ESSEX JOURNAL

A review of local history and archaeology published by The Essex Society for Archaeology and History

Spring 2022 • Vol.57 No.1

What do we mean by Essex?

Frederick Haslock at Grays 1886-1906

'An Honest Priest To Sing For My Soul' Part Two:

Bequests To Colchester's Religious Houses

by Sue Howlett

Also in this issue:

- Woodham Ferrers in the later medieval period
- *'Othona'* Revisited
- Book review

Greetings and welcome to the Spring 2022 issue of the *Essex Journal*

There is much within these pages to educate, entertain and inform (to paraphrase Lord Reith) as well as to beguile and bemuse. In relation to the latter, we can surely find no better starting point than James Bettley's intriguingly titled piece *What Do We Mean By Essex?* which he kindly presented at the October meeting of the Society at Galleywood. It is a fair question, and no doubt each of us has a different answer based on personal experiences and preferences. It can be tedious to have to define terms constantly, but it is surely salutary and often helpful. James's article will henceforth guide our thoughts.

The Firstsite arts centre in Colchester recently mounted an exhibition based on Michael Landy's work, in which visitors were welcomed to "England's Most Misunderstood County". Some of the familiar clichés were included (suited-and-booted lager-drinker, a Ford car), as well as a curious choice of local interest items from round the county (the Salvation Army farm beside Hadleigh castle).

Patricia Croxton-Smith offers some thoughts on the likely location of the battle of *Assandun*, fought between two rival monarchs each of whom wanted the other off the scene. Edmund Ironside was a scion of the West Saxon royal line and apparently had all that family's nobler qualities – which is not often said of his father King Ethelred (he of the 'Unready' soubriquet). Right and tradition were on Edmund's side, but some of the wealthier magnates were not, prefering the Danish prince Knut Svensson, who is now remembered as King Canute and famed more for his inefficient reading of the tides than anything else. The battle proved a turning point, in that a contingent of mercenary Mercians threw the match and finished Edmund's chances of maintaining Wessex's hegemony. But where did the battle take place?

'Edmund Ironside was a scion of the West Saxon royal line and apparently had all that family's nobler qualities – which is not often said of his father King Ethelred … (the 'Unready')'

Links between Scandinavia and Essex are not confined to Knut's praise-poem though. On the inside back cover you will discover an unusual item reported recently to the PAS - a nummular brooch with Swedish connections. The issuing monarch was Ethelred, Edmund's father, one of the longer-lived kings of the Late Saxon period about whom a great deal is known. The story of that brooch would make interesting reading if it could be discovered.

Nick Alexander takes a detailed look at Woodham Ferrers and its major landowners in the later medieval period, with particular reference to Edwardes Manor. The de Ferrers family is the most obvious former landowner of the district, but a range of half-a-dozen names present themselves to the researcher looking at this district and period. The heirs of William Sandes come in for some detailed treatment in Nick's illuminating essay.

Sue Howlett's two-part contribution concludes with her investigations into Colchester religious houses in the later medieval and Tudor periods. While the motives of the benefactors cannot now be known in detail, expressions of piety are common, in line with the hoped-for benefit of a shortened stay in Purgatory for the souls of the departed.

The place-name *Othona* mentioned in the *Notitia Dignitatum* has long been associated with Bede's *Ythancaestir* and the Saxon Shore fort at Bradwell-on-Sea. Paul Gilman offers an archaeologist's response to Andrew Breeze's 2020 article and some of the evidence presented there.

A little-known Georgian industry was carried on in Essex – the manufacture of artificial slate for roofing. A major fabrication plant was established at Woodford for this purpose. The slate was bound for the export market, principally in the West Indies. How this trade came into being and what became of it are covered in Michael Leach's informative and sometimes surprising article.

Local historian Brian Buxton examines the life and career of the visionary cleric Frederick Haslock in the Late Victorian Thameside docks. The first part of the tale, in this issue, deals with the deprivation and poverty the clergyman found in the East End, and the steps he began to take to mitigate these.

Finally I would like to invite the secretaries of any and all Essex local history societies to let me know what plans they have for talks, meetings, outings, get-togethers and the like. I try to keep track of the doings of the major groups but I confess I seem to miss a great many that would prove useful.

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ESSEX JOURNAL

SPRING 2022
Vol.57 No.1
ISSN-0014-0961

INCORPORATING ESSEX REVIEW

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The *Essex Journal* is part of the Essex Society for Archaeology and History (ESAH) membership package (full, family or associate). See the ESAH website (http://esah1852.org.uk) for further details or contact Martin Stuchfield (Hon. Membership Secretary) at martinstuchfield@pentlowhall.uk.

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Cover illustrations right & below: Colchester's present Greyfriars building – right

Michael Landy 's map of the county at Firstsite, Colchester – below

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In Brief

Valerie Susan Stuchfield

It is with great sadness that members of the *Essex Society for Archaeology and History* learnt of the death on 6th March 2022 of Valerie Stuchfield, late of Pentlow Hall, Pentlow at the age of 64 years. We convey our deepest sympathy to Martin upon the loss of his wife and to their sons, John and Michael.

Dr Jennifer Ward

Society members will be saddened to hear the news of the recent death of Dr Jennifer C. Ward, the distinguished medieval historian, retired Professor of history at Goldsmith's College, University of London, and the first female President of ESAH.

As many members of ESAH Council have commented, Jenny was a marvellous scholar who made many important contributions to her specialist field in medieval women's studies as well as to the history of medieval and Tudor Essex. Her commitment to Essex was expressed in her unwavering support for many historical societies across Essex, including ESAH, the Essex Record Office, FHE and VCH. She was a very dedicated teacher generous and encouraging with her time and knowledge, helping countless numbers of professional and amateur historians alike. She was a kind and charming person who will be very much missed by us all.

The Society extends its deepest condolences to Jenny's family. Her funeral was on February 23rd at 2.30pm at St Thomas's in Brentwood. A fuller account of her life and works will appear in a future edition of the transactions.

Chris Thornton on behalf of ESAH Council (10/02/2022)

Lt. Col. Chris Manning-Press, D.L.

Lt. Col. (Retd) Christopher Benbow Manning-Press, D.L., (1930-2021)

Chris Manning-Press, who died in Colchester Hospital after a short illness on 13th September 2021 aged 91 years, had been a member of *The Essex Society for Archaeology and History* since 1983. He served in the Regular Army from 1949 to 1983 and following a long and successful military career, retired in 1983 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. His long association with Essex had begun in 1953 when he was posted to the county to help with the East Coast flood disaster.

In July 1983 he was appointed as the Director of the Rural Community Council of Essex and continued in this position until 1990. During this time he helped found the Essex Guild of Craftsmen. He was appointed as Secretary of the *Essex Association of Local Councils* in 1983, a position he held concurrently with the RCCE. Following retirement he

was appointed as a Vice-President of *EALC* and was later President until 2015. He was elected to Essex County Council in May 1993 and represented the Mersea and Stanway Division until 2005 and the Mersea and Tiptree Division from 2005 until 2009. He held many positions at ECC, becoming Vice Chairman of *ECC* 2002-2004 and Chairman 2004-2006. He was also Chairman of Archaeology Advisory Committee for Essex. He was an active and hard-working member of *Essex History Fair* and later became a Vice President in recognition of his service. He was chairman of the Essex University Association and carried out much work to raise the profile of the University in the county.

Chris was one of the members of the original *Victoria County History of Essex Appeal Committee*, formed in 1993 to help an emerging 'gap' in VCH funding as local government grants declined. He was Treasurer of the *VCH Essex Appeal Fund* from 1993 to 1996 and Chairman from 2000 to 2005. He remained a Trustee of the *VCH* charity after it was renamed as the *VCH Essex Trust*, serving until his death. He was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Essex in 1996 and retired from the active list on his 75th birthday in 2005. One of his great interests was music and he toured with the Essex Youth Orchestra.

He leaves a widow, Jan, four children, Sarah, Prew, Anthea and Jim and seven grandchildren. He will be greatly missed by all the county organisations with which he was associated for so many years.

A more detailed account of his life will appear in the next edition of the *Transactions*.

Adrian Corder-Birch

Robert G. E. Wood, B.A., (1937-2022)

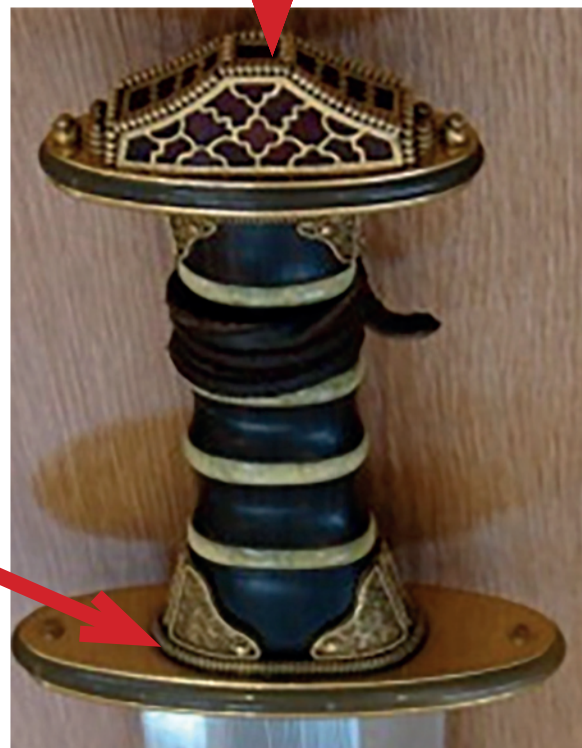
Sadly, Bob Wood of Chelmsford - who had been a member of ESAH since 1975 - died during early March. He was a native of Kent, where he married his wife Anna in 1962 before moving to Essex. He was a former chairman of the Essex VCH Appeal Fund and was a member of the Essex History Fair Committee. His position as a former archivist at the ERO enabled him to help with a number of publications about Essex history.

A gold Angel coin of Henry VII (1485-1509) was found in the Saffron Walden area in November 2021. The obverse shows St Michael standing with both his feet resting on a dragon, which he is piercing with a spear. The reverse features a ship with a large cross as its mast, on which the royal shield is displayed. It was recorded with the PAS under reference CAM-4E7E9D and returned to the finder. Gold coins are not as rare a find as we might think, but it is still intriguing to consider how this one came to rest in the soil – especially representing a considerable amount of wealth concentrated in this single coin.

An intriguing Roman-period bronze figural steelyard weight was found at Coggeshall and recorded with the PAS in February 2022. Steelyard weights often take the form of Roman gods such as Mars or Venus, but the present example wears a distinctive pointed cap and is probably to be identified with Mithras – a deity from Asia Minor whose worship was very popular with the Roman military. A temple to Mithras stood in the City of London, near St. Pauls. The bronze surface has suffered from rust spreading from the iron rivet which attached it to the frame. (PAS ID SF-661E65).

A gold ring was found at Langham near Colchester in September 2021; its PAS reference is SUR-67AB6D. It probably dates from the 7th century, when such beaded wire rings were used as finger rings and also as collars on larger display items such as swords. The findspot in Langham (near the present course of the A12) is interesting since a gold sword pommel of the same period was found on the other side of the A12 at Ardleigh (PAS reference ESS-27D367).

Gold sword fittings are rare finds and deserve attention. Perhaps a burial mound once stood beside the A12, the old Roman road from London to the Norfolk coast, and was disturbed in road-widening, its contents unnoticed and spread in the soil redeposited in the surrounding fields. Or conceivably the spot may have been the site of a battle in which the sword was lost – and presumably the owner lost his life too. Aah, the romance of the Essex past …



Modern reproduction of the sword hilt from Sutton Hoo with gilt-bronze pommel

Journal and Index Celebration event

On 30th October last year, a celebration event was held at Galleywood Heritage Centre to mark the imminent publication of the *Index* to *Essex Journal* and the elapsing of fifty-five years since its creation, replacing the previous periodical *Essex Review* published by the *Essex Archaeological and Historical Congress*. Many of the former editorial and supervisory team were present, including Martin Stuchfield, Maureen Scollan and Dorothy Lockwood. Martin continues to support ESAH and the *Journal* as Honorary Membership Secretary, of course. Nick Wickenden, the President of ESAH, was sadly unable to attend but his address was read out by the Chairman, Adrian Corder-Birch.

The absence of such recently departed notables as Stan Newens and Vic Gray was noted with sadness.

The Chairman welcomed the guests to the 'Celebration Tea' and particularly Sue Vaughan, who undertook the task of creating the Index. Sue had travelled from Bath, Somerset, with her husband for the occasion.

The event marked the first issues of *EJ* published under the auspices of *ESAH* which succeeded the Editorial Board comprising representatives of *ESAH, FHE, ERO* and, until 2016, *Essex Congress*. Support for *Essex Congress* had previously been declining, hence the amalgamation with *ESAH*, overseen by former President, Adrian Corder-Birch.

