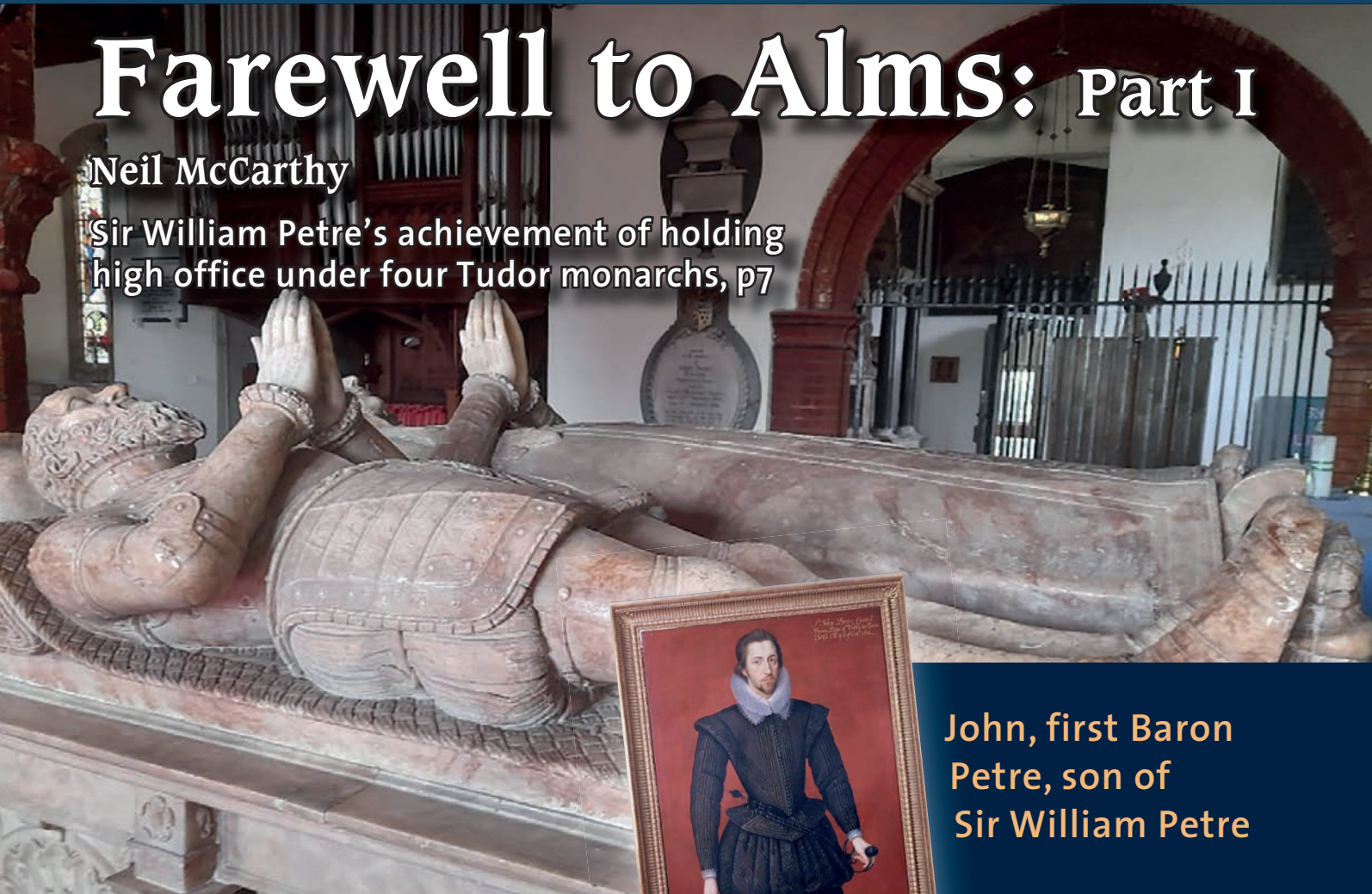




Farewell to Alms: Part I

Neil McCarthy

Sir William Petre's achievement of holding
high office under four Tudor monarchs, p7



John, first Baron
Petre, son of
Sir William Petre



The current Lord
Petre celebrates
his birthday, p6

Also in this issue:

- Clavering Castle: Religious Miracles and an Ancestral Seat of Medieval England
- Walter Map's '*De gradone milite strenuissimo*': An East Saxon version of the Anglo-Saxon origin myth?
- The Pectoral Cross of Abbot Beche: *a rare medieval survival?*
- A Thameside Mission Priest: Part II – Frederick Haslock at Grays 1886-1906, A Significant Benefactor

Welcome to the Autumn 2022 issue of the *Essex Journal*



As editor of the Journal, I sometimes have enjoyable tasks to perform alongside the drudgery of putting together the material for publication, such as when virtue may be recognised and rewarded. This is one such time. The occasion is the 80th birthday of John, 18th

Baron Petre, our patron and long-time supporter, and it could not be allowed to pass without a permanent acknowledgement in the Society's archives.

Within these pages you will find a variety of interesting articles many of which touch on the activities and interests of Baron Petre, who is associated with a good many Essex-based societies ranging from the St. John's Ambulance to Brentwood Theatre, from the Fryerning Angling Club to the Ginge Petre Almshouses. These very almshouses form a large part of Neil McCarthy's two-part study including the background to Sir William Petre's rise to power and tenacious survival in the world of political and religious intrigue. The remit of almshouses as refuges and hospitals for the poor and needy acquired a religious dimension which attracted the attention of political rivals. The provision of support for the poor has probably always been contentious, finding a balance between the meeting of the needs of the deserving but unfortunate and those deemed feckless or wanton. The first part plots the Petre family's course through troubled waters where many perils awaited those who found themselves on the 'wrong' side of the debate.

The enigmatic Clavering Castle is the subject of Simon Coxall's review of the community-led archaeology and local history project involving extensive documentary research alongside a fresh archaeological survey, from which Clavering Landscape History Group has cast a new light on this corner of northwest Essex. The presence of a 'castle' here is mentioned in pre-Conquest documents but there is little surface evidence to indicate where or what it might have been. Archaeology has come to the rescue, however, and the results are surprising....

Colchester – now once again a 'city' after a long time in reduced circumstances - has been famous for its national importance as a Trinovantian *oppidum*, Roman *colonia*, seat of local governance in the

Saxon and Norman periods and latterly the site of the famous Civil War siege. Beyond these 'factual' references the city has often held a greater claim to legendary or even mythic significance – is its Roman name *Camulodunum* the source of medieval tales of Camelot? Less well-known is the attack on Colchester recounted in Walter Mapp's *De gradone milite strenuissimo* which has resonances among the body of 'origin myths' ascribed to the early Saxon period by medieval tellers of tales.

Phillip Heath-Coleman takes us through the legendary background to Mapp's tale, bringing in the splendidly enigmatic "*Oath book or Red Parchment Book of Colchester*" and a wealth of other early material. Who knew our newest and oldest city had such a rich and colourful past?

‘ Colchester – now once again a ‘city’ after a long time in reduced circumstances... Who knew our newest and oldest city had such a rich and colourful past? ’

A "gold and enamelled cross [which] belonged to Abbot John Beche, last superior of the Benedictine Abbey of St John's, Colchester" is the subject of Philip J. Wise's paper describing the sumptuous object which is now in the possession of the abbot of Buckfast Abbey. The religious inscriptions which decorate the piece indicate a wish to evince a devout faith. Its sometime owner, Thomas (John) Beche, was the last medieval abbot of the Benedictine St John's Abbey, Colchester and one of a few senior figures amongst the clergy and laity who were executed during the reign of Henry VIII for their adherence to their Catholic faith. Indeed, faith and fact intersect (where they do not actually collide) in the history of the

cross and Wise's survey of the provenance provides a great deal of intriguing detail.

We conclude in this issue the tale of Frederick Haslock's missionary work in the London docks, Tilbury and Grays. The burgeoning population, the squalor and the poverty evoked strong reactions in the reverend who did all he could to establish recreational and other facilities in order to break the hold that alcohol seems to have had over the lives of the poor.

Books sent in for review have been a little thin on the ground since COVID struck, but I am pleased to report that we have a good selection now out with reviewers and the first of them are included in this issue.

Due to the quantity of material in the present issue, the **In Brief** round-up has had to be omitted.



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Notes to contributors

Contributions are welcome and should be sent in a Word format to the Honorary Editor at the email listed above. General correspondence can either be emailed or posted to: Amore, Mill Road, Boxted, Essex CO4 5RW. The Editor is more than happy to discuss any proposed articles as he does not guarantee that unsolicited material will be published. Contributors are requested to limit their articles to 2,500/4,000 words, other than by prior agreement with the Editor. Style notes are available.

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Cover illustration below:

Sir William Petre and Lady Anne's tomb



CONTENTS

Editorial	2
In Brief	4
A Birthday Message from Maureen Scollan	6
Farewell to Alms - Part I Neil McCarthy	7
Clavering Castle: Religious Miracles and an Ancestral Seat of Medieval England Simon Coxall	15
Walter Map's ' <i>De gradone milite strenuissimo</i> ': An East Saxon version of the Anglo-Saxon origin myth? Phillip Heath-Coleman	28
The Pectoral Cross of Abbot Beche: a rare medieval survival? Philip J. Wise	36
A Thameside Mission Priest Frederick Haslock at Grays 1886-1906 Part II Brian Buxton	42
Book Reviews	45
Slow But Sure. A History of the Portway Family and Tortoise Foundry at Halstead	
The Orchards of Eastern England: history, ecology and place	
Old Copped Hall 1258-1748 A Massive Object of Desire	
Territoriality And The Early Medieval Landscape. The Countryside of the East Saxon Kingdom	



Cover illustration left:
John, first Baron Petre

A Birthday Message from Maureen Scollan

HAPPY BIRTHDAY YOUR LORDSHIP

This short article for Lord Petre's "special" birthday has been planned around some of my experiences in the earlier years of the Record Office rather than only of Lord Petre.

Before I joined the Essex Police in 1971 I was on the staff of the Record Office as a clerk who was later promoted to assistant archivist. Essex County Council at that time had a contract with the Petre family for using a room in the north wing of Ingatestone Hall as an education centre. Members of the archive staff took it in turns to plan the themes and the exhibitions based on their special interests, and separate groups of school children and adults enjoyed the results.

The contents of each session were printed in the wide-ranging photographic publications often referred to as the 'half-crown booklets'. The main person in these overall events was the County Educational Officer A.C. Edwards, always known as 'Gus' because he used to say to his lazier students when he was a school-teacher 'that won't do for Augustus.'

As a newly promoted assistant archivist I took my turn in supervising the visitors to Ingatestone Hall on a Saturday, for the first few occasions being accompanied by F.G. Emmison, the County Archivist. On one of those days he drew my attention to two men walking past the education room towards the main gates,

the younger one having light hair in a ponytail who was wheeling a motorbike. Emmison told me that the younger man was Lord Petre's son, John, who worked at the Hammersmith Theatre in London. As we watched, John climbed onto his motor bike and rode away.

More recently I met Lord Petre when he was Lord Lieutenant during the years that I was Chairman of the Friends of Historic Essex. I also saw one of his predecessors in action while I was serving as a voluntary special constable at the same time as working in the Record Office. On the occasion of some special event at Police Headquarters Sir John Ruggles-Brise inspected those of us "on parade."

In my ten years as Chairman of The Friends of Historic Essex while Lord Petre was our president and the Lord Lieutenant, I was in his presence while wearing a different sort of uniform; he presented the BEM to Keith Coleman who was organist and choirmaster at Riven-

hall parish church where I was in the choir - and still am. On that occasion I recall being amused when Lord Petre asked me what I was doing there rather than at an FHE meeting!



Lord Petre

Farewell to Alms - Part I

Neil McCarthy

Sir William Petre's achievement of holding high office under four Tudor monarchs during a period of religious tumult is comprehensively documented.¹ His descendant, John, the 18th Baron Petre, uses fewer words to explain these 27-years of political brinkmanship: "He always played a straight bat."² Seemingly irreconcilable doctrinal differences imposed by successive Sovereigns were dextrously overcome, securing wealth and land for Sir William. Founding an almshouse charity was part of his survival strategy.³

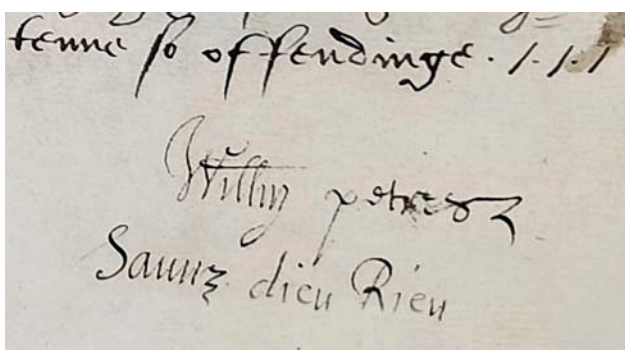


Image left:
Sir William
Petre



John, first Baron Petre

Image below:
Sir William's
signature
beneath
which he has
inscribed the
family motto,
on the deeds
of foundation
of the Ginge
Petre Charity



Lady Anne and Sir William's table tomb in the parish church

(All images are © the author unless otherwise specified)

From Devonian farming stock, Sir William rose, via a law degree at Oxford, to occupy an active part in the Dissolution of the Monasteries while Secretary of State to Henry VIII. He served Edward VI, and Mary I, in the same role, finally becoming Counsellor and acting-Secretary to Elizabeth I. He established a fine new home in Essex from among the many estates that fell to him by purchase, exchange or gift. After his death in 1572, Sir William's legacy of a property-owning and professedly Catholic dynasty passed, first through his son John, and continues to this day with the current Lord Petre of Writtle.⁴ The Ginge Petre almshouse charity he created at Ingatestone, likewise, still flourishes.



Sir William and Lady Anne's tomb (reverse angle)

The Dissolution and After

The Dissolution disrupted customary if erratic provision of poor relief administered at the ‘hospitals’ of the religious orders. Although some medical care might be available, ‘hospital’ was then understood as offering hospitality; shelter and food.⁵ The Ginge Petre original ‘hospital almshouse’ also appears as the poor house and workhouse in later documents indicating its primary purpose.

Parish and craft guilds, especially in larger settlements, afforded some relief for paupers and vagrants but it was the abbeys, priories and convents of the medieval period that provided a degree of respite in rural areas. Widespread, entrenched poverty and increasing numbers of those suffering absolute destitution caused Parliament to enact over two dozen statutes between 1485 and 1649. Although this raft of legislation made attempts to ameliorate hardship, its main motive was the quelling of societal unrest.⁶ “*For ye have the poor always with you.*”⁷

Almshouses outside of the religious orders were established in Essex in the century before Sir William’s own. Saffron Walden’s was in existence in 1420. Morant⁸ details many long-standing almshouse endowments including those in parishes neighbouring Ingatestone. However, only Sir William’s foundation had the distinction of deriving from a unique Papal Bull and a Royal Proclamation.

In 1553, Sir William navigated transition from ardently Protestant Edward VI’s reign to continue as Secretary of State under the fiercely Catholic Queen Mary.⁹ Questions of doubtful legitimacy of claim to usurped Church estates included the new family seat at Ingatestone. Sir William’s diplomatic approaches to the Vatican for a solution to satisfy Queen Mary were answered in November 1555. A Bull of Confirmation by Pope Paul IV, addressed personally to Sir William, confirmed his ownership of disputed land in perpetuity and absolution from censure. The Bull details all Sir William’s former church owned possessions. The first known document to record the geographical extent and value of property gained by a single individual during the Dissolution.¹⁰

The Pope added a rider in return for granting dispensation: charitable works to be undertaken, specifically an almshouse and distribution of pensions to the poor. The act of contrition was in keeping with the times. Ingatestone’s poor were in the care of the Abbess of Barking, as one of the multiple manors her convent controlled, until 1539. As replacement Lord of the Manor, Sir William was obliged to contribute to parochial relief to which he added occasional donations. Gifts of £4 on Christmas Eve were distributed to the poor of Ingatestone, Buttsbury and Stock. His accounts for 1554 have an entry, *Relief of the poor of the parish of Yng Petre - June: Sir Wm. Petre knight and lord of the town, 6s. 8d.* In 1555 Edward Bell, his bailiff at Ingatestone Hall, wrote, *My master’s charity to the poor of Ingatestone since the 18th November last past for 28 weeks[...]* 46s. 8d.¹¹

The almshouse were taking physical shape by 1556. A Crown Licence permitting establishment was granted; red brick and clay tiled cottages were under construction in Stock Lane, Ingatestone, on a site located to the rear of the Rectory, itself adjacent to the parish church in the High Street. Builders were also adding a side chapel to the church to cater for the spiritual needs of the alms-folk.

Sir William’s building costs for 1556, the almshouses and chapel included, totalled £253. Endowments and income from leased land were secured for long-term funding of the new charity. In July 1557 he received Letters Patent of Mary and Philip¹² addressed to *Our Beloved Councillor William Peter[sic], our Principal Secretary, that he himself is the executor or assignee of a certain foundation at Gyng at Stone otherwise called Gyng at Petra, called Gyng Petre, otherwise called Gyng Abbisse in our County of Essex of one priest and seven poor.*

Endowments to the charity also provided for the priest-in-charge to pay a monthly pension of 2s 6d to ten others with ‘no dwelling’, amounting to 3d each per month. Further, every Christmas 20 poor parishioners were to receive 4d. each and the same dividend from 13s.8d given to 40 of the poor at Easter.

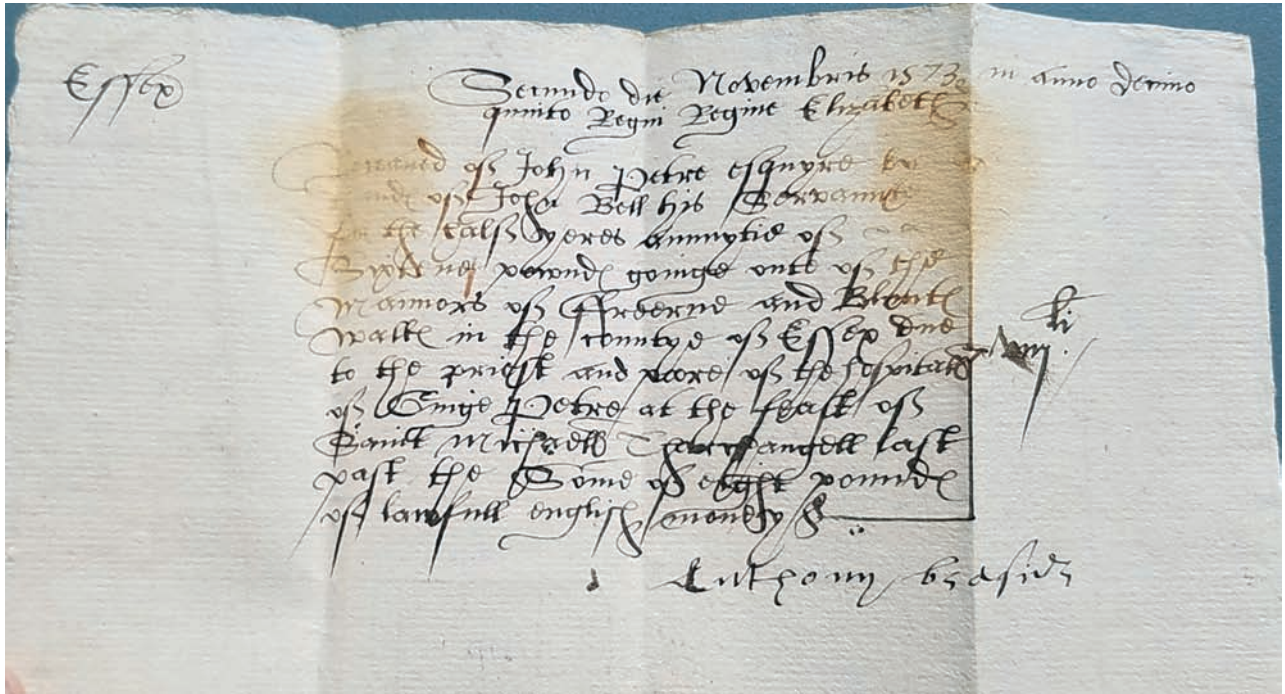
The hospital was to accommodate poor persons and a priest. Five of the pensioners to be women; a male and the priest in charge to have a vote on the Ginge Petre Body Corporate, which held in trust the freehold land. Inmates were allotted 2d. a day; 6s. 8d. a year for firewood; 12s. for cloth to use for a livery gown. Attendance at twice daily services in their own chapel in the parish church was compulsory except when sick. Each default being punished by deduction of a halfpenny. The Priest was enjoined to say prayers daily for the King and Queen, Sir William and his Lady, in the forenoon and afternoon and not to be absent more than 63 days in one year.¹³

Power of Appointment

Sir William held power of appointment, adding two ‘extraordinary’ persons to be accommodated in Stock Lane even before construction was completed. Wilde¹⁴ writes that while Petre’s descendants continued to formally appoint the choice of new pensioners, selection of candidates was left in the hands of the Protestant parish rector of the day until the 1830s.

Set against the monthly 2d doled out to the ‘common poor without dwelling’, the first inmates of 1557 enjoyed a permanent pension, well-built and rent-free secure housing, fuel and other benefits. For the Almshouse chaplain, the annual stipend was £4, plus payments for firewood and cloth and £6 income from lease of land for two cows. The first chaplain was John Stewart Woodward, Rector of the parish church, St. Edmund and St. Mary’s. Installed in post by Sir William in 1556 during Mary I’s reign, the return to Protestantism under Elizabeth I, forced

FAREWELL TO ALMS – PART ONE



A receipt made out by Rev Brasier (mentioned in text)



An exterior of Ingatestone parish church with the added almshouse chapel in the same brickwork as the contemporaneous cottages nearby.

FAREWELL TO ALMS – PART ONE

his resignation in 1566. He took the short journey from Rectory to Ingatestone Hall to join the Petre household as chaplain and tutor.¹⁵ In 1587 he was executor for the will of Sir William's brother Richard, also a Catholic priest. Richard, exiled in France at the San Rouen Abbey, bequeathed 10 francs to the 'poor of the hospital.'

