in private premises should be secured in a kennel or chained up. In August the same paper reported that two men in Colchester who had been bitten a rabid dog, and a month later a farmer and his daughter from Stebbing were receiving the Pasteur vaccine in a London hospital after being attacked by an infected animal. By October the restrictions on dogs had been extended to most of the county.

There were scattered reports of suspected rabid dogs being destroyed in Colchester, Saffron Walden, Stebbing, and Dunmow, though it is not clear which of these were confirmed histologically.

In January 1920 the Essex Newsman noted that the number of stray dogs had been much reduced by the high cost of food and its wartime rationing, as well as by the rabies regulations. Case numbers remained very low, and by February all dog control measures had been lifted in Essex. There were a few occasional scares until the beginning of 1921, none of which appear to have been confirmed on autopsy, and after this date there are no further reports of suspected rabies in dogs in the press. A standard medical work of 1929 noted that hydrophobia in humans had been rendered extinct by dog muzzling orders, though surprisingly – while acknowledging the efficacy of the Pasteur vaccine – it still advised deep incision of the bite wound, and cautery with nitric acid. There is now no evidence to show that this was effective but, before the development of the Pasteur vaccine, it was the routine treatment which had been used by Dr Grattan in Ongar half a century earlier.

These events of more than a century ago have many resonances with the recent Covid pandemic – hesitation in imposing the necessary public health measures, reluctance to comply with them, and denial of the efficacy of vaccines. Though rabies is now a largely forgotten disease in the UK, it still accounts for about 60,000 deaths a year worldwide (mainly in Africa and the Far East) and even today the disease remains incurable once the symptoms have developed. But the Pasteur vaccine is completely effective if administered before there are any clinical signs of the disease.

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Another Essex History

By Michael Leach

George Worley's *Essex: A Dictionary of the County*, mainly Ecclesiological was published in 1915 by G Bell & Sons of London. Arranged alphabetically by parish, it is not illustrated or indexed. As the title suggests, his principal interest was churches and church architecture.

The writer indicated that this book was intended to be an abbreviated vade mecum, conveniently sized for the casual visitor to that under-rated county, Essex. Though clearly a work derived largely from printed sources, the writer noted a surprising number of reference books which he appears to have used in its compilation, and which he recommends to readers for further reading. These range from the standard works on Essex history (such as Morant, 'The Gentleman', Wright, Buckler and Suckling) as well as a wide range of other published works, learned journals, and local parish histories (such as Palin's privately printed *Stifford and Neighbourhood, Past and Present*, and Benton's *History of the Rochford Hundred*). It is clear that Worley had also searched other less likely publications for relevant information, including such diverse sources as *The Builder*, *The Home Counties Magazine*, *Archaeologia*, and the *Transactions of our Society* as well as those of the *St Paul's Ecclesiological Society*. Reading the text suggests that it is unlikely that Worley had visited many, or indeed any, of the parishes he described, but he did correspond with various local clergy who had antiquarian interests (such as the Rev F W Galpin of Hatfield Broad Oak, the Rev W T House of Dunmow, and the Rev E Geldart of Little Braxted). It is clear that he had made use of the material contained in their replies and included some curious fragments may not be found elsewhere. Under Pleshey, for example, Worley recorded that one church bell was rung every Sunday at 8 am, 'mainly for the guidance of parishioners in regulating their private timepieces'. His observations on the county distribution of Kentish ragstone in relation to access to water transport are well ahead of the standard guides of that period.

Like most books of that time, there is no biographical information about the writer, or any indication of the reasons for his interest in Essex. He had a definite interest in ecclesiastical matters, as his introduction gives details of the formation of the new diocese of Chelmsford in 1914, and the accompanying financial adjustments which formed a necessary part of the Order in Council of 7 April.

Online searches for other published works that he authored show that he contributed three volumes to Bell's Cathedral Series, (namely Southwark (1905), the Temple church (1907) and St Bartholomew's, Smithfield (1908). He may be the George Worley who, in 1907, published a biography of the seventeenth century crypto-Catholic high churchman, Jeremy Taylor, as well as the author of *The Catholic Revival of the Nineteenth Century* (1894). All these suggest a familiarity with gathering, abbreviating and assembling information about ecclesiastical topics.

The usefulness of Worley's contribution to Essex history is limited both by its very abbreviated nature, and by research and new insights since his book was compiled, but it is of interest in the historiographical sense. Each parish entry consists of a brief architectural description of the church, brief details of the bells and commencement dates of the registers, and occasional notes on recent matters affecting the building which may not be found elsewhere. It is also handy for the ignorant contemporary, as his alphabetical list of parishes is conveniently divided between the archdeaconries of Essex and Colchester is useful for checking which jurisdiction was responsible for any particular parish.

My own copy is one withdrawn from the Essex County Council library service. The red cloth binding shows a considerable amount of wear and tear, so the volume must have been much used over the last century. Coffee or tea stains, and a few pencilled notes, have been added to the text by past readers.

Cholera outbreak at Theydon Bois

By Michael Leach

Cholera, perhaps due to the swift and dramatic fatality of its vulnerable victims, was the mid nineteenth century equivalent in the public domain of a combination of Covid19, SARS and bird 'flu. This is illustrated by the reaction of the authorities, and the somewhat hysterical press response, to a very limited outbreak on an isolated farm at Theydon Bois in October 1865. Even though a decade earlier Dr John Snow had clearly demonstrated that the disease was spread through contaminated drinking water, there were still misunderstandings about the epidemiology of cholera.

The Groombridge family lived at Little Gregories farm and, shortly after returning from a late September holiday in Weymouth, Mrs Groombridge was taken ill, as well as one of her daughters who died within six hours. Dr McNab, who had attended the family, was also taken ill and he too died within a few hours. The other fatalities were Mr Groombridge, one of the resident farm labourers, and a woman who had been brought in to lay out one of the corpses. With adequate hygiene, direct person-to-person spread of cholera is improbable, and subsequent investigation showed that there had been leakage from the farmhouse closet and the kitchen sink into the well on which the farm relied for its supply. The spread to non-family members must have been through the contaminated well water, or poor hand hygiene after attending sick members of the family. There were no further cases, and none were reported from seaside resort of Weymouth.