One of the aims of the *Congress* was to provide a vehicle of news between Essex local history societies, and ESAH fully intends to maintain this role. The two award winners who received recognition in the national Local Hstory awards were also present: Andrew Emeny and Neil Wiffen. Neil gave a presentation on the present state of the *Index* (then in preparation for press) and a brief history of the publication. Steve Pollington spoke about the importance of Essex on the national and international stage in history, and the future of the *Journal* in promoting knowledge of this; he reminded the guests that historically the kingdom of the East Saxons covered territory now designated as Middlesex, Hertfordshire and Surrey but he had no plans at present to extend the remit of *Essex Journal* to quite that extent. Martin Stuchfield proposed a vote of thanks and closed proceedings with some personal recollections from his thirty-year involvement with the *Journal*.

We were fortunate to have as our guest speaker James Bettley. James was High Sheriff of Essex from 2019-2020 and has been a Deputy Lieutenant of Essex since 2013. He is an architectural historian who revised Pevsner's iconic *Buildings of Essex*. He has been a major contributor to the *Journal* for many years with articles on buildings and architects, as well as providing book reviews. James's talk was entitled ',' (reproduced elsewhere in this issue) and dealt with the various territorial ranges that the name 'Essex' can cover depending on context.

The former EJ Editorial Board. (l-r) Adrian Corder-Birch, Geraldine Willden, Neil Wiffen, Samantha Butler and Martin Stuchfield. Photo: Sarah Honour.

What do we mean by Essex?

A talk given to the Essex Society for Archaeology & History at Galleywood Heritage Centre, 30 October 2021

James Bettley

Michael Landy 's map of the county at Firstsite, Colchester Photo: S. Pollington

If you visit Firstsite in Colchester now you will find a large mural in the entrance hall by Michael Landy, which includes his version of the county road sign saying *Welcome to England's Most Misunderstood County*. Perhaps that should be England's most *confused* county. I'm sure many people here are connected as I am with a variety of county institutions, nearly all of which cover a different geographical area.

It's hardly surprising that the county is misunderstood if *we* can't even decide what we mean by Essex. Is any other county quite so ambiguous, or polyguous, if such a word exists?

The question, "What do we mean by Essex?", is one that would not have seemed worth asking 100 years ago, although even then there were anomalies: Great and Little Chishill and Heydon were transferred to Cambridgeshire in 1895, and Ballingdon confuses people because it's part of Sudbury but is on the Essex side of the Stour. Mrs Andrews, one half of that couple famously painted by Gainsborough, was a daughter of the owner of Ballingdon House, but she and her husband lived at Bulmer, firmly in Essex, although the author of an otherwise excellent book on Essex says more than once that the Bulmer brickworks are 'officially in Suffolk but originally in Essex'. Bartlow Hills moved to Cambridgeshire as recently as 1990, or rather the county boundary moved to accommodate them. I wonder why.

The foyer at Firstsite with caricature 'Essex Man'
Photo: S. Pollington

But a hundred years ago Essex had hardly changed since the earliest modern maps of the county, and Norden's 1594 map would still do its job.

The reality was a bit different, however. There was that idea of London-over-the-Border, or those bits of Essex that were for all practical purposes East London. Charles Dickens is usually credited with coming up with the expression, although I don't think he ever wrote those words. 'Londoners over the Border' was the title of an article published in 1857 in Dickens's periodical *Household Words*, but it was written by Henry Morley. The article deals with a very precise and limited geographical area, the new districts of Hallsville and Canning Town in West Ham, and does not refer generally to the London overspill east of the River Lea.

All those boroughs east of the Lea – Stratford, East Ham, West Ham, Chingford, Leytonstone – were still in Kelly's Directory for Essex in the early years of the 20th century, but by the interwar years they're described as suburbs of London and no longer covered by the Essex directory. And this at a time when Essex County Cricket Club still had its ground at Leyton! Incidentally the ECCC still covers the same area that it did when it was founded in 1876 and in that respect has not moved with the times.

The big change came in 1965 with the creation of the Greater London Council. A London-based colleague of mine, born in Walthamstow two or three years before that, was very surprised to learn from me that her birthplace was no longer in Essex. Anyone less like the caricature Essex girl it would be hard to imagine, but she clearly liked to be thought of as such when it suited her.

It's astonishing how many journalists born since 1965 – which is practically every journalist – still refer to Dagenham or Romford or Ilford as being in Essex, usually when something *bad* has happened there.

London is quick to claim the *good* things. I spotted this recently in *Apollo* magazine: '*Discovered near the River Thames at Rainham in 2018, the Havering hoard is the largest trove of Bronze Age artefacts ever found in London*.' They're talking about something that had been in Essex for 2,947 of its estimated 3,000 years!

At the other end of the county, *good* things like Bulmer Bricks are thought of as coming from Suffolk because the postal town is Sudbury. Nothing enrages a Suffolk resident more than having a CO postcode. Royal Mail stays out of the argument – they don't bother with counties any more.

The postcode lottery has given rise to what might be called "estate agents' Essex". When estate agents say a house is on the Essex/Suffolk border, or the Essex/Hertfordshire border, you can be sure it's in Essex, because otherwise they'd just say Suffolk or Hertfordshire.

Norden's 1594 map of Essex

Let's try and be a bit more systematic, and consider the various forms of Essex, from small to large. If I confuse you along the way, that's entirely intentional.

The smallest Essex is, ironically, that covered by Essex County Council, because in 1998 Thurrock and Southend seceded to become unitary authorities. Who knows what will happen as a result of local government reorganisation currently being discussed. Essex as an administrative county may simply cease to exist.

Next up is what is called the "ceremonial county", corresponding to Essex between 1965 and 1997, which is what most people now think of as Essex and is the area covered by the Lord-Lieutenant and the High Sheriff. But let's not forget that from the 16th century to 1965 more than fifty High Sheriffs of Essex came from those parts of the county now in Greater London, a reflection of the growth of importance of the mercantile and professional classes, who prospered in the capital and settled in the surrounding countryside but wanted to remain within easy reach of the metropolis – which until the coming of the railways meant what are now the London suburbs, places like Wanstead.

One of the important functions that the Lord-Lieutenant and High Sheriff perform is to encompass the whole county, including the unitary authorities, in a way that no one else quite does. The police also cover this wider area, but modern ways of working mean that they share some functions with Kent Police, as well as having a generally friendly rivalry with the Met. Southend had its own separate force until 1969, and the constables had distinctive white helmets, perhaps to fool visitors into thinking the town was sunnier than it really is. I wonder whether they'll try to revive the idea now that Southend is to be a city. Magistrates used to be very local and strictly county-based – I remember a colleague in Witham being very indignant at having to deal with an incident that had occurred just over the Suffolk border. But now we are all part of one happy regional family, with legal advisers coming from Peterborough, defendants in Colchester committed to the Crown Court in Ipswich, and search warrants issued to police in Kent and Sussex.

Ceremonial Essex was also the area I covered when I revised the Essex Pevsner. The first edition, published in 1954, included what is now East London, all the way to Stratford, and that remained so for the 2nd edition, in 1965. As a rule the Pevsner volumes stick quaintly to the pre-1974 county boundaries, but an exception was made in the case of London because of the six separate volumes covering Greater London, published between 1983 and 2003. I felt at the time that Essex merited two volumes, and in a sense that is what we have ended up with, my *Essex* published in 2007 and *London: East* published in 2005. Hertfordshire is a similar case, with the three editions (1953, 1977, and 2019) each covering slightly different geographical areas.

Then there's what the *Friends of Essex Churches Trust*, and no doubt others, call the historic county of Essex, including not just the unitary authorities but also the five London boroughs formerly in Essex (Barking & Dagenham, Havering, Newham, Redbridge and Waltham Forest). The reason for this is actually that the Trust covers the geographical area of the Diocese of Chelmsford, which was fixed in 1914 to be coterminous with what was then the County of Essex – although the aforementioned Chishills and Heydon, in the Diocese of St Albans in 1895, remained as they were for ecclesiastical purposes (the various dioceses in which Essex found itself in the 19th century could form the subject of another confusing little talk). This means that they are in the Diocese of Chelmsford and the County of Cambridgeshire, and therefore in the fortunate position of being able to apply for grants to both the *Friends of Essex Churches Trust* and the *Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust*, because the latter's boundary follows the county boundary rather than the diocesan one. The London boroughs are in danger of being overlooked, but one of the most interesting bike rides I have done for the annual Ride & Stride was through East London, from Barking to Waltham Abbey.

The Victoria County History, of course, stepped lightly over the 1965 boundary changes, with volumes covering the East London hundreds in 1966, 1973, and 1978 – one would not expect otherwise. Since then there appears to have been a reaction and the editor now seems to like spending most of his time at the seaside, which is perfectly understandable, and very nice for the rest of us.

And so it is, necessarily, with the *Essex Society for Archaeology and History*. Boundary changes come and go but the archaeology and history, on the whole, stay in the same place. You cannot really understand the growth of east London, and its remaining historic buildings, without knowing that they were once part of Essex. Indeed, I think the *ESAH* should broaden its horizons and lay claim to the Kingdom of the East Saxons. That would really upset our neighbours.

So, back to where we started, and *Welcome to England's Most Misunderstood County*. Should we adopt this for the county road signs? Perhaps we need a strapline, to match Hertfordshire's *County of Opportunity*, a greeting I found uplifting whenever I crossed the border on Pevsner excursions and wondered what I was going to come across that day. 'England's most misunderstood county' is a fact, but actually I am tired of special pleading, just as I am tired of having to pretend to be amused by references to Essex man and Essex girls. Do other counties indulge in so much navel gazing? Yorkshire do, of course, and Cornwall, but we don't want to be lumped together with them in the awkward squad. I'm sure Herefordshire for example, just gets on with being Herefordshire and is all the happier for it. If we stop going on about being misunderstood, maybe people will forget that we're misunderstood, and treat us like any other county. But we do just need to be clear what...

Hadstock and Assandun

Patricia Croxton-Smith

The Background

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (MS 'C') under the year 1016 recounts the tale of the Danish adventurer Cnut (popularly 'King Canute') whose attempts to seize the throne of England by force were for a long time thwarted by King Edmund (popularly 'Ironside'). Cnut evaded open battle, but Edmund needed to bring the Danish threat to a swift conclusion in order not to exhaust his armies. Eventually, after much manoeuvring, attacking and withdrawing across the English Midlands, the two sides joined battle at a place called "Assandun", the location of which has been disputed. The relevant *Chronicle* entry says "*Þa se cyning geahsode þæt se here uppe wæs, þa gesomnode he fiftan siðe ealle Engla þeode 7 ferde him æthindan 7 offerde hi on Eastsexum æt þære dune þe man hæt Assandun, 7 þar togædere heardlice fengon*" (When the king discovered that the raiding army was out, he then gathered all the forces of the English for the fifth time [that year] and travelled after them, and overtook them in Essex at the hill which is called *Assandun* and there they drew together harshly.)

A miniature portrait of Edmund Ironside from the early 14th-century manuscript Genealogical Roll of the Kings of England (MS Royal 14 B VI)

Image: Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=27947438

The battle was a turning point: Edmund's troops included a contingent under Earl Eadric of Mercia who feigned illness in order to hold back his men. This ruse entailed defeat for Edmund's depleted forces and the king barely managed to get away with his life. A truce was later negotiated between Edmund and Cnut, whereby rule was split between them. Edmund died in mysterious circumstances shortly after.

Defeat for Edmund cost him his sovereignty and the lives of many of his most trusted leading men; Eadric's treachery eventually handed Cnut sole rule in England. Eadric did not enjoy his rewards for long: Cnut disposed of him soon afterwards.

All we know of *Assandun* is that it was in Essex. Its modern form might be *Assdon, Ashdown, Assingdon* or something similar. A Scandinavian source (the praise poem made for King Cnut around 1050 AD, known as *Knutsdrapa*) calls the site *Assatun*. Favoured possible sites are Ashingdon (near Rochford, on a hill overlooking the River Crouch) and Ashdon, near Saffron Walden. Neither has any known strong connection to Cnut or Edmund. James Kemble argued in the pages of this journal (*EJ* vol.49 Spring), 2014) for a site near Hadstock.

Site(s) of the Battle

The Victorian historian E. A. Freeman was sure that the battle of *Assandun* took place at Ashingdon in 1016, but he took Florence of Worcester as his main authority, translating the Latin text's "*ad naviculam*" as "reaching his ships". The Latin word "*ad*" means movement towards, not arrival at so the meaning here must be 'en route to his ships'. Cnut was a good general and whenever possible he got his men back to the ships and escaped.

Ashingdon is south of the River Crouch and, as the Danes were apparently returning from raiding into Mercia and the Midlands, it seems unlikely that they would have gone round to the south of the river and then stopped to fight. They would have boarded their ships and escaped.

Freeman also accepts Florence's definition of *Assandun* as meaning the "hill of the asses" and dismisses the author of the *Encomium Emmae Reginae* (Praise-Poem for Queen Emma) as a foreigner who did not know the language. Freeman furthermore takes a lot of details concerning the battle from the *Encomium*. Its author was a priest in the household of Queen Emma, who was married first to the English King Ethelred, the father of that Edmund who led the English, and then to Cnut himself. The Encomiast could have spoken to men who fought at the battle. He not only spells the name of the place "*Aescendun*" but carefully defines it as *mons fraxinorum* – "the hill of the ash trees". The hill between Ashdon and Hadstock in North-West Essex is very much 'the hill of the ash trees'. The local Chronicler, Henry of Huntingdon, calls the battle site *Esesdune*, i.e. "hill of the ash tree".