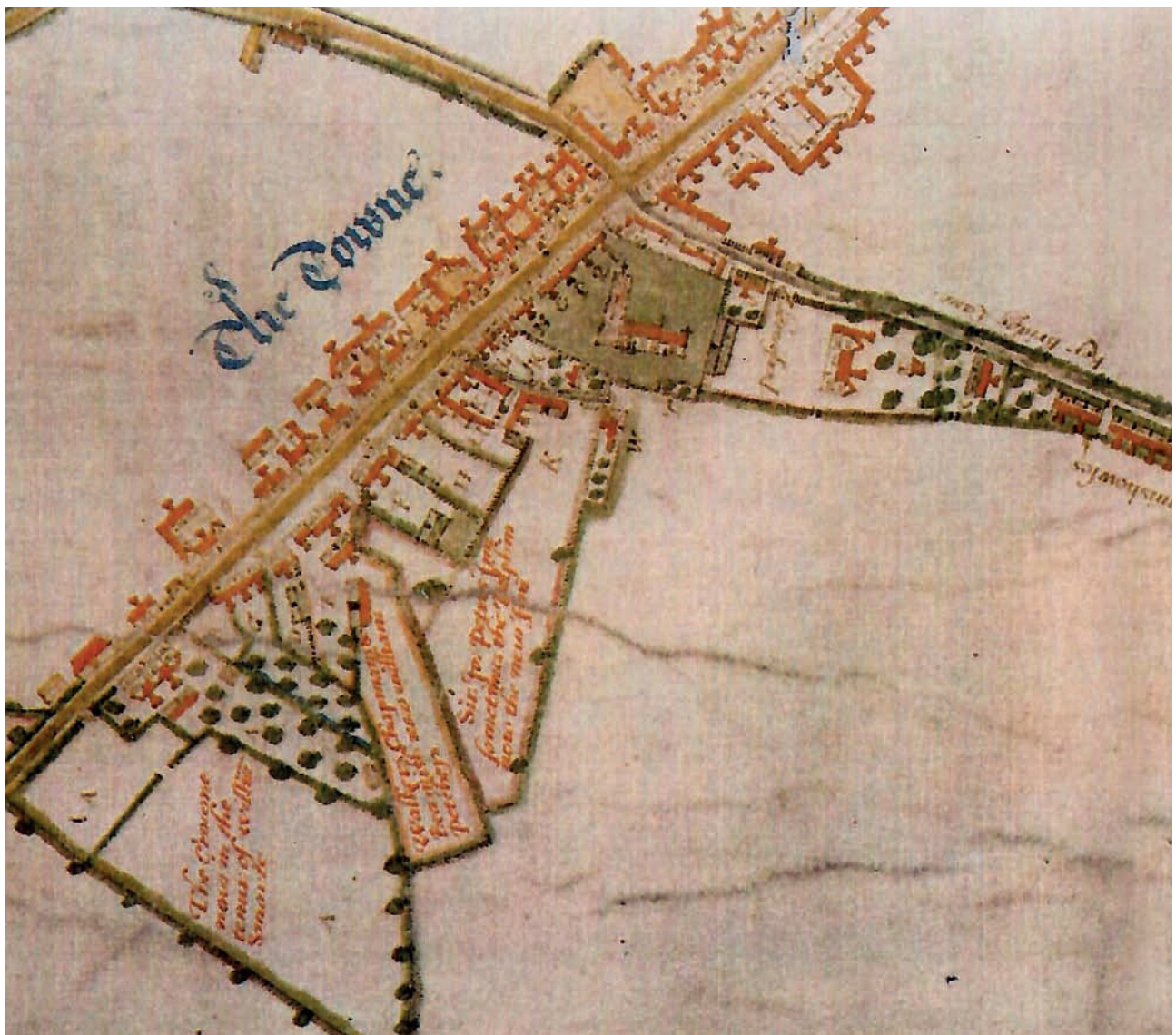
The professed denomination — Roman or Reformed — of the parish rector and priest-in-charge of the almshouses had a direct bearing on the administration on the charity thereafter. With the Reformed Church in control, one of the tenets of the foundation — pensioners to be practising Catholics — would have been difficult to impose for Sir William's next appointed rector, Anthony Brasier.

Sir William's will of 1571,¹⁶ compiled a year before his death, left £40 to the poor of Ingatestone and set aside 100 marks to buy them five years' supply of firewood. He assigned to Lady Anne, his second wife, £200 to spend on charitable causes and the right to select beneficiaries of the Ginge Petre

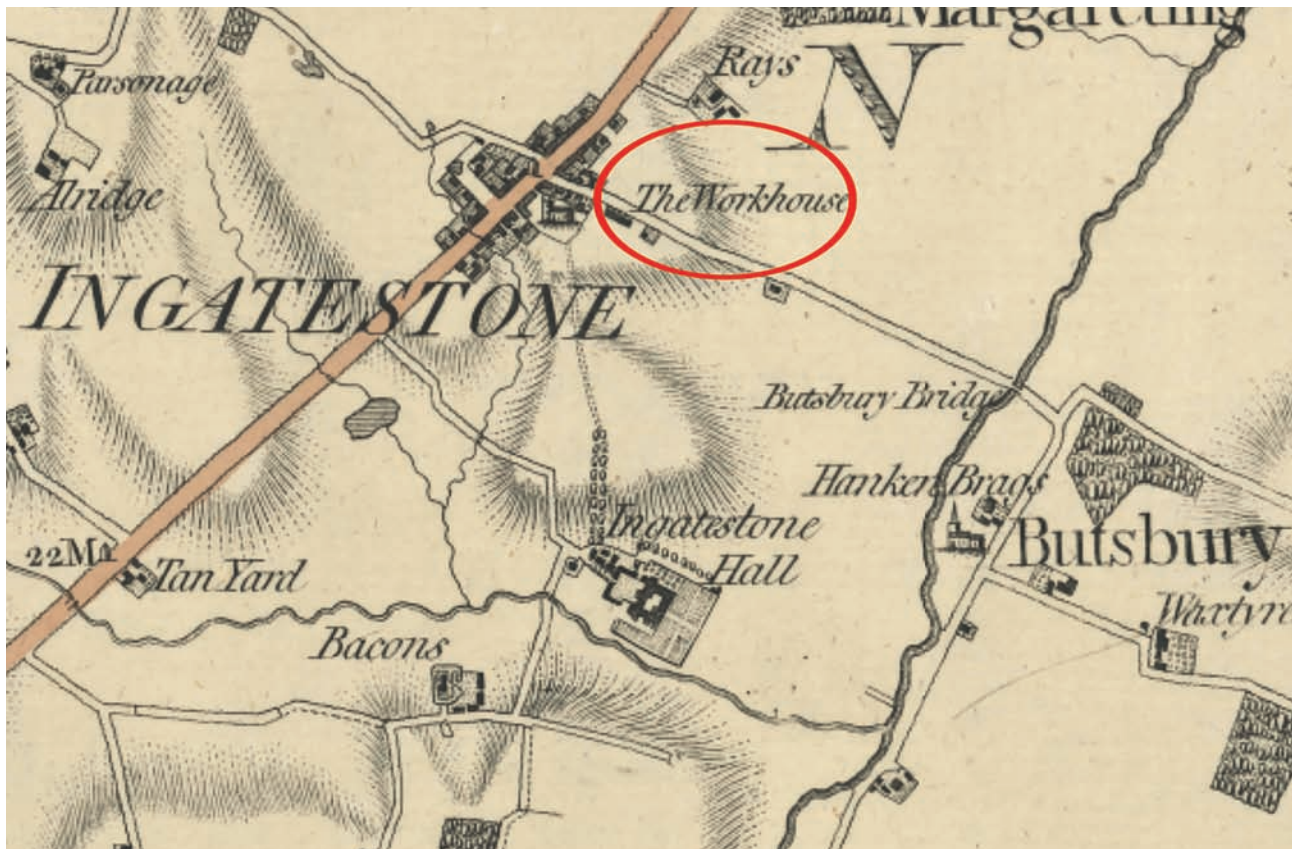
charity, a responsibility that was to pass to his male heir on her death.

The Dowager outlived her husband by ten years, remaining at Ingatestone Hall while their son John and his wife Mary (a member of the equally Recusant Waldergrave family) occupied Writtle Park until repairing to the family's grander new seat being developed at Thorndon Hall, West Horndon.

John, knighted by Elizabeth in 1576 and created Baron Petre of Writtle by King James in 1603, became legal head of the charity following his father's death. In 1573, the Rev. Brasier was writing to him acknowledging receipt of eight pounds "*delivered at the hands of John Bell your servant[...]to the priest and poor of the hospital at the feast of St. Mary.*" Bell served Lord John as steward, as his own father Edward had done for Sir William. Lady Anne's steward at Ingatestone Hall was the missioner priest (St.) John Payne, executed for treason at Chelmsford in 1582. The Dowager also refused to relinquish her faith and despite an indictment at the Essex



An extract of the Walker survey map of 1601 showing the almshouses in proximity to the parish church and High Street



Extract of Chapman & Andre 1777 map with the almshouses 'workhouse' ringed and including Ingatestone Hall

Sessions for failing to attend Protestant services,¹⁸ avoided further sanction.¹⁹ The Petre household continued to hold on to Catholicism, maintaining Sir William's ability to remain in good standing with the Sovereign. The Baron was patron of composer and musician, and fellow Recusant William Byrd, a frequent visitor from the manse at Stondon Massey to Ingatestone Hall.¹⁹

Lord Petre employed cartographer John Walker of Hanningfield to survey his estates. An extract of Walker's map of 1601 shows the almshouses in Stock Lane as two rows of attached dwellings with a grass frontage.

Lady Anne died in 1582. Her effigy alongside that of Sir William is prominently sited on a table-tomb in the Ingatestone parish church, St. Edmund and St. Mary, beneath an arch separating the chapel built for the almshouse poor and the high altar. Across the nave is another chapel dominated by 'a sumptuous pile of sculptured marbles displaying the full-sized kneeling effigies of John, the first Lord Petre and his wife, with eight sons and five daughters'.²⁰

“Rogues, Vagabonds and Sturdy Beggars”

An Act for the Provision of Relief of the Poor introduced towards the end of Edward I's reign banned outdoor begging and called for a register of both those receiving and contributing alms. To follow, a series of increasingly harsher legislation was enacted in the years following the founding of Ingatestone's almshouses. Acts of 1563/72/76/97, 1604 and 1610

included penalties on property owners failing to pay for relief but concentrated on punitive treatment of the unfortunate poor themselves. Understanding that the term Rogue applied to the permanent homeless in the locality and *Vagabond* or *Vagrant* to homeless who traveled the country, the 1572 Act ordered all vagabonds above age 14 to be whipped and burned through the right ear; 1576's *Avoiding of Idleness Act* made provision for the out-of-work to be committed to a house of correction; *Punishment of Rogues, Vagabonds and Sturdy Beggars* in 1597 allowed for incorrigible rogues to be sent overseas; an amendment in 1604 added branding with an 'R' to the shoulders of rogues; and in 1610, Lewd and Idle Persons were added with Justices required to commit mothers of bastard children to houses of correction for a year and men who desert families judged as rogues.²¹

The proportion of the rural population existing in poverty during the 16th and 17th Centuries has been measured as high as 30% in a time of crisis, such as 1570-1650, and with those in abject misery at around 5%.²² With the stability of the long-term endowments put in place by Sir William to finance and maintain the almshouses, it must have been a comfort for those who depended upon it, when set against the miserable lot of so many others.

Morant²³ summarises these financial securities as £48 p.a. from lease of Petre farm land at Crondon Park, Stock; similar leases at Buttsbury and a smaller estate at Stock, bringing in £18 and £6.13s.4d. a

FAREWELL TO ALMS – PART ONE

year respectively; a further £18 from the copyhold land in Fryerning endowed by Wadham College brought in another £18 a year in lieu of pasture for two cows for the priest and another four for the poor. Morant adds: *At the auditing of the accounts by the ministers of Ingatestone, Mountnessing and Buttsbury to be spent 5s. To be deposited in the chest, £5 17s. 4d yearly, towards the repairs of the hospital and of Lord Petre's Chancel built for the poor.*

The Petres' had close familial connection to the Wadhams. In 1610 Dorothy Wadham was the titular foundress of an Oxford college, fulfilling her late husband's request that she did so, including donating land for the benefit of the almshouse charity. Until her death in 1618 she encouraged graduates of the College to take appointments as Rector of Ingatestone and therefore also priest of the hospital. It was a custom repeated long after her death. The Second Baron Petre was given liberty to go hunting, hawking and fishing across her College's estates in Fryerning and Writtle.²⁴

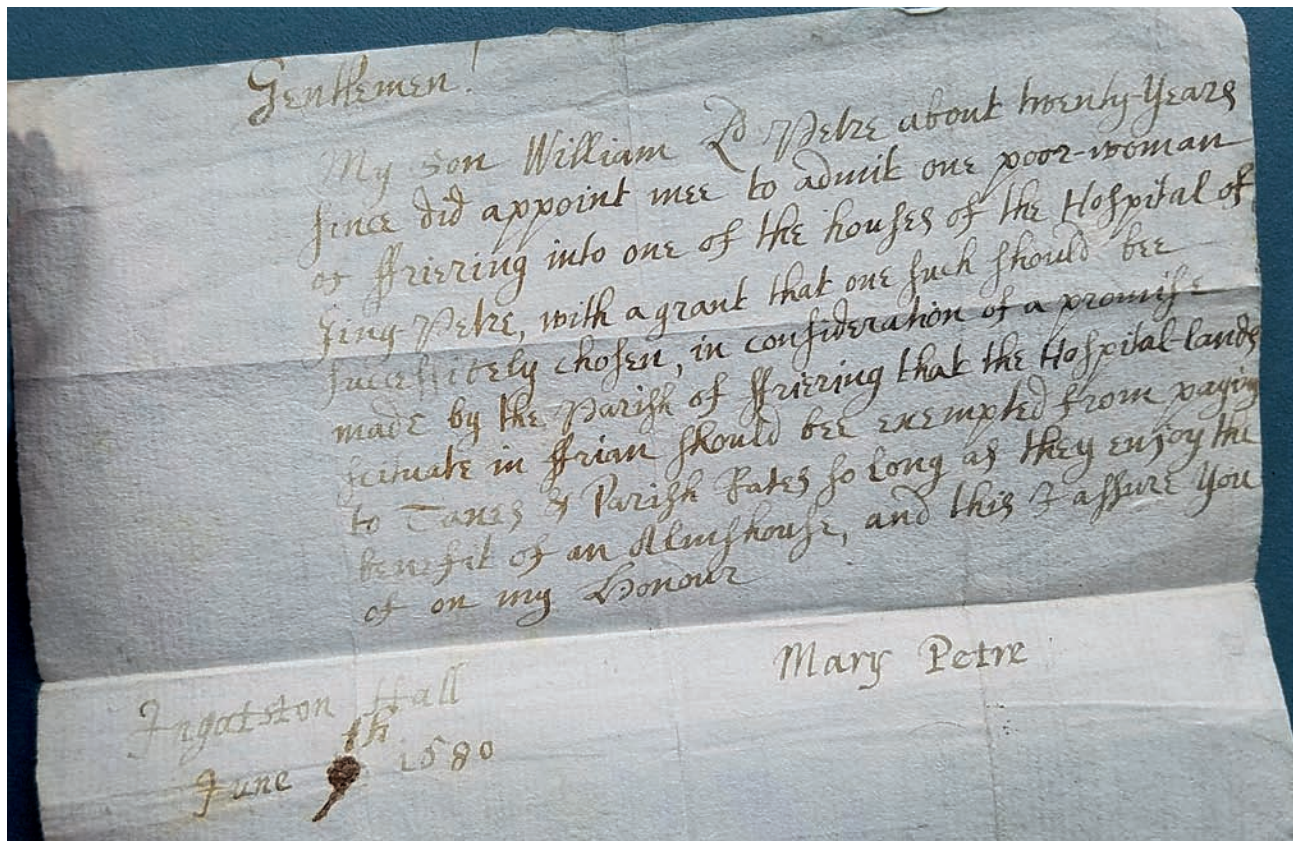
The Ginge Petre Body Corporate

Throughout the 17th Century, successive Lords Petre or their nominees, now ensconced at palatial Thorndon Hall, continued to assent to candidates selected by the parish rector. Members of the family living at Ingatestone Hall also took an interest. One such intervention was by the Dowager Lady Mary. Her son, Lord William, the 4th Baron, was confined to the Tower of London at the time, imprisoned in 1678 after allegations of treason made by Titus

Oates. He died in the Tower where he'd remained without trial in 1684.²⁵ Lady Mary wrote to the Ginge Petre Body Corporate from Ingatestone Hall in June 1680: *Gentlemen! My son William Lord Petre about twenty years since did appoint me to admit one poor-woman of Friering [Fryerning] into one of the houses of the Hospital of Ginge-Petre, with a grant that one such bee successively chosen, in consideration of a promise made by the parish of Friering that the Hospital lands situate in Friering should be exempted from paying to Taxes of Parish Rates so long as they benefit of an Almshouse, and this I assure you of on my honour. Mary Petre*".²⁵

Evidence of the 17th Century role of parish rector encompassing priest of the charity is available in receipts issued to the Lords Petre for rents collected.²⁶ John Willis in October 1660 acknowledges receiving £20 from Lord William at Michaelmas, signing himself as Master of the Hospital. The Rev. Willis described himself as 'Minister to the Hospital' when called upon as Clerk to assist in the collection of King Charles I's 1637 demand of Ship-Money from inland parishes.

Willis's successor was John Ewer. Issuing a receipt to Lord Thomas Petre, the 6th Baron in August 1684, for *twenty pounds sterling delivered to him by Mr. Francis Woolmer, arising from rent for farms belonging to Crondon Park*. He signs himself as 'priest of the said Hospital'. By this time income from leases and tithes had risen from the sums set in the foundational endowments. Crondon Park, for instance, was producing £40 a year against the £18 of 1557.



Lady Mary's letter of 1580

Administration of the almshouses appears to have continued to function as Sir William designed — excepting the loss of the Catholic qualification. Communication between the Petre family and the Rector was maintained. The cottages in Stock Lane were kept in good repair and the funds to pay for pensions and doles duly collected. As to the men and women who lived out their later years there, only the parish registers, where available, record their names and the occasional snippet of personal information.²⁷

A page from Ingatestone's burial register of 1626, entered in the hand of the curate John Shrigleigh, contains a section confirming the continuing Petre connection. *Anne Surtoneham, an Almswoman* was buried on January 29th in the parish graveyard. The following entry is of a baby – *John Petre: (a twinne and ye younger of ye twaine) ye sonne of Robert Petre, Esq and Mary his wife was buried at the Head of his father's great grandfather Sr William Petre in ye Almsfolkes chappell ye 4th day of February 1626. Later in the month, Robert Ely one of my Lr. William Petres Almsfolks was buried in ye parish abovesaid.*

Other names of Almshouse residents appearing in, at times incomplete, burial registers of the 1600s, include Mother Denies, 1613, Michael Foster and Alyce Beard, 1617, Alyce Smytte, 1620, Thomas Wilson, 1662, Charles Buckley, 1664, widow Margaret Stratton, 1665, Katherine Clarke who it is noted was of Fryerning parish, 1665, Joane Douglas, alias Tublyn, 1666, Thomas Ball, aged 94, 1684. In 1699 Anne daughter of Almsman Samuel Clarke died of smallpox from William Neville of Fryerning. It was during a time of many recorded deaths attributed to a smallpox outbreak.

Thomas Pavett, a local farmer, agreed to pay £18 rent for 12 years' lease on 16 acres commonly called Almshouse Land in Fryerning. These fields were directly across Stock Lane, facing the old almshouses. They remain in the property folio of the Ginge Petre Trust to this day, bringing in £2,000 a year in 2022. Pavett's lease of 1697 had a clause preventing over farming: they shall not take above five crops of corn or grain from any part of the said land without making a fallow there every third year under the penalty of five pounds sterling they shall not plough or convert to tillage any of the now meadow or pasture ground without the permission of Lord Petre.²⁸

A meticulously prepared statement of 1709²⁹ frets over adapting the accounts as set by statute in the original foundation so that annual income and expenditure still balanced. Prepared under Rector John Ewer, priest-in-charge between 1662 and 1716, it draws a line under the original accounts system and

starts afresh under a Second Foundation heading. Adjustments were made to the disbursements. A postscript explains difficulties involved in achieving the desired 'ballance' occurred through a lapsed lease and the cost of cow keeping.

'Sewing on the Earl's head'

In 1716, the Jacobite Earl of Derwentwater was executed at The Tower for treason against the King. His family had ties to the Petres and his beheaded corpse was brought to the chapel at Thorndon Hall for burial. D.W. Collier in *The People's History of Essex* relates "At Ingatestone there was a few years ago, in an almshouse funded by Lord Petre's family, an old woman who had frequently heard from her mother that she assisted in sewing on the Earl's

head'. The bloodied clothes worn by the Earl are now kept at Ingatestone Hall.³⁰ Lord Robert Petre, the 8th Baron, married the Earl's daughter, Lady Henrietta, at St. Paul's Cathedral in 1732. She was to become mother of the 9th Baron, also Robert. Collier, the anecdote's chronicler, was employed by the Chelmsford Chronicle at the time of his book and later went on to edit the Essex Weekly News. Brought up as an orphan in the care of a nun at Ingatestone Hall, the chaplain was his childhood tutor. In his own returns made to the Register of Papist Estates in 1763, the 9th Lord Petre, details among his outgoings: *forever to yearly sums, viz., to vicar of Buttsbury for supplying and attending the parish and for tithes £149.7s.10d., to parson of Ingatestone for the almshouses, tithe and modus of tithe £53 12s. 6d., to curate of Mountnessing £12.*³¹

Chapman and Andre's map of Essex published in 1777 misnames the row of cottages as *The Workhouse* and shows the ground on which the old rectory stood cleared, a replacement being built the other side of the High Street. The Priest in Charge was no longer on the premises.

It is about this time that an actual parish workhouse was created in a row of tenements in Ingatestone's High Street, funded by the poor rates collected and dispersed by the Vestry.³² Another workhouse, for Fryerning Parish, was sited even closer to the almshouses in the former High Street tavern, The Ship.

In 1784 the Ingatestone vestry was paying Thomas Caton a weekly 2s.4d. per inmate of the workhouse to farm its poor so they would be occupied on the land instead of idle.

Second Catholic Relief Act

The Papist Act of 1778 and Second Catholic Relief Act of 1791 signalled a tentative easing of Establishment antipathy towards its followers. Lord Robert Petre, 9th Baron, chaired two committees

‘ In 1716, the Jacobite Earl of Derwentwater was executed at The Tower for treason against the King. His family had ties to the Petres and his beheaded corpse was brought to the chapel at Thorndon Hall ’



Dorothy Wadham, nee Petre

of prominent Catholics instrumental in securing the new legislation. It came at some personal cost in 1780 during what were known as the Gordon Riots. Supporters of the Protestant Association, vehemently opposed to relaxation of the strictures, formed mobs to attack Catholic targets, burning and looting in a week of rioting. Lord Robert's London home in Park Lane, Mayfair, was destroyed in a fire set by the mob. A further 3,000 men marched on the family seat at Thorndon to confront his lordship and were only dispersed by the intervention of armed militia from nearby Warley.

At a Vestry meeting in July 1796, a Jon Sillion was given charge of the Ingatestone workhouse in return for five shillings a month and allowed expenses to provide each pauper *Meat, Drink, Washing and Mending*. In March 1798, the Vestry minutes record a grant to Smith's children of 8 yards of stuff for gowns, and later in the meeting decided to order his whole family be taken to the workhouse.

The divide between the fortunes of the alms-folk and Ingatestone's poor remained. At the close of the 18th Century, and under the influence of the Industrial Revolution, conditions were in place for significant societal changes in the years ahead — Sir William's almshouses were not to be exempt.

References

1. Most notably, *Tudor Secretary, Sir William Petre at Court and Home*, F.G. Emmison, Longmans, London, 1961. Henceforth 'Emmison'
2. Broadcast interview, PhoenixFM Radio, 17th November, 2014
3. Emmison p185
4. At the time of writing (October 2022) John, the 18th Baron Petre of Writtle, is Patron of the Essex Society for Archaeology and History. Lord Petre holds both honorary and active roles in many county organisations and charities. He resides at Writtle Park. His son and heir, the Hon Dominic Petre, lives at Ingatestone Hall.
5. p3, *The Problem of the Poor in Tudor and Early Stuart England*, A.L.Beier, Methuen, 1983. Henceforth Beier
6. pp11-13 Brier
7. King James Bible, Matthew 26:11
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27. ERO D/DP 31/1/1(/2/3/9/10)
28. ERO D/DP Q11/9
29. ERO D/DP Q11/6
30. p521 *The People's History of Essex*, D.W. Collier, Meggy & Chalk, Chelmsford 1861
31. ERO D/DP E65
32. ERO D/P 31/8/3

NB. ERO holds nearly 8,000 separately catalogued references to the Essex Petres, much of the documentation having been lodged by the family for safe-keeping. Additional original material remains at Ingatestone Hall which itself served from the 1950s until 1978 as an annex to the ERO in Chelmsford.