The reaction of statutory authorities and the national press was brisk. Freeman's Journal on 16 October queried whether the outbreak was due to cholera, West Indian black fever or Russian rinderpest. Blame was attached to the farm's purchase of a large quantity of manure from a London dairy. Other press reports noted that the West Ham Board of Guardians were pressing for the removal of certain local 'nuisances', Stratford was spreading quicklime over dung in its streets, and the Epping magistrates issued a directive to disinfect 'any place ... producing bad smells', and threatened 'the full penalties of the law' for anyone failing to do so. This clearly shows that the idea that cholera was spread by 'noxious effluvia', rather than by contaminated drinking water, was still prevalent in spite of Dr Snow's work a decade earlier.

The reaction to this deadly but very localised outbreak spread to the Privy Council who, according to one report, ordered an official enquiry. The Glasgow Herald of 25 October carried a long report from a consulting surgeon who had been treating Mr Groombridge off and on for three months before the deadly outbreak. In June, he had examined a sample of the Little Gregories well water which had 'an unpleasant odour and a nauseous taste' and chemical analysis had shown that it contained hydrogen sulphide and a considerable quantity of organic matter. It was the surgeon who had recommended the seaside holiday, but he seems to have missed the opportunity to recommend attention to the farm's water supply. In his view, the poor quality of the water had merely 'enfeebled the digestive organs' of the victims, making them more susceptible to cholera.

Mid nineteenth century treatment for cholera included large doses of calomel (mercuric chloride), sugar of lead (lead acetate), opium and castor oil, suggesting to the modern observer that, if cholera did not kill the victim, there was a good chance that the treatment would succeed! Even with better (and safer) management of the illness by the 1920s, the mortality was between 25 and 50%. The account of the outbreak at Theydon Bois is a reminder of the deadly nature of cholera, the alarm it created in the local population, and the vital importance of clean drinking water and the effective disposal of sewage.

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Mathematical or Brick Tiles?

By Michael Leach

This form of wall cladding is unknown in Essex, apart from a single example near Brentwood, destroyed by fire in 1976. Yet large numbers are found in Kent and Sussex, and smaller numbers in Surrey and counties to its west. There are also a few in other counties, including Norfolk, Suffolk and Hertfordshire. However, buildings clad in this way are difficult to identify as their appearance closely resembles conventional brickwork, and it is possible that there are examples still waiting to be identified, even in Essex. The Milton Hall brickworks at Southend was manufacturing brick tiles as late as the 1980s, though this was probably an opportunistic venture to supply restoration projects elsewhere, rather than an indicator of local demand. But it would be interesting to scrutinise some of Southend's older buildings, as well as those in other popular Essex seaside resorts, to look for evidence of brick tiles.

A brick tile cladding is fixed in a similar way to conventional tile hanging, being bedded in mortar and nailed onto battens, or straight onto the wall face, however constructed. They were flat, or gently cambered tiles, designed to present a flat vertical external face of standard brick dimensions – simulating the headers, stretchers and closers of normal brickwork. There was even a simulated gauged brick arch for door or window openings, formed in four parts but scored to imitate the splayed rubbing bricks. Once bedded in mortar and pointed up, the finished wall surface was almost indistinguishable from fairfaced brickwork. The deceit is only apparent to the discerning at the window reveals, and at the corners where the brick tiles were usually butted into a mortar fillet, or onto an applied timber corner piece. In more sophisticated work, a special right-angled tile could be obtained to wrap round the corner of the building. This was made by cutting and joining two tiles at right angles while the clay was still 'green'. Alternatively, the brick tiles at the corners could be mitred to provide a neat fit, or they could be butted against robust rusticated timber quoins.

Though modern brick tiles, like roof tiles, are made more secure with a nib to hook over the underlying timber batten, traditional ones relied solely on nailing every few courses, together with the adhesion provided by the mortar bed. Some inevitably failed over time due to 'nail sickness' (thereby providing a visual diagnostic clue to the astute observer), and occasionally (as at Lady Huntingdon's chapel in Brighton in 1826, and the Royal Pavilion in the same town in 1836) a substantial area of wall could collapse into the street without warning.

The origins of the brick tile are obscure, but they were probably developed in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century in those areas of southern England where tile hanging had long been a popular form of wall cladding. The earliest known brick tile, identified at Milton near Dorking, was marked with the date 1734. Brick tiles became popular in south eastern counties as a convenient way of updating the appearance of an old building and, as a lightweight cladding, were particularly suitable for the upper storey of jettied timber framed buildings. The fact that Essex was principally a county of lime plaster rendering – rather than tile hanging or weatherboarding – may explain why brick tiles never became popular in the county, even though it would appear to be easier way of updating a frontage than the usual Essex solution of building a nine-inch brick wall against the face of an existing timber framed building.

It has long been claimed that brick tiles became popular when bricks themselves became subject to tax in 1784. However, as clearly shown by Norman Nail, this cannot be true. It is very clear from the legislation that tiles were also taxed from this date (at a slightly higher rate per thousand than bricks) and that the 'weasel words' of the Act make it clear that the tax was applied to all tiles 'by whatsoever name such tiles are called'. Tax was assessed when the bricks and tiles were in the drying sheds before firing, though there was a 10% allowance for kiln waste. Owners of brickyards were also obliged to provide returns to the excise officer every six weeks, and it is reasonable to query the effectiveness of the enforcement of a tax which was so reliant on the honesty of the maker, or assiduous visits to the brickyard by the revenue official. The tax was abolished for tiles in 1833, and for bricks in 1850.