The ash tree is a native of chalky soils and the pH here at Ashdon is around 7.6. Ashingdon in the south of the county is on the acid London clay and the ash is not native to that area. The Domesday name for Ashingdon was *Nesenduna* and that of Canewdon was *Carenduna* (nothing to do with Canute despite some wishful local folk-etymology). The Manor of Ashdon in those days was only the small part round the Church: the modern village is an amalgamation of five Manors, which occurred some 300 years later.

The Book of Ely

The *Liber Eliensis* (Book of Ely) describes how the monks of Ely bore holy relics into the battle and afterwards that night carried back to Ely the bodies of the Abbot of Thorney and Eadnoth, Bishop of Lincoln, who had been killed in the fighting. Ashingdon is too far away for a return over one night to Ely, but Ely is only about 25-30 miles from Hadstock. A survey of the Manor of Hadstock in 1248-49 lists a customary cottager's duties as including carrying wood on foot to Ely twice a year so it was apparently a manageable distance.

The casualties of the battle were mostly among men from Cambridgeshire, N. Essex, Norfolk and the Saffron Walden area, rather than from South Essex or from Suffolk. The *Cartulary of Walden Abbey* records a wayside cross dedicated to St. Eadnoth on Ely's property at St. Aylotts on White Street. This is an old route from Saffron Walden and roads south: old tracks lead on thence to Hadstock and Ashdon. Ely revered Bishop Eadnoth and, although it owned two hides in Hadstock, if the monks had put a cross nearer to Red Field (see below), it would have been overshadowed by the large royal Minster Church on the hill in Hadstock. A site on the route to Red Field would perhaps have been considered a preferable, more conspicuous alternative.

The Red Field

Accounts of the battle suggest that Cnut was returning from Mercia laden with plunder. From the hill above Hadstock, there is a good view to the Gog/ Magog Hills along the Granta valley - ideal to watch for the escaping Danes. It has been argued that the country was too wooded for them to be seen but any countryman could note the passage of a large body of men by the agitation of the woodland birds.

King Edmund collected an army from London and came to cut Cnut off. There are several old tracks which lead to this area. The Granta valley leads from Cambridge through a fairly narrow gap in low hills to a field in Hadstock parish known as Red Field - a name sometimes associated with the sites of battles.

'... it would seem to be an ideal site at which to cut Cnut off from his ships and force him to fight. Moreover, in about 1863, when the railway cutting was made through Red Field a very large number of skeletons were dug up.'

Beside an old ford, the valley widens to a more level area big enough for a battle. From this area there are river valley routes to the estuaries of the Stour, Blackwater or Crouch rivers. Looking at the land and at the Ordnance Survey map of *Britain in the Dark Ages*, it would seem to be an ideal site at which to cut Cnut off from his ships and force him to fight. Moreover, in about 1863, when the railway cutting was made through Red Field a very large number of skeletons were dug up. Both Linton and Hadstock have folk memories of this but we have found no official record. But *Kelly's Directory for Cambridgeshire*, 1892, (now online) records that a lot of skeletons were found when the railway line was dug out only 30 years before, and that they were only 3 feet below the surface. These were probably carried down with the soil to make the embankment to Bartlow. Something similar happened at Lewes, Sussex, when their society tried to find a mass grave of those killed at their battle in the 13th century. The railway navvies also drove straight through one of the Bartlow Hills.

Geophysical examination of Red Field has been carried out and two possible burial pits excavated, but nothing was found; too much metal rubbish has been used to fill in the railway cutting so geophysics found no trace of burial pits to either side.

After the battle, the English army fled. The Danes followed and caught up with them at Deerhurst in Gloucestershire. The map shows that the route was straight down the Icknield Way (there are branch tracks to it on the Hadstock parish boundary), turn right for Aylesbury and old tracks lead straight to Cirencester, Gloucester and Deerhurst. From Ashingdon, London gets in the way.

Cnut's Church

In 1020, Cnut dedicated the church he built at *Assandun* to the memory of the fallen of both sides. Hadstock has a very large church rebuilt probably in the first quarter of the eleventh century according to Dr. Harold Taylor. Warwick Rodwell found it was a rebuild on the site of an earlier church or churches, one of which had been burnt down in the late 9th century. Hadstock has always been a royal church and manor: the revenues of the Manor were granted to the monastery of Ely, but they did not get the church until after 1097. Cnut knew it and granted Ely four days' food rent from his manor of *Cadenho*. The church has strong connections with St. Botolph to whom it is dedicated. This would mean a lot to Cnut as St. Botolph was the patron saint of seamen and travellers, and still is in Scandinavia. All the churches dedicated to him are associated with main travel routes, city gates or ports.

A contemporary portrait of King Cnut from the New Minster Liber Vitae, 1031 AD (Stowe Ms 944, folio 6).

Cadenho – Hadstock?

Cadenho, or variants of it, was the name for Hadstock for only about 100 years, from around the time of Cnut until about 1120, when it became Hadstock. It occurs in Domesday Book as *Cadenhou*. This name has been interpreted as the "end of a ridge or spur of land belonging to [someone called] Cada". Hadstock is certainly on a *ho* 'spur' at the end of the hill between Ashdon and Hadstock.

The English, understandably, would not want to commemorate a defeat for long. There is a charter of King Ethelred, dated around 1008, which grants 2 hides at *Caddeno* to Ely (the church is not included in this charter and the two hides here seem to be a compulsory extra condition for Ely getting a large hidage of land at Littlebury - much better farming land), but this is a later copy in the twelfth century *Liber Eliensis* which also had the name 'Hadstock' on a charter of Edward the Confessor now considered a forgery.

The village has been Hadstock now for over 800 years. The name probably derives from someone called Hadda (perhaps the parson at the time) and *stock* can mean an outlying farm but also a holy place, which seems more likely here. Ely did not get the church until a charter of 1097.

By the time William of Malmesbury wrote in 1125, the church at *Assandun* had become an ordinary parish church with a parish priest. Rodwell (1992) thought it might have been in Old Church Field in Ashdon but this field is down the lane to Newnham, which was a separate Manor under different ownership at least from Domesday Book until after 1334. Newnham was a manor worth more than either Ashdon or Hadstock, owned by Alsi, then Ingelric and at Domesday by the Earl William de Warenne so it would probably have had its own church which was disused when the five manors joined to form the modern village of Ashdon. Hadstock also has a Sunken Church Field down near the river but this was the site of the Roman villa. Saxons gave this sort of name to places with Roman buildings as churches were the only buildings of stone that they knew.

Stigand – Priest, Bishop, Archbishop

Cnut installed Stigand as the first priest of his church at *Assandun*. Stigand later became Bishop of Elmham and then Archbishop of Canterbury. He was certainly active in the Hadstock area. He witnessed the will of Thurstan who held lands in Ashdon and Wimbish, and was bequeathed a large sum of money. He also was witness to a charter concerning Wimbish. He received lands from Leofgifu who owned estates in N. Essex and Suffolk. Stigand was also a benefactor to the abbey at Ely: he was abbot for a short time and may have taken refuge there after the Conquest.

Traitor's Field

There used to be a small pasture on the corner of the Bartlow Road at the junction with Chalky Lane. According to Ernie and Joe Freeman, this was called *Traitors Field* and it was unlucky to plough it because it was where a traitor [Eadric] and his men held back from the battle and betrayed Edmund and the English. Joe and Ernie were not sure of the name of the battle or the traitor, but the Freeman family had a tradition that they had been here since before the Conquest: there was certainly a Freeman in the 1248/9 Survey of the Manor and there was a will listed at Chelmsford dating from the early 1400s.

The Forest of Walden

Without the Minster of Assandun, there is no reason at all for a large Saxon-period royal church in Hadstock. The village has never had any agricultural wealth; the soil is heavy boulder clay with flints and was only about 240 acres (2 hides) until the late 12th century when the Bishop of Ely got busy with assarts of up to 680 acres from the King's Forest of Walden. This forest extended across to the south of Hadstock, virtually cutting it and Ashdon off from the rest of Essex.

Conclusion

Hadstock Wood is a remnant of the old forest, according to Dr. Oliver Rackham (various publications and a lecture given in Hadstock). The *Knutsdrapa* mentions that the battle was fought "north of the Danes Wood". Later called the Walden Forest, there was a large wood right across to the

south of Hadstock commemorated in many field names after the Bishops of Ely took the vast assarts of over 680 acres from it. There does not seem to have been a large wood south of Ashingdon.

Hadstock certainly never had the money to build such a church and it seem likely that the settlement grew up round it. On that basis and for the reasons outlined above, I believe that the fateful battle at *Assandun* must be situated at Ashdon by Hadstock.

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Knútsdrápa by Óttarr svarti (Óttar the Black)

Verse 10

Skjöldungr, vant und skildi
skœru verk, hinn sterki,
(fekk blóðtrani bráðir
brúnar) Assatúnum;
vátt, en valfall þótti
verðung, jöfurr sverði
nær fyr norðan stóru
nafn gnógt Danaskóga.

Editor's translation:

"Mighty scion of Skjold, you undertook war-deeds behind your shield; the raven took dark nourishment at Assatun. You won in warfare a great name, boar in battle, with your sword near to the north of the Dane-wood and a slaughter it seemed to your men."

The name Danaskóga (Dane-wood) is often assumed to refer to the Forest of Dean and Edmund's retreat to the west before agreeing terms with Knut at Deerhurst, Gloucestershire.

Woodham Ferrers in the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries

Nick Alexander

Woodham Ferrers has featured in previous *Transactions of the Society* in 1899 and 1926. Thanks to Google I discovered the 1926 paper by Mr Fowler during my researches into the Sandes (or Sandys) family. The present paper is my own contribution to the history of Woodham Ferrers and in particular of Edwarde's Manor, extending both the geographical scope and the timeframe of the previous paper and correcting a (very understandable) error in relation to the Sandes family connection.

Fig 1. Edwins Hall Aerial view November 2014
Photo: John Fielding www. britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101236906

The main building of the Manor (Fig.1) has been rebuilt and extended over the centuries and is now known as *Edwin's Hall* but its original name of *Edwarde's Manor* will be used throughout this paper. The map accompanying (fig.2) is an enlargement of part of the 1830s map of Essex in *The County Maps of Old England*. The area shown covers from Chelmsford and Maldon in the north to Basildon in the south.

The location of Edwarde's Manor east of Woodham Ferrers has been added and shows its proximity to the associated properties of Stow Maries and Cold Norton. The map also shows Runwell, the home of the Flemings, near Wickford; Bowers (Gifford) the home of the Gerards south of Pitsea; Sandon, the home of Robert Plomer, south-east of Chelmsford, and other places mentioned herein.

I include three family tree tables. The first shows the relationship between the various families involved with Edwarde's Manor up to the marriage of William Sandes and Margery Gerard in about 1500. The other two show William's ancestors in Hampshire and Surrey, and William and Margery's descendants at Woodham Ferrers.

Fig 2. 1830s map of Essex in The County Maps of Old England

The De Ferrers family

As its name suggests, Woodham Ferrers has a long association with the de Ferrers family. Although they had moved their main area of interest to Leicestershire, they still held properties in Essex in the 14th and 15th Centuries. William Ferrers, the fifth Baron Ferrers of Groby, was taken ill while visiting his properties at Woodham Ferrers and managed to complete his Will the day before he died there in 1445. William had two sons: Henry, who had already died in 1425, and Thomas. William's estates passed to Henry's daughter Elizabeth.

While still a child, Elizabeth Ferrers was married to Sir Edward Grey. Their first son, Sir John Grey of Groby, was born in circa 1432. About 1452, Sir John married Elizabeth Woodville, the first child of Sir Richard Woodville of Grafton Regis and Jacquetta of Luxembourg. Jacquetta was the widow of the Duke of Bedford, who was the uncle of King Henry IV. Grafton Regis is about nine miles south of Northampton and seventeen miles south-west of Higham Ferrers, another part of the de Ferrers estate.

Sir John Grey supported the Lancastrian cause in the Wars of the Roses and was killed at the second battle of St Albans in February 1461. His estates, including his properties at Woodham Ferrers, were seized by Edward of York, the future King Edward IV. The lands at Woodham Ferrers were granted to Roger Ree, one of this King's faithful supporters, to whom we will return below.

Sir John Grey's widow, Elizabeth, married King Edward IV secretly in 1464 and tried to reclaim her Ferrers inheritance on behalf of her son, Thomas, apparently without success. Elizabeth, King Edward IV and Elizabeth's eldest daughter, married King Henry VII. This united the warring Houses of Lancaster and York and ended the Wars of The Roses.

Thomas Kays

Although the village of Woodham Ferrers and its surrounding area took its name from the Ferrers family, some properties were owned by other families. One such owner was Thomas Kays, sometimes spelt Cays, who was an Attorney and frequently appeared as Counsel in cases at the Court of Common Pleas in London. This Court was similar to the modern Small Claims Courts.