A full Bibliography will be included with the second part of this article

Clavering Castle: Religious Miracles and an Ancestral Seat of Medieval England

Simon Coxall

Saintly miracles, precious jewels, internecine murder and judicial execution are the dramatic stock in trade of Hollywood, *Game of Thrones* and storybooks. What a contrast to the experience of the field archaeologist often confronted with grubby pot sherds in a medieval ditch. And yet recent archaeological investigation of sites in Essex can still conjure us back to those medieval centuries. And in some places the historical record, however mystical or uncertain, points the way.

The community-led Clavering Castle Environs Project, involving extensive historical research together with detailed archaeological survey, has seen Clavering Landscape History Group cast new light on a mysterious and tempestuous corner of NW Essex.

Clavering Castle (Fig.1) and the chapel of St John the Evangelist: History and Legend

The charming village of Clavering in NW Essex, like most in our county, is well served by William the Conqueror's Domesday Record of 1086. But critically it

also features twice in records spanning the last days of Saxon England.

Dealing with the feuding between Edward the Confessor and the Godwin family the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of 1052AD: Manuscript E states:

'... When they [the Godwins] came to London, there lay the king [Edward the Confessor] and all his earls to meet them, with fifty ships... And Godwin stationed himself continually before London with his fleet... it was determined that wise men should be sent between



Fig.1 Aerial view of the Clavering Castle estate, parish church and churchyard (courtesy National Library of Scotland)

CLAVERING CASTLE

them, who should settle peace on either side. Godwin went up, and Harold his son, ... then advanced Bishop Stigand with God's assistance, and the wise men both within the town and without; who determined that hostages should be given on either side. And so they did. When Archbishop Robert and the Frenchmen knew that, they took horse; and went some west to Pentecost Castle, some north to **Robert's castle.**' (Swanton 2000, emphasis added).

Castles are rare in England before the Norman conquest, but the Robert's castle cited above has long been suggested as being a reference to Clavering castle (Round 1903, Historic England 2022). Morant (1768) indeed suggested '...the residence of the ancient lords of this place and the Head of the Barony of Clavering was a Castle some of the walls of which were not long since in being'.

For us today there is no castle at Clavering. Instead, we find an impressively large grassy platform some 100m x 60m surrounded on four sides by moat ditches of great width and depth with further earthworks beyond.

The Miracle of the Ring and Clavering's Chapel of St John the Evangelist

Then in an account written by the monks of Waltham Abbey around 1177 we gain further insight into Clavering's mystical Saxon past. Here the churchyard is the scene of a religious miracle involving Edward the Confessor.

"Whan the blessyd Kyng Edwarde [the Confessor] had lyvid many yeres and was fallen in to grete age, it happed he came rydyng by a chyrche in Essex, callyd Claverynge, whiche was at that tyme in haloung, and sholde be dedycate in the honour of our lorde and saynt Johan the evangelyste... a fayre olde man came to the kyng

and demaunded of hym almes in worship of God and Saint John Evangelyst. Thenne the kyng ... took of the ryng fro his finger and gave it unto the pour man... certayn yeres after, two pylgrymes of Englonde went in to the Holy Londe, for to visyte holy places there, and as they had lost theyr way... At the last they sawe a fayre companye of men arrayed in white clothyng, with two lyghtes born afore theym. And behynde theym there came a fayr auncyent man wyth white heer for age... he sayd, I am John the Evangelyst, and say ye unto Edwarde your kyng, that I grete hym well, by the token that he gaaf to me this ryng wyth his owne hondes at the halowyng of my chirche, whiche ryng ye shall delyver to hym agayn. And say ye to hym that he dyspose his goodes. For within five monethes he shall be in the joye of heven wyth me, where he shall have his rewarde for his chastite and for his good lyvinge' (Ellis 1900).

Later we learn that on the translation of Edward the Confessor's body to its new shrine in Westminster Abbey on 13th October 1163 the Abbot of Westminster Laurence of Durham took the ring from the royal finger. Edward became a saint and medieval images thereafter, like that of the famous Wilton Diptych made for Richard II, typically show Edward proffering the ring subject of this legend (Fig.2).

The ring remained among the relics of Westminster Abbey and its sapphire today graces Her Majesty's Imperial State Crown as a symbol of royal continuity spanning almost a thousand years (Galbraith 1923).

The Descent of the Lordship of Clavering and evidence for the castle (1066-1541)

Turning perhaps to more conventional historic sources the Little Domesday Book (LDB) describes the manor and half-hundred of Clavering as being in the possession



Fig.2 St Edward the Confessor proffering the ring as shown in the 14th century Wilton Diptych (courtesy of the National Gallery) and St Edward's sapphire today sitting atop the Imperial State Crown (courtesy of the Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2022)

1 In this account of the legend from Caxton's Golden Legend dated c1470 'hallowing' relates to the ceremonies surrounding a church's foundation.

CLAVERING CASTLE

of Swein, Earl of Essex in 1086. In the time of King Edward the Confessor and the events related above it had been held by Swein's father Robert Fitzwymarch, a kinsman of both Edward and William the Conqueror and reputedly the figure propping up King Edward in the Bayeux tapestry's death-bed scene (Round 1896).

By 1086 Swein had commenced his castle building at Rayleigh and had been granted anew a number of estates in South East Essex. Nevertheless, the LDB valuation of Swein's estates in 1086 suggests Clavering as being the most valuable of his extensive Essex holdings.

However, despite the early reference to it as Robert's Castle, Clavering Castle or any suggestion of the same then disappears entirely from the historic record.

Research shows how in the medieval period the baronial manor and half hundred of Clavering passed in turn between members of the Fitzwymarch, De Clavering and Neville families. This succession (Appendix 1) is eventful enough. First the Fitzwymarch family is deprived of Clavering with the fall from grace of Henry of Essex in 1163. Then the de Claverings, for generations stalwarts of the northern wars against the Scots, are dispossessed by John de Clavering (d.1332) who against a background of internecine murder within his own family arranges for his sister Euphemia de Clavering's son Ralph Neville, 2nd Baron Neville to inherit².

Clavering was then held by several generations of the Neville family. The Nevilles, however, were themselves no strangers to bloody conflict. Key players in the plotting, intrigues and battles known now as the Wars of the Roses a remarkable number would meet a violent end.

Today physical evidence of the Neville's investment in Clavering is marked by the arms of Richard Neville,

Earl of Salisbury discovered by the project carved onto a roof boss of the porch of Clavering parish church (Fig.3). Its label of three points across the Neville saltire marks the family's marriage alliance with Joan Beaufort, granddaughter of Edward III. In this blood relationship to the Crown lay the foundations of both the Neville's rapid rise to power in the 15th century and their ultimate destruction.

Both Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury and his son Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick 'the Kingmaker' were killed in the bloody fighting for the Crown between the houses of York and Lancaster. Accordingly the Neville's ownership of Clavering is interrupted periodically with seizures of the estate by the Crown as their fortunes fluctuated. Then after years when Clavering was held successively by Edward IV, Richard III and Henry VII ultimately Clavering is restored by Henry VIII to Margaret Pole, Countess of Salisbury in 1513. Margaret was the granddaughter of Richard Neville 'the Kingmaker'. She was also the daughter of George, Duke of Clarence ill-fated brother to the last of the Yorkist kings Edward IV and Richard III.

However, despite this powerful lineage for the lords of Clavering, the historical record, makes no specific mention of a castle at Clavering throughout the medieval period. Moreover, on only two occasions does the historical record directly hint at Clavering being used as a lordly residence.

In the summer and autumn of 1374 the records of the Archbishopric of York indicate it was the location for the court of the prospective Archbishop of York, Alexander Neville (grandson of Ralph Neville and Euphemia de Clavering) (York Archbishop's Registers 2021).

Then in the 1520's the accounts of Margaret Pole, Countess of Salisbury provide the first hints of an extant lordly residence at Clavering³.

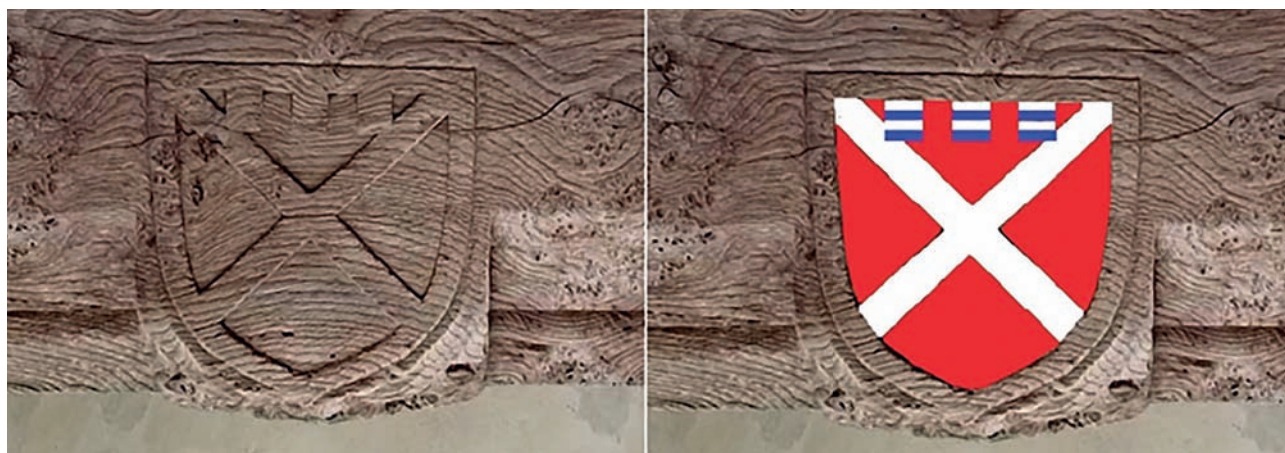


Fig. 3 The arms of Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury (1400-1460) carved into the roof boss in the porch of Clavering parish church. The label differentiating the basic Neville saltire advertises Richard's mother's Beaufort and royal lineage. Neville Arms Enhanced

- 2 John de Clavering has for long been derided in the historical record for his '*motives of resentment and avarice*' that '*deprived his brothers and their descendants of a most Noble Inheritance*' (Morgan 1891). The account, which is otherwise comprehensive, turns a blind eye to the evidence of murder, threatened rape and torture within John De Clavering's family that lies behind his decision. This brief outline of the tortuous succession of the Lordship of Clavering introduces material which will feature in a further article (Coxall forthcoming).
- 3 The project as regards Margaret Pole, Countess of Salisbury has been greatly assisted by the detailed biography of Dr Pierce (1997 and 2003).

i. *Two receipts by Margaret countess of Salisbury for 28l. and 40l. from Oliver Frankeleyn, her bailiff at Clavering, dated 2 July and 11 Feb. 15 Hen. VIII. Signed.*

ii. *Order for the payment of 5l. 11s. 101/2d to Frankeleyn, for repairs at Clavering for the year ending Mich. 15 Hen. VIII., including 500 paving tiles for the chapel, 20s.; laying them, and mending the wall, 5s.; a load of plain tile for the fermer hall, 5s.; four days to a tiler and his man for tiling the hall, 3s.4d.; painting St. Edward and St. John in the chapel, 40s.; meting my Lady's woods there, 8d.; painting of a chamber for my Lady's council to lie in, 13s.4d. Signed by the Countess.*

There were clearly buildings upon Clavering's castle platform requiring repair in the mid 1520's. The reference to 'the fermer hall' relates to Claveringbury a medieval hall house immediately east of the Castle Platform and its surrounding moat. The timbers of Claveringbury's fermer hall have been dendrochronologically dated to c1304-5 (Heppel and Saunders 2007).

This account's reference to 'a chamber for my Lady's council to lie in' is also interesting. The order concerned appears to be issued by Margaret Countess of Salisbury suggesting she refers not to her council but to **her lady's** council. If the 'Lady's council' referred to is not that of Margaret Countess of Salisbury herself then the lady in question as suggested by the historical record is likely to be the Princess Mary Tudor. Margaret had become Mary's godmother in 1519 and was appointed her governess from 1520-21, serving again in 1525 (within a year of the said works) and remaining as such until 1533. Dr Pierce in her extensive studies of Margaret Pole comments on the lack of detailed evidence as to the nature of Margaret's estate at Clavering.

'...Unfortunately, little is known about Margaret's household at Clavering except that it was as a castle, covered an 'extensive area' and possessed a moat. It was obviously a residence commensurate to her rank and between 1523 and 1524 she initiated a number of repairs and renovations at considerable expense, paying particular attention to the chapel.'

Such is the fragmentary but intriguing evidence for a castle or other lordly residence at Clavering.

Where miracles happen? The Chapel of St John the Evangelist.

Turning to the history of the legendary 'lost' chapel of St John the Evangelist we are on slightly firmer ground. The chapel features in various court rolls and similar throughout the medieval period.

- i. *1251 - Henry III visits Clavering and orders the 'Miracle of the Ring' to be commemorated in the chapel.*
- ii. *1254-5: "Gregory the chaplain is ministering in the chapel of Clavering" and speaks of "the chapel of Clavering, where St. John the*

Apostle and Evangelist received the ring from the hand of blessed Edward"

- iii. *1353 - Ralph Neville, 2nd Baron Neville of Raby provides 40 acres of land to support a chantry at Clavering. Research conducted under this project suggests this grant is related to three fields in Clavering which, totalling 40 acres, were known until the 19th century as the Priests lands.*
- iv. *8 June 1378 John Neville. Ralph's son secures an annual fair from Richard II which taking place around the feast day of St John may be associated with the chapel. As discussed later significantly this grant coincides exactly with one secured for similar provisions at John Neville's new castle at Sheriff Hutton, Yorkshire.*
- v. *In 1426 - order is made to the escheator of Essex to give Joan Beaufort [only legitimised daughter of John of Gaunt by Katheryn Swynford], the late wife of Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmoreland... livery of the manors of Claveryng and Catmere and the advowson of a chantry in Claveryng chapel.*
- vi. *In 1480 a Paul Whytyng, chaplain is presented to the perpetual chantry in the chapel of St. John the Evangelist within the cemetery of the parish church of Claveryng. In his will of August 1500 he bequeaths his'...body to Almighty God, the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the Saints body, mind and spirit to be buried in chapel of Saint John the Evangelist and of King Edward in the said parish [of Clavering?]. He further leaves 5s for 'painting the image of St Edward in the chapel'*
- vii *Records relating to Margaret Pole, Countess of Salisbury specify her investment of funds for the repainting of images within the Chapel of St John the Evangelist around 1523/4 as rehearsed above.*
- viii *A chapel at Claveryng is, in the reign of Elizabeth I, cited amongst her commissioners' searches for 'concealed lands' in 1561, 1569 and 1570.*

The evidence taken together suggest that somewhere in the churchyard at Clavering was formerly sited a chapel dedicated to St John the Evangelist.

If any part of the 'Legend of the Ring' is credible at least to the extent of recording a visit by the aged Edward the Confessor to Clavering upon the foundation of this chapel one might expect its foundation to be dated to the latter years of his reign, perhaps around 1060-66.

The Clavering Castle Environs Project - the Archaeology

In March 2020, just prior to the onset of the Covid-19 public health situation, the Clavering Landscape History Group (CLHG) commenced a project funded by

CLAVERING CASTLE

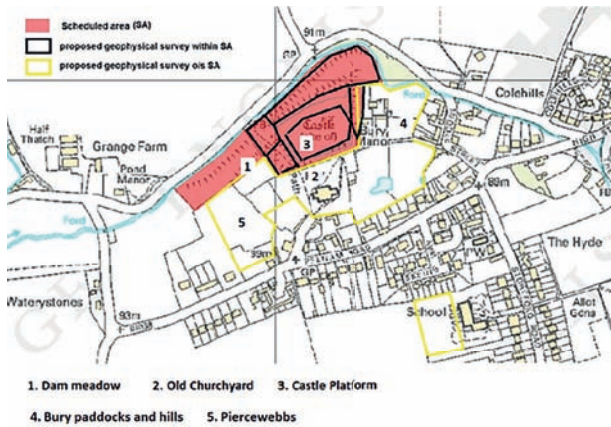


Fig.4 The site as surveyed indicating locations mentioned in the text (courtesy Historic England 2022 then annotated)

the Essex Heritage Trust and directed by the author to conduct a topographical and geophysical survey (resistivity) of the scheduled site of Clavering Castle, the churchyard of Clavering parish church and its surrounding landscape.

Guidance relating to the pandemic limited the degree of public participation initially envisaged by the project, however, every opportunity was taken to demonstrate the techniques involved and describe the findings in a series of open air presentations and later lectures⁴.

The area covered by the geophysical survey is approximately 5 hectares surrounding and including the scheduled monument of Clavering Castle, Clavering, Essex (Figs.1 and 4).

The project sought evidence regarding the establishment and development of Clavering Castle and the chapel of St John the Evangelist through landscape and geophysical resistivity survey of:

1. The Dam meadow an area of earthwork ramparts and platforms between the Castle Platform and the area of supposed fishponds and attendant meadows in the valley of the Stort (Plate 4)
2. Clavering churchyard, seeking the location of the 'lost' chapel of St. John the Evangelist
3. the Castle Platform
4. the Bury Hills within the grounds of Clavering's Bury manor
5. the lower garden of Piercewebbs (adjoining the churchyard)

Topographical survey

The castle platform and the area of the Dam meadows include substantial earthworks. These had been topographically surveyed in detail during the course of an earlier project (Heppel and Saunders 2007) producing a detailed hachure map (Fig.5). The new project built on this work and assisted by LiDAR analysis, topographical and geophysical survey explored these earthworks and constructed a clearer understanding



Fig.5 Hachure map of the Castle Platform and its surrounds (courtesy: Heppel and Saunders 2007)

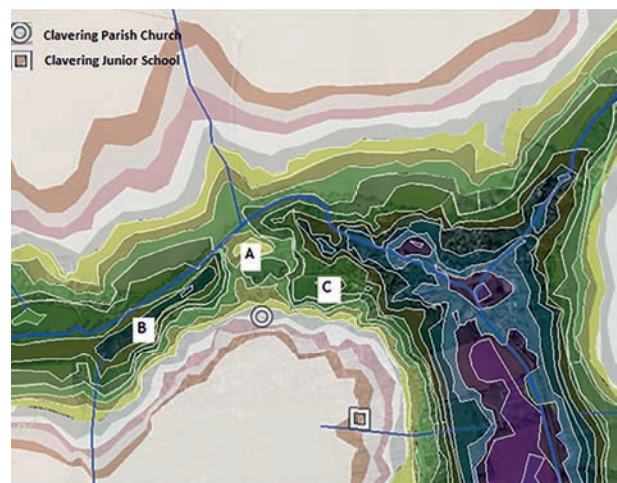
of the phases of complex water management systems which underpinned the castle's development.

The project created a topographical map depicting contours at 1m intervals across the survey area (Fig.6). This illustrated how the castle platform, as an entirely artificial brick-shaped mound, had been created by a major feat of earthmoving. The same map indicated potential areas of associated quarrying.

Phases of water management

In effect the natural course of the valley of the River Stort had been blocked by the superimposition of the brick-shaped Castle Platform along the valley bottom. The LiDAR image at Fig.7 illustrates an interpretation of the medieval and current regimes of water management associated with Clavering castle.

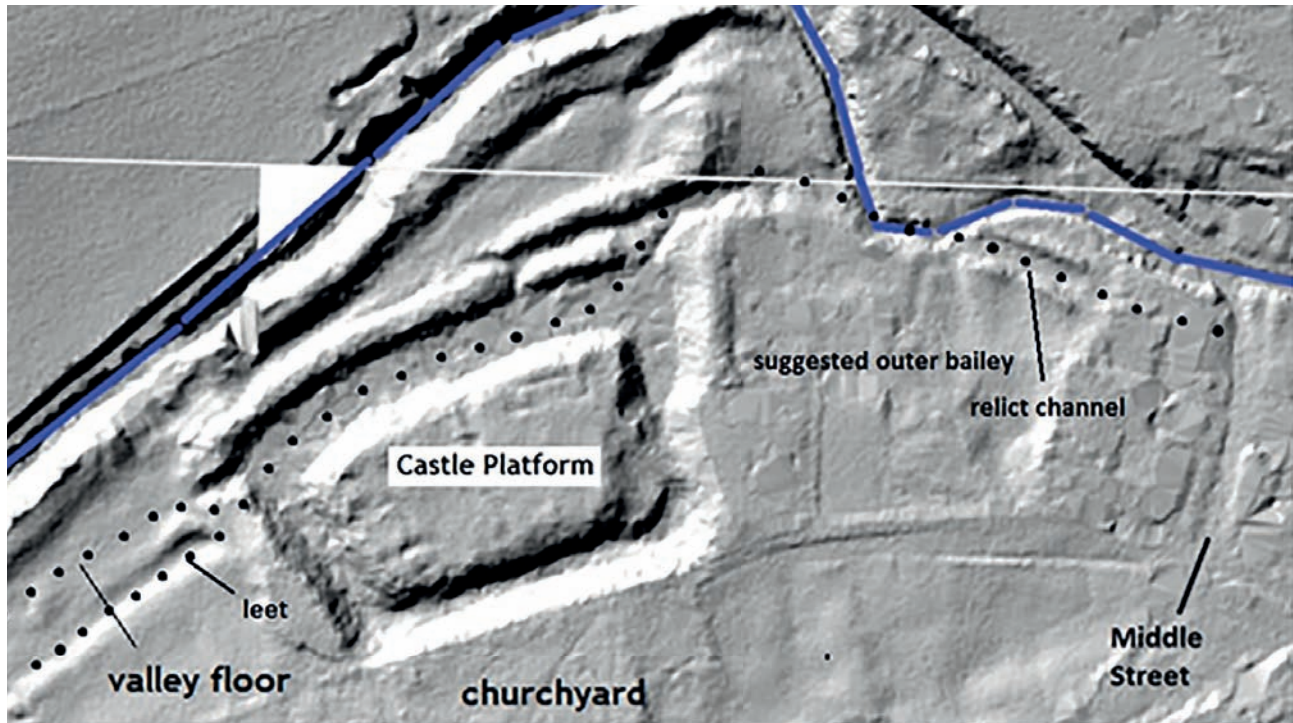
The surveys showed how during the life of the Castle estate⁵ the natural course of the River Stort had been channelled in the Dam meadow so as create a leet for a



A - The Castle Platform. B - The Dam meadow. C. Bury meadow suggested area of quarrying

Fig.6 Contour map of the Stort valley surrounding Clavering Castle. The current course of the Stort and its tributaries are indicated

⁵ Phases of water management are directly related to the currency of the castle, however, more precise dating could only be achieved by excavation.



- former course of the Stort managed within the Clavering Castle estate in the medieval
- current course of the Stort bi-passing the Clavering Castle estate

Fig.7 LiDAR image of Clavering Castle and its environs. Interpretation of water management phases (courtesy Environment Agency).

mill. The river and leat waters were then reunited and directed to form the northern arm of the moat, before exiting the area of the castle platform to the east.