Brick tiles, though they had the advantage of being lighter and using less clay, took twice as long to produce as the same number of bricks. A good workman could produce between 400 and 500 brick tiles a day, compared with twice as many standard bricks, and there was probably a higher wastage rate on firing the tiles. This made them more expensive, though – being lighter in weight – the high transport costs from brickyard to building site would have been lower.

Thus the economic benefits of using brick tiles are difficult to establish. They undoubtedly had advantages when updating an older building to form a faux brick front, or for converting an unfashionable red brick façade into one of gault appearance. Their light weight was an advantage on projecting jetties or segmental bays, or on very high buildings, or if there were uncertainties about footings and subsoil. They were claimed to be useful for weatherproofing an exposed wall, and their use also simplified the task of matching an existing facade to a new extension. In the only known Essex example (Rochets at South Weald) the unknown architect chose brick tiles because his client had insisted on a very tight completion deadline which was not possible to meet by using conventional brickwork.

Though brick tiles seem to have had a vernacular origin at some point early in the late seventeenth century, their decorative function had become important by the late 1700s, notably in Brighton and Lewes where black glazed tiles were often used, usually (though not always) arranged in header bond. The black finish was achieved by applying a paste of the lead ore (galena) with additional colouring agents such as manganese oxide, and was claimed to be waterproof in highly exposed situations, such as the sea front (hence their alternative name of weather tiles). Towards the latter part of the eighteenth century, some of the 'big name' architects – such as Robert Adam, Henry Holland, John Nash, James and Samuel Wyatt, used brick tiles, particularly in remodelling commissions where red brickwork was regarded as unfashionable and 'white' (i.e. yellow or grey) tiles provided a remedy that was simple and quick to apply to the existing fabric.

Buildings clad with brick tiles continued to be repaired well into the twentieth century and beyond, and Essex's own brickworks at Bulmer can still supply them to order. They seem to have fallen out of favour by the 1870s, perhaps because of problems caused by nail corrosion leading to the sudden detachment of areas of walling. These were highlighted by nineteenth century newspaper reports. However, there was renewed interest in this form of cladding in the late 1950s when the lightweight CLASP system of prefabricated modular buildings for schools, hospitals and local authority buildings was developed (pioneered by the county architect of Nottinghamshire), and a special brick tile with a nib was devised by the Keymer brickworks in Sussex to resolve the problems caused by 'nail sickness'. Stimulated by the shortage of brick during the early 1960s, the Keymer brickworks which had been heavily involved in the CLASP project, produced many hundreds of thousands of 'Ketoclad' tiles of slightly larger dimensions to fit the modular requirements. These were mass produced by extrusion at their Maidenhead works, though it is not clear what proportion were brick rather than plain tiles. By the late 1960s, local authority spending cuts, and the vulnerability to damage of tile-hung walls at ground level on schools led to the abandonment of this form of cladding, and the closure of the Maidenhead works.

Unfortunately, these flat roofed CLASP buildings, including many schools in Hertfordshire, made extensive use of asbestos. They also fell short of modern standards of insulation and protection against solar gains, necessitating subsequent demolition or extensive modifications to bring them up to modern standards.

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Discovering William Byrd

By Andrew Smith

To celebrate the quatercentenary of the death of William Byrd (c.1540-1623) Stondon Massey Church, which he steadfastly refused to attend because he was a papist, held three events this summer. It culminated in the 'William Byrd Anniversary Concert' hosted by the Stondon Singers on the actual date of his death, 4th July. An Evensong Service was held, and a history presentation entitled 'The Life and Times of William Byrd: A Local History'. The latter was adapted into a commemorative book (for sale, £5.00 via www.williambyrdblogspot.com).

Researching the talk, and preparing a lively script, I had already available the manuscript and published work of Revd. Edward Henry Lisle Reeve who was Rector of Stondon Massey a hundred years ago, as well as a keen local historian and wonderful writer.

Reeve was an early enthusiast of William Byrd. One hundred years later much more is known about Byrd but trying to understand who he was is puzzling and whether, as a recusant Catholic, he was truly loyal to his monarch and patrons becomes questionable.

William Byrd was as famous as his contemporary William Shakespeare. Byrd's work however served a mostly private audience and fell into obscurity for at least three centuries because of Catholic suppression, particularly following the Gunpowder Plot of 1605.

Byrd's name appears today in many books about Elizabethan England. Browsing in a bookshop one lunchtime I came across a book entitled 'The Catholics' by Roy Hattersley, the former politician turned historian, who revealed "Among the silent Catholics, who were emboldened by the execution of Edmund Campion, was the wife of William Byrd, the composer and organist in the Elizabethan Chapel Royal. She, at least according to folklore, was in the crowd that witnessed his disembowelling, and dipped her handkerchief in the martyr's blood".

Detective work leads from one book to another.

In the early 1580s men who had been trained abroad as Jesuit priests were entering England as missionaries. One of the most high-profile was Edmund Campion, originally ordained in the Church of England. Campion travels the country and is welcomed, in his own words, "to hear their confessions ... [say] Mass, I preach; they hear with exceeding greediness and often receive the sacrament". But this is a dangerous course of action. From 1581, celebrating mass was punishable by death.

A network of spies engaged by the authorities would secretly join invited congregations at recusant country houses. Campion made an ill-judged return visit to Lyford Grange in Berkshire two days following his first visit. It was there that George Eliot, a professional priest-hunter, heard Campion preach on the text 'Jerusalem thou killest the prophets'. Jerusalem then, as in the later setting of William Blake's poem, was reference to England: 'England thou killest the prophets' was an incendiary speech. Later that day the house was surrounded, and the following morning intruders discovered Campion hiding in the 'priest's hole'. He was executed on 1st December 1581.