Thomas Kays appears to have lived near Chelmsford, and William Malter, one of his executors, lived at Great Baddow. The only records available through *British History Online* for the Court of Common Pleas cover the period between 1401 and 1409, during which Thomas appeared in forty cases: in more than two-thirds of them, on behalf of the plaintiff. He represented the Bishop of London twice, the Dean and Chapter of St Pauls Cathedral nine times and the Abbess of Barking once.

Thomas Kays was involved in four cases in which the Dean and Chapter were trying to recover unpaid debts from Little Leighs Priory, north of Chelmsford, and in a similar case against Beeleigh Abbey near Maldon. Surprisingly perhaps, one of the cases in which Thomas Kays appeared for the defendant concerned the Prior of Little Leighs. In another case, he acted for a defendant over alleged damage at Rawreth, Rayleigh and Thundersley - all a few miles south of Woodham Ferrers.

Thomas Kays seems to have died in about 1410 - Alice, Prioress of Stratford, brought a case in the Court of Chancery (C1/4/51) over "land of the late Thomas Kays at Cheshunt in Hertfordshire, one of whose four daughters was a nun in the Priory". A later case (C1/69/26), probably of 1425, refers

to Thomas as having had a son William and a daughter Marion, both of whom had died without issue, leaving another daughter Rose to inherit his property of Edwarde's Manor at Woodham Ferrers together with other land and buildings at Stow Maries and Cold Norton.

The Fleming family

Rose Kays, the daughter of Thomas, was born in about 1405. Her first husband was Robert Fleming of Runwell, about five miles south-west of Woodham Ferrers. He was the great-great-grandson of Robert Fleming and Alice who lived at Runwell in 1327. A case in the Court of Augmentation (E326/8183) in 1360 refers to the widow, another Alice, of Robert Fleming senior's son John and to their son and heir, Robert, while another case in the same Court (E326/8185) in 1411 refers to this Robert's son, Thomas.

This Thomas appears to have had two sons, Thomas and Robert. Thomas Fleming junior had a son, John, who died without issue; his three sisters Constantia, Blanche and Anne became co-heirs to the Flemings estate in Runwell. Anne is believed to have married Sir William Sulyard who thereby gained control of the estate. He was followed by his son, Sir John Sulyard, and in 1485 the Sulyards were living at Flemings and were holding lands at Downham, Rettendon, East and South Hanningfield, Rawreth, Ramsden Bellhouse and Wickford.

Robert Fleming, the younger son of Thomas, married Rose Kays. Robert and Rose had one daughter, Alice Fleming, born in about 1425. Alice's father, Robert Fleming, died in about 1428 and shortly afterwards his widow, Rose, married Roger Ree.

The Ree family

The family of Rose Kays's second husband, Roger Ree, originated from Rease, a few miles west of Nantwich in Cheshire, but he had moved to Essex by about 1425. One record shows him living at Stratford-atte-Bow. Roger Ree married the young widow, Rose, in about 1429 and their first son, also Roger, was born the following year.

Roger Ree senior died in 1479 and was commemorated in a tablet to him and Rose at St Michael Bassishaw Church near the Guildhall in London. When King Edward IV won the kingdom in 1461, Roger Ree junior became an Usher of the King's Chamber and so had to deputise for the Chamberlain in the latter's frequent absences from royal household duties.

In 1462, Roger was given lands in Essex, forfeited by the Ferrers. As noted above, these included a number of properties in Woodham Ferrers, but not Edwarde's Manor. Roger Ree junior served as Sheriff for Hertfordshire and Essex in 1464, for Norfolk and Suffolk in 1469, for Hertfordshire and Essex again in 1471 and for Norfolk and Suffolk again in 1473. He fought for King Edward IV at the Battle of Tewkesbury in 1471 and was knighted after the battle. He died in 1476, three years before his father, leaving a son, William, who was born about 1460 and who died without issue before 1489.

Sir Roger Ree had an older brother William who appears to have inherited the Rease family lands near Nantwich and lived there until his death in 1489. William's heirs were his two daughters, Margery and Ellen. ('See Family Tree below) In 1490, Margery and Ellen Ree and their respective husbands, Richard Wilbram of Woodhey and Roger Chetwood of Worleston, both near Nantwich, sold the inherited properties at Woodham Ferrers. The purchaser was Robert Plomer who lived at Sandon Manor, between Woodham Ferrers and Chelmsford, and was MP for the borough of Maldon in 1478 and again in 1491/2. The sale to Robert Plomer specifically excluded Edwarde's Manor, Pykes Chalcroff and Stoterdiscroft, but Margery and Ellen claimed ownership of them in 1499 when they brought a case in the Court of Chancery (C1/231/35) against Christopher Sandes and Robert Plomer in an attempt to prove this. The case also mentions Christopher's wife, Alice.

In 1506, the Chetwoods and Margery Ree's son, William Wilbram, brought two more cases in the Court of Chancery (C1/292/9 and C1/300/34) claiming that they had given evidence of their rights to ownership of Edwarde's Manor to Christopher Sands and his wife, Alice. This was denied by Christopher's son, William Sands, who had married the young heiress Margery Gerard in 1500. In their response to the claims by the Chetwoods, William and Margery explained the sequence by which Margery had inherited Edwarde's Manor.

They said that Margery was descended from Rose Ree (nee Kays) by her first marriage to Robert Fleming; that Rose and Robert had a daughter, Alice Fleming, who married Eustace Gerard; that Eustace and Alice had a son John Gerard; and that Margery was John's daughter. Although no existing records substantiate these claims, they seem to have been accepted by the Court at the time. Eustace Gerard, his wife Alice and John Gerard and his wife must all have died before 1506 – otherwise, they would have been parties to this dispute.

The last case in this series (C1/375/55) was in 1514 when the same plaintiffs claimed that the properties at Woodham Ferrers, Stow Maries and Cold Norton had been sold by Richard Wilbram, his wife Margery Ree, Roger Chetwood and his wife Ellen Ree to Robert Plomer and that he had sold them to William Sandes. This is the last that we hear of the Rees, the Wilbrams and the Chetwoods. William Sandes and his successors retained Edwarde's Manor for at least another hundred years.

The Gerard family

Like the Flemings at Runwell, the Gerards lived at Bowers Gifford south of Chelmsford. The first mention of them is a case in the Court of Augmentations (E326/8184) in 1384 where Eustace Gerard and his wife, Alice, are mentioned in relation to property at Rawreth and Thundersley. This may be the same property that is the subject of later cases involving John Sandes and his son-in-law, Nicholas Forde, in the 1520s.

Eustace Gerrard had a great-grandson, also named Eustace, born in about 1420. He married Alice Fleming, the daughter of Robert Fleming and Rose Kays, in about 1445. They had a son, John Gerard, born about 1448, who also married an Alice in about 1470. John and Alice had a daughter, Margery Gerard, born about 1473. John Gerard died in about 1475 and his widow married William Vernon. They had a daughter, Alice, who married John Voke in or before 1499.

Eustace Gerard outlived his son John by about ten years and on his death, Edwarde's Manor and the other properties near Woodham Ferrers and at Rawreth and Thundersley were inherited by his twelve-year old grand-daughter, Margery. She was made a Ward of Court and in 1489 Christopher Sandes was sent to collect rents and other income from her properties. About ten years later, probably when he became of full age, Christopher's son William Sandes married Margery Gerard.

William Sandes' antecedents

A document entitled "*Materials for a History of the reign of Henry VII*" is in two Volumes; Volume Two contains the following entry: "10 Mar 1489: Writ to Christopher Sandes directing him to enter on the manor of Edwarde's in Woodham Ferrers part of the inheritance of Sir Laurence Guaret and in the king's hands by reason of the nonage of the said heir and to take the rents and profits thereof in the king's behalf". There is no other record of any Sir Laurence Guaret and this is presumed to be an error by the original scribe (or in transcription by the editor of the above document) and that it should read Eustace Gerard.

This entry provides a definite link with the Christopher Sandes involved in the Court of Chancery cases described above but it does not tell us who Christopher was. The Sandes family originated at Burgh-by-Sands where the River Eden enters the Solway Firth west of Carlisle. The family divided into three main branches in the second half of the 14th Century.

John Sandys, as he became known, left home in 1367 and accompanied Sir Matthew Redmayne to join the army of the Black Prince in Aquitaine. During his service in France, he was knighted and, when he returned to England, settled in Hampshire. He married a wealthy widow, Joan Bridges (nee Fifhide), and they founded the Hampshire and Surrey branch of the Sandys family.

John's older brother Robert Sandes moved to St Bees on the Cumberland coast where his first son, William, bought the nearby Manor of Rottington and founded the second branch of the family. William's younger brother, John, moved from St Bees to Esthwaite, a small lake between Coniston Water and Lake Windermere. John founded the third branch of the Sandes family, the one recorded in the Sandis (sic) pedigree in the Visitation to Cumberland in 1615 referred to by Mr Fowler in the 1926 *Essex Archaeological Society* paper.

Edwyn Sandes, who married Mary Sandes, the younger grand-daughter of William of Woodham Ferrers, was descended from the Esthwaite branch of the family but Christopher is not recorded as a forename in this branch of the family before the birth of Edwyn's older brother in 1516. There was a Christopher in the Rottington branch of the family who would have been an old man in 1489 and who had a son, William, living at Rottington and raising a family there in the 1490s. There is no record of a Christopher Sandes or Sandys in the Hampshire branch of the family but, as explained below, this must be where he fits into the story.

Volume One of the *Materials for a History* includes three entries involving Christopher Sandes. These are for December 1485, February 1486 and April 1486 and record grants for life to Christopher Sandes "in consideration of good and praiseworthy service as well to the king as to the most dear and most excellent princess and lady his mother". It seems certain that this Christopher Sandes is the same as the one sent to collect the rent from Edwarde's manor in 1489, and that he must have been employed by Margaret Beaufort, the mother of King Henry VII, at Woking Manor for some years prior to the king's accession to the throne after the battle of Bosworth in August 1485.

During this period, Sir Reginald Bray was chief adviser to Margaret Beaufort and he went on to fulfil the same role for King Henry VII. He must have known Christopher Sandes at Woking and would have been well placed to recommend him for the task at Woodham Ferrers. Sir Reginald Bray was also related to the Hampshire branch of the Sandys family - his step-mother, the second wife of Sir Richard Bray, was Margaret Sandys, the younger daughter of Walter Sandys of East Cholderton by his second wife, Margaret Erleigh. Walter was the son of Sir John Sandys of Southampton and East Cholderton.

Walter Sandys had two sons by his first wife, Agnes Warriner: Thomas and William. Thomas lived at East Cholderton while there is a single mention of William as living at Catherington, another of the properties inherited from the Fifhide family.

Thomas died in 1442 and his wife, Sybil, died three years later leaving at least one infant son (possibly two). The first was William Sandys, born in 1439; it seems most likely that the second was Christopher Sandes, born in 1440 or 1441. They must have been brought up by their uncle ,William of Catherington.

William Sandys of Catherington had three sons of his own – William, who later bought Harleyford Manor beside the River Thames west of Great Marlow; John, who, according to the List of Wars of The Roses Combatants compiled by the Towton Battlefield Society, was knighted after the battle of Tewkesbury in 1471; and Thomas, whose daughter Julian married Robert Fenrother, a Goldsmith and Alderman in the City of London. Their cousin, William, son of Thomas, definitely was knighted on the same occasion, as was Roger Ree of Woodham Ferrers.

A PhD thesis[1] on the early history of the Yeomen of the Guard mentions that it was normal practice for the younger sons of landed gentry, who could not expect any inheritance, to join the household of a member of the nobility as a means of social advancement. It is suggested that this is how Christopher Sandes came to join the household of Margaret Beaufort at Woking Manor. Woking is about fifty miles east of East Cholderton, with the other main Sandys property at The Vyne mid-way between.

This identification of Christopher Sandes is confirmed by the appointment of his cousins, William and Oliver, the younger sons of William Sandys of Harleyford, as deputies to Sir Reginald Bray when he was granted the role of Keeper of the Royal Parks at Guildford and Shere Vachery both within a few miles of Woking. Christopher's wife, Alice, has not been identified but may have been a daughter of William of Catherington and therefore a first cousin that he had grown up with.

William Sandes' family at Woodham Ferrers

William Sandes and Margery Gerard had three daughters: Elizabeth, Agnes and Alice, and a son, John. who was born in about 1505. Elizabeth had married Nicholas Forde, a Fish-monger of London, by 1523 when they were involved in a case (C1/573/11) over the deeds for property of the Manor of Bekhall and land in Rawreth and Thundersley, all near Woodham Ferrers and previously owned by John Sandes. Nicholas may have been the son of William Forde, Stockfish-monger, who was given permission to travel to Calais with Sir Richard Wingfield in 1519. The Feet of Fines records for Essex for 1526 refer to the same properties as being quitclaimed by John Sandes and his wife, Elizabeth, to a John Wiseman. (This is the only reliable record of John with a wife Elizabeth and it might be that it was actually his sister who was involved with him in this transaction.)

The notoriously inaccurate Cumberland Visitation of 1615 shows John Sandes as marrying Elizabeth Cavendish of Trimley. However, the Suffolk Visitation of 1561 shows John as marrying Anne Cavendish, daughter of Sir Richard Cavendish of Grimston Hall, Trimley, Suffolk and it seems much more likely that this is correct. John definitely identified his wife as Anne in his Will.