Crucially, here alongside the Bury Hills, LiDAR indicated a relict course of the river as it approached the ford in Middle Street. Though much overgrown this medieval river channel was ground-truthed with the assistance of a stout pair of wellingtons. Projecting the course of this relict channel to the east suggests an earlier position for the ford in Middle Street and in doing so explained the awkward acute angle at which the current road approached the modern ford.

All this system had been abandoned presumably at the end of the medieval period when the Castle Platform had lost its relevance. Then an entirely new course for the Stort was cut in a deep channel along the northern banks of the natural valley of the Stort.

The Resistivity Survey

The technique

Briefly resistivity survey (using an RM85 resistivity meter) operates by introducing an electric current into the ground surface. These readings are taken along gridlines 1m apart and at intervals of 1m⁶. Where the current meets wet deposits such as the course of former ditches, pits, ponds or springs little resistance is offered to the current. In all the illustrations in this article these low resistance readings are represented by sequences of black or dark pixels. Conversely where the current meets material below ground which is hard

and/or dry like walls, foundations, building rubble, roads, paths or yard surfaces a high resistance figure is registered depicted in these illustrations as sequences of white or lighter pixels.

Before proceeding to the highlights of the surveys conducted the first point noted across the wider survey area was that distinct areas of the survey overall produced an unusually high range of readings (Fig.8).

Generally the valley landscape surrounding the Castle Platform registered low values as the probes identified a depth of relatively undisturbed meadowland. However, unusually high resistance values extended across the entire Castle Platform and across much of the area of the Bury Hills. Here the survey appeared to be encountering artificially compacted layers presenting as an island of artificial earthworks and platforms extending east-west along the valley of the Stort. This suggested that both the Castle Platform and the Bury Hills had been created together at some point as one artificial landscape. The area of the Bury paddocks had earlier been suggested as representing an outer bailey to the east of the castle platform extending as far as Middle Street (Heppel and Saunders 2007). This evidence corroborates this suggestion.

Turning then to the detail of the findings for each area⁷ (Fig.4).

The Dam meadow (Fig.10)

The Dam meadow presents as a broad valley framed by

⁶ Accordingly to survey a square 20m x 20m 400 readings are taken. In the course of the project some 28,000 readings were taken.

⁷ This article is derived from a wider report detailing the findings across the entire survey area. Here the chief points of evidential interest are summarised.

CLAVERING CASTLE

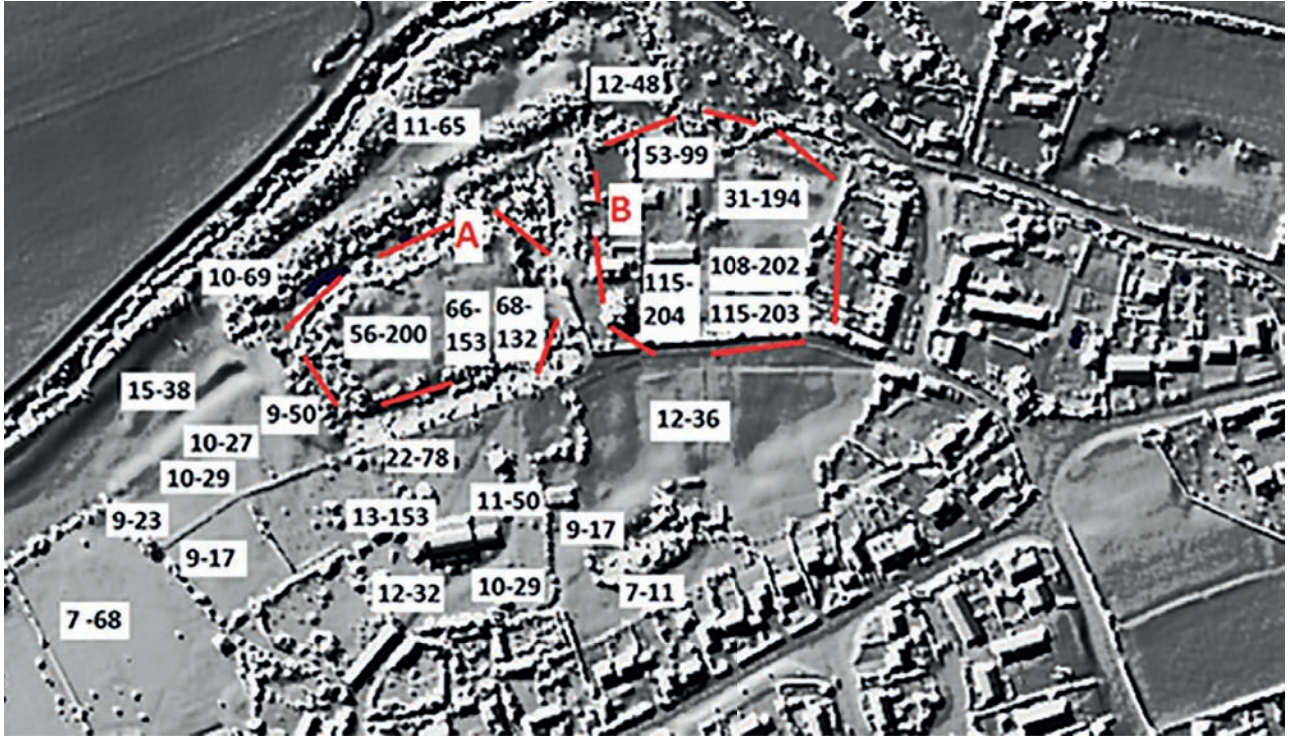


Fig.8 LiDAR image with ranges of survey values indicated. Areas A – the Castle Platform and B – the Bury Hills area represent an island of consistently high values. The 153 value present in the churchyard is caused by the survey clipping the foundations of the church tower



Fig.9 Plot of the completed resistivity survey overlain upon a GoogleEarth image (courtesy GoogleEarth)

earthwork ridges to north and south and terminating with a substantial earthwork bordering the western side of the castle's moat. In surveying the new churchyard extension to the south of the Dam meadow the survey identified that a succession of medieval ditches flowed from south to north towards the bottom of the Dam meadow where lay the former valley of the Stort. Earlier trial trenching of two of these ditches at a point higher up the valley side had already established these ditches as being from 9th to 13th century in date (Crank and Murray (2000).

On approaching the bottom of the valley the resistivity survey showed the westernmost of these new churchyard ditches fed an extensive pond presumably also of medieval date. Then both ditches before reaching the valley bottom had their path obstructed by a revetment which extended along the base of the

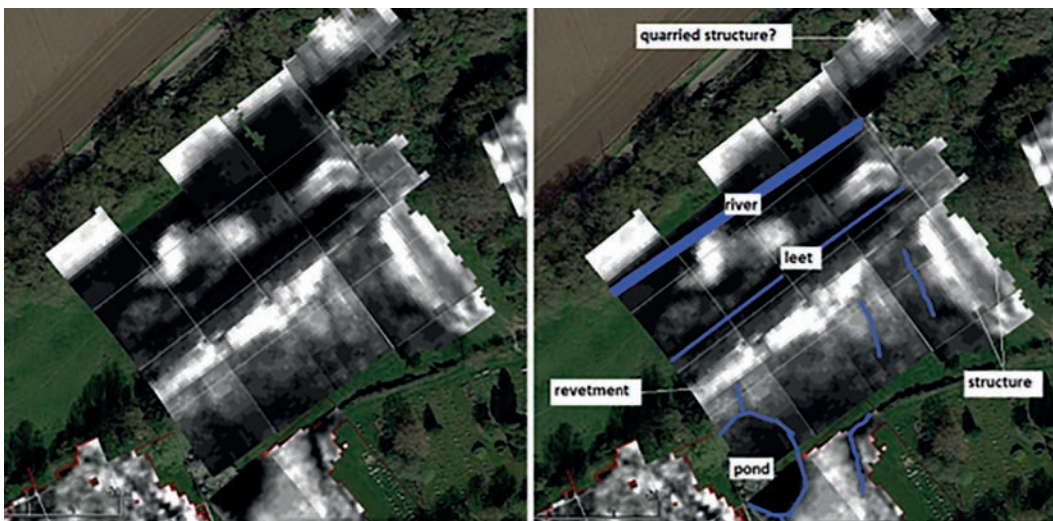


Fig. 10 Survey plot in Dam meadow and interpretation overlain upon GoogleEarth image

valley for some 60m terminating as it approached the moat. This could be wall foundations or more likely a retaining bank of flint and or gravels or the surface of a routeway approaching the castle moat from the west. Further survey across the valley bottom then found this revetment constrained a leet channel heading west-east along the valley bottom with a further linear platform running alongside the leet on its northern side. The leet is effectively enclosed by the revetment to its south and this linear platform to its north.

Beyond this linear platform the survey then encountered the wettest deposits representing the bed of the natural valley. Taken together this arrangement of revetment, leet, platform and natural river valley is suggestive of a location for a medieval mill drawing waters from the Stort down its leet, before both the leet and natural river course are reunited as they empty into the north-west corner of the moat.

Survey then turned to the large earthwork bank that abuts the western side of the castle moat. Here the survey revealed indications of two parallel foundations on a north-west to south-east alignment. This earthwork bank has hitherto been interpreted as just spoil from the moat, but survey indicates the earthwork appears to conceal building foundations of a substantial structure. The survey suggests this structure is 30-40m long with two parallel walls enclosing an interior space 4-6 m in width.

Finally in the north-west corner of the survey area further high resistance readings indicated the presence of a separate quarried rectangular structure.

The churchyard of St Mary and St Clement Clavering (Figs 11 and 12)

Clavering parish church today consists of a handsome chancel, nave, north and south aisles, porch and western tower. The original boundaries of the churchyard form a rectangle directly abutting the southern arm of the moat of the Clavering castle platform. The larger part of the churchyard lies on the northern side of the church. Here it gently slopes towards the castle moat until the ground levels out at a point some 15m before it reaches the edge of the moat.

Like many others Clavering parish church has undergone significant rebuilding and restoration in its lifetime. While its chancel is broadly dated to c 1360 the bulk of the church's visible structure is considered



Fig. 11 Truncated effigy of a knight c. 1200-1250 in Clavering's north aisle

to be of early 15th century date including the porch where the Neville roof boss is located (British History on Line RCHME 2022). The rich interior is noted for its angel roof and extensive 15th century glass, features perhaps suggestive of noble patronage.

From an archaeological perspective also of particular note is the as yet unidentified stone effigy of a knight dated to the early 1200's (Fig.11).

He lies truncated and cramped in a later 15th century niche at the eastern end of the north aisle. In coat of mail with his right hand gripping the hilt of his sword he has clearly been moved to his current location, perhaps from an earlier resting place in the parish church or indeed the 'lost' chapel of St John the Evangelist⁸.

Less impactful perhaps, but equally relevant to the survey's findings, the north doorway to the church, described as '*possibly of the 14th century, re-used*' appears to have had the north aisle and its colourful 15th century windows built around it. Unlike most Essex churches the north doorway does not appear opposite its 15th century southern counterpart. Instead it is positioned significantly further east than the south doorway. Both these features suggest perhaps fragmentary evidence of an earlier church layout incorporated into a later 15th century re-building programme.

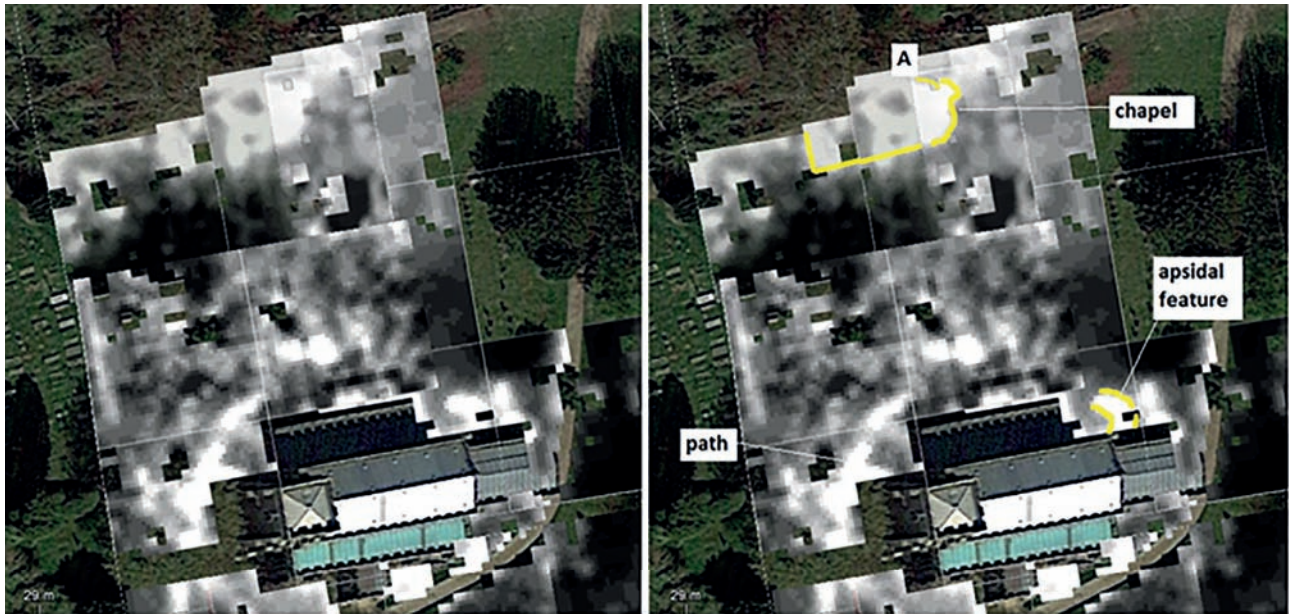
While neither the church nor old churchyard has been subject of earlier archaeological enquiry, in 1923 works on the fenced boundary between churchyard and moat revealed a Barnack stone coffin and skeleton in a position some 100 feet from the kissing gate at the north-west corner of the old churchyard (ESAH 1926) (Essex Record Office 2022) (SMR No: 116)⁹. Folk memory voiced back in 1923 suggested there had been a bridging point of the moat in this area, but certainly none had existed within living memory and the historical record suggests no occupation of the Castle Platform after the Tudor period.

Beginning in the south churchyard the survey reassuringly identified some buried stone paths appearing in old Victorian maps of the churchyard. However, moving to the northern churchyard abutting the chancel and the north aisle further structures suggested themselves (Fig.12). Beneath the churchyard grass framed by the east wall of the north aisle and the north wall of the chancel high resistance readings were registered which appear to suggest the presence below ground of an apsidal ended structure whose south wall corresponds with the current north wall of the chancel.

Clearly survey alone cannot prove whether this apse feature is the remains of an earlier church structure at Clavering, but foundations do appear to be lying beneath the grass here and such could conceivably explain the unusual position of the north doorway and knight's effigy described in the north aisle above.

8 The knightly effigy is unidentified. Its stylistic dating suggests perhaps an early member of the De Clavering family perhaps John FitzRobert (ca. 1190-1240) a Magna Carta surety baron

9 The skeleton and coffin was examined at the time and suggested to be of Roman date?



A - Approximate position of skeleton and coffin discovered in 1923

Fig.12 Survey plots and interpretation of Clavering churchyard

The survey then approached that part of the north churchyard whose slope levels out on its approach to the churchyard's northern boundary with the edge of the castle moat. Here high resistivity readings suggested the presence of a demolished stone structure broadly rectilinear in plan and orientated east-west with its northern side disappearing into the void beyond the moat edge (Fig. 12).

Then between this 'structure' and the parish church, in an area coinciding with the apparent levelling of the churchyard slope, the survey indicated a diffuse linear anomaly of low resistance. Such may indicate the dispersed remains of linear ditch on an E-W alignment. A ditch in this location may suggest a former boundary between the 'structure's' precinct and the remainder of the northern churchyard as it approaches the church.

The demolished stone structure indicated measures some 15m (E-W) x 9m (N-S). Its eastern end appears to describe a semi-circle such as one might interpret being created by an apsidal structure. These dimensions and their apparent layout may, however, represent the spread of demolition material rather than the strict dimensions of any structure. The structure extends in part to the very edge of the moat in a position which closely corresponds with the position given for the coffin and skeleton discovered in 1923. No other part of the churchyard has produced similar results. This feature is suggested as representing the demolished remains of the 'lost' chapel of St John the Evangelist, which according to the monks of Waltham abbey was the location for the opening scenes described in Edward the Confessor's 'Miracle of the Ring'.

Clavering Castle Platform (Figs.13-15)

Finally the survey focussed on the Castle Platform itself. The moated platform today encloses an area approximately 100m (east-west) x 60m (north-south) bordered on all sides by a moat of substantial width and depth. The width of the moat is such as to suggest its sides have over time eroded back into both the Castle Platform and the churchyard. Its internal earthwork features have been mapped and an earlier magnetometry survey produced a little evidence suggesting occupation at some point (Heppel and Saunders 2007). Apart from this the site has never been subject of archaeological enquiry.

Here, however, the project's resistivity survey produced clear evidence for the foundations of substantial structures underlying the grass (Figs.14 and 15)¹⁰.

The layout of structures revealed takes the form of a double courtyard with a centrally positioned entrance court. The western courtyard is on a broadly E-W alignment with its eastern counterpart offset slightly to take a NE-SW alignment. Both courtyards have dimensions approximating 35m (E-W) x 25m (N-S). The centrally positioned smaller entrance court is broadly triangular in shape, joins together the two courtyards to its west and east and clearly displays an entrance positioned approximately midway along the southern perimeter of the overall Castle Platform. The orientation of this entrance clearly suggests a bridge crossing of the southern arm of the moat at this point affording access from the entrance court to the parish churchyard.

Interestingly, such a bridged entrance to the Castle Platform and its courtyards would emerge into the churchyard immediately to the east of the site of the

10 Magnetometry and resistivity survey are two of the principle geophysical techniques used in archaeological enquiry. On occasions they can produce significantly different results.

11 This article is derived from a wider report detailing the findings across the entire survey area. Here the chief points of evidential interest are summarised.

CLAVERING CASTLE



Fig. 13 Clavering the Castle Platform bordered by its tree-lined moats (photo: author)

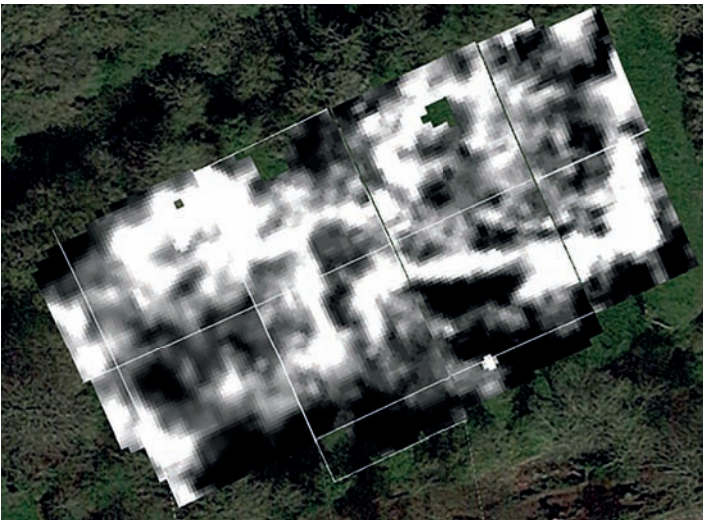


Fig.14 Survey plot of structures on the Clavering Castle Platform

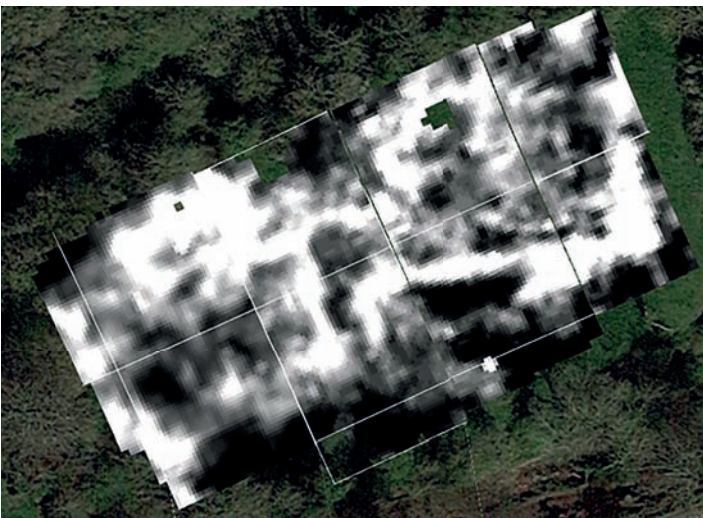


Fig.15 Interpretation of structures on the Clavering Castle Platform

suggested chapel of St. John the Evangelist and the 1923 confined skeleton. Indeed, if projected further it heads directly to the north door of the parish church¹¹. This evidence for a bridge at this point, agrees with the local folklore recorded in 1923 and perhaps testifies to the value of local oral tradition in historical/archaeological research.

Returning to the Castle Platform itself, The highest resistance values focus upon an area alongside the northern perimeter of the western courtyard. Here survey suggests the most substantial remains of structures.

Amongst these broad indications suggestive of below-ground remains, finer distinctions can perhaps be identified within the survey area which suggest that the Castle Platform is host to a range of archaeological deposits reflective of successive phases of development throughout its medieval lifetime. Clearly what the survey is depicting are the remains of Clavering Castle or at least the dominant features of one (presumably the latest) phase in the layout of structures that over the centuries have constituted Clavering Castle.

On a site which hitherto presented as a large deeply moated grassy platform the survey has revealed that double-courtyard configuration which exists elsewhere from the medieval period and typically takes the form of a residential court and service court joined together and served by a central entrance range. Emery (2006) advises us

'...The [double-courtyard] form had become the norm for high-status houses by the second quarter of the fifteenth century as at Caister Castle, Wingfield Manor, and Haddon Hall. The two courtyards were nearly always separated by the hall, facilitating the distinction of an outer court for services, and an inner court for the

private apartments of the householder. The outer court was more open to the world and had greater public access. The inner court encouraged privacy, and the development of secondary or inner chambers and even suites, and gave greater control over access...'

At Clavering the survey suggests the higher-status courtyard accommodating private apartments of the lordship are located in the western courtyard with the eastern courtyard serving as an outer court for services.

Drawing the strands together – an ancestral seat

The project's resistivity survey has indicated a number of interesting features casting fresh light on the Clavering Castle monument and its environs. The site, though a landscape suspected of significant antiquity and even a role in national affairs, hitherto has been poorly understood.

The readings generated by the resistivity survey overall suggests a distinct difference between the composition of sub-surface deposits present in the Castle Platform and suggested Bury Hills 'outer bailey' areas when compared with the surrounding landscape. Such suggests both areas are largely artificial in nature forming two adjoining compounds within an overall wider 'castle' complex. Looked at in conjunction with the project's review of evidence for water management across the survey area suggests both the Castle Platform and Bury Hills form part of some of earliest phases of the castle estate.

The Clavering Castle Platform itself appears densely packed with evidence for structural foundations. The strongest evidence suggests a double-courtyard arrangement of structures, joined and served by a separate entrance court whose entrance faces south across the central portion of the Castle Platform's southern moat. Such an arrangement of structures corresponds well with the prevailing fashion for lordly residences in the early 15th century, and at Clavering perhaps corresponds with the increasing ascendancy of the Neville family in national affairs. Moreover it ties together the castle structures, the hallowed chapel of St John the Evangelist and perhaps the earlier layout and orientation of the parish church.