Edmund Campion, born 25th January 1540, was the same age as Byrd and as a boy had connections with St Paul's Cathedral where Byrd's brothers also sang. They grew up together: "A boyhood friendship between them might explain the intensity of Byrd's musical reaction to Campion's martyrdom".

Byrd's association with Jesuit Catholics also appears in the writing of Father William Weston.

In 1585, new laws were passed making it "illegal for ordained priests to return and minister in England is extended to all laymen and women assisting in the matter".

Meanwhile, Father Henry Garnet and Robert Southwell arrive undercover in England from Rome and are escorted to a safe house, Hurleyford in Buckinghamshire, by William Weston their Jesuit superior.

A secret welcoming party is held there in late July lasting eight days. William Weston and several unnamed friends are present as is the owner and host Richard Bold, a very skilled musician. One of the unnamed friends may have been William Fitton of Bailes who had “exchanged letters with Byrd on the subject of music”. The house has an organ, and Bold employs several instrumental musicians as well as choristers. It is an ideal retreat to sing songs, hear confession, and say Mass.

William Byrd is also present.

Father William Weston later writes *“Mr Byrd, the very famous musician and organist, was among the company. Earlier he had been attached to the Queen’s chapel, where he gained a great reputation. But he had sacrificed everything for the faith – his position, the court, and all those aspirations common to men who seek preferment in royal circles as means of improving their fortune”*.

Byrd certainly did not give up his post at the Chapel Royal, but stayed there until his death, albeit in semi-retirement when he moved to Stondon Massey around 1594.

In September Hurleyford is raided, its owner Richard Bold, and William Fitton, are arrested.

Investigators into the Babington Plot find a letter on the person of John Reason, Byrd’s servant, to “m[aste]r Fyton”. Walsingham’s office diary notes: “‘To seek out matters against Bryde’, ‘to sende to Fra[nci]s Mylls m[aste]r Brydes note’ and ‘To sende for M[aste]r Byrde’”.

Byrd’s home in Harlington is searched in August.

Byrd is undeterred. His meeting with Henry Garnet at Hurleyford begins a friendship with the most wanted man in England. Garnet is a keen musician with a fine singing voice. Byrd gives lessons to Garnet sharing his love of music. Garnet undoubtedly reciprocated by giving Byrd instruction in theological matters.

John Stow’s chronicle of 1605 records on the same page as Campion’s martyrdom: *“1582. John Paine executed at Chelmefford. John Paine priest, being indicted of high treason for words by him spoken to one Eliot, was attained, and condemned at Chelmesford on the last of March, and was there executed on the second day of April”*.

John Payne was arrested in Warwickshire having been detected for celebrating Mass in July 1581 at Haddon, Oxfordshire. George Eliot was his betrayer, the same man who had turned in Campion. Eliot already knew Payne was an ardent Catholic: he had met Payne while he was employed by the Petre family at Ingatestone Hall. Payne was employed as a steward to Lady Ann Petre but, in truth, was her private priest.

Payne was brought before Francis Walsingham who “could find no grounds upon which to convict Payne”. He was however found guilty on a fresh, invented charge that he attempted to enlist Eliot to murder the Queen. He protested at the gallows that “his ‘feet did never tread, his hands did never write, nor did his wit ever invent any treason against her Majesty”.

It is said that the poet Henry Walpole attended Edmund Campion’s execution. Afterwards he wrote twenty-one verses beginning ‘Why Do I Use My Paper Ink and Pen’ naming the martyr. Byrd set the first three verses to music in 1588 without naming Campion. It was probably sung in the Petre household also in remembrance of John Payne. Maybe the additional verses were sung in secret.

It is well documented that Sir John Petre became Byrd’s patron. Byrd was a frequent visitor to Thorndon Hall, West Horndon and Ingatestone Hall and stayed at Ingatestone Hall over the Christmas season of 1589.

John Petre was a keen musician. In 1589 he commissioned an expensive instrument from a Mr Brough (costing £50) which could have been an organ or elegantly decorated virginal. Mr Robert Broughe, a frequent visitor to Thorndon Hall where he was paid £2 a year 'to keep all my Master's wind instruments and virginals' was Byrd's brother-in-law. He had married William's sister Barbara.

Byrd in the meantime was busy composing three illegal Masses ("Mass Ordinary"). The Mass for Four Voices is completed around late 1592, and those for three and five voices by 1595. These are written in Latin and probably received their first performances in the Petre household. These were circulated secretly. The title page of the printed version is blank, and the work was not published at the time of composition.

Byrd later completes and publishes two books of Latin religious music known as the 'Gradualia'. To the uninitiated these are merely a collection of out-of-date Latin liturgical texts. The index merely shows a list of jumbled titles. Reassembled this, and the following set, form a complete set of Latin sung liturgy for the Roman Catholic year (known as "Mass Proper").

These volumes become treasured possessions of Byrd's Catholic friends.

In November 1605 Charles de Ligny is arrested at an inn and sent to Newgate prison "on account of certain papistical books written by William Byrd". This is clearly the 'Gradualia' because the person to whom it is dedicated is named.

In gratitude for a pay rise at the Chapel Royal Byrd dedicates the first volume to Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton. He is a privy councillor to King James I. Known to be a closet Catholic in the royal household, the King described him as a "tame duck with whom he hoped to catch many wild ones".

There are many disaffected Catholics. In June 1605 Garnet has a strange and theological conversation with his friend Robert Catesby over the killing of innocents, and the week later celebrates the Feast of Corpus Christi "with great solemnity and music", at Fremnalls in Downham, Essex, the home of Sir John Tyrell. Mass is said at 2am and "it is tempting to think that Byrd may have been present". Spies are watching the house. The priests manage to escape safely but Garnet is uneasy about Robert Catesby's behaviour to the extent that he pays another visit to Fremnalls in early July where Francis Tresham and Lord Monteagle are also present with Catesby. He urges them against "rushing headlong into mischief".