John's older daughter, Anne, married Anne Cavendish's nephew, Richard, in about 1552. Richard Cavendish studied at Cambridge, then at Oxford and then in Europe before returning to Cambridge. This suggests that he was a colleague of Edwyn Sandes and one of the Protestant theologians involved in the ramifications of the Reformation and the compilation of the first *Book of Common Prayer*.

John's son, William, married Anne Felton at Trimley. The Feltons had originated at Shotley across the River Orwell from Trimley and also had property at Playford, east of Ipswich. William and Anne may have lived at Harwich, where they brought up two sons. They sold Edwarde's Manor in 1570. William died at Trimley in 1573 and his younger son, another William, registered a Quitclaim in 1582 to the effect that he was not entitled to any compensation for land at Harwich being transferred to the Queen.

John Sandes' third child, Mary, became the first wife of Edwyn Sandes. Edwyn was Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University and was one of the first priests to marry after this was authorised by King Edward VI in 1552. He went into exile in Europe during the reign of the Catholic Mary Tudor. Mary Sandes and their child James died there in about 1557.

Edwin's father-in-law, John, died in February 1559 and his widow, named in his Will as Anne, married Laurence Manley at Woodham Ferrers in August 1559. An Anna Manley was buried at Ingatestone (west of Chelmsford) in May 1580. A Laurence Manley was buried at Isleworth (Middlesex) in January 1589.

It is presumed that Edwyn Sandes acquired Edwarde's Manor between 1570 and 1577 while he was Bishop of, London. As recorded by Mr Fowler, Edwyn Sandes's second wife, Cicely Wilford and their oldest son Sir Samuel Sandys lived at Woodham Ferrers until her death in 1610. Sir Samuel moved back to his wife's home of Wickhamford in Gloucestershire and died there in 1623.

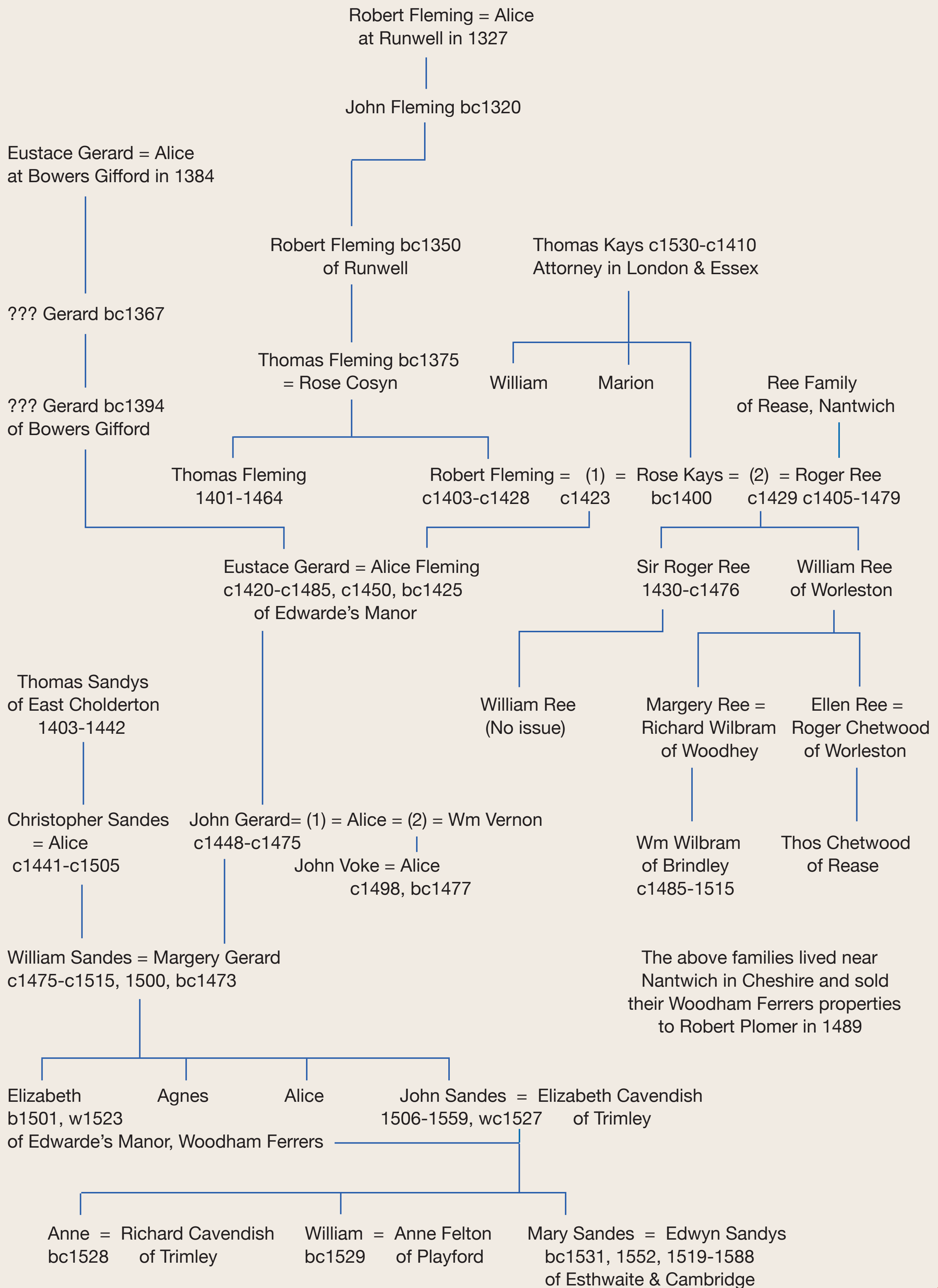
POSTSCRIPT – Escape and Exile

Rev Dr Edwyn Sandes, as he then was, publicly supported the claim of Lady Jane Grey to become Queen in 1553 following the death of King Edward VI. Because of this, Queen Mary Tudor had him imprisoned in the Tower of London. He was transferred to The Marshalsea in Southwark from where he was released on bail and escaped to exile in Europe, where he was joined by his wife Mary a year later.

Other exiles included Thomas Wilford and two of his sons. When news of the death of Queen Mary reached the exiles in December 1558, Edwyn Sandes was visiting Peter Martyr in Zürich, having left his wife and their son James at Strasbourg. Mary died while Edwyn was in Zürich.

The exiles returned to England just in time to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's coronation in January 1559. Five weeks later, Edwyn married Thomas Wilford's daughter, Cecily, and one week after that he entered into an agreement with his former brother-in-law, William Sandes of Woodham Ferrers, to the effect that William would not sell any part of the estate at Edwarde's Hall without first offering it to Edwyn's son, James, at a fair market price.

Presumably, Edwyn subsequently bought the estate on his son's behalf. It is not known when James died but it must have been before he had any children and this is how Sir Samuel Sandys, Edwyn's first son by his second marriage, later came into possession of Edwarde's Hall.


Combined Family Tree for Woodham Ferrers
(Revised January 2021)
Robert Fleming = Alice
at Runwell in 1327
John Fleming bc1320
Eustace Gerard = Alice
at Bowers Gifford in 1384
Robert Fleming bc1350
of Runwell
Thomas Kays c1530-c1410
Attorney in London & Essex
??? Gerard bc1367
Thomas Fleming bc1375
= Rose Cosyn
William
Marion
Ree Family
of Rease, Nantwich
??? Gerard bc1394
of Bowers Gifford
Thomas Fleming
1401-1464
Robert Fleming = (1) = Rose Kays = (2) = Roger Ree
c1403-c1428 c1423 bc1400 c1429 c1405-1479
Eustace Gerard = Alice Fleming
c1420-c1485, c1450, bc1425
of Edwarde's Manor
Sir Roger Ree
1430-c1476
William Ree
of Worleston
Thomas Sandys
of East Cholderton
1403-1442
William Ree
(No issue)
Margery Ree =
Richard Wilbram
of Woodhey
Ellen Ree =
Roger Chetwood
of Worleston
Christopher Sandes
= Alice
c1441-c1505
John Gerard= (1) = Alice = (2) = Wm Vernon
c1448-c1475
John Voke = Alice
c1498, bc1477
Wm Wilbram
of Brindley
c1485-1515
Thos Chetwood
of Rease
William Sandes = Margery Gerard
c1475-c1515, 1500, bc1473
The above families lived near
Nantwich in Cheshire and sold
their Woodham Ferrers properties
to Robert Plomer in 1489
Elizabeth
b1501, w1523
of Edwarde's Manor, Woodham Ferrers
Agnes
Alice
John Sandes = Elizabeth Cavendish
1506-1559, wc1527 of Trimley
Anne = Richard Cavendish
bc1528 of Trimley
William = Anne Felton
bc1529 of Playford
Mary Sandes = Edwyn Sandys
bc1531, 1552, 1519-1588
of Esthwaite & Cambridge

‘An honest priest to sing for my soul’

Part Two: bequests to Colchester's religious houses

Sue Howlett

In 1534 Henry VIII’s ‘Reformation Parliament’ began the process of separating England from the Roman Catholic church and establishing the king as Supreme Head of the English church. Failure to swear to the Oath of Supremacy led to many public executions, and the abbot of St John’s Abbey in Colchester was one of three abbots to be hanged for treason. By 1539 nearly 900 monasteries had been closed, most of their churches demolished, and remaining buildings with their monastic estates sold to local nobles or the nouveau riche. In ‘one of the most revolutionary events in English history’,[1] the bulk of former church property passed into lay hands, helping to fund Henry VIII’s war-chest and changing the structure and management of much of the English land economy. Changes to the national religion were even more drastic. Thomas Cromwell’s first series of Injunctions, issued in 1536, initially retained much Roman Catholic doctrine, but cast doubt on the concept of Purgatory, dismissing as abuses: ‘masses said at Scala Coeli [stairway to heaven] … or elsewhere in any place, before any image’.[2]

Colchester’s Friaries

Colchester had its own *Scala Coeli*, an altar granted a special indulgence to remit part of the period a soul might spend in Purgatory. This could be found at the Crutched or Cross Friars, originally founded as a hospital and chapel outside the town walls. Nothing now remains of the buildings apart from the road name, ‘Crouch Street’, although burials and foundations have been excavated close to the street frontage. Early in the 15th century a second chapel had been built there in which a chantry priest sang masses for the soul of Thomas Godstone, its founder. When the Crutched Friars claimed the chapel and hospital in 1496, they enlarged the buildings and made Godstone’s chapel their Lady Chapel.[3] In 1516 it was recorded that the earlier chapel had been granted a special indulgence, and in 1534 John Tey bequeathed ten marks [£6 13s. 4d.] to the Prior of Cross Friars for daily sung masses at the *Scala Coeli* altar there, just two years before such observance was condemned.[4]

While many testators simply requested prayers or masses to be sung for their souls in parish churches, those with more funds to invest purchased multiple masses from Colchester’s two friaries. One elaborate combination was ‘St Gregory’s Trental’, which required masses to be performed on designated days. William Wheler bequeathed 20s. to the Friars Minor [Greyfriars] of Colchester, to sing two trentals of St Gregory, while other testators preferred the standard trental from the Greyfriars and Cross Friars. Most bequeathed 10s. per trental, apart from John Godfrey, a wealthy beer-brewer of Colchester, who left 30s. to the Greyfriars and 40s. to the Cross Friars for each to perform a trental for his soul. A third trental was to be sung at the altar of *Scala Coeli* in Westminster Abbey, for which Godfrey bequeathed 15s. for the priest’s salary.[5]

Plate 1. Colchester’s present Greyfriars building

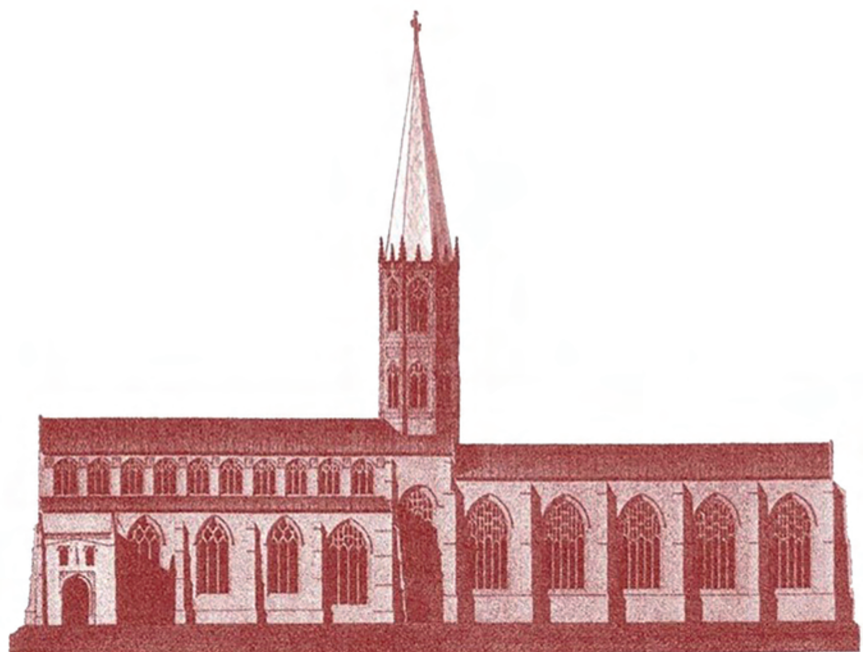


Plate 2 A typical Greyfriars’ church (reconstruction drawing courtesy of John Ashdown-Hill)

Colchester's Franciscan friary, known as the Greyfriars or Friars Minors, occupied a substantial enclosure in the north east corner of the town walls. It once boasted a large church with tall spire at the highest point of the town, but virtually nothing remains today beneath an elegant 18th century building, now a hotel. In the late 15th and early 16th centuries around a dozen local men and women left funds for multiple trentals to be performed in the friary church, while testators also paid for a new church window, a cross of silver and painting of the rood loft. In 1465 the wealthy widow Kateryn Peke left bequests to several Colchester churches, including to the Colchester friars: 'a piece [coin] called the ten shilling piece and ten marks to the house, of which ten marks I will that every frere have four pence ... to Frer Robert Trumpington my chalice' as well as 40s. over ten years, 'and he is to assist [my] executors in matter that [be]longeth and is betwixt the Abbot and me'.[6] It is interesting that several of the friars were identified by name in local wills, being probably well known to the townsfolk among whom they ministered.