Conclusions

Combining the evidence of the historical record, legend, folk memory and landscape archaeology the project's findings suggests that Clavering Castle, for at least the best part of five centuries, was the centre of a lordly estate with structures and facilities which were capable of sustaining the households of its powerful noble owners. The Lords of Clavering, be they Fitzwymarcs, de Claverings or Nevilles were drawn from some of the most powerful medieval families of their time. Each are associated with major construction works in the medieval period. Huge edifices like those at Rayleigh Castle in Essex, Warkworth, Middleham and Sheriff Hutton castles on the Scottish marches were all constructed in whole or part by the Lords of Clavering. There is no reason to think such building initiatives would not have been reflected in perhaps more modest style at Clavering.

In a sense it is here at Clavering that their dynasties start – a truly ancestral seat. Moreover, Clavering's role as the ancestral foundation of these dynasties also sees reflection in the spiritual dimension.

The Waltham chroniclers in 1177 recorded that the events surrounding Edward the Confessor and the 'Legend of the Ring' began with the dedication of a church to St. John the Evangelist in Clavering churchyard towards the latter years of the Confessor's reign. The project's resistivity survey appears to have located this chapel in the churchyard of Clavering abutting the moat and Castle Platform. St. John the Evangelist is associated with 'capella ad portam' or chapels by the gate, notably at the church in Rome of San Giovanni a Porta Latina, which commemorates a major part of the saint's legend. It is interesting to note that the suggested location of Clavering's chapel to St John the Evangelist revealed by survey is at the entrance to the Castle Platform and its structures. The historical record for Clavering further advises us that John Neville in 1378 secured from the Crown a yearly fair at Clavering '*on the vigil and the day of St. John before the Latin Gate* (May 6th)'. John Neville's choice of this feast day clearly reflects both the saint's relevance in the spiritual life of the Clavering lordship and points to the spiritual relevance of the chapel site's physical location at the gateway to the Castle Platform.

Finally further exploration of John Neville's engagement with Clavering then reveals perhaps one more clue to Clavering's relevance in the medieval period. John Neville inherits his patrimony in 1367. This consists of extensive landed estates in Yorkshire and the north and a smaller number of estates inherited from his de Clavering ancestors in the south. In the years that followed John sells his southern estates with the exception of Clavering. Indeed here John's younger brother Alexander Neville is holding his court in the summer of 1374 prior to his instalment as Archbishop of York. Then in 1378 John Neville secures market and fair privileges for Clavering and in precisely the same transaction for Sheriff Hutton also.

John de Neville received his licence to crenellate Sheriff Hutton Castle in 1382 though construction there is felt to be dated to just before this licence being granted (Dennison 1998). Sheriff Hutton castle, built afresh on a green field site, is a much larger and substantial baronial castle than anything suggested by our survey of the Clavering Castle Platform, however the overall floor plans at Sheriff Hutton and Clavering are remarkably similar. Sheriff Hutton is constructed as a double-courtyard. The castle occupies a western court with the high status rooms suggested as occupying its northern range – the same arrangement as suggested at Clavering. Sheriff Hutton has an eastern court offset from its partner on a slightly different alignment with the suggestion of a wedge-shaped intervening range filling the angle created by the offset.

Neville's castle at Sheriff Hutton was a late-14th century new build for a family whose fortunes were very much in the ascendant. It is distinctly possible that similar works were conducted in the same period at Clavering, an ancestral home situated conveniently thirty miles or half a day's ride from London?

The fall

However, the days of the medieval Clavering castle were numbered.

In 1396 Ralph Neville had married Joan Beaufort the daughter of John of Gaunt and granddaughter of Edward III. Three years later, Ralph Neville supported his half-brother Henry Bolingbroke (the future Henry IV) in his usurpation of the throne and deposing of Richard II. The Neville, lords of Clavering and their role in national politics had been greatly fortified by their new blood relationship to the Crown. It is this royal link that is advertised by Richard Neville's arms, the Neville saltire differenced with Beaufort, one sees in the porch of Clavering church.

The Neville ascendancy, however, was short-lived.

First Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury then his son Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick the 'Kingmaker' would through the Wars of the Roses seek to control the throne of England. Both would be killed in their attempts to do so and both Sheriff Hutton and Clavering would fall to the Crown.

Under Henry VIII the last of the Neville Lords of Clavering was Margaret Countess of Salisbury. She was herself the granddaughter of Warwick the 'Kingmaker' and indeed the daughter of George Duke of Clarence the ill-fated brother of the last of the Yorkist kings Edward IV and Richard III.

Henry returned Clavering to Margaret, where she conducted works to once more re-establish this ancestral home of the Fitzwymarch, De Clavering and Neville families. As had been the case for generations before, the images of Saints John and Edward the Confessor were repainted in the chapel of St John the Evangelist

and her Lady's chambers on the Castle Platform were re-furbished. Within a few years, however, all would be at an end. Ultimately, Margaret's royal pedigree, her loyalty to the divorced Katherine of Aragon, the family's adherence to the old catholic religion and Henry VIII's temper would combine to see the 67-year-old Margaret executed in the Tower of London in 1541 (Pierce 1997 and 2003). By the time Elizabeth I had dispatched three separate sets of commissioners to root through the concealed riches of medieval Clavering in all likelihood little or nothing remained.

There are perhaps few clearer examples of the long drawn-out sigh then sudden end that marked the passing of medieval England.

In Tudor England chain-mailed knights no longer guarded the Scottish marches. Instead such anachronisms ended their days truncated and squeezed into some ill-fitting niche.

The veneration of saints, painting of images, establishment of chantries, belief in miracles were all of an old religion which suddenly prohibited on the orders of the state were in time forgotten. Ultimately such was the old religion that Margaret would herself die for and in doing so rather than venerate saints she began the journey to becoming one herself¹².

So in what is now the quiet rural idyll of Clavering churchyard it is perhaps hard to imagine those medieval centuries with their clattering knights in armour, Saxon kings and saintly beggars. Then you notice the mist clinging to the Dam meadow, the wood anemone lighting with stars the earthwork banks and a herd of fallow deer canter through the moat to the freedom of the meadows beyond. Overhead red kites circle and young kestrels call.

12 Margaret Pole was beatified on the 29 December 1886 by Pope Leo XIII.

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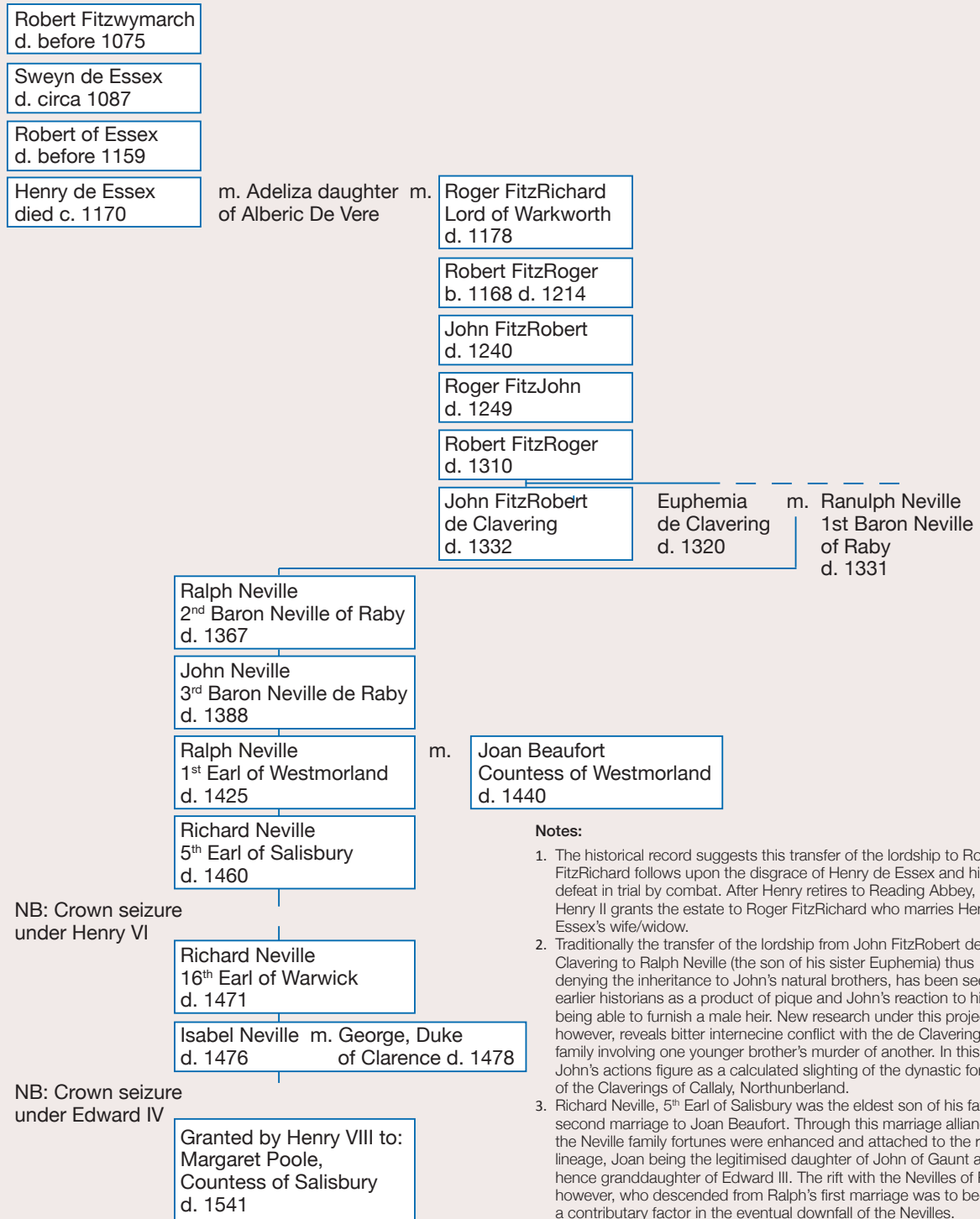
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Appendix 1

Descent of the Clavering Lordship 1066-1541



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Correspondence from Miss Ffytche of Clavering and
W. Duckworth of Jesus College, Cambridge, Essex
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Walter Map

‘*De gradone milite strenuissimo*’:

An East Saxon version of the Anglo-Saxon origin myth?

Phillip Heath-Coleman¹

A ‘Tale of Wade’

There are two events in Colchester’s history whose significance transcends the sphere of the local historian. Those two events – both violent in nature – are the Roman town’s destruction at the hands of Boudicca and the revolting British tribes in c. AD 60/61, and its siege by Parliamentary forces towards the end of the Civil War in AD 1648. There are ample contemporary records of both of course, but Colchester also has a legendary history which had its origins in what we might still with reason describe as a dark age – not because it was unenlightened, which was the original implication of the term, but because contemporary records fail to shine a light on it. Intriguingly that legendary history likewise relates to a Colchester under siege.

The Legendary History

In his *De Nugis Curialium* (conventionally translated ‘Of the trifles of courtiers’), which he wrote towards the end of the twelfth century, the cleric Walter Map, who had himself served at the court of Henry II, relates a curious tale set in Colchester which tells how ‘King Offa’ was treacherously besieged in Colchester by the ‘Emperor of Rome’ after wedding the latter’s daughter, but is saved by the appearance (in fantastic circumstances) of his friend ‘Gado’. Map’s tale was mirrored by a legend of similar vintage which is preserved in a variety of sources and involves ‘King Cole’, Constantine and the latter’s daughter Helena.

Translated from the Latin, the relevant part of Walter Map’s *De gradone milite strenuissimo* [‘Of Wade the boldest of knights’] provides the following narrative:

A certain Gado, son of a king of the Vandals, from love of adventure leaves his home as a boy and wanders through the world redressing wrongs. At last he comes to the court of King Offa who has just married the daughter of the Roman emperor. On their return home the Roman guests urge an attack on Offa, but the Romans are deterred by fear of his

friend Gado. But when Gado has been called off to the Indies the Romans send a mighty army and refuse all Offa’s terms for peace. In the meantime Gado, having completed his task, is returning home when his ship, much against his will, carries him to Colchester. He greets Offa there, and accompanied by a hundred chosen knights goes to the headquarters of the Romans in an attempt to make peace but is repulsed. Thereupon he arrays the English forces, placing Offa with the main body in the market-place of the town, Offa’s nephew Suanus with five hundred men at one gate, and himself with a hundred men at the other. The Romans avoid Gado and concentrate their attacks on Suanus who, at the third assault, appeals for help. Gado refuses, but as Suanus prepares for the third attack, commands him to fall back. The enemy rush in and are met by Offa in the market place, whilst their retreat is cut off by Gado. A great slaughter of the Romans follows until quarter is offered to the survivors, who return to Rome with their dead’

In the past this account has aroused scholarly interest by virtue of the fact that it is the only surviving insular narrative of any substance to describe an exploit of the otherwise shadowy Germanic hero, Wade (OE *Wada*), of whose name *Gado* is a Latinised form.² As M.R. James noted in his edition: “This chapter is usually supposed to preserve an episode of the saga of the mythical hero Wade”.³ Wilson thought the tale might exemplify a body of lost heroic legends which would have existed in Old English, and provides a useful summary of all of the sources which refer to Wade.⁴ Chambers used the story to flesh out the sole OE reference to Wade (“*Wada weold Haelsingum*”), which occurs in the mnemonic list of heroes in the OE *Widsith*.⁵ It has been suggested that local folklore may have preserved a memory of his name in that of *Wade’s Causeway*, an ancient trackway across the North Yorkshire Moors.

The Adventus Saxonum – the ‘Kentish’ Version

However, if we remove the fantastic element in the story which involves Wade we are left with a straightforward narrative which is not without its echoes elsewhere in Germanic legend, and appears to be a version in an East Saxon setting of the English settlement myth which is still most familiar from the ‘Kentish’ form involving Hengist, his brother Horsa and Vortigern, a myth which long formed the basis for serious accounts of the period by historians and would once have been known to every schoolchild in the land.

We know better now, of course, the alliterating names of Hengist and Horsa being tellingly paralleled by those of the founding fathers of other Germanic-speaking tribes: *Raos* and *Raptos* among the Vandals, *Ibur* and *Aio* among the Langobards, and *Aggi* and *Ebbi* among the Danes. Further afield we also have the example of *Romulus* and *Remus*. Those echoes become more obvious if we isolate the main elements in Map’s narrative:

13 This article is a revised version of an article which originally appeared on line, as “a tale of Wade”, in Issue 15 of *The Heroic Age* (October 2012) [<https://www.heroicage.org/issues/15/heath-coleman.php>].



Balcerne Gate, Colchester. the largest surviving Roman gateway in Britain and the site of the legendary defence of the city in Map's story

- (a) two kinsmen feast with a foreign lord to celebrate an apparently dynastic marriage between their two families.
- (b) the foreign lord's followers treacherously decide to fall upon those kinsmen and their followers.
- (c) the kinsmen are besieged, and have to defend themselves against assault at two entrances to their stronghold.
- (d) the besieged feign retreat and the besiegers are routed; the survivors are given quarter.

Perhaps the parallel which most readily comes to mind is that of (c) with the Old English *Finnsburh fragment*⁶. If, however, we also take the *Finnsburh* episode in *Beowulf* into consideration, similarities are also apparent with elements of (a), (b), and (d). The *Finnsburh* story involves two kinsmen (Hnæf and his nephew), who are related by marriage to a foreign lord (Hnæf's sister Hildeburh is the wife of Finn); Hnæf and his followers are treacherously attacked by an element in Finn's entourage and have to defend themselves in a hall with two entrances; the besiegers are driven off and an uneasy peace ensues.

But the *Finnsburh* story is not alone in presenting a series of similarities to Walter Map's tale of *Gado*. Another parallel can be seen in the story of Hengist and Vortigern, as recorded in the early 9th century *Historia Brittonum*⁷, and subsequently repeated by Geoffrey of Monmouth⁸ and posterity: Hengist, the leader of the English ("Saxones"), whose daughter has been married off to Vortigern, the king of the British, has summoned

his son Octha, and nephew Ebissa to his side (*Historia Brittonum* 37-38); subsequently the English treacherously turn on and slaughter the British at an ostensible peace conference. Vortigern is spared, but he is obliged to surrender Essex and Sussex to the English (*Historia Brittonum* 45-46): the surrender of Essex and Sussex is not based on any otherwise recorded historical circumstance and reflects the etymology of the two names. It has long been recognised that the narrative in the *Historia Brittonum* of which these events form part derives from an English original⁹. The following comparisons may be made with Map's tale of *Gado*:

- (a) the leader of the English forces (Hengist/Offa) is accompanied by a close kinsman (Octha and Ebissa/Suanus);
- (b) he is related by marriage to the leader of a potential enemy (Vortigern/the Roman emperor), both of whom have "Roman" connections;
- (c) a peaceful meeting is devastated by treachery; the English prevail.

The principal differences are that

- (a) Hengist has had to travel to Vortigern's territory, while Offa apparently rules from Colchester;
- (b) in the story in the *Historia Brittonum*, the treachery is on the part of the English, who nonetheless benefit from it; in Walter Map's story the English are the victims of the treachery, but ultimately prevail by means of subterfuge.

These differences can be readily accommodated:

- (a) The *Historia Brittonum* is relating the story of Hengist and Vortigern for a British audience. This is how they might wish to hear, or might have always heard it. It is perhaps more likely that an original English version would have told of British treachery: regardless how the incoming Saxons behaved, it is perhaps unlikely that they might have celebrated their own treachery in their oral traditions. If the Offa story is more faithful to the original *English* version, then it was originally Vortigern and the British who planned to get rid of Hengist and his Saxons once and for all, but came unstuck, like the "Romans" at Colchester. However, one man's treachery is another's cunning ruse, and the two versions may represent different perspectives on the same set of circumstances.
- (b) Like Hengist, Offa may have originally been the visitor to a stronghold of the Romano-British. Colchester, after all, is a suitable residence for a "Roman emperor", and the story's Colchester setting and the presence there of "Romans" surely constituted a single element in the original story. Perhaps, once Colchester was regarded as being firmly in English (East Saxon) hands, it was assumed that it must have been home to Offa, and the Romans were inevitably taken to be the visitors.¹⁰

That the original of Walter Map's tale of *Gado* was regarded as a story of the earliest days of the English settlement is supported by the presence of "Romans" (and English together) in Colchester, and by the insertion of the name of Offa at an appropriate point in the East Saxon regnal list,¹¹ immediately above *Escwini/Erchenwine*, whom Florence of Worcester¹² and Henry of Huntingdon¹³ regard as the first King of the East Saxons. It was perhaps these or similar circumstances which ultimately lent the name of *Camulodunum* (Colchester), in the form *Camelot*, to the citadel of the Romano-British in Arthurian legend.

Suanus

Although the name of Offa's nephew *Suanus* bears a superficial resemblance to that of *Suanna*, the form which Roger of Wendover gives for OE *Swæppa*, the third name above that of *Offa* in the East Saxon royal genealogy, Roger, who seems to share his sources with Henry of Huntingdon, has apparently misread OE *-pp-* in his source as *-nn-* (while Henry has *Spoewe*, which probably involves a misreading of the OE letter *wynn* as *p* rather than a unique metathesis). One of Offa of Angeln's two adversaries in the *Vitae duorum Offarum* is called *Sueno*, but there is no real reason to associate him with *Suanus*.

Closer to home, however, the form *Suanescamp* is found for the placename Swanscombe in Kent in a charter dated c. AD 687 in which Eorcenwald (Erkenwald), Bishop of London, that is the East Saxon diocese, grants land, mainly in South-West Essex, but including Swanscombe and Erith in Kent, to Barking Abbey,

where his sister Aethelburh (Ethelburga) was abbess. Swanscombe is not recorded again until the Domesday Book in 1087. This placename seems a possible origin for our legendary *Suanus*, especially in view of the connection with Essex (a later reader of the Charter – perhaps at Barking – may not have realised where *Suanescamp* was).

The Stuff of Legend

Walter Map inevitably associates the *Offa* of his own narrative with the celebrated King Offa of Mercia. The degree to which the semi-legendary Offa of Angeln, the historical King Offa of Mercia, and Offa of Colchester may have been confused, conflated or identical in Anglo-Saxon and later minds probably varied from hardly at all in the first instance, to completely by post-Conquest times.

The similarities between the *Hengist* and *Offa* stories on the one hand and the *Finnsburh* story on the other suggest that the former have adapted a popular theme to describe the circumstances of the English settlements and the defeat of the British. *Finnsburh*, however, shares one significant similarity with the story of *Offa* which is absent from the *Hengist / Vortigern* story, to wit the defence of two entrances. In the *Offa* story the presence of two entrances seems in some way connected with the deception which allows Offa to get the better of the Romans, but is hardly essential to it. A similar deception may have featured in *Finnsburh*, perhaps between the events described in the fragment and those in the episode, even if the absence of any essential connection between the presence of a second entrance and the success of the ruse – which absence supports comparison of the two stories – presents difficulties (though it need not have done to its intended audience).

The association of different sets of protagonists with what is in essence a single theme depicting the earliest English settlements is paralleled by the five different versions of the story of the (usually) two kinsmen and their (usually) three ships which appear in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. The Chronicle relates that

- 449 Hengist and Horsa land in three ships at *Ypwinesfleot/Heopwinesfleot* (Ebbsfleet, Kent)
- 477 Aelle and his three sons Cymen, Wlencing and Cissa land in three ships at *Cymenesora* (i.e. *The Owers*, to the south of Selsey Bill, Sussex)
- 495 Cerdic and his son Cynric land at *Cerdicesford* with five ships
- 501 Port and his two sons, Bieda and Maegla, land in two ships at *Portesmuþa* (Portsmouth, Hampshire)
- 514 The "West Saxons" Stuf and Wihtgar land with three ships at *Cerdicesora*.

The duplication is most apparent in the entries for 495 and 514. In all these entries, with the exception of that for Hengist, one at least of the personal names

involved seems to have been derived from a placename (according to the Chronicle Wihtgar was subsequently buried at *Wihtgaraburh* on the Isle of Wight).¹⁵

That fact that Jordanes, the historian of the Goths, relates how the Goths and Gepids came to Europe from Scandinavia in three ships indicates that we are dealing with a pan-Germanic origin myth, or rather formula.¹⁶ The formulaic nature of both these narratives - the arrival in three ships and the treacherous siege - underscores the fact that we are dealing not with history, or any attempt at it, but with the application of legendary formulas/formulaic legend, adopted and adapted to suit individual circumstances.

Modern scholarship is reluctant to read too much into the information which the earliest sources - Bede, the *AS Chronicle*, the *Historia Brittonum* - give about the earliest stages of the English settlements: the formulaic nature of these (and other) narratives means that we should in fact not expect them to contain even a shred of historical accuracy. In the virtual absence of any real historical record of the period the popular imagination still struggles to reconcile the archaeological record and latterly the genetic record and their evolving interpretations with the mythology, though the use of the latter as a proxy for history is completely at odds with its purpose and nature.¹⁷

It follows that:

- Hengist did not exist; he no more led the first English expedition to Britain than did our Offa, the friend of Wade;
- like Offa, Hengist only appears in a royal genealogy (in Hengist's case that of Kent, in Offa's that of Essex) on the strength of a legend;
- the three battles of the West Saxons against the *Welsh* which are recorded in the Chronicle are probably as fictitious as those of Hengist and Horsa in Kent;
- Cerdic and Cynric are similarly an alliterating fiction; what is interesting in their case is that the West Saxons should have inserted two kinsmen with what are apparently *British* names into a basically Germanic, and in particular English, origin myth. It may be worth noting in this connection that the name Cerdic is conventionally derived from the British name **Cereticos*, and that there are, tantalisingly, echoes of the tales attaching to Hengist / Vortigern and to Offa/the 'Roman Emperor' in stories attaching to *Ceredig ap Cunedda*, the legendary founder of Ceredigion (Anglicised as *Cardigan*) in SW Wales.