A few days later, in mid-July Garnet is visited at his London home by Father Oswald Tesimond where he hears under seal of Confession that Catesby intends to assassinate both monarch and government by blowing up the House of Parliament. Garnet is alarmed and writes to his supervisor in Rome, "There is a risk that some private endeavour may commit treason or use force against the King".

The detail of the "Powder Treason" is unrelated to Byrd. Early on 5th November John Johnson, alias Guy Fawkes, is found in the cellar of the House of Parliament with several barrels of gunpowder round about him ready to ignite and with no plausible alibi.

There is great national celebration that the plot is foiled. Either way this is unwelcome news for all Catholics. The terrorists are hunted down. Garnet is also looked for although it is unclear of his involvement in the plot. He is on the run and arrested in Worcestershire on 27th January 1606. He is taken to London where he is repeatedly questioned and confesses that he heard about the Plot under Confession but states he is not guilty.

Garnet's trial on 28th March is presided over by Robert Cecil, now the Earl of Salisbury, and others including the Earl of Northampton, Byrd's dedicatee of the 'Gradualia'. The Jury to find Garnet "guilty of treason for not revealing the Powder Plot".

Garnet was executed at St Paul's Churchyard on 3rd May 1606.

Undeterred by the Gunpowder Treason Byrd publishes a second volume of 'Gradualia' in 1607. He dedicates the book to his patron and friend Lord Petre. Sir John Petre became baron in 1603, a title conferred on accession of King James I to the throne.

The final pieces of music in the volume are settings for the Feast of St Peter and St Paul. Set for six voices it contains a complete Mass plus two psalm settings intended for the Feast Day (29th June). However, there is also a setting for St Peter ad Vincula, St Peter in chains, commemorated on 1st August. It does not take much stretch of the imagination to align this with the chains that have bound Catholics throughout Elizabethan England.

Peter, the first Pope is also seen as a protector. For Byrd Lord Petre is also his protector and patron. Peter is the rock, and stone. Lord Petre is from Ingatestone.

It is the ultimate tribute to one of his greatest supporters and friends.

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The Monument to Arthur Winsley in St James's Church, Colchester, 1738.

By James Bettley

One of the reasons to visit St James's Church on East Hill, Colchester, is to see the monument to Arthur Winsley, founder of the Winsley Almshouses in Old Heath Road. The monument was set up in 1738, in accordance with the wishes expressed in his will, but until now its sculptor – clearly someone of more than average ability – was not known, although in the 1960s the Victoria and Albert Museum ventured the opinion that it was the work of Michael Rysbrack. Now, research by David Beattie published in a booklet on behalf of St James's Church has identified the sculptor as Richard Van Spangen (died 1757).

Richard Van Who? For all but the most knowledgeable scholars in this field he is an obscure character, with only three other works to his name, none of them a figurative sculpture. David Beattie's booklet not only connects him with the Winsley monument, based on the faculty, contract and receipt to be found in the Essex Record Office, it also considerably expands on the little that is known about Van Spangen's life and career, including the important fact that he was apprenticed to Samuel Fulkes, one of the leading masons of the time: amongst other appointments Fulkes was 'overseer of the masons' for the building of St Paul's Cathedral in London. Van Spangen appears to have been well regarded in his day, even if he has been largely forgotten since.

There is much interesting detail in the tale told by David Beattie. For a start there is the fact that Winsley asked to be buried in St James's Church, in spite of his having been a lifelong Nonconformist; in fact he had only been able to become an alderman after the repeal in 1719 of the Occasional Conformity Act, which barred anyone who attended anything other than Church of England services from holding public office. His will was curiously specific when it came to his monument: he set aside £250 to pay for it, and it was to be erected against the south wall of the church, 'with my Statue cut out in Marble lying with the left hand under the Head and a Book in the right hand and in a Night Gown with inscriptions as my most judicious friends shall think proper'. Van Spangen's bill came to £203 3s., which included a smaller version set up in the almshouse chapel; but there was an additional £17 19s. to pay for the railings in front of it. Mr Beattie suggests that £203 would be the equivalent today of over £58,000.

The monument was executed exactly as prescribed by Winsley, with one important variation: it was placed against the east wall of the south chapel, in front of the tall four-light window. It is not clear why this happened, but it gave rise to a bitter dispute when the Revd C. C. Naters, a High Churchman appointed rector in 1895, wanted to turn the south chapel back into a Lady Chapel.



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The Winsley monument, with its 'figure of a man in his nightshirt' (in fact a loose garment fashionable at the time worn at home during the day, and not for sleeping in), was clearly not in the right place as far as Naters was concerned, and he hid it behind an altar with retable and high reredos. When he came to apply retrospectively for a faculty in 1914 there were numerous objections, motivated partly by opposition to Naters' churchmanship, and permission was refused; the offending articles were taken down, not without protest, in 1915. Naters died in 1917 and his successor, the Revd Bertram Hirst, went about things more diplomatically but with equal determination, and in 1923 the monument was moved, with the agreement of the Winsley trustees, to its present location.

The saga of moving the monument takes up the second half of David Beattie's booklet, and tells us much about church politics and attitudes at a time when Anglo-Catholic ritual was still regarded with deep suspicion and hostility by much of the population; in fact the dispute was the starting point for Mr Beattie's researches, which then led him to documents that identified Richard Van Spangen as the sculptor. The main unanswered question, in spite of Mr Beattie's best endeavours, is why Van Spangen was chosen for the work, but perhaps publication of this excellent booklet, well produced and nicely illustrated, will prompt others to suggest the reason.

The Memorial to Alderman Arthur Winsley at the Church of St James the Great, Colchester (28 pp) is available from David Beattie, david.beattie@btinternet.com, for a suggested donation of £10 to St James's Church.