St John's Abbey

The most important of Colchester's monastic houses was St John's Benedictine Abbey, founded at the end of the 11th century. King Henry VII and later Queen Catherine of Aragon both stayed there, and in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535, St John's Abbey, Colchester, was valued at over £5,000, the fourth richest in Essex. Supported locally by Sir Thomas Audley, Lord Chancellor, the abbey survived until 1539 when the abbot, Thomas Beche *alias* Marshall, was imprisoned in the Tower of London for refusing to submit to the king's demands. He was returned to Colchester to be tried and executed for treason, while the 19 remaining monks of St John's Abbey were dismissed with pensions of £4 per year.[7] To families from around Colchester whose members were buried in the abbey church, the closure of St John's must have come as a devastating shock.

For generations the abbey had experienced frequent internal disputes and conflict with the town, but wealthy individuals continued to seek burial in its prestigious precincts. In 1490 Sir Lawrence Reynforth, a Yorkist knight who had fought at Tewksbury, requested burial within St John's Abbey, Colchester. He bequeathed 40 shillings, 'annually for ever' from his lands in Tendring, for the Abbot and his successors to celebrate anniversary masses, 'solemnly at the high altar' for his soul and those of his parents, benefactors 'and for all faithful departed'.[8] William Breton also sought burial there in 1499 with his 'sepulture' adorned with images of himself, his parents and wife, to be paid for by 'all such money as [the Abbot] oweth me which appears in the account of the Bailiwick of Greenstead' [one of the abbey's local manors].[9]

Conspicuous tombs and engraved gifts were a constant reminder for those present to pray for the souls of the named dead. Another wealthy patron of the abbey, John Tey (d. 1534), bequeathed a silver chalice with a 'scochion' engraved with his arms, so that his family might be remembered at every celebration of the Eucharist; his month's and year's mind were also to be kept at the abbey with prayers from his own priest, Sir Thomas Kyrke.[10] However, a more unusual request to the abbey came from clothmaker Thomas Clere (d. 1520), desiring 'St John's Monastery' to keep safe his bags of money until his children came of age.[11] None of these testators could dream that within a generation the abbey church, with all its tombs, monks and masses, would disappear, and the last Abbot be hanged on his own gallows.[12]

The surviving gatehouse of St John's Abbey

The west front of St Botolph's Priory

The Priory of St Botolph and St Julian, founded in the 1090s, was the earliest English house of Augustinian Canons. Built on the site of an earlier Saxon church, its parishioners worshipped at the parish altar in the nave, and this part of the church therefore survived the wholesale demolition of other priory buildings, only to be largely destroyed in the Colchester Siege of 1648. In 1494 William Neve left carefully graduated sums to the prior, priests, canons and novices of St Botolph’s as well as 40 shillings ‘to mending of [statues of?] St John and St Stephen … against the vestry door’. In addition to requesting many prayers and trentals, John Salough, a parishioner of All Saints, Colchester, in 1511 bequeathed 6s 8d for ‘breaking the ground’ for his burial in the church of St Botolph, and ten shillings to the high altar there ‘for to be paid as a brother of this place’.[13] For prosperous townsfolk, subscribing to one of the religious houses as a lay brother or sister secured privileged access to the services and prayers of the religious community. Elizabeth Harmanson of St Leonard’s had multiple memberships, bequeathing ‘to every place where I am sister by any pardon, 3s 4d’.[14]

Similar bequests were made to many holy sites in London, particularly St Paul’s and Westminster, and elsewhere in Essex and adjoining counties. Occasionally, testators who had failed to visit shrines in their lifetime requested pilgrimages made in their names after death. In 1508 Agnes Bownde left a house to Robert Stoyle on condition ‘he go on pilgimage for me to Master John Schorne [reburied at St George’s Chapel, Windsor, in 1482[15]], St Thomas of Canterbury, Our Lady of Walsingham, the Holy Rood of Dovercourt, Our Lady of Ipswich and Our Lady of Owting [Ulting, Essex] [16], with ten shillings when he goeth’.[17]

Church gifts and improvements

As churchgoers entered a shadowy space lit only by candles and ‘lights’ bequeathed by past parishioners, their gaze might linger on some physical legacy bringing to mind a deceased benefactor. The chapel of St Anne received in 1508 ‘two stained cloths’ [probably painted banners] with images of St Anne and Our Lady, the gift of Agnes Bownde,[18] and a new window was bequeathed to the Greyfriars’ church in 1505 by George Aleyn.[19] Reminders were not only visual: as worshippers in the church of St Martin heard their choir sing a new antiphon, the manuscript music bequeathed in 1465 by Kateryn Peke was ‘a sufficient Antiphon to be bought and abide for ever in St Martin’s church’, priced at ten marks. In the 1500s, parishioners contributed to the rebuilding of steeples at St Martin’s and St Mary at the Walls, only for these to be destroyed by Parliamentarian cannon in 1648.

Most churches had statues or images of saints, including St Leonard’s church to which John Leverson bequeathed five marks to the new ‘dyghting’ [making or adorning] of St Paul,[20] and St James’ church which had an image of St Ignatius. The most significant image in every church was the rood, a great cross beneath the chancel arch, normally standing on the rood beam between St Mary and St John the Evangelist. Nicholas Clere (d. 1500) bought a cross for St James’ church, also arranging, if his son should die, to spend £20 on a new crucifix called ‘the rood’ with Mary and John ‘standing on the rood loft’ in the same church. John Salough left 20 shillings to buy a silver cross for the Greyfriars and to paint the roodloft, with another 20 shillings for two trentals, as well as three pence per week for two years to five ‘bedefolks’ to pray for the souls of himself and his wife.[21] It was not only within churches that saints’ statues were placed: John Elys in 1485 willed that his wife ‘make or cause to be made three statues, of which one should be of St Helena [patron saint of Colchester], another of St Margaret and [the other] of St John the Baptist, to stand above the East Gate of the said Colchester’.[22]

The end of Purgatory?

Most Colchester testators, bequeathing money and gifts to churches in the decades before the Reformation, appear motivated by personal faith and religious devotion. Yet amounts of money were frequently linked to the number of prayers requested, and gifts such as windows or chalices often served as reminders to pray for the donor. Most wills left unbequeathed money or goods to heirs or executors, often with conditions attached to this final bequest. In 1441 William Clerke left the residue to his wife ‘to dispose as she thinketh best for the wealth [well-being] of my soul’,[23] and similar phrases were still employed a century later. William Hubbert, in 1544, left his soul to God, his Maker and Redeemer, but the residue of his goods was still left to his wife, not for her own use but ‘to dispose of them as it seem [to] her most best to the pleasure of god and health of my soul.’[24] Despite the increasing Protestant belief in Christ’s Redemption, concern was still widespread for a soul’s safe passage from the earthly to heavenly kingdom.

Well before the Reformation, there was growing criticism that payment for prayers and masses had become too commercialised.[25] Probably linked to increasing scepticism and the rising tide of Protestantism, bequests for prayers in Colchester wills had steadily declined before 1530.[26] Shifting religious attitudes paved the way for gradual or grudging acceptance of the fundamental changes imposed during the 1530s. Apart from St John’s Abbey, Colchester’s religious houses succumbed quietly to their disssolution, their properties mainly acquired by Thomas Audley, Colchester’s town clerk, the king’s Lord Chancellor and Speaker of the Reformation Parliament. While many townspeople accepted or adapted to religious and political changes, several parish priests who objected were charged between 1527 and 1545 ‘for loose morals and not proclaiming royal statutes.’[27]

Many Colchester wills drawn up during the transitional years of the 1530s and 1540s provide evidence of shifting attitudes. However, these may owe more to the influence of reformist priests, and the lessening pressure to spend on religious bequests, than the testator’s independent, heartfelt belief. In 1536 Thomas Preston, brasier of St Peter’s, commended his soul ‘to the infinite mercy of Almighty God, [his] Creator and Redeemer’, while still requesting his wife to ‘do for me

in deeds of charity at her pleasure for the health of my soul and all Christian souls.'[28] Three years later, the widowed Parnell Lane of St James' bequeathed her soul solely 'unto the will and mercy of Almighty God': no prayers were requested and all other bequests were for her family.[29] In 1540 John Mynche of St Leonard's, dispensing with the need for prayers to release his soul from Purgatory, commended his soul to God, Our Lady and all saints to mediate with the Trinity, to convey his soul 'immediately ... to that celestial place in the sight of Almighty God'.[30] Many testators, including Thomas Cock (d. 1544), acknowledged the king's new status as Supreme Head of the English church.[31] In keeping with Protestant preferences, some testators requested sermons rather than prayers for their souls, and in 1545 John Smyth left his soul to God, his 'maker and redeemer', with no money for forgotten tithes but five shillings to the parson of St Leonard's 'for preaching the Holy Gospel of our Saviour, Jesus Christ'.[32]

Many of the religious practices which had indicated personal levels of piety before 1530 were discredited or outlawed within 20 years. As well as casting doubt on the idea of Purgatory, Cromwell's *Injunctions* prohibited the veneration of saints' images and relics, use of candles and tapers except those required for lighting, and making pilgrimages to saints' shrines. Succeeding his father in 1547, the young king, Edward VI, took these measures further:

> *A regime of systematic iconoclasm was implemented. Orders were given to 'utterly extinct and destroy' images 'so that there remain no memory of the same'. Religious images were accordingly removed, defaced, whitewashed or obliterated to prevent people's engagement with them.*[33]

Despite Queen Mary's temporary reversal, these policies, combined with a further wave of destruction during the 1640s, changed forever the character and internal appearance of English parish churches. Townscapes were altered and lives affected by the demolition of religious houses. Colchester paid a heavy price, retaining only evocative remains of the once flourishing Abbey and Priory. Yet the town was also in the vanguard of religious reform, gaining an early reputation as a Protestant and increasingly Puritan town, within what was later known as 'the most strongly Protestant county in England'.[34]

It is hard to reconcile the Colchester thus described with the earlier ubiquity of apparently devout benefactors to the town's churches and monasteries. Very few early Tudor Colchester wills contained no religious bequests, and the majority of testators requested multiple prayers for their souls. Perhaps even those who may have felt sympathy with the Lollards or leanings towards proto-Protestantism preferred, at the last, to conform to religious expectation and make provision for their souls. There could be no gain to their heirs in offending the probate-granting church courts, or, if prayers could speed salvation, condemning their own souls to eternal damnation.

To many, the English Reformation was an appalling loss of religious comfort, art and architecture, tradition, security and 'the beauty of holiness'. It is hard to imagine the shock of those seeing familiar windows, wall-paintings, roods, statues and shrines savagely destroyed. Rich endowments paying for perpetual prayers and guaranteed salvation were swept away in widespread confiscations, leading to the greatest transfer of land and political power since 1066. But it also encouraged the freedom to read the Bible in English, think for oneself, worship as one wished and provide for one's family. Finally, men and women could learn to stand alone before their God, trusting in a Christian redemption for which no monetary payment was required.

Notes

1 Professor George W. Bernard, 2011, quoted at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dissolution_of_the_Monasteries (22/05/2021)

2 Williams, C. H., (ed.), *English Historical Documents* vol. v (1971) p. 805

3 http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol9/pp303-309#h3-0005 (22/05/21)

4 ERO, D/DCm F1/40

5 ERO, D/DCM F1/85.

6 ERO, D/DCM F1/80.

7 https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol2/pp84-102 (21/05/2021)

8 TNA PROB 11/8/494 PCC will of Sir Lawrence Reynforth.

9 ERO, D/DCm F1/58.

10 ERO, D/DCm F1/40.

11 ERO, D/DCm F1/63.

12 VCH Essex II p.93 https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol2/pp93-102 (02/09/2019).

13 ERO, D/DCm F1/76.

14 ERO, D/DCm F1/83.

15 W. J. White, 'The death and burial of Henry VI, Part II, The re-burial of Master John Schorne and King Henry VI: Windsor's two saints', *The Ricardian*, vol. vi, no. 79 (December 1982), pp.106-117.