For the same reason it also seems likely that Bede's sub-division of the Germanic incomers into Angles, Saxons and Jutes¹⁸ is another reflex of the fondness for tripartition which is apparent in their myth of origin, rather than of any actual tribal or cultural affiliations.

The identification of the circumstances of this "tale of Wade" is important in that it places the contractual

element which Brooks identified in the marriage of Vortigern to Hengist's daughter in Geoffrey of Monmouth in the realm of myth rather than in a historical context. Rather than illustrating an aspect of the historical acquisition of southern Britain by the English, it gives the contractual relationship of intermarriage an (equally) important place in the English (and probably originally pan-Germanic) myth of origin.

The Oath-Book of Colchester and Old King Cole

An echo of Walter Map's story of Offa and the Roman Emperor, also located in Colchester, may survive in a legend attaching to King Coel, or Cole, who had come to be regarded as the town's eponymous founder.¹⁹ That legend has him besieged there for three years by Constantius, the father (subsequently) of the Emperor Constantine: the conflict ends with Constantius marrying Cole's daughter, Helen.

The details can be found in the so-called *Oath book* or *Red Parchment Book of Colchester*, a compendium of manuscripts relating to Colchester's history, Folio 20 of which is headed *De Colocestria et Coele*, and provides a set of annals in Latin in a 14th century hand, the relevant entries being:²⁰

AD

- 219 Coel, Duke of the Britons, began to build the city of Kaircoel,
- 238 Coel, Duke of Colchester, began to reign over Essex and Hertford
- 243 Helen, daughter of Coel, is born in Colchester,
- 259 Constantine, Commander (Dux) of the Romans in Spain, sailing (*navigans*) to Britain, besieges the city of Colchester for three years,
- 263 The siege of Colchester was raised by the espousal of Helen, daughter of Coel.
- 265 Constantinus, son of Constantius, is born in Colchester, of Helen, hitherto mistress [of Constantius].
- 297 Coel, most powerful King of the Britons, dies at Colchester in the second month.

A brief narrative which bears some relation to and is possibly dependent on the above annals - though without any mention of Coel - can be found in the again possibly 14th century *Chronicle of Colchester or Oath Book*²¹:

"Colchester is situated in the eastern part of Britain. Indeed it is related that Helena, later mother of the empire, was born and brought up in this city. It was of great merit, as can be seen from the fact that Constantius, father of Constantine the Great, is said to

have besieged the city for three years, but was unable to win it except finally by marrying Helena".²²

Brief – dependent and derivative - references (which do not, however, refer to a siege can also be found in Henry of Huntingdon and Geoffrey of Monmouth, and the legend reached its poetic apogee in Oscar Fay Adams' Constantius and Helena of 1886.

A Continental Parallel

It has often been noted – and the suggestion as often dismissed - that there are similarities between the plot of the *Finnsburh* story and the second part of the Old High German epic known as the *Nibelungenlied*. In the latter the Burgundian king, Günther, and his brothers visit Attila, who has married their sister, Kriemhild, as guests, but end up under siege in Attila's hall. It is not necessary to suggest, of course, that either story is a version of the other, but it is obviously legitimate to suggest that the story of the last stand of the Nibelungen which constitutes the second part of the *Nibelungenlied*, is an adaptation of the theme which occurs not only in *Finnsburh*, but also in the legends of Hengist and Offa. So once again we are apparently dealing with an apparently pan-Germanic formula.

The validity of this comparison is underlined by the similarities which both *Finnsburh* and the *Nibelungenlied* share with the story of Offa and the Romans. There is enough of (a), (b) and (c) in the second part of the *Nibelungenlied* to make any suggestion of coincidence at least questionable.

The climax of the *Nibelungenlied* is somewhat confused. A Burgundian hero (Dancwart) holds the door to the hall *to prevent the Huns from leaving*, while the other Burgundians indulge in what can only be described a frenzy of slaughter. Other Huns wait helpless outside, and the *Nibelungen* poet has the warrior on the door ridicule them for not coming to the aid of their compatriots. However, comparison with the same situation in the Old Norse *Þiðrekssaga*, which is generally held to be a more archaic version of the same story (and ultimately also of continental German origin), suggests that the Burgundians were originally also besieged in a hall. At one stage in its narrative, however, *Þiðrekssaga* also has the Burgundians attacked in an orchard, where, tellingly, they slaughter a number of Huns who are barred in with them²⁴.

In both the *Nibelungenlied* and *Þiðrekssaga* the Huns slain respectively within the hall and in the orchard (which is apparently standing in for the hall) are reminiscent of the Romans lured to their deaths in the marketplace at Colchester. If there is a thematic relationship, then either the luring of the Romans in the *Gado* story is a device to rationalise the presence of representatives of both sides within the besieged hall, or the situation in the *Nibelungenlied* and *Þiðrekssaga* represents an attempt to explain the presence of Huns on the inside once the deception had been forgotten. Indeed, the evidence of the *Nibelungenlied*, where

Dancrat uniquely, and bizarrely, holds the door to stop Huns getting *out*, suggests that it is indeed the Offa story which most accurately preserves the original theme. However, it is not impossible that the two versions are compatible. The besieged may have been besieged because they had already killed associates of the besiegers within their stronghold. The incompleteness of the *Finnsburh* story tantalisingly makes this interpretation a possibility in that story too - one which previous studies of *Finnsburh* have not been able to consider.

What is true of *Finnsburh*, however, is that this identification of the formulaic nature of its theme makes any attempt to make historical or even logical sense of the action futile. In particular the fragment and the episode need not be any more compatible than the *Nibelungenlied* and *Þiðrekssaga*.

In all of the narratives under discussion individual aspects of the theme reflect different institutions in early Germanic society:

- (a) the role of kinship, and in particular the bond between uncle and nephew (Offa/Suanus, Hnæf/unnamed nephew, Günther and his brothers/Kriemhild's sons)
- (b) the sanctity of hospitality, even between potential foes
- (c) the use of the arranged (royal) marriage to forge an alliance or keep the peace.

What these stories serve to illustrate, whatever their outcome (which unlike the theme is not, of course, constant) is the vulnerability of all these structures to the overriding demands of honour and its bedfellow, vengeance.

Comparison with the *Nibelungenlied* and *Finnsburh* suggest that the underlying motif was old, widely known, and essentially tragic, emphasising as it does honour, revenge and the downfall of realms. But in Britain the old implications of the theme seem to have been stood on their head: the loser is now a Romano-British world which was opposed to the incoming 'Saxons', and the tale has become a success story, retrospectively celebrating and justifying the establishment and existence of 'English' kingdoms. In Offa's case it is perhaps no coincidence that the main Saxon protagonist shares his name with an East Saxon king of the late 8th century: the fact that that king's name breaks a long sequence of regal alliteration on initial S- may also suggest that his name owes something to that of the legendary Offa of Colchester, or that a version of the story came into being which used his name for the hero. Either way that might reflect a desire to legitimise the idea of (an) historical (East) Saxon hegemony in the 8th century, possibly in the face of threats from neighbouring kingdoms.

Post scriptum

The *Wade* character (though not, however, Wade himself, or the supernatural element) may be an early accretion,

Appendix 1

Table showing the parallels in theme among the sources

General theme	<i>De Gradone</i>	<i>Historia Brittonum</i>	<i>Finnsburh</i>	<i>Nibelungenlied</i>
Two or more kinsmen (a leader and his nephew)	Offa and his nephew Suanus	Hengist and his brother Horsa (Hengist and <i>his nephew?</i> Otha)	Hnaef and a band of men including Hengist (Hnaef's his sister Hildeburh's son, is apparently, but not necessarily, on the other side)	Günther, the king of the Burgundians, his brothers and entourage. (Attila's sons are nephews to Günther and his brothers by their sister Gudrun)
enjoy the hospitality of a foreign lord	<i>receive</i> the Roman Emperor (in Colchester)	are entertained by the British King Vortigern in Kent	are staying with Finn at Finnsburh	visit Attila
to celebrate the marriage of one of the parties and the daughter / sister of the other.	where Offa is to marry the Emperor's daughter	Vortigern is enamoured of Hengist's daughter and is betrothed to her	Finn is already married to Hildeburh, apparently Hnaef's sister	who is married to Günther's sister, Gudrun
They find themselves at odds with their hosts (who may already have a score to settle) as the result of treachery	The Romans plan to besiege Offa's men	The <i>Saxons</i> plan to turn on the Britons at a feast	A section of Finn's entourage has a score to settle with Hnaef and his men. They betray Finn's hospitality and besiege Hnaef in the hall	The Huns turn on the Burgundians slaughtering their squires.
They are besieged in a hall and have to guard two entrances	Offa and Suanus hold out in Colchester. Suanus and the returning Wade defend its two opposite gates		Sigferth and Eaha hold one door, Guthlaf and others the other	A Burgundian warrior holds the door to the hall.
The besieged warriors (ultimately) prevail; their adversaries sue for peace	The Romans are lured in and slaughtered; the survivors are granted quarter	The Saxons slaughter the British nobility; Vortigern surrenders up his lands in return for his life	Hnaef (and his nephew) are killed, but his followers fight the besiegers to a standstill, and subsequently get the better of them in renewed fighting	The Burgundians have trapped a number of Huns in the hall and slay them. The <i>Burgundians</i> are finally defeated by the Huns and their allies outside.



Balcerne Gate, view from the interior

or even original to the plot of the legend. Comparison may be made with Sigferth in the *Finnesburh* fragment, and Dancwart in the *Nibelungenlied* (and perhaps Hogni in *Þiðrekssaga*): all are great heroes who play a significant part in the defence of the besieged hall. This role may have been Wade's *entrée* to the Offa story.

Afterword

The role of Sigferth – “*Secgena leod wrec*o* wide cuð* [‘famous exile of the nation of the Secgan’] – in the ‘*Finneburh* Fragment’, whether or not it casts Hengest (*pace* Tolkien) in a subordinate role (“*and Hengest sylf – hwearf him on laste*” [‘and Hengest himself – followed on’]), may be evidence that the *Fragment* itself had an East Saxon (courtly?) audience at some point in its transmission. Not only does the East Saxon regnal list (BM Ms Add 23211) include a *sigferð seaxing* amongst the earliest East Saxon kings, but it also includes *Gesecg* and *Antsecg* at its head. While there is no explicit connection between *Gesecg* and *Antsecg* on the one hand and *Secgan* on the other – and how can there be, given that the first two at least are mythical? – it is surely unlikely that the East Saxon mind would not have made both associations at some time. The latest king in the most complete line in BM Ms Add 23211 (i.e. the one which includes legendary and mythical sections before the names of historical kings) is *Offa*, whom Bede describes as abdicating and going to Rome in AD 709 (though exile rather than pilgrimage may be nearer the mark), and it is possible that he owed his name (which unlike the names of almost every other recorded historical king of the East Saxons does not alliterate on S-) to interest in his legendary namesake, our *Offa* of Colchester.

As for Sigferth, in the light of the fluidity we have seen among *personae* of the same name – *Offa*, *Hengest* and *Wade* – in ultimately Germanic legend, it would perhaps not be far-fetched to see a evidence of a similar multiple persona in the names of *Sigferth* and the German *Seyfrid* and *Sivrit* [modern ‘*Siegfried*’], and even in the character of *Seofrid* (whatever his origin) in Nicholas Rowe’s *Royal Convert* of 1707, the main character of which is another *Hengest*.²⁵ After all how

many ‘widely-known’ heroes of the same name can a composite legendary of the kind evidenced by the various Germanic languages in their sundry mediaeval guises support?

When all is said and done, it is ironic (or as the Saxons themselves might have said *weird*) that the demise of the Anglo-Saxon state should have been due to English warriors on *Senlac* hill falling victim to the very deception by which according to this *tale of Wade* they themselves had originally gained the upper hand over the Romano-British in Colchester.

Appendix 2

The East Saxon King-list to Saberht

Little is known of the predecessors of Saberht, the first East Saxon king to enter the pages of history in Bede’s narrative. There are two main versions of the list from the progenitor Seaxneat, a presumed tribal god, to Saberht himself. These are:

MS BL Add.23211, *Chronicon ex Chronicis B*

Seaxnet – Gesecg – Antsecg – Swæppa – Sigefugl – Bedca – Offa – Æscwine – Sledd – Saberht

Henry of Huntingdon (*Historia Anglorum*), Roger of Wendover (*Flores Historiarum*), Matthew Paris (*Chronica Majora*)

Henry’s readings first with variants in Roger’s and Matthew’s in parentheses:

Saxnat (Nascad) – Andesc – Gesac – Spoewe (Suanna) – Sigewlf – Biedcan – Offa – Erchenwine (Erkenwinus) – Sledd – Sebert

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Notes

- ¹ Summary in translation taken from Wilson (1970), who paraphrases the translation in Chambers (1912). The translation of Walter Map's *De gradone milite strenuissimo* by Tupper and Ogle (1924) can be accessed in its entirety at maryjones.us/ctexts/map6.html, while the original Latin text can be accessed at https://archive.org/details/waltermapse_nugis00mapwuoft/page/n123/mode2up.
- ² The original text uses the form *Grado* once in the title and once in the text (its very first word). Thereafter the form *Gado* is used exclusively.
- ³ Wade appears as *Wate* in the Middle High German epic *Kudrun* and as *Vathe* in the Old Norse *Þiðrekssaga*.
- ⁴ Speght 1598, quoted in Wilson 1970, p.16. Tolkien and Gordon regarded the name which Speght gives to Wade's boat as a borrowing of *Guingalet*, *Gryngolet*, the name of Gawain's horse in Arthurian legend (see Tolkien and Gordon, 1967, p. 90, note on l.597).
- ⁵ Chambers (1912). **Wada weold Waelsingum* might be more satisfactory from the point of view of alliteration, but this is not the place to pursue that line of thought!
- ⁶ References to the *Finnsburh* episode and fragment are to the Tolkien/Bliss edition (1982).
- ⁷ References to the *Historia Brittonum* (formerly attributed to Nennius) are to the parallel text in Morris (1980).
- ⁸ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia Regum Britanniae* (History of the Kings of Britain) vi 10 – 16. In the same context Geoffrey has Vortigern grant Hengist land at a place “*which we call Castrum Corrigie in Latin ... known as Kaercarrei in the Welsh tongue and as Thanceastre in Saxon*”. Tatlock (1950) associates this with Caistor in Lincolnshire (*Thwangcastre* in 1322). It is, however, possible that Geoffrey's *Thanceastre* derives rather from a misreading of *Ythancaestir*, the name which Bede gives to the Roman station at *Othona* (*Yppanceastre* in the Old English version) which stood on the south bank of the Blackwater Estuary, a name which survived as *Effechester* - with East Saxon /e/ for standard (late West Saxon) OE /y/ - in the Domesday Book.
- ⁹ See, for example, Brooks (1989).
- ¹⁰ Archaeology reveals a Saxon presence (in the forms of huts, cruciform broaches, combs, pottery) within the Roman walls of Colchester from the early 5th century. See Crummy (1997).
- ¹¹ BL MS Add 23211 f.1.
- ¹² The Latin *Chronicon ex chronicis*, traditionally ascribed to Florence of Worcester (d. 1118) and latterly to *John*, also 'of Worcester' (fl. 1128-1138). It has been suggested that Florence may have assembled material which John consigned to the *Chronicon* as it survives.
- ¹³ Henry of Huntingdon (c.1088 – c.1157), *Historia Anglorum*.
- ¹⁴ In an earlier part of his *Gado* story, Walter Map refers to Offa's erection of a *fossa* ('defensive ditch', a reference presumably to Offa's Dyke) to keep the Welsh in Wales. He – or his source - may perhaps have conflated the dispute between Offa of the *Gado* story and the 'Emperor of Rome' with that between Offa of Mercia and Charlemagne, though at one point he seems to identify his 'Emperor of Rome' as 'Cunnan'.
- ¹⁵ It should, however, be noted that Woolf (2017) has suggested that Hengist's name may have its origins in an Anglicisation of Latin *cantarius*, which is repeatedly glossed as *hengest* in Old English sources, both words meaning 'gelding' in their respective languages, the motivation - serious or otherwise - being the resemblance of *cantarius* to Latin words such as *cantuarri* which refer to the people of Kent.
- ¹⁶ Jordanes: *De origine actibusque Getarum* [The Origin and Deeds of the Goths] (c.AD 551)
- ¹⁷ See Howe (1989).
- ¹⁸ Bede, *History of the English Church and People*, Chapter 15.
- ¹⁹ The earliest form of the 'Colchester' name listed by Reaney (1935) is (to) *Colenceastre* (921/925, ASC), and his earliest form showing loss of the *n* is *Coleceastra* (1067). Association of the town's origins with 'Old King Cole' is dependent on and therefore presumably post-dates the loss of the *n* from the standard contemporary form of the name. That association is pervasive: mediaeval records mention *Colkyng's Castle*, apparently with reference to the town's Roman Balcerne Gate, and Morant and others refer to the Roman Temple of Claudius which forms part of the foundations of Colchester Castle as the *Palace of Coel*.
- ²⁰ Text (in translation), as annotated, in Benham (1907)
- ²¹ British Library, MS Cotton Nero D, VIII, fol. 345b. See Harbus (2002) for a detailed examination of the legend and its origins.
- ²² Translation by Harbus, (2002) (pp. 67-8)
- ²³ Accessible on line at <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/Camelot/text/adams-constantius-and-helena>
- ²⁴ A useful summary of *Þiðrekssaga* in English can be found in Hatto (1965) pp.375-383.
- ²⁵ Cp. 'Das Lied vom hürnen Seyfrid'; *Sivrit* is the usual form of 'Siegfried' used in the *Nibelungenlied*.

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The Pectoral Cross of Abbot Beche: a rare medieval survival?

Philip J. Wise

Thomas Beche, also known as Marshall, (d. 1539) was the last medieval abbot of the Benedictine St John's Abbey, Colchester in Essex and one of a relatively small number of senior figures amongst both the clergy and laity, executed during the reign of Henry VIII (1509-47) for their adherence to their Catholic faith.^{xxvi}



Fig.1 Pectoral Cross Case (front view)



Fig.2 Case Reverse

The ownership history of the pectoral cross was first published by the Catholic historian Cardinal Aidan Gasquet in 1908, and several later writers have repeated its story without questioning its veracity.^{xxvii} Interest in Thomas Beche has grown in recent years and it is felt to be timely to undertake the first detailed assessment of his claimed association with the cross.^{xxviii} If it can be shown that Beche could have owned the cross, this would be a rare medieval survival indeed.

Description and Dating

The pectoral cross (Figs. 1-5) is actually in two parts with a cross-shaped hinged case, elaborately enamelled, enclosing an enamelled crucifix. The front of the case is decorated with the Instruments of the Passion – a pillar with entwined rope, a spear, a sponge on a reed, scourges and a hammer, nails and pliers – surrounded by drops of blood. At the centre of the design where the arms of the cross meet is a cockerel. The back of the case is decorated with Christ's pierced hands and feet, the inscription *INRI*, the sacred monogram *IHS* and, at the centre, the Sacred Heart within the Crown of Thorns, again accompanied by drops of blood.

Around the outside of all four sides of the case is the inscription, *+ PASSIO DNI NRI IESV XPI ERVAT NOS A DOLORO TRISTI*.^{xxix} In the corresponding position inside the case is a second inscription, *EN HOMO QUAE PRO TE PATETUR TORMRNTA REDEMPTOR*.^{xxx} Inside the lid of the case is a third inscription, *QVI VVLT POST ME VENIRE ABNEGET SEMETIPSVM ET TOLLAT CRVCEM SVAM ET SEQUATOR ME*.^{xxxi}

The bottom of the case is decorated with a diamond lattice pattern with fleurs-de-lys in the spaces. The majority of the fleurs-de-lys, and the lattice pattern itself, are in green enamel with a small number in blue forming the outline of a cross. There is a gold pin in the upper arm which corresponds with a small hole at the top of the crucifix. The case measures approximately 12.0 cm long (excluding the separate attachment ring) by 8.5 cm wide.

The crucifix has a figure of Christ in white enamel with a gold loincloth and crown of thorns set against a red enamel background. Below is a white enamel skull referring to the site of the Crucifixion – Golgotha, the place of the skull. On the back of the crucifix is the inscription, *HOC SIGNV ERIT IN CELO CVM DNS AD IVDICANDVM VENERIT*.^{xxxii}

Abbot Beche's cross has recently been dated to c. 1535 by Marion Campbell who has also suggested that it might be a rare example of English workmanship. This would enable it to have been owned by the abbot, although Campbell adds that 'Tudor and Stuart crosses await a full study...'. Campbell notes that 'the sole somewhat comparable pectoral cross [is] that of Cardinal Reginald Pole, archbishop of Canterbury (1500-1558) ...'.^{xxxiii} As well as a similarity in design, these pectoral crosses

THE PECTORAL CROSS OF ABBOT BECHE

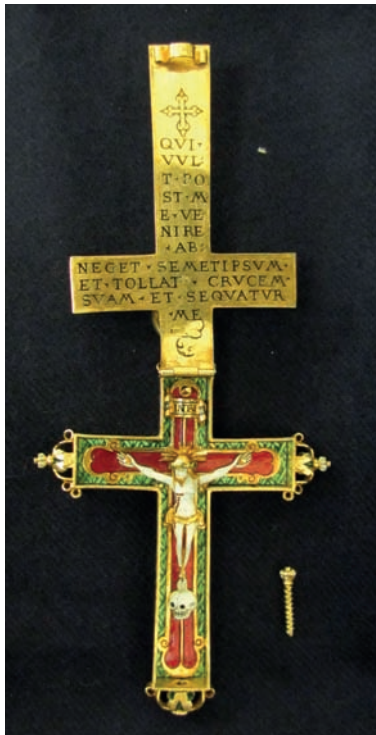


Fig.3 The case opened



Fig.4 Cross (front view)



Fig.5 Cross (back view)

also have in common a traditional association with a prominent Catholic cleric and, as will be shown below, comparable ownership histories.

The history of the cross is recorded, according to Cardinal Gasquet, 'in French on a half-sheet of notepaper which is enclosed in the case'.^{xxxiv} Unfortunately this document appears to no longer exist, having not been seen for some forty years (Abbot David Charlesworth, pers. comm.). The only source is therefore Gasquet's translation:

This gold and enamelled cross belonged to Abbot John Beche, last superior of the Benedictine Abbey of St John's, Colchester, in the county of Suffolk in England. He was elected Abbot in 1523, and refused, at the same time as the Abbots of Glastonbury and Reading, the act by which Henry VIII, King of England, was declared head of the Church, or to resign to his Majesty the property of his abbey. For this reason he was convicted of treason, and hanged in the said town of Colchester on December 1st, 1539. This cross was preserved in the Mannock family, whose seat was in the neighbourhood of Colchester, up to the time of the last baronet, Sir George Mannock, who gave it to the English Benedictine nuns then at Brussels, and since settled in Winchester, where two of his sisters were nuns. About the year 1788, the cross was given by the abbess of that community to the late Mr. Weld, whose aunt had long lived among them'.^{xxxv}

Gasquet acknowledges that 'there are certain inaccuracies' in this account, but unhelpfully does not state what these are (although these must include the location of Colchester in Suffolk rather than Essex, the incorrect date of Abbot Beche's election which is actually 1533 and the fact that his Christian name is given as John rather than Thomas). Instead he argues that it is fundamentally correct and provides a small amount of supporting evidence.