Essex Seen from Elsewhere

By Michael Leach

i) St Mary's church, Mundon, is vested in that heroic organisation, Friends of Friendless Churches. This organisation benefitted from grants from the government's Culture Recovery Fund, totalling a little over £3M between August 2020 and June 2022. This enabled it to carry out repairs on 29 of the churches for which it is responsible in England. The church at Mundon was one of the beneficiaries and the recent repairs were part of a long-standing struggle to combat subsidence. A recent photo shows the south side of the interior of the building stripped out, with a series of holes dug for piles preparatory to underpinning. Other work at Mundon has included a new drainage system, masonry repairs, and conservation of wall plaster and wall paintings.

ii) The Petre mortuary chapel at Thorndon Park, Brentwood, is in the care of the Historic Chapels Trust (HCT), an organisation which has also benefitted from a central government initiative, the Covid Recovery Grants programme. This has funded repairs on eight of its chapels, including the Petre mortuary chapel, and it is hoped that this will facilitate their transfer to other sympathetic bodies, as the HCT is to be wound up after struggling for its survival for some years. New owners for a further twelve chapels in its care (none of which are in Essex) will also have to be found in due course.

iii) Roman Catholic cathedral at Brentwood, designed by Quinlan Terry in 1991, has been listed Grade II* under the Thirty Year Rule for listing.

iv) The United Free Church, Woodford Green, designed by the Arts and Crafts architect Harrison Townsend, was built in 1904, albeit a much simplified form of the original concept. It is now listed Grade II*. It is a large and unusual building in a free Byzantine style with large brick and stone-banded arches dividing the internal spaces and supporting a central vault. Its planned tower, however, was never built. Some rather unconvincing paintings were applied to the central vault in 1963, and some remodelling took place in 1991, but the building remains substantially as originally built. It was closed in June 2022 and is seeking a new use.

v) St Peter's church, Colchester. Re-ordering is a term likely to cause concern to conservationists, yet it is often necessary to make places of worship suitable for modern needs, and to promote their usefulness to the local community. So it is encouraging to see this process carried out sensitively, as is planned at St Peter's. There is praise for the use of the space freed up by removal of some pews, and for the careful detailing of an internal ramp which is too often the subject of utilitarian design. Here there is to be the ingenious use of former cast iron gasoliers retrieved from the scrapped pews to provide an edge balustrade, and the historic floorscape will be retained, along with the ghostly marks from the former box pews still visible on the medieval arcade.

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Domestic Air Raid Shelters in WWII

Colchester: A request for help

By Jonathan Pearsall

I have decided to try and identify the remains of one bit of Colchester's history which probably has not been researched, at least not in a systematic way, and that is the World War 2 domestic air raid shelters. I am interested not so much in the public shelters such as that in Colchester Castle or in school grounds such as at Hamilton School, but shelters for use by private households.

The standard shelter made available by the war time government for private households was the so-called Anderson Shelter. It was of a simple, but effective design of corrugated steel sheeting set in the ground, covered by earth and offering protection at least against a direct bomb hit. The shelters were free for those below a certain income and for others, sold at a modest cost.



Despite the passing of time, it appears that a remarkable number of them remain. Abandoned and rotten perhaps but some in use today but adapted for different purposes - often storage in gardens.

It was possible for private individuals to purchase shelters of individual design usually constructed of concrete and brick. I have so far come across three in my near neighbourhood though in fact one of them is not quite what I expected it to be.

The Maldon Road example is a relatively simple construction of poured concrete, with a central ventilation shaft, steps down and with a sharp left turn into the shelter itself designed to reduce the impact of a blast. It was covered in earth to give extra protection, but with no lighting or power.



The *Cambridge Road* example, to which I have yet to gain access, is much more sophisticated and made of prefabricated concrete sections with ventilation and a separate emergency exit shaft and would not have come cheap. At a distance it looks like the type built, but of a larger size, for the use of airfield personnel if the field was under attack.



The *Shrub End* shelter is set twice as deep as the Maldon Road example with two flights of steps doglegging into the main shelter chamber. There is a steel blast door into the chamber and within it an elaborate ventilation system and some sort of drainage arrangement, power, and lighting. This shelter was clearly designed for safe occupation for some time, whereas the others would be used only for a very short time. This must be an example of a shelter constructed in the post war period as to be nuclear bomb 'proof' or more specifically, to provide shelter from the radiation fallout after the bomb's detonation. The development of the 'A Bomb' and later the 'H Bomb' in the late 40's and into the 50's coupled with a real fear of nuclear war with the USSR, prompted the government to re-establish the Civil Defence Corps and offer advice as to what to do after a nuclear attack. Most would have to rely on hiding under the kitchen table whilst those with the means, could take advantage of shelters designed and built by private companies. It was calculated that two weeks would be sufficient for the radiation levels to have fallen to a level as to allow people to venture out in safety and shelters such as these were designed with this in mind.



I have more research to do on these three examples (and improve the quality of the images!) but in the meantime if readers know of any examples of shelters, or what you think may be or have been shelters, I would be grateful if you could let me know so that I can follow up on them.

I can be contacted at: jonathan.pearsall@ntlworld.com

Funeral Rituals

By Michael Leach

Funerary practices are of great interest to archaeologists, but rather less so to historians. Anyone familiar with Henry Machyn's diary would be impressed by the ritual pomp and pageantry accompanying the mid sixteenth century funerals that he described, and the very close relationship that the formalities had to the status of the dead person, even down to the type and number of flags and pennants that could be displayed in the procession to church. The heralds were closely involved in determining what was appropriate for individuals from different social strata, and even as late as 1780 Joseph Edmondson's *Complete Body of Heraldry* contained a section on 'the origin, use and abuse of funeral trophies' though surely the rigidly regulated traditions must have almost disappeared by then. Machyn's business in London included the provision of the fabrics required for the flags, pennants and funeral furnishings so naturally he had a special interest in this side of the rituals and his journal provides numerous short accounts of the displays at the last rites of London citizens. Unfortunately, his manuscript was badly damaged in the Cotton library fire of 1731, so the descriptions are somewhat fragmented, but enough remains to give an idea of the complexity of the funeral processions that he noted, with their status-appropriate flags, paid mourners dressed in black, singing clerks, heralds, candles, torches, decorated hearses and so on. The tradition carried on unaltered for the few remaining years that Machyn lived after the accession of Queen Elizabeth, and these included the singing clerks (albeit performing in English), the black drapes in the church, and the gowned men.