16 Essex Views UK: Ulting, All Saints http://www.essexviews.uk/photos/Essex%20Churches/Essex%20Churches%20U-Z/slides/Ulting-Church-Essex-1.html (14/08/2019).

17 ERO, D/DCm F1/62.

18 ERO, D/DCm F1/62.

19 ERO, D/DCm F1/42.

20 ERO, D/DCm F1/91.

21 ERO, D/DCm F1/76.

22 TNA PROB 11/8/219 PCC will of John Elys.

23 ERO, D/ABW 8/1, will of William Clerke.

24 ERO, D/ABW 18/51, will of William Hubbert.

25 S. Badham, Seeking Salvation p. 238.

26 Higgs, Wills and Religious Mentality, p.91.

27 Tudor and Stuart Colchester p.122.

28 ERO, D/ABW 28/36.

29 ERO, D/ABW 23/24

30 ERO, D/ABW 25/46.

31 ERO, D/ABW 8/83.

32 ERO, D/ABW 33/126.

33 Tate Britain, *'Art under attack: centuries of British iconoclasm'*, (2014): https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/exhibition/art-under-attack-histories-british-iconoclasm (16/08/2019).

34 W. Hunt, *The Puritan Moment: The Coming of Revolution in an English County*, (Harvard, 1983) p.87.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Neil Wiffen for helpful conversations on this topic, and for drawing my attention to the excellent work of Laquita Higgs. Particularly, I thank Dr Heather Falvey of the Institute of Continuing Education, University of Cambridge, for introducing me to medieval wills, for reading this article and for continued inspiration and support over recent years. Thanks also are due to Dr Michael Leach for reading and commenting on this article, to the searchroom staff of Essex Record Office and to the digitisers who make so many wonderful documents easily accessible. Final thanks are due to the new editor of *Essex Journal*, Stephen Pollington.

The Author

Since retiring as a WEA tutor in English Literature and Local History, Sue Howlett has spent ten years researching the history of Mersea Island. As well as being part of an online project to transcribe fifteenth century wills from the PCC Milles Register, she works with a group meeting regularly at Mersea Museum to transcribe a selection of Mersea's Tudor and Stuart archives in the collections of Essex Record Office.

'Othona' revisited

Paul Gilman

The Spring 2020 issue of *EJ* carriedan article by Andrew Breeze "A Celtic-Roman Mystery: The Name Othona" which developed the proposition that the name Othona given for a Roman fort on the coast of Essex should be regarded as a misspelling of *Octona* with the meaning 'the remote place'. Breeze's article tackled both the linguistic and the archaeological evidence for the association with Bradwell-on-Sea and the famed chapel there.

General Comments

I can't comment on the philology in the paper other than to note that the apparent isolation of the site now may not have had a bearing on how it was perceived in the past. As the author acknowledges, in the past travel by sea was generally easier and quicker than by road. Therefore, places on the coast may not really have seemed to be all that remote.

I am more concerned about the apparent lack of consideration given to archaeological work in Essex over the past few decades and also to recent work on the Saxon Shore forts. This is shown by the dates of the sources mentioned in the references, those on Roman Britain being well out-of-date by now. The most recent review of the archaeology of Essex was published in 2012 and includes papers on both the Roman and Early Saxon periods. Since the appearance of Stephen Johnson's book on the Saxon Shore Forts (1976) there have been others, such as by Andrew Pearson (2002 and 2003). Whilst acknowledging that the focus of the *Essex Journal* paper is on the placename evidence, more up-to-date awareness of the archaeological background might have helped to refine the arguments presented about the site's location. I can understand the author wanting to emphasise the site's remoteness since this supports his central argument. However, a glance at more recent sources and readily available databases could have avoided incorrect and misleading and statements such as the one in the second column of page 12 about the relative emptiness of Roman Essex.

Specific Comments

Page 11: the role of the so-called Saxon Shore forts is still a matter for discussion and it has been suggested that, rather than being for the defence of the coasts,

they acted as fortified ports to safeguard the movement of goods into and, perhaps more importantly, out of the province. Incidentally, my understanding is that the *Notitia Dignitatum* was compiled in the 420s, not about 400, although presumably it drew on earlier material.

Page 11: I have looked at my copy of Bede and I can't find a statement that the King of the East Saxons gave the site to St Cedd.

Page 11: the site may appear now to be far from anywhere but archaeological excavation and survey (Medlycott 1994, Sparrow 2011, Wardill 2000) indicate that the fort was surrounded by an extensive extra-mural settlement, as at other forts such as Brancaster (*Branodunum*).

Page 11: it is surprising there is no mention of the garrison which, according to the *Notitia*, was the *Numerus Fortenses* a unit that may perhaps have been raised originally in North Africa.

Page 11: given that other Saxon Shore forts also appear quite isolated what in particular about the site of *Othona* could have resulted in attention being drawn to its situation? Landscape study based on a borehole survey and aerial photography suggests that the fort was originally sited on a low promontory with saltmarsh and tidal creeks on three sides. This would have made the fort very defensible and difficult to capture, and perhaps this was reflected in the name?

Page 12: 550 seems a very late date for Anglo-Saxon settlement of the region and I have not come across this in recent sources.

Page 12: the statement that Essex is relatively empty of Roman finds is out-of-date, as shown by the map in Medlycott and Atkinson (2012). This includes a cluster of finds around *Othona*. A search for Roman sites and finds from Essex on the Heritage Gateway retrieved many records. The author mentions the OS map of Roman Britain but refers to the 1956 edition whereas my own copy is the 2001 edition and the current edition is from 2016. In discussing the site's location, the author quotes from Geoffrey Grigson's 'Ythancaestir and the North Sea'. I am sure Grigson was a fine poet and writer but am not sure that he was an authority about Late Roman and Early Saxon Essex. His mention of 'dull black forests which then occupied the London Clay' seems to be contradicted by archaeological evidence for clearance of woodland in the Roman period (Medlycott and Atkinson 2012).

Finds of 'Romano-Saxon' pottery are taken to suggest the presence of Germanic warriors. However, it is no longer thought that this pottery was made for Germanic people. Indeed, by the end of the 1970s it had been shown that this pottery was made for the Romano-British population (https://quod.lib.umich.edu/f/frag/9772151.0005.001/--perils-of-periodization-roman-ceramics-in-britain-after-400?rgn=main;view=fulltext). It is again surprising in this context that the name of the garrison from the *Notitia* is not discussed. [The term is now avoided in archaeological discourse. – *Editor*]

Another OS map, this time for the Dark Ages, is cited as evidence that the county is poor in finds for the Anglo-Saxons. But the map dates from 1966 and there have been many discoveries since then, as demonstrated by the Essex Historic Environment Record and the Portable Antiquities Database.

Page 13: the discussion of the name *Othona* referring to a place difficult to attack might benefit from the topographical evidence mentioned above. The author mentions Peter Salway and Stephen Johnson's research, citing Salway's work on Roman Britain published in 1981. However, there have been other works published since then on the Saxon Shore Forts in general and also excavation reports for work at Othona (Medlycott 1994, Sparrow 2011). It is interesting to see the mention of the church as possibly being built in the Kentish style. It has been suggested indeed that St Peter's Chapel was not built by Cedd and post-dates his ministry in Essex. The expression of doubt that the Bradwell region was not known for cattle rearing is ironical in view of the archaeological discovery in 2009 of evidence for the slaughter of cattle north of the fort (Sparrow 2011).

Page 14: the mention of 'headland' may be relevant since it seems that the fort was originally sited on a peninsula (see above).

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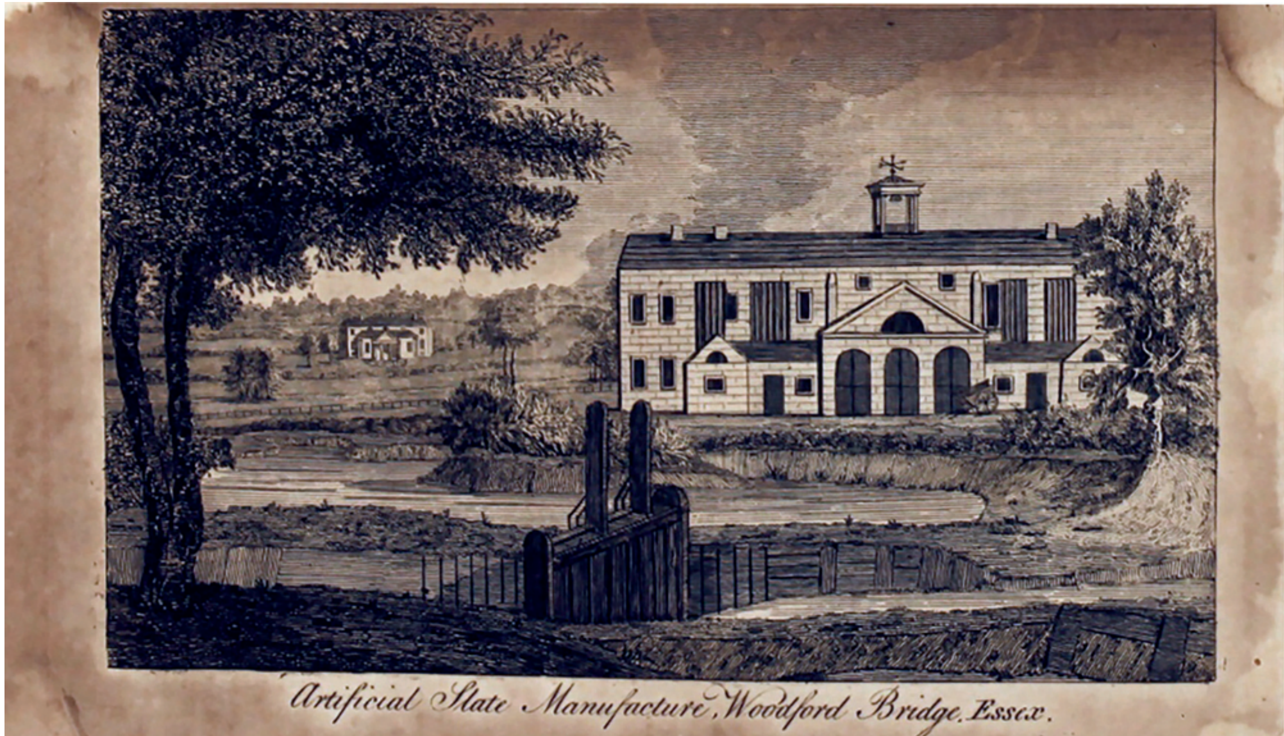
Editor's note: Dr. Breeze saw a draft of Paul Gilman's paper and was happy to note that his article produced a response. Regarding the reference to St. Cedd, he states: On the site as a royal gift to St Cedd, see J. M. Wallace-Hadrill's commentary on Bede (Oxford, 1988), p. 119, citing books by James Campbell and Charles Thomas. As for the rest, "let a hundred flowers blossom". Any discussion of the archaeological background to Bradwell must be good.

Sir James Wright and the artificial slate factory at Woodford Bridge, Essex

Michael Leach



Henry Cook, a Norwich papermaker, acquired the watermill at Stoke Holy Cross in 1767 and within a few years was making an artificial slate, for 'covering churches, houses and other buildings.' This comprised a mixture of litharge, red lead, chalk, stone, black flint, brick dust, sand, and ground glass, bound together with old rope which had been reduced to a pulp, and formed into suitable flat sheets. The mill was completely destroyed by fire in January 1776 and Cook was anxious to deny rumours that his artificial slate had been a contributory factor in the blaze. Undaunted, he rebuilt the mill and advertised it for sale or let in September 1778[1]. Though an agent in Norwich was selling the artificial slate in July 1780, this could have been old stock and it is not clear whether Cook resumed manufacturing his product at Stoke Holy Cross. He did not obtain a patent for his process until June 1779, and sold it soon after.[2]

Cook's patent was acquired in that year by Sir James Wright (1717-1804), a retired diplomat who had served in Venice. The manufacture of the slates was transferred to purpose-built premises at the southern end of his Woodford Bridge estate in Essex and was claimed to incorporate improvements, including the addition of a 'Venetian' ingredient which was noxious to vermin. In 1780 the engineer John Smeaton (1724-1792) was commissioned to design a waterwheel and the necessary modifications to the adjoining River Roding, though it is evident from later evidence that this was never constructed.[3] It is not known when production of slates commenced at Woodford Bridge, but by 1782 he was paying parish rates on the manufactory, and in May of that year samples of the slate and Sir James's promotional pamphlet were exhibited at the Bristol Agriculture Society's AGM. In spite of this, his eye seems to have been almost entirely on export, as his pamphlet was addressed to "West-India Gentlemen" and it was not until the autumn of 1787 that use of the artificial slate was actively promoted in England. According to the newspaper advertisements, constant demand from overseas had made it impossible to supply the home market until 'there was time to erect an additional set of works' – presumably a recent extension of the factory at Woodford Bridge.[4] It is not clear who managed the day-to-day running of the factory, or whether Henry Cook retained any involvement after he had sold the patent to Sir James.