History of the Cross

Turning now to the history of Abbot Beche's cross, and working backwards from the present, at the time of writing, the cross is in the possession of the abbot of Buckfast Abbey. According to Gasquet the cross was given to Buckfast in the early 1920s.^{xxxvi}

The cross was lent to Buckfast Abbey by the Hon. Charles Clifford (1887-1962), later 11th Baron Clifford of Chudleigh, until such time as a Benedictine abbey should be re-founded in Colchester. The recipient was Abbot Anscar Vonier, who had been elected in 1906, and the gift was made on a date shortly before the opening of the new church at Buckfast Abbey in August 1922. The cross had passed to the Hon. Charles by descent through the Clifford family. According to Gasquet, it had previously belonged to the Rt. Rev. William Clifford (1823-93), who was the third bishop of the Roman Catholic diocese of Clifton in the south-west of England.^{xxxvii} The bishop was the son of Hugh Charles Clifford (1790-1858), 7th Baron Clifford of Chudleigh, and his wife Mary Lucy, née Weld (1799-1831). It is through Mary Weld that the cross comes into the ownership of the Clifford family.

Mary Weld was the only child of Thomas Weld (1773-1837) of Lulworth Castle (Dorset). Weld came from a long established family of Catholic gentry, one of a number living along the South Coast from Dorset to West Sussex.^{xxxix} Perhaps because of his role as the head of the family, Thomas Weld did not initially become a priest, instead marrying Lucy Clifford and only following her death in 1821 being ordained. Five years later he was consecrated titular bishop of Amyclae and appointed coadjutor to Alexander Macdonell, bishop in Upper Canada. During a visit to Rome in 1830 he was made a cardinal by Pope Pius VIII. This 'unexpected elevation, which made him the first English cardinal since Philip Thomas Howard (1629-1694) was seen as a gesture of papal goodwill towards England in the wake of the Catholic Emancipation Act'.^{xl} As a prominent churchman, Cardinal Weld was a highly suitable recipient of the cross as stated by Gasquet.^{xli}

During the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution of 1789 Weld, with his father also called Thomas (1749-1810), had offered hospitality to both exiled French clerics and members of religious orders, and English communities who had been living on the continent and now returned home. These included a group of French

Trappists who were given asylum at Lulworth, some French Nuns of the Order of the Visitation at Shepton Mallet (Dorset) and a community of English nuns, Poor Clares, formerly at Gravelines who settled near Plymouth.^{xliii} This provides a context for the gift to Weld 'about the year 1788' (according to Gasquet) of the cross by the abbess of the English Benedictine nuns of Brussels.

However, there is a serious difficulty here as the Weld family are linked not to the Benedictine but to the Franciscan nuns of Brussels.^{xliiii} At least two members of the Weld family were Franciscan Nuns whilst a third was a pensioner. The nuns are Mary Gertrude Simeon Weld (1741-1801), the first cousin of Thomas Weld the elder and abbess from 1782 to her death in 1801, and Juliana Mary (Sr Frances Sales) (c. 1773-1800), the daughter of the same Thomas Weld and sister of the cardinal.^{xliv} Most significantly, in 1783 the nuns, then at Bruges, were frightened that they might be closed down by the Emperor Joseph II and took steps to secure their assets by transferring these to England; in particular 'we made a present of 11 of our best Pictures, our Damask table linen, 3 Albs, and 3 Surplices with handsome Brussels lace to Thomas Weld Esq. of Lullworth [sic], for which in return he has given us £150'. Although Abbot Beche's pectoral cross is not specifically mentioned, it is at least possible that it entered the possession of the Weld family at this time. For this to happen though the cross would have had to have been given to the nuns during the lifetime of the supposed previous owner Sir George Mannock Bt who died in 1787 (see below). Alternatively it might have happened slightly later once the nuns had arrived in England, for in 1794 it is recorded that Thomas Weld the elder rented Abbey House in Winchester for the nuns's use and subsequently, having bought the property in 1797, allowed the nuns to remain there rent free.^{xlvi}

There is no doubt, however, that Cardinal Weld did possess the cross as a portrait by an unknown Italian artist dated c. 1830-5 in the Royal Collection shows him wearing it around his neck.^{xlvii} In addition the cross also seems to appear in a pencil drawing by William Furze dated 1837 in the National Portrait Gallery.^{xlviii}

According to Gasquet, the cross had passed to the Weld family from the English Benedictine nuns of Brussels (although, as we now know, the Franciscans are more likely) who, in their turn, had received it from Sir George Mannock Bt, who resided at Great Bromley in Essex and was a Jesuit priest who had died without a male heir in June 1787. Sir George had the misfortune to be overturned in the Dover mail coach whilst travelling to the continent.^{xlix} The year before his death, Sir George made his will, dated 7 October 1786, and amongst its bequests is that of £10 to 'Mrs Rebecca Pigot of Brussels'.¹ This beneficiary is actually the abbess of the English Benedictine nuns in Brussels, Dame Mary Ursula (d. 1796) and whilst, perhaps unsurprisingly, Abbot Beche's cross itself is not mentioned in the will the appearance of the abbess's name is clear evidence for a connection with the nuns at this time. It is also very significant that three members of Sir George's family were Benedictine nuns in Brussels in the later eighteenth century, including Dame Etheldreda, who was the abbess from 1762 to 1773, and her sisters Mary Agnes (d. 1774) and Anne Cecily (d. 1780).

The Mannock family were English recusants during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Amongst their number was John Mannock (1681-1764), the Benedictine monk Fr Anselm, who was a writer on Catholicism and chaplain successively to the Canning family at Foxcote House in Warwickshire and the Wright family at Kelvedon Hall in Essex. He was born at the family seat – Giffords Hall, Stoke-by-Nayland in Suffolk – where the Mannocks had lived since 1428 when the manor had been purchased from the crown.^{lii} In 1642, Giffords Hall was ransacked by a mob from Colchester during the 'Stour Valley Riots', a series of anti-Catholic riots and attacks which took place across southern East Anglia at the start of the English Civil War.^{liii}

The cross, according to Gasquet, enters the family's possession in 1539 from Abbot Thomas Beche of St John's Abbey, Colchester.^{liv} At this date the head of the family was George Mannock (c. 1468-1541), but establishing a connection between him and Thomas Beche has proved impossible. There are, for example, no monks with the surname Mannock amongst the 16 who take the oath of supremacy with Abbot Beche on 7 July 1534 at Colchester.^{lv} Nor is there any evidence that George Mannock had any other links, family or otherwise, with Colchester with the exception of some land that the Mannocks owned at Wix, Ramsey and Bradfield on the Tendring peninsula to the east of the town in the mid-16th century.^{lvi} Likewise, there is no documentary evidence for the possession of Abbot Beche's cross by the Mannock family. Perhaps this is not surprising given that it was declared to be a criminal offence in 1571 to possess Popish items such as crosses, pictures and beads with the offender subject to outlawry and forfeiture of lands and goods.^{lvii}

Thomas Beche

Relatively little is known of the life of Thomas Beche (d. 1539).^{lviii} The historian Philip Morant writing in the mid-18th century did not realise that Thomas Marshall and John Beche were the same man which has led to much confusion over his name.^{lix} By the 1880s Gasquet had recognised that Marshall and Beche were indeed the same man, but it was only conclusively demonstrated in 2013 by the late John Ashdown-Hill that his original surname was Marshall, that only later in life he used the alternative surname Beche and that his Christian name was always Thomas.^{lx} Beche was educated at Oxford, receiving his bachelor's degree in 1511 and his doctorate in 1515. He became subsequently the prior of Wallingford Priory (Berks) in circa 1518, abbot of St Werburgh's Abbey, Chester in 1527 and abbot of Colchester in 1533.^{lxi} In his final appointment Beche became one of twenty-eight mitred abbots who sat in the House of Lords.^{lxii}

Beche appears initially to have been prepared to support Henry VIII's religious policies; in July 1534 he is recorded as acknowledging the king's supremacy over the church in England.^{lxiii} Later, however, he became a fierce opponent, both of royal supremacy and the dissolution of the monasteries. Indeed it has been suggested that he supported the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536 with money and influence.^{lxiv} He was sufficiently vocal for his views to be brought to the attention of¹⁴ the government. On 21 November 1538 it was reported in a letter from Sir John

Seyncler to Thomas Cromwell that Beche had said that, 'the King shall never have my house but again[st] my will and again[st] my heart, for I know by my learning that he cannot take it by right and law'.^{lxv} Twelve months later, in early November 1539 Beche was arrested. Three witnesses testified against the abbot: Edmund Trowman, a servant at St John's Abbey, Robert Rouse, a mercer of Colchester, and Thomas Nuthake, a mercer and physician also of Colchester.^{lxvi} All three in their evidence referred to Beche's opposition to the dissolution of the monasteries, his outrage at the executions of Cardinal John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, and Sir Thomas More in 1535 and his support for the Pilgrimage of Grace. Although Beche seems to have renounced his views during his interrogation on 4 November, by the 20 November he was being held in the Tower of London on a charge of treason.^{lxvii} He was found guilty at his trial in Colchester before a commission headed by Henry Bourchier, earl of Essex, and executed on 1 December 1539, also at Colchester.

Beche was one of three Benedictine abbots executed in 1539, the others being Richard Whiting of Glastonbury, and Hugh Farringdon of Reading, both being executed on 15 November.^{lxviii} All three are commemorated in one of the series of wall paintings at the Venerable English College in Rome, originally produced in 1583 by Niccolò Circignani (c. 1530-1597), and were also beatified together on 13 May 1895 by Pope Leo XIII.^{lxix} Indeed amongst the total of fifty Catholics executed during the reign of Henry VIII only Cardinal Fisher, Sir Thomas More and Margaret Pole, countess of Salisbury, were more important at the time than these three Benedictine abbots.^{lxx}

We know almost nothing of the circumstances of Beche's execution, although 'There is a tradition in this place [Colchester], that the magistrates invited him [Beche] to a feast, and then showed him the warrant, and went out and hanged him without further warning or ceremony.'^{lxxi} This story is clearly false however because of the evidence of Beche's imprisonment in the Tower of London and subsequent trial.^{lxxii} There is also a document in the British Library – a fragment of a survey of the lands of St John's Abbey dated January 1540 – which is often cited as evidence of his execution.^{lxxiii} This shows a figure on horseback preceded by a trumpeter and with a retinue of soldiers apparently passing through the gatehouse of St John's Abbey. Amongst those following is a figure identified as Abbot Beche on the basis that he is wearing a biretta (the only person in the image to do so) and that he is guarded by soldiers.^{lxxiv} It has been suggested that a hill seen in the distance is the place of Beche's execution. Ashdown Hill identified the location as the village of Greenstead located on raised ground to the east of Colchester where the abbey maintained a gallows.^{lxxv} Unfortunately, none of this is true as the image is actually taken directly from an engraving of 1515 by Lucas van Leyden (1494-1533) entitled 'The Triumph of Mordechai', a scene from the Old Testament Book of Esther (6.11).^{lxxvi}

Before concluding this review of the historical evidence for the association of the pectoral cross with Abbot Beche, it is interesting, by way of comparison, to look briefly at the pectoral cross which it is said belonged to Cardinal Reginald Pole, the last Catholic archbishop of

Canterbury from 1556 until his death only a few hours after that of queen Mary Tudor in November 1558. This cross was formerly in the ownership of the Petre family of Ingatestone Hall in Essex (although since 1989 it has belonged to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brentwood). The Petres were 'the one family [in England] of cast-iron landed magnates to remain invincibly Catholic from the sixteenth century onwards.'^{lxxvii} Their fortunes had been founded by Sir William Petre (1505–1572) who served four monarchs – Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth I – as Principal Secretary from 1544 until 1560, a unique achievement in the turbulent world of Tudor politics.^{lxxviii} Sir William would have known Cardinal Pole from the moment that he returned to England from exile in 1554 and worked with him closely on drafting the legislation to repeal the anti-papal Acts of the Henrician Reformation.^{lxxix} He was also at court when Pole died as he was amongst the principal mourners at Queen Mary's funeral.^{lxxx} Sadly, of course, none of this can support the theory that the Cardinal gave or bequeathed his pectoral cross to Sir William Petre. Indeed, the present head of the family the 18th Baron Petre has suggested a more plausible explanation when he wrote, 'succeeding generations of my family have married into most of the other leading Catholic families (Cliffords, Howards etc.) and I suspect that it was one of these liaisons that brought the cross to us' (Lord Petre, pers comm). These comments are especially relevant, partly because they remind us that many religious items were preserved in the ownership of wealthy Catholic families and partly because they suggest an alternative story in relation to Abbot Beche's cross.

Provenance

The researcher who undertakes an enquiry into the provenance and dating of objects such as Abbot Beche's cross is engaging in a particularly challenging endeavour. The traditional association of this cross with an individual who to some is a martyr for his religious beliefs means that one is dealing with matters of faith as well as fact. Nevertheless an attempt should be made to establish what can and cannot be verified from the available evidence. It has proved possible to confirm the accuracy of this history back to the early nineteenth century, the principal piece of evidence being the appearance of the cross in a portrait of Cardinal Weld painted around 1830-35. Before this date and, in particular, in the late eighteenth century the situation is very confused and the chain of ownership seems to be irretrievably broken around the time of the French Revolution of 1789. It is quite plausible that the cross was in the hands of a religious community at this time, but the problem lies in identifying which of the possible candidates amongst the nuns of Brussels, for whilst it is the Franciscans who are linked to the Weld family the Mannocks favoured the Benedictines as is revealed in the will of the last baronet in 1787. It has proved impossible to pick up the thread at an earlier date, the most promising source – the will of William Mannock of 1558 – makes no mention of the cross. Indeed it has not even been possible at a circumstantial level to establish a connection between the Mannock family and Abbot Beche himself.

THE PECTORAL CROSS OF ABBOT BECHE

Thus, despite exhaustive endeavours, it is necessary to conclude that the traditional link with Abbot Beche cannot be proven and that the association is a pious rather than historical one. Why this should be the case is unclear, but perhaps it is something to do with an attempt to create a direct link between the pre-Reformation Catholic Church in England and its restored form in the 19th century. What this story does reveal however is the interconnectedness of English Catholic families and religious orders in the centuries after the Henrician Reformation and the role of the former is preserving significant religious objects for the use of the latter.

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Lucas van Leyden's 'The Triumph of Mordecai' (1515) previously thought to show the execution of Abbot Beche in Colchester in December 1539

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- ^{xxix} 'Passio Domini Nostri Jesu Christi eruat nos a dolore tristi'. 'May the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ bring us out of sorrow and sadness'.
- ^{xxx} 'En homo quæ pro te patetur (sic) tormenta Redemptor'. 'Behold O Man! Thy Redeemer suffers for thee'.
- ^{xxxi} 'Qui vult post me venire abneget semetipsum et tollat crucem suam et sequitur me'. 'Let he who wishes to come after me deny himself and take up his cross and follow me', (see Matt. 16:24).

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Illustrations

1. Case of the pectoral cross of Abbot Beche, closed front view
2. Case of the pectoral cross of Abbot Beche, closed rear view
3. Case of the pectoral cross of Abbot Beche, open
4. Pectoral cross of Abbot Beche, front
5. Pectoral cross of Abbot Beche, rear
(1-5 Copyright: Colchester and Ipswich Museums)
6. Lucas van Leyden's 'The Triumph of Mordecai' (1515) previously thought to show the execution of Abbot Beche in Colchester in December 1539. (Open access: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1951; acc. No. 51.623.6)

A Thameside mission priest

Frederick Haslock at Grays 1886-1906

Brian Buxton

PART II

A Significant Benefactor

Frederick Haslock was quite pragmatic when need demanded and would work with potential benefactors even if some raised an eyebrow. Although a supporter of the temperance movement he was quite willing to work with local brewer Charles Seabrooke who was not universally admired but who had money and influence.¹ Late in 1887 the two men were invited to a meeting with the member of Parliament for Romford, James Theobald, another man about whom opinions differed in Grays.

Much of the recent development in the town had been on land leased from Theobald. He had already offered the site for a church but now increased his offer to include a temporary church building to seat 300. He also gave £1,000 towards a permanent church, but that had to wait another 40 years. Just before Christmas the temporary church of All Saints was opened by the bishop of Colchester.²

The Early Years 1886-1891

At the opening of the church Haslock explained how he intended to work the district, with its population approaching 7,000. In such areas everything could not depend upon the priest as it may have done in rural parishes with small populations. He was looking to build a body of lay helpers and through this team develop the many schemes he had in mind.³

A Guild of All Saints was formed consisting of a group who made a special commitment to pray, read the Bible, promote all church work in the district and raise funds. It was probably from this guild that District Visitors were recruited. Each visitor was allocated an area to work in which they would check needs and encourage participation in the church's programme. No records survive of how many became involved in running the many projects but at an entertainment in 1890 for voluntary helpers some sixty or more were said to have been present.⁴

Some five years after Haslock began his work he produced two pamphlets describing the activities at that time and appealing for funds for both these and yet further projects.⁵ The intention behind many of the activities sponsored by churches at this period – and All Saints was a good example

of this – was to guide people to use what money and leisure time they had responsibly and beneficially, rather than being brought down by drink and relying on charity or the workhouse to survive. This was all in line with the 'Self Help' ethos of the period, reflected in the statement of the Anglican bishops meeting in 1888 that: *'...the best help is self-help... thrift and self restraint are the necessary elements of material prosperity...'*⁶ Applied strictly this idea was sometimes very damning of those who struggled materially. The Charity Organisation Society's annual report of 1876 declared *'...it is a misuse of money to spend it in assisting the labouring classes to meet emergencies which they should themselves have anticipated and provided for'*.⁷

Haslock was a man of his age but seems to have avoided too judgemental an approach to the poor. Amidst the range

of activities aimed to help people raise themselves was a recognition that there were those with urgent need which must be alleviated immediately. 'Poor relief' and jumble sales 'for the benefit of the poor' were amongst the causes for which he sought support in 1891. He advertised widely

The death of Mr. James Theobald, M.P. for the Romford division of Essex, on March 10, was caused by a very sad accident on the day before at the Romford railway station, where he fell between a moving train and the edge of the platform, and was mortally injured. He was a landowner in that neighbourhood, and an active county magistrate, having attended the Romford Petty Sessions just before this fatal disaster.

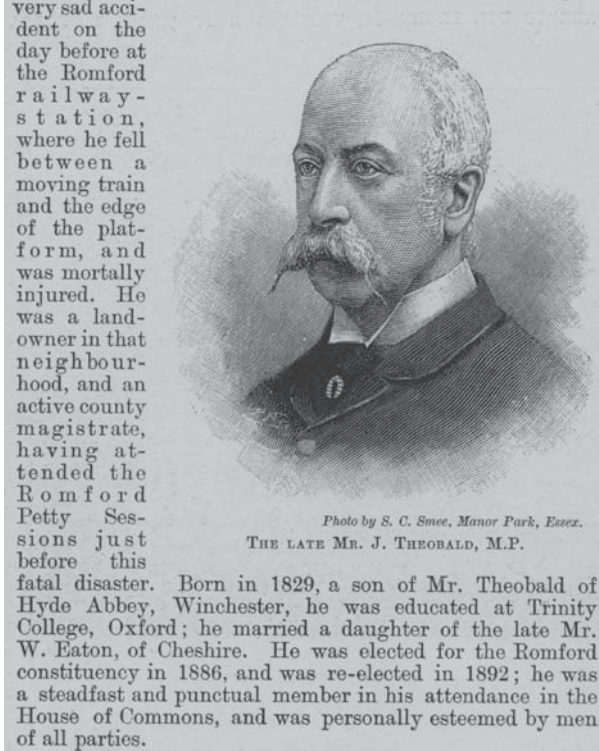


Photo by S. C. Smee, Manor Park, Essex.
THE LATE MR. J. THEOBALD, M.P.

James Theobald M.P. from his obituary

A THAMESIDE MISSION PRIEST PART II



Theobald's Memorial Chancel at All Saints Church from 'The Builder' 25th September 1897



All Saints Church exterior view

for monetary donations and for items which could be sold for low prices at jumble sales to those in need whilst, at the same time, raising funds.⁸ However, All Saints did provide a range of ways forward for those who could and would help themselves. Savings clubs encouraged provision for various eventualities. Many, however little their income, could with care subscribe to one or more of these. At All Saints there was the Sick and Benefit Club with a weekly subscription of 6d which allowed 10s a week sick pay when required and could call upon the services of two doctors. The Clothing Club, the Blanket Club, the Coal Club and the Penny Bank, were others.



All Saints Church interior view

There was much argument as to whether 'wasteful' spending, particularly on alcohol, was a cause of poverty or rather the result 'of attempts to make bearable lives that would otherwise have been insupportable; and in this light were perhaps closer to necessities than they appeared to the outsider'.⁹ The great concern about the abuse of alcohol led to schemes promoting leisure activities apart from the public houses, although often clergy were disappointed to find such attractions treated as supplementary to time spent in the public house, rather than a replacement for it. A Temperance Society for adults, and the Band of Hope for children, were specifically aimed to draw members away from the attractions of drink and to a commitment of abstinence.

Newspapers, library facilities and games were amongst the attractions offered by several clubs which met under the auspices of All Saints. The Working Mens Club, The Boys' Club and Gymnasium, the Girls Club and Evening Home, the Young Women's Christian Association, Mutual Improvement classes and others were open every night either in the mission room or in various other premises around the district. Winter saw a range of lectures and entertainments. Of course Haslock's hope was that some of those who became involved with these activities might also go on to link up with the more obviously religious programme of the church. There were services, Bible classes, and other activities most days. In the original Mission Room a more popular type of service was held. Haslock probably recalled his experience at the Sailors' Home where it was noted that many seamen preferred the simpler services held in the hostel to the more formal type in the adjacent parish church.

Haslock hoped to erect a building for Sunday School activities. He noted that '*...we are compelled to teach the children in the Temporary Church and hired rooms, and these are all far too small, consequently we are obliged to refuse admission to the numerous children who apply*'. With the advent of the *Grays & Tilbury Gazette* free secular education, which allowed religious education but banned denominational teaching, he believed that 'the importance of careful religious instruction in our Sunday Schools cannot be too highly estimated'.¹⁰ No registers of service attendances have survived from this time and so it is difficult to assess participation, in particular how many of the poorer were ever drawn in. One contributor to suggested that the poor were conspicuous by their absence and that All Saints was a 'mutual admiration society'!¹¹

In the Wider Community

Haslock was not only overseeing all the activities of the mission district but was also involved in so many aspects of wider community life. His list of objects for which funds were needed included some which were not specifically All Saints' projects. There were plans for a Cottage Hospital in Grays. This was never to be fulfilled but Haslock was particularly concerned about local men injured in Tilbury Docks and being taken to Gravesend or Whitechapel for care. He realised the need for creche and nursery facilities for working mothers. He established a Home of Rest at Southend for girls, poor parishioners and others referred.¹²

In the more spiritual realm he was chaplain of the training ship which was moored off Grays where some three hundred boys, *Exmouth* chargeable to London poor law unions, were given preparation for a life t sea by the Metropolitan Asylums Board. Haslock presented many of these boys for confirmation, some 180 in 1904 alone.¹³

As the years went by he became a diligent member of significant local bodies, in particular the Grays School Board and its successor, and the Guardians of the Orsett Union who were responsible for the Orsett workhouse and implementation of the poor law in the area. Despite taking on so much it was said of him that 'His regular attendance and thoroughness in connection with everything he undertook were proverbial'.¹⁴

1906

The General Election of January 1906 saw a landslide Liberal victory ushering in the government which was to take the first steps towards a welfare state, initially by the introduction of

old age pensions and establishing a commission to review the Poor Law. At last some of the social distress which Haslock and so many others had sought to alleviate through the churches and other voluntary bodies was now seen

as a legitimate matter for state involvement. Some of the possible consequences of the election were discussed at the meeting of the Guardians of the Orsett Union on 15 th March, Haslock himself mentioning the proposed old age pensions. He was concerned to push through plans for an extension to the Workhouse and, in the course of the discussion, he made several light hearted comments. He seemed his usual self, although now in his seventieth year.