I had assumed that none of this had survived the Commonwealth period and was surprised by Joseph Bufton's diary accounts of ritual pomp at some of the funerals in Coggeshall in the last decades of the seventeenth century. Though lacking the flags, the heralds, the coat armour and the other heraldic trimmings, the grander funerals were marked by processions which were clearly derived from those earlier traditions, with paid mourners (usually the poor) capped and gowned in black, carrying torches into a church which was draped in black for the occasion. The 1662 Order for the Burial of the Dead allowed the singing of much of the service by the priest and his clerks, though Bufton does not mention this. Such formal funerals were usually for men (though a few were for high-status women) from the more prominent families in that parish, and usually took place at night by candle or torch light. One, for example, was accompanied by between 30 and 40 men, dressed in black gowns and caps carrying torches, and was attended by 'half a score' of coaches. The chancel was draped with black hangings, as was the pulpit and the 'great Bible'. For another, the body was brought from London 'in great pomp', preceded by 200 horsemen, some 40 of whom were in black cloaks, and followed by about 10 coaches. The burial was by torchlight and was attended by 'an abundance of people'. At the funeral of the wife of the Coggeshall minister, the pall was carried (according to my annotated copy of Dale) by six gentlewomen dressed in white hoods and 'night veils' (perhaps a less dense form of veil which enabled the bearers to see in the dark).

Over just over four decades, Bufton noted well over a hundred funerals, about eleven of which took place after dark, usually following a sermon. Today we might regard nocturnal burials as a suspicious attempt to avoid public scrutiny, but in Bufton's time, judging by the social standing of the deceased, it was probably regarded as a mark of status in the parish. Litten noted that this practice began in the early seventeenth century, and lasted for a century and a half, and suggested that it was a backlash against the expense and pomp of the heraldic funeral. A search through Machyn's diary failed to find any mention of burials in the hours of darkness, though this could be because the diarist's main interest was the composition of the procession, and the provision of a good dinner afterwards. For other spectacles that he witnessed he did sometimes record the time ('of the clock'), but perhaps nocturnal funerals (if they did occur) were something he did not regard as significant or unusual enough to record, though it may be, as Litten suggests, that the practice only developed after his time.

Another feature of funerals was the accompanying sermon. In Bufton's time, by no means all burials were preceded by one, though it often accompanied the higher status funerals. The officiating clergyman's fee for this extra may have made it unaffordable to many – Bufton, for example, paid £1 in 1695 for the one preached at his father's funeral. The 1662 Order for the Burial of the Dead makes no provision for a sermon, so it was perhaps an optional extra for those who could afford it. The provision of mourning rings and gloves was common at a later date, and Bufton's account for his father's funeral in 1695 included 19 pairs of the latter, in varying qualities of leather according to the status of the recipient.

However, I had wrongly assumed that funeral sermon was a product of the seventeenth century. Close scrutiny of Machyn's diary shows that, before the break with Rome, a sermon (presumably in English) sometimes accompanied the Latin 'morrow mass' which took place on the day after the burial. Following the abandonment of the 'morrow mass', the sermon seems to have increasingly become a feature of the funeral service itself and - if Machyn's account can be relied upon - particularly so after the accession of Elizabeth I.

Sources

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Dale, S., 1863. *The Annals of Coggeshall*, Coggeshall

Litten, J., 1991. *The English Way of Death*, London

Nichols, J.G (ed)., 1848. *The Diary of Henry Machyn from 1550 to 1563*, Camden Society

New Publications: 'Mrs. Pankhurst's Bodyguard' by Dr. Emelyne Godfrey

By Adrian Corder-Birch

'Mrs. Pankhurst's Bodyguard', is about Emily Katherine 'Kitty' Marshall (1870-1947), who lived at Theydon Bois and later at Bridge House, Queen Street, Sible Hedingham for many years. Her husband was Arthur Edward Willoughby Marshall, a solicitor, who defended the Pankhurst family in many of the civil and criminal proceedings against them. He was also the solicitor for the Women's Social and Political Union, often risking his own personal safety and career.

Emily Marshall was a devoted follower and intimate friend of Mrs. Pankhurst, the suffragette leader and courageously faced imprisonment on three occasions for the Women's Suffrage cause. The first time was in 1910 following the throwing of a potato at the fanlight window over the front door of Winston Churchill, then Home Secretary. Many years later, her chief distinction was in raising a large fund to erect a statue of Mrs. Pankhurst in the Victoria Tower Gardens, Millbank, London. The hardest part was persuading Stanley Baldwin, the Prime Minister, to unveil the statue, which was attended by 10,000 people.

She also arranged for a portrait of Mrs. Pankhurst to be hung in the National Portrait Gallery. Kitty Marshall became a well-known and talented water colourist and four of her paintings, including one of Hulls Mill on the border of Sible Hedingham and Great Maplestead, are in the book.

She was an active member of the Hedinghams Nursing Association, raised funds for the restoration of Great Maplestead Church roof and other good causes. She was buried in Sible Hedingham Churchyard on 2nd December 1947 aged 77 years. There are blue plaques to Kitty and Willoughby outside Bridge House, which were provided jointly by Essex Heritage Trust and Sible Hedingham Parish Council. I arranged for the two blue plaques to be erected a few years ago when I was Clerk to Sible Hedingham Parish Council. Her art studio, specially built for her, still stands opposite Bridge House and is now a garage.