On 3rd April he should have attended a meeting of the Grays Provided Schools Managers but was absent, reportedly seriously ill. He was to linger on for six months, latterly in Southend, where he died on 4th October. Describing his funeral, under the heading '*An Impressive Scene*', the *Grays & Tilbury Gazette* suggested that '*It is perhaps not too much to say that never before had the town and neighbourhood been moved to such a degree in mourning the loss of one of its sons*'.¹⁵

After an all-night vigil in the temporary church every seat was taken for the funeral service. Father Edwards, of the Society of the Divine Compassion at Plaistow,¹⁶ spoke, reminding the congregation of the Christian beliefs and values which had always underlain Haslock's work. A 'vast crowd' gathered in the adjacent streets to witness the long procession move off to Grays New Cemetery, with the coffin drawn on a gun carriage by boys of the TS *Exmouth*, the ship's band going ahead playing Handel's *Dead March*. Flags on many buildings were flown at half-mast. At the



Training Ship Exmouth and her crew of young men

cemetery a crowd of 'extraordinary proportions' witnessed the internment,¹⁷ the grave lined with laurel leaves and into which flower petals and acacia twigs were thrown, the last of these representing Haslock's active freemasonry.¹⁸

'Sympathetic, Kind and Industrious'

In 1887 Frederick Haslock had indicated how he saw the way forward for the church in growing urban area. District Visitors and other lay helpers would be the immediate face of the church to the community. However, the scenes at his funeral suggest the older ways were not yet dead. Surely he must have impacted on the lives of many individuals for them to gather in such numbers in the streets and cemetery on that October afternoon.

Throughout his ministry, both in London and in Essex, he had been known as a hard worker. This commitment was recognised again in the tributes to him, together with reminders of a gentler side to his character. '*His natural characteristics were geniality and sympathy. He could not act unkindly towards anyone*' (Orsett Board of Guardians), and a '*...more sympathetic, kind and industrious member they could not be associated with*' (Grays Provided Schools Managers).¹⁹

He seems to have been a man who saw a need and had to try to do something about it. If that meant working with the

local brewer, relieving improvident parents because they had several sick and hungry

children, or sidestepping red tape, then so be it. This was a time when there were groups and individuals calling themselves 'Christian Socialists' who believed that the church should not just be relieving the poor but engaging in political activism to strike at the roots of poverty. For Haslock, as with many clergy at this time, the priority was probably to take action to alleviate the distress by which he was surrounded every day. '*The work before many pastors included a lot of poor folk and suffering folk, and most of those responsible worked well to do what they could.*'²⁰

At least in his early years in Grays it seems to have been accepted that Haslock was politically a Conservative supporter. His views on such issues as the dock strikes of 1888 and 1889, or the proposal for old age pensions and a poor law commission in the Liberal manifesto of 1906, seem unrecorded.

If challenged as to the basis of his work he would probably have pointed to his sermon at the opening of the mission room in 1886 with its text: '*For I am determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified*' (I Corinthians ch.2 v. 2).

Notes

¹ For information about the Seabrooke family and their businesses see *Thurrock Local History Society Panorama* No.24.

² ET 24/12/1887.

³ Chadwick pp. 243-251 for new ways of working urban parishes.

⁴ G&TG (*Grays & Tilbury Gazette and Southend Telegraph*) --/02/1890

⁵ The Grove Mission District : For God and the Church (1891) and The Grove Mission District : the various organisations...for which donations are earnestly solicited (undated but almost certainly 1891).See note 13.

⁶ Lambeth Conference 1888 quoted in Helen Merrell Lynd *England in the Eighteen Eighties* (Oxford 1945) p.325.

⁷ Quoted in W.H.B.Court *British Economic History 1870-1914* (Cambridge 1965) p.373.

⁸ For example advertisements in the general interest magazines *To-day* and *Graphic*, in the former headed 'Help the poor in the most effectual manner'.

⁹ Jeremy Seabrook *Pauperland : Poverty and the Poor in Britain* (Hurst 2013) p.120.

¹⁰ Quotation from *The Grove Mission District : the various organisations...for which donations are earnestly solicited* (undated but almost certainly 1891). The Elementary Education Act 1870 included the 'Cowper-Temple clause' which stated that 'no catechism or religious formulary shall be taught which is distinctive of any particular denomination'.

¹¹ G & TG 08/06/1889. This anonymous contributor sounds as if he had some grudge against Haslock. He seems to imply that he was a 'ritualist' priest for which the present author

has seen absolutely no evidence, rather the contrary.

Ritualism referred to the use in Anglican worship of Roman Catholic style customs. Shortly before Haslock's arriving in the St. George's in the East area in the 1860s there had been riots over ritualism in that parish. St. Matthew's, Pell Street, although carved out of St. George's parish, was quite opposite in its style of worship.

¹² MP (Morning Post) 17/08/1897.

¹³ G&TG 11/06/1904.

¹⁴ G&TG 06/10/1906.

¹⁵ G&TG 13/10/1906.

¹⁶ It would be interesting to know more of Haslock's links with the SDC, a Franciscan style order based in Plaistow, E13. In 1904 the Rev.E.H.Hardy had preached at a Harvest service at All Saints BEH&I 29/10/1904. More commonly known as Father Andrew SDC he became a sought after spiritual counsellor. At the funeral, in addition to Father Edwards, there was also present Brother Thomas. In 1905 the SDC had purchased Potter's Farm at Stanford le Hope (this stood immediately north of the junction of Branksome Avenue and Central Avenue, Corringham) where novices could test their vocation.

¹⁷ G&TG 13/10/1906 The Urban Council sent a letter of thanks to the police praising the way in which they kept order at the cemetery having regard to the 'vast crowds'.

¹⁸ The grave is marked with a marble cross and the inscription : . 'Erected by a few friends in loving recognition of the Rev. F. Haslock's many years devoted work'.

¹⁹ G&TG 13/10/1906 & 27/10/1906.

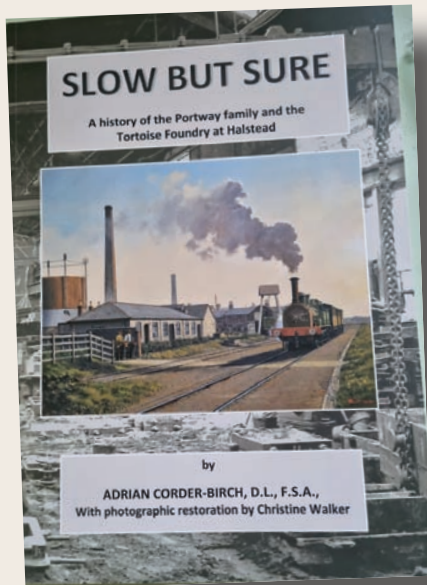
²⁰ Chadwick p.270, and pp.269-286 for Christianity and Socialism.

Book Reviews



Adrian Corder-Birch, DL, FSA with
Christine Walker

Slow But Sure. A History of the Portway Family and Tortoise Foundry at Halstead



Card covers,
A4 format,
192pp,
colour and
monochrome
maps,
illustrations
and
photographs
Published
by Adrian
Corder-Birch,
2021
ISBN 978-0-
9567219-4-5
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from the
author at

Rustlings, Howe Drive, Halstead, Essex CO9 2QJ
and selected outlets
£14.95 + 3.20 p.& p.

This impressive study covers in its 19 chapters and six appendices the history of the Portway family and its various engineering endeavours from 1828 down to the late 20th century. The Foreword by Charles Portway, the current head of the family, sets out the context of the book's conception, its progress culminating in the present volume and the author's passion for meticulous research and accurate description.

The Portways' claim to fame- and indeed international importance - rests on their development of the Tortoise Stove, patented in 1877, a cast-iron burner which was used to heat commercial premises and public buildings such as churches for decades. The stove's selling point was that it took a very long time to consume its load of fuel - hence its 'Slow but Sure' motto impressed into the lid and the tortoise badge. In terms of efficiency, these stoves provided an incredible amount of heat for very little fuel - a unique selling point at the time. The factory where the stoves were constructed was sited at Halstead and had its own dedicated siding from Halstead station. An estimated 17,000 units were sold worldwide in half a century of production.

Corder-Birch has produced a comprehensive history of the company, its main products, and the later history of the firm which saw take-overs and mergers, as would be expected of an engineering firm producing a popular product. Aside from the story of the company itself, there is impressive attention to detail in identifying the employees who appear in various 'group photo' shots. The earliest of these dates from the 1890s and shows more than a hundred workmen, engineers, overseers and a top-hatted owner (?) all gathered in rows outside the foundry shed. In more recent images where faces can be made out (as in an example from 1912) individuals can be named based on the author's exhaustive research. More recent shots of the workforce and their products can be dated with greater precision. The author goes so far as to supply a full alphabetical listing of all known employees (other than short-term) with dates of service and other biographical details including where they lived, which jobs they did and what became of them where this is known; some have been identified in photographs which are reproduced in these pages. War service and other details are included, a reminder that the road from apprentice to gaffer was not always a smooth one. In its own way, the Tortoise Foundry's story of rise-and-decline and eventual absorption into a large industrial corporation has been echoed in every British town as local, small-scale manufacturing has been replaced by mega-scale industrial complexes drawing in parts from all over the world, but contributing little to the local economy beyond piecework jobs.

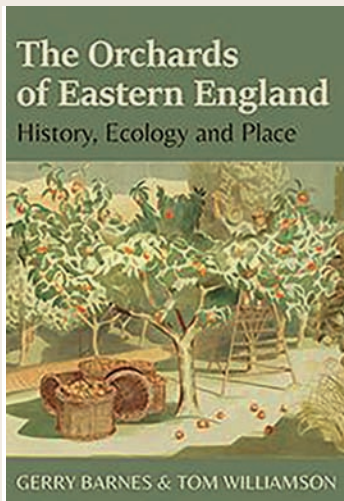
Family history trees, specimen trademark plates, product listings and even company letterheads provide a comprehensive record of the company's history and activities. The appendices cover the Greenwood family (ironmongers and braziers at Halstead); a listing of exhibitions where the stoves were displayed and a selection of (mainly Essex) customers who bought them where they can still be found; a listing of customers circa 1941; Halstead Working Men's Club, supported by most of the employees; the Graham family (engineers who developed many of the company's products; books by members of the Portway family, fiction and non-fiction.

Corder-Birch has packed a phenomenal amount of detailed research into a very handsome and highly readable volume. Some of the photographs and other images have been sympathetically enhanced by Christine Walker, complementing the text with surprising detail. The book is a fine example of a one-subject study which students of Britain's industrial heritage would do well to emulate.

Heather Godfrey

Gerry Barnes & Tom Williamson

The Orchards of Eastern England: history, ecology and place



University of
Hertfordshire
Press, 2021
ISBN 978-1-
912260-42-3
£16.99.

A stand-out memory, from the first lockdown in spring 2020, was having my breath taken away by the sheer beauty of the blossom in my own small orchard of apple trees. Somehow the

weather and orchard gods seemed to have conspired to align conditions for an incredible display. Gazing at the trees in full bloom, in warm sunshine, while the world was closing down and we were being told to stay at home and not to have parties, was incredibly cathartic. Surely our forebears felt similar emotions, even if their connection to orchards was more visceral, when a successful harvest would have gone a long way to improving a bland diet over winter. Many of these aspects of orchard culture and the importance of orchards in the past and today are discussed in Gerry Barnes and Tom Williamson's excellent new publication.

Over the last few years both authors have been heavily involved with the University of East Anglia-based and National Lottery Heritage-funded project Orchards East. This examined various aspects of orchards across six counties of eastern England: Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and, of course, Essex. The Orchards of Eastern England comes about because of, and is a major output of, this project. In nine chapters over 250 pages, various aspects of the history of orchards are discussed and, as the authors state, 'in the absence of rigorous enquiry ... much that is written about orchards, and much that is widely repeated in conservation circles, is arguably based more on modern myth than on historical reality' (p.5). This book tackles these points head-on.

The obvious subjects of orchard history are covered, in particular the importance of small farm orchards to the domestic and local economy. I found the chapter on institutional orchards particularly fascinating. Orchards, along with vegetable gardens and in some instances small farms, were seen as an integral part in the domestic arrangements of whichever institution, but also as part of the therapy, a way to assist the recovery of patients and inmates.

Another rewarding chapter discusses cider and fruit processing. Cider, not widely considered a product of the east as we have such excellent malting barley for beer, has always been brewed here and one of the larger producers, Aspalls, can trace its history to the early eighteenth century. An extensive discussion on the company includes an appearance by our own Philip Morant, fellow channel-islander and correspondent to the founder, Clement Chevallier. Does any return correspondence survive in Morant's papers? A sad postscript to this story is the throwaway remark that Aspalls was 'recently taken over by an American firm' – globalisation continuing. Within this chapter Wilkins of Tiptree is also well discussed.

Gritty subjects such as grafting, pruning and pollination are all discussed in a lively manner along with the weather and the landscape – the soils, those loams and silts or clays that may, or may not be conducive to orchard growth. The description and discussion of the landscape, while short, is a tour de force of the subject – as is to be expected from Tom Williamson.

Revealing distribution maps of England for 1871, 1901, 1930 and 1960 (p.16) show the transformation of the importance of the eastern counties in the twentieth century while I love the distribution map of orchards in eastern England in c.1900 (p.18) as the region looks like it has the measles. As the authors point out not all the orchards shown were the same. They could be small domestic orchards attached to farms (generally less than 1% of land area) or parsonages. Some were part of the formal garden of the large country house or estate along with institutional orchards and thus very select while the third type are the commercial orchards – all very different in their own ways.

The use of the 2nd edition 6-inch and 25-inch Ordnance Survey as the base map for the survey of orchards in c.1900 is explained, rightly so, in some detail. Put simply, this was really the only revision to that the OS undertook that clearly, or as clearly for any of the previous or subsequent revisions, identified orchards. However the authors are alive to the shortfalls of these maps for studying the six counties of the study area because they were surveyed at a different date for each county – the survey for Essex taking place around 1895.

In 'The Significance of Orchards' there is much on the ecological importance of 'traditional' orchards, a term which the authors make clear they are suspicious of. Our idea of a 'traditional' orchard, an orchard full of veteran trees teeming with flora and fauna, is very much a modern idea, the equivalent of an old folks home full of geriatrics. Our forebears would have soon whipped out any old and non-productive trees, using the timber for fire wood or other uses. And as soon as any treatments came along, then the trees were sprayed, dusted or dosed, to within an inch of the applicator's life, to control pests. An orchard in the past was part of the household or farm economy and was made to work. That said, many dilapidated old orchards, probably no older than a hundred or so years at most and planted

with varieties introduced in only the last 150 years, can be valuable wildlife habitats, or as the authors state, 'Fruit trees age more quickly than other trees and within decades rather than centuries become veteranised' – that is, filled with the cavities and rot required by a large number of rare organisms' (p.5).

Overall, this is a really good book: well written, well illustrated and the University of Hertfordshire Press has produced a very nicely produced publication. My only real niggle is with the index, which, for such a comprehensive book is adequate. Don't put that off you buying a copy of it, just be aware of it!

As the authors state at the very end of the book, 'such endeavours [the championing of orchards] need to be backed up by further research: the work set out in this volume represents only a beginning, an initial foray into an area of immense interest and important.' If that is not clarion call enough to have you heading towards the archives, then I don't know what will – come on, let's carry on this important research!

Neil Wiffen

Norah Carlin



Old Copped Hall 1258-1748 A Massive Object of Desire

160 pp. in paperback
60 illustrations, 45 in full colour
Published by West Essex Archaeological

Group on behalf of the Copped Hall Trust Archaeological Project, in collaboration with the Copped Hall Trust

Norah Carlin's 'Old Copped Hall 1258-1748 A Massive Object of Desire' deserves shelf-space in the library of expert, student and lay reader alike; drawing on sources from national art galleries, museums, archives and private collections, the book covers the history of the owners and occupants of the Hall, the legends that have sprung up around them and the building's architectural biography from 1258 (the date of the oldest surviving written record of the Hall), to its demolition in 1748.

A former history lecturer and author of accounts on the history of social change in England from the 17th century onwards, Carlin places everything from the sensational to the esoteric under the scrutiny of the historian's microscope, situating the history of the Old Hall within the context of broader economic and social

trends, identifying where it conforms and deviates from both 'popular' and academic received views, writing in a style which is both accessible and expertly informative.

Carlin brings a holistic methodological approach to her research and presentation, producing a micro-historical and local study with primary and secondary historical and archaeological evidential underpinnings, also commenting on the historiographical place of her findings. Notable for her methodological transparency, the author highlights the limitations of her sources where appropriate and acknowledges gaps in the existing knowledge base.

But there are really two studies here: the story of Old Copped Hall is juxtaposed alongside an introduction to the present-day Georgian mansion on the site ('Copped Hall'), the Archaeological Projects room located there and the work of many of the volunteers, Friends, WEAG and CHATP members involved with the heritage site today. In so doing, the book is also a testament to the potential of this genre of historical study to contribute to local and national community and heritage projects. Immaculately structured and proofread, the book is presented in seven chapters, each comprising three sub-divisions complete with notes and references at the close of each, together with a final concluding chapter. Each chapter features coloured plates, maps and/or photographs which expand upon or illustrate the textual content. Also provided are passages on the sponsors, author, CHATP, even the reasoning behind the chosen style of footnoting, sources and units of measurement referred to throughout.

If there are limitations to Carlin's work, they are those common to the genre of such histories in general. The index is arranged by name of individuals who appear in the book which may not be to the taste of every reader. Explicit mention of potential future research projects would also have been appropriate. Deeper and broader than previous accounts of Old Copped Hall, Carlin has written a highly usable educational resource, a model for collaborative ventures of its type and a fitting springboard to further elevate the profile of a hitherto overlooked and understudied 'object of desire'.

Heather Godfrey

Stephen Rippon

Territoriality And The Early Medieval Landscape.

The Countryside of the East Saxon Kingdom

Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 2022. ISBN 978-1-78327-680-6
385 pp, hardback, monochrome photos, maps and charts.
£60

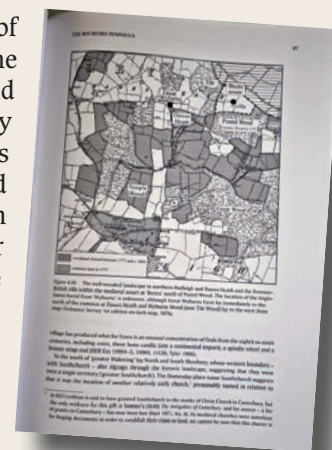


The topic of this study is not “Essex”, in the modern sense, but the entire East Saxon territory which includes the modern counties of Essex, Middlesex, Hertfordshire (and probably also Surrey at times, alongside the southern area of Suffolk between the Stour and the Deben). Dissatisfied with the traditional

approach to documentary history, toponymy and landscape studies – all of which are conventionally based on the Victorian “County History” framework - Rippon applies a fresh analytical approach to the subject of the East Saxons and their landholdings. The pattern of our modern counties was largely established by the 10th century, but many are based upon territorial units of the 7th century and earlier, some of which can be perceived (albeit dimly and with much effort) in the surviving records – land-grants, place-names and the like.

according to Bede) was always an attractive prize for Essex’s larger and more powerful neighbours, and the city fell under the successive domains of the kings of Kent, Mercia, and Wessex. This may have encouraged the internal sub-division which resulted in the creation of a ‘Middle Saxon’ territory, parallel to the ‘Middle Anglia’ which appeared briefly as a sub-division of Mercia. East Saxon kings had their land-grants in the outer areas approved by their over-kings, while in the kingdom’s heartland (roughly equivalent to the modern county) no such endorsement was necessary.

A great strength of the book lies in the helpful use of maps and graphics. Each territory under discussion is provided with a shaded contour map onto which hundreds and other landscape divisions are projected to illustrate the developmental history discussed in the text. A comparative diagram (p.289) shows how four models of evolution for



Roman structures would appear: (i) a 'blank slate', (ii) a state of complete continuity, (iii) continuity of Roman *pagi* within an existing framework and lastly (iv) the disappearance of Roman units but later development within a residual framework of regional identities. This is just one of the many images which assist the reader in quickly grasping the tale Rippon wishes to tell.

The book would have benefitted from a more thorough proofreading. Occasional absent words and misspellings are merely annoying, but, for example, citing the West Saxon hidage assessment as 1,000,000 (instead of 100,000) and 30,000 for the Mercians (not 300,000) (p.12) or giving the Old English name *worþ* to riverside lands rather than *worþ* (p.71) might mislead the reader who does not cross-check the information. Happily, such slips are few in a book which cites a great many facts and figures.

There is a noticeable tendency to repetition in the text, arising from Rippon’s use of the same data in different ways and in connection with different problems. This is preferable to endless cross-referencing within the text, which is dense enough already and packed with interesting ideas.

In all, the book provides a great deal of detailed information within its covers, and a useful and well-documented discussion of the early history of “Greater Essex” in its 5th-7th century guise and its relation to the later landscape. It may be that some of the analytical methods chosen for the study will fall from favour in time, but no serious student of our early history can afford to ignore this important work.

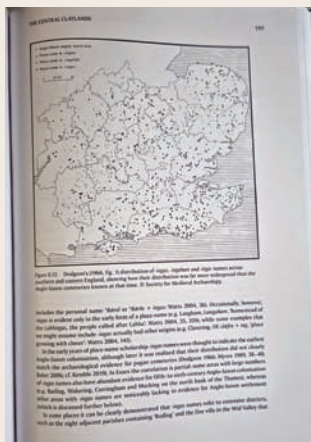
Steve Pollington

Modern Essex fits largely within the geographical area called the North Thames Basin, with its eastern limit at the coast and its western in the Chiltern hills; this is roughly the territory ruled by the East Saxon kings from their powerbases in London and Colchester. The famed ‘shared kingship’ (multiple rulers) of their kingdom may be merely a product of modern nomenclature (what constitutes a ‘king’ as opposed to a ‘governor?’),

with several co-rulers sharing power but respecting defined internal borders.

Rippon uses a number of ‘case studies’ to illustrate his points about land-use and organisation, focusing on the Rochford peninsula as an early “folk territory”, the fenlands of the central Thames-side region, the detached “province” of the Middle Saxons, evidence for sustained Roman-British political autonomy in the central Essex claylands and elsewhere – all topics which are essential to the understanding of the development of the territory which was a kingdom in its own right from its 6th century origins as a northern offshoot of the Kentish power-bloc right down to the reign of King Sigeric II, perhaps ending as late as 837 AD. A span of around 350 years is quite remarkable for what was always one of the smaller political units in such very competitive times.

The wealth of the great emporium of London (a “market of many nations resorting to it by land and sea”,





Lord Petre of Ingatestone