The book is hardback containing 256 pages and illustrations, including her four paintings in colour.

'A Centenary History of the Courtauld Homes of Rest 1923-2023 and a Brief History of Other Almshouses in the Halstead Area by Adrian Corder-Birch

By Adrian Corder-Birch

This book is a history of Almshouses in Halstead and District with an emphasis upon the Courtauld Homes of Rest in Halstead, which is celebrating its centenary. In 1923 Samuel Augustine Courtauld built twenty almshouses on the site of the former Halstead Workhouse. The concise history of the Workhouse, its demolition and the Halstead Board of Guardians has therefore been included. A biography of the founder and his other generous benefactions are outlined. The wonderful architecture, the construction of the homes and one hundred year history has been detailed together with the gardens, grounds, allotments, spinney and meadow. The personalities comprising the trustees, chairmen and clerks, are the subject of brief biographies. Importantly, the residents who occupy the homes and the contractors who maintain them have not been forgotten.

The book also includes a short history of other almshouses in the surrounding villages, particularly at Castle Hedingham, Earls Colne, Great Yeldham and Sible Hedingham. The history of the former almshouses in Castle Hedingham has been traced back to the seventeenth century, but only the picturesque Webster Almshouses at Sible Hedingham still survive.

The book comprises 104 pages, A4, numerous illustrations some in colour, with a Foreword by George Courtauld.

Event Notices:

Tuesday 12th September, 7.30pm, £5

Halstead 21st Century Group Presents: Grounded A Talk. By the author of The Oak Papers, James Canton
Halstead United Reformed Church, 161 Kings Road, CO9 1HJ

James Canton takes us on a journey through England seeking to see through more ancient eyes, to understand what landscape meant to those that came before us. We visit stone circles, the West Kennet long barrow, a Crusader round church and sites of religious visions. We find artefacts buried in farmers' fields. There is history and meaning encoded into the lands and places we live in, if only we take the time to look.

www.halstead21stcentury.org.uk

ESAH Events & Visits Questionnaire

Dear member,

We have noticed a steep drop in the numbers booking for events and visits. As ESAH has always considered these as an essential offering for members, we need to establish why there is so little interest, post-Covid.

We'd be grateful if you were able to answer a few questions:

I don't book for events and visits because:

- 1) I don't like them
- 2) they are badly timed (mid-week, weekend, etc)
- 3) the dates coincide with events organised by other bodies
- 4) they are too expensive
- 5) they are places I've already visited
- 6) the locations or events are not appealing to me
- 7) I'm still cautious about Covid and similar infections

Or, please tell us of any other reasons

Can you tell us what sort of visits & events you would enjoy and support?

You can either print this page and post to Howard Brooks at the address on your programme card. Or you can email your responses to Howard.

Thank You!

ESAH Events for 2023

Saturday 16th September. Essex Record Office, £25.

Above and Below: the Archaeology and History of Essex Castles.

An all day conference. An impressive list of speakers on several Essex castles. Run jointly with ERO.

Please note: this can only be booked via the ERO website.

Friday 20th October, Waltham Abbey, 11:30. £5.

Walking tour of Waltham Abbey.

Please note: this may not suit members with mobility problems.

Saturday 4th November, all day. ESAH Symposium. £10

United Reformed Church, Chelmsford

Five speakers on historical and archaeological topics. Includes a light sandwich lunch and tea/coffee.

Please email/write to the Excursions Secretary to book (howard000brooks@gmail.com). **Payment: Online as before.** Let us know if you require account details. Please give event reference and number of bookings (e.g. HAR 2). Alternatively: send a cheque to Hon Sec's Colchester address or you can pay cash on the day.

PLEASE NOTE: If you pay online you must tell us otherwise we won't be expecting you.

The visits on the Society's programme are open to members and associate members only. Non-members attending may not be covered by insurance.

The Society can accept not liability for loss or injury sustained by members attending any of its programmed events. Members are asked to take care when visiting old buildings or sites and to alert others to any obvious risks. Please respect the privacy of those who invite us into their homes.

Your Photographs Needed!

Council is arranging for three pop-up banners to be made for use at exhibitions, meetings, and conferences. These will replace our current display boards which are very large and very heavy.

Consequently, we require high-quality photographs of local historic buildings, archaeological sites, monuments, and objects, historic landscapes etc.

Photos of any of our members visiting the above would be ideal too!

To avoid copyright problems it would be ideal if these photographs came from members, rather than the internet. If your photograph contains another member please ensure they are happy for the photograph to be used before sending it.

Please contact Hon Secretary with any offers at: howard000brooks@gmail.com

Help with Rebow Family Portraits

By Howard Brooks

An art historian member of the Suffolk Records Society is very much wanting to locate a copy of the 30th June 1908 auction sale catalogue by Ernest S. Beard & Daniell at the Colchester Corn Exchange, of the Rebow Family Portraits & other chattels, removed from Wivenhoe Park.

If any member who knows of, or has, a copy they would be willing to allow this person to examine, please contact Howard Brooks.

Membership

Subscriptions are due 1st January each year as follows:

Single Member - £25

Family Membership - £30

Student - £15

Associate Member - £15

Institutions - £25

Associate Institutions - £25

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The Society's Publication and Research Fund (PRF)

This Endowment Fund supports the publication of articles in the *Transactions* of the Society as well as Occasional Papers. It is also available to support research consistent with the Society's objectives. As an endowment fund, only the interest earned from it can be used to provide such support. The amount of the Fund is in excess of £50,000 and we continue to seek further donations.

Donations for this Fund, or the to Society's General Fund where the capital can also be used in support of the Society's objectives are welcome.

Donations should be made payable to the 'Essex Society for Archaeology and History' and could attract Gift Aid.

Please address all enquiries to the Hon. Treasurer, Bill Abbott at 13 Sovereign Crescent, Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3UZ or 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 a 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 Howard Brooks or Victoria Rathmill.