It might seem surprising that, from the outset, the main output from the factory was destined for export. Through his marriage Sir James had acquired an interest in the Stapleton sugar plantation on St Kitts and this must have given him an insight into a problem that had recently arisen in the West Indies. Wooden shingles were the usual roofing material used there, but these were in short supply due to the American War of Independence. Another disadvantage of shingles was their short life in the tropics and their vulnerability to fire. These factors probably encouraged Sir James to

promote his artificial slate as this had been shown to be fireproof, as well as promising a longer life than wooden shingles. The artificial slates were much lighter (and therefore cheaper to ship) than conventional roof coverings such as natural slate or plain tiles. Sir James's pamphlet shows that the logistics for their export (as well as the instructions for their installation) had been thought out in considerable detail, though there is nothing to indicate whether the necessary expertise came from the baronet himself, or from hired help, or an unidentified partnership. Even the wooden cases in which they were shipped could be broken down and re-used for boarding under the slates. [5]

The artificial slates, measuring about 24 by 15 inches, were a similar size to the largest natural slate (the 'empress') and provided a much lighter roof at considerably lower overall cost than either pantiles or plain tiles. Sir James demonstrated his faith in his material by using it on his own house at Woodbridge (Ray House), and on a house which he built for his son in the grounds (Ray Lodge). It was also used on the factory itself and an engraving published in 1796 shows that the external walls were hung with this material.[6] The only other Essex sites recorded were 'Mr Wolf's house in Saffron Walden' which was fronted with the artificial slates, and Weald Hall near Brentwood where they were fitted internally behind panelling as a precaution against dry rot, another recommended use for the product. As well as making slates, the basic material could be formed into pipes and guttering with machinery invented by 'the ingenious Mr Smeaton'[7].

It seems probable that the formulation was similar to Cook's original patent, though this provided no clues to how the mineral and fibrous materials were bound together. Under Wright's manufacture, concerns about the cost of linseed oil show that it must have been a significant ingredient for hardening the mineral and fibrous constituents. He also referred to the need for the slates to 'cure' or harden before use which would be compatible with the use of oil as a binding agent. Their long-term durability was never proven and the need to apply a coat of metallic paint every four years must have been a considerable disadvantage over a conventional roof. There was a further practical disadvantage as the artificial slates relied on a one inch overlap at the edges, sealed with a thin fillet of cement which must surely have been prone to failure and rain penetration.[8] Though there was a flurry of promotional activity in 1796-7, particularly in promoting its use on hay stacks and for resisting the incursions of rodents in farmyard storage, the business had closed by April 1800 when the premises were advertised to let. Sir James's will, written in 1802, indicates that he had already settled his Woodford estate, presumably including the manufactory, on his son George on his marriage in 1796.[9] George was already in debt and was to sell the whole Woodford estate in 1803. It is not clear why the business had failed three years earlier, but the topographer Thomas Cromwell noted in 1819 that the slate manufactory had failed to meet 'with the encouragement that it deserved'. Perhaps the potential defects of the roof material had become apparent, or exports to the West Indies had been seriously hit by the Napoleonic War.[10]

Press notices seeking a tenant for the premises in 1800 give some idea of the scale of the factory. As well as a dwelling house with stabling for the six horses which provided the motive power, there was a small corn mill, a 'lavigating' mill, a starch and flatting mill, two large boilers, two large oak presses and screws, a paper engine, and a horizontal horse wheel (claimed to be the largest in England). The advertisement noted that an incoming tenant would be at liberty to install the waterwheel which had been designed by 'the ingenious Mr Smeaton'. The 'lavigating' (or levigating) mill would have been used to grind the hard mineral components with water into a smooth creamy paste. This would have been combined with oil and rope or paper fibre, compressed into flat sheets and left to harden, possibly with the assistance of heat.[11] The advertisement implies that the business had already closed. It would seem that no new tenant was found and the premises were subsequently demolished, though a small building shown on the tithe apportionment map, close to a small bridge over the River Roding, may represent the dwelling house associated with the manufactory. [12]

The exact formula of Sir James's artificial slate is lost but a remarkably similar slate was being manufactured in Russia. This involved grinding up chalk and bolar earth, adding glue and paper pulp and then beating the mix with linseed oil before spreading a thin layer on an appropriate shaped former with a raised edge. When dry, each slate was passed through a rolling mill, and pressed and finished with a coat of drying oil. [13]

Sir James died in March 1804 at the Bathford home of his son George, who then inherited the baronetcy. In May 1803, when the Woodford estate was offered for auction, both Ray House and Ray Lodge were let to tenants. However, two years later, Sir George continued his father's interest in manufacturing by patenting a process for cutting pipes and columns from solid stone, using steam power. The pipes were claimed to be half the cost of lead or cast iron. Initially based in Charles Street, London, the main works was later built adjacent to a stone quarry in Guiting Power in the Cotswolds and, at its peak, it is claimed to have produced the astonishing volume of 30 tons of pipe a day. A similar undertaking was set up in North Strand, Dublin in 1806 using the local stone, though this business was very short lived and was put up for sale shortly before Sir George's death in December 1809 when he was living in Oakingham, Berkshire. His three executors were very tardy in proving his will, perhaps because of his debts or complications with his business affairs. The third executor finally applied in March 1825, nearly 16 years after Sir George's death. Even then there were unexplained problems, and his financial affairs were only finally wound up by the Court of Chancery in 1837. In spite of these problems, the stone manufacture at Guiting Power was not closed until 1817, following serious failures of the pipework supplied for Manchester's water supply, an enterprise for which Sir George and others had obtained the necessary Act of

Parliament in 1809. The oolitic limestone proved to be porous, and was also prone to burst under mains water pressure. Stone pipes were swiftly superseded by the much more reliable cast iron ones which were provided economically by a newly developed technology. [14]

Though the artificial slate business had closed down by 1800, this was not the end of experiments with alternative roof coverings. The architect, John Buonarotti Papworth (1775-1847) who had acted as site architect for the improvements at Ray Lodge on the Woodford Bridge estate in 1796, acknowledged that he was familiar with Sir James's artificial slate business with which he may have had some practical or financial involvement. He understood the need for a cheap, light form of roof covering for outbuildings. Writing in 1832, he recommended dipping sheets of paper into boiling tar, nailing them onto laths or boards on lightweight roofs, and painting the whole with pitch, mixed with coal dust, chalk or brick dust to provide a protective and decorative finish. This technique was not dissimilar to the treatment recommended for Wright's artificial slates, and suggests that Papworth might have adopted his idea. It was a possible precursor of the modern roofing felt shingle which was manufactured industrially from the early years of the twentieth century.[15]

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St James Chronicle, 1-3 April 1800, advertisement to let former artificial slate manufactory

(Wright, Sir J), 1796a *Observations upon … preserving wheat & other grain from vermin*, London

(Wright, Sir J), ?1783 & ?1796b *Patent Artificial Slate Manufactory at Woodford Bridge*, printed anonymously & privately

www.norfolkmills.co.uk (accessed 01/02/2021)

1. *Norfolk Chronicle*, 8/7/1780
2. www.norfolkmills.co.uk/Watermills/stoke-holy-cross-history.html accessed 28/3/2021: *Norfolk Chronicle,* 8 July 1780.
3. Royal Society Archives: SMEATON/VOLUMEONE/ folio 39v&40 (ground plan of water-wheel & conduit together with flood-gates &c for the artificial slate manufactory near Woodford Bridge. Signed 1780: *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal,* 18 May 1782: *Morning Chronicle*, 19 Sept 1787, 11 July 1788: *St James Chronicle,* 1-3 April 1800. [Editor's note: This is the same John Smeaton who replaced the second Edystone Lighthouse, and received the Royal Society's Copley Medal for his 1759 paper *An Experimental Enquiry Concerning the Natural Powers of Water and Wind to Turn Mills*.]
4. ERO D/DP 167/11/1
5. www.ucl/ac/lbs/person/view/2146647791 (accessed 12/4/2021): *Morning Chronicle,* 2/1/1822 (sale of one eight part of Stapleton Estate): Anon, ?1783. *Patent Artificial Slate Manufacturing …*, pp. 3-5 et seq.
6. ERO D/DU 1578/1, p.74-5, grangerised copy of Ogborne's *History of Essex*
7. *Patent Artificial Slate Manufactory, Woodford Bridge,* 1796
8. It is the 1783 edition of *Patent Artificial Slate* which refers to the cost of the linseed oil ingredient

   Later commentators suggested that the relatively short life of the slate was the reason for the failure of the business.
9. for example, *St James Chronicle,* 16-18 May 1797; (Wright, Sir J)` 1796a; Sir James Wright's will PCC will PROB 11/1406/209, proved 17 March 1804.
10. Sale catalogue of Ray House & Ray Lodge, 1803, ERO D/DU 357/14; Cromwell, T, 1819 *Excursions in the County of Essex*, ii, London, p.55
11. advertisement for tenant, *St James Chronicle,* 1-3 April 1800, *True Briton,* 3 April 1800;
12. Woodford tithe map ERO D/CT 408B
13. *Enniskillen Chronicle,* 2 June 1828
14. Upper Windrush Local History Society website www.uw/hs-uk/pri_spc.html accessed 23/05/2021; VCH Essex, vi, pp.348-351; *Saunders News-Letter*,28 Nov 1809; *Morning Chronicle*, 19 March 1812; *Berkshire Chronicle*, 25 Nov 1837; Prosser R B, 1910 'Some Essex Inventors' in *Essex Review*, xix, pp.113-4; PCC will PROB 11/1539/49.
15. Papworth, J B, 1832 *Rural Residences*, London, p.36

A Thameside mission priest

Frederick Haslock at Grays 1886-1906

Brian Buxton

PART I

Frederick Haslock had been an unlikely candidate for ordination, having no higher education and coming from a humble family. However, by his arrival at Grays in 1886 he had behind him over twenty years experience of ministering in London's dockland, together with a reputation as a hard worker.

This was a time when the Church of England, with its ideal of a church building and a minister in every community, was being challenged by ever-growing urbanisation. In London the spread of docks and industry along the river frontage and out into Essex was an example of this situation. These areas were often centres of poverty, posing a further challenge to the church as to how to serve and to preach the gospel to a hungry people. The Church desperately tried to replicate the old parochial system through the creation of new mission districts and parishes, but many clergy realised that they could not operate these as if in some imagined arcadian past. Frederick Haslock was one of these.

From India to Millwall

Haslock was born on the 20th August 1836 at Arnee in southern India, the first child of David Haslock and Christiana (*née* Kerr). His father was serving in the 41st Regiment of Foot. Wounded in Afghanistan, David returned to England, obtained discharge from the army with a good service record and a pension, and took the family back to his home town of Stourbridge, Worcestershire.[1]

Christiana died in 1857 and David re-married. However, the 1861 census shows that Frederick had moved from the family home to the neighbouring village of Amblecote, a centre of glass making, and he gave his occupation as Scripture Reader, a role through which full-time lay service could be given to the church.

At Amblecote Frederick met Hannah Ladbury, a near neighbour, and the couple married in 1863. Almost immediately they moved to the very different area of London's dockland: Wellclose Square, close by London Docks and with a mixture of industrial and residential occupation, was probably their home for some of the following years.

Frederick continued to work as a Scripture Reader. In 1870 he was a witness representing the Sailors' Home in nearby Well Street in a minor theft case which suggests his work was based there. [2]This hostel provided about 150 beds, meals, and a range of other services, as well as a daily programme of worship. It aimed to help sailors avoid drink, prostitution and other forms of exploitation whilst in port. [3]

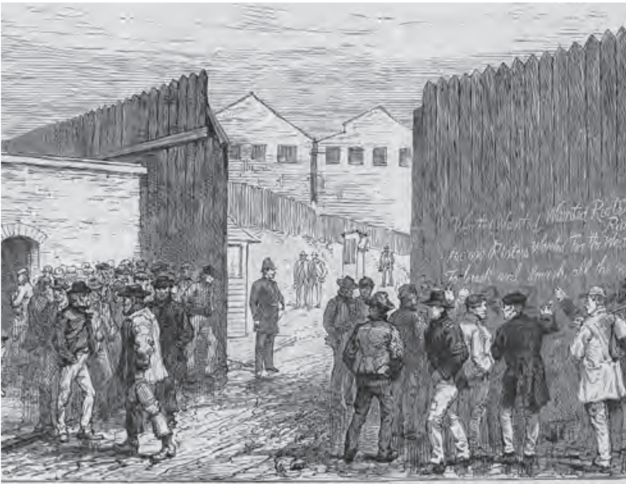
Sailors' Home in Well Street

By now Frederick was in his mid-thirties with a decade or more of experience as a Scripture Reader. Presumably it was this which persuaded the bishop of London that he was a fit candidate to be made a deacon in 1872 and so enter more fully into the ministry. This was despite the fact that both then, and when he was ordained

priest in 1879, he was the only candidate without either a degree or record of study at a theological college. Neither did he have any influential family contacts. He represented a slow move in the Church of England towards a willingness to consider candidates without the academic or social backgrounds which had been expected of clergy in Victorian England.[4]

He remained in the same neighbourhood, becoming curate of St. Matthew, Pell Street under the second vicar of that parish, John Mortier Fidler.[5] After three years there it was said of him that he 'laboured as curate with unflagging zeal and devotion'.[6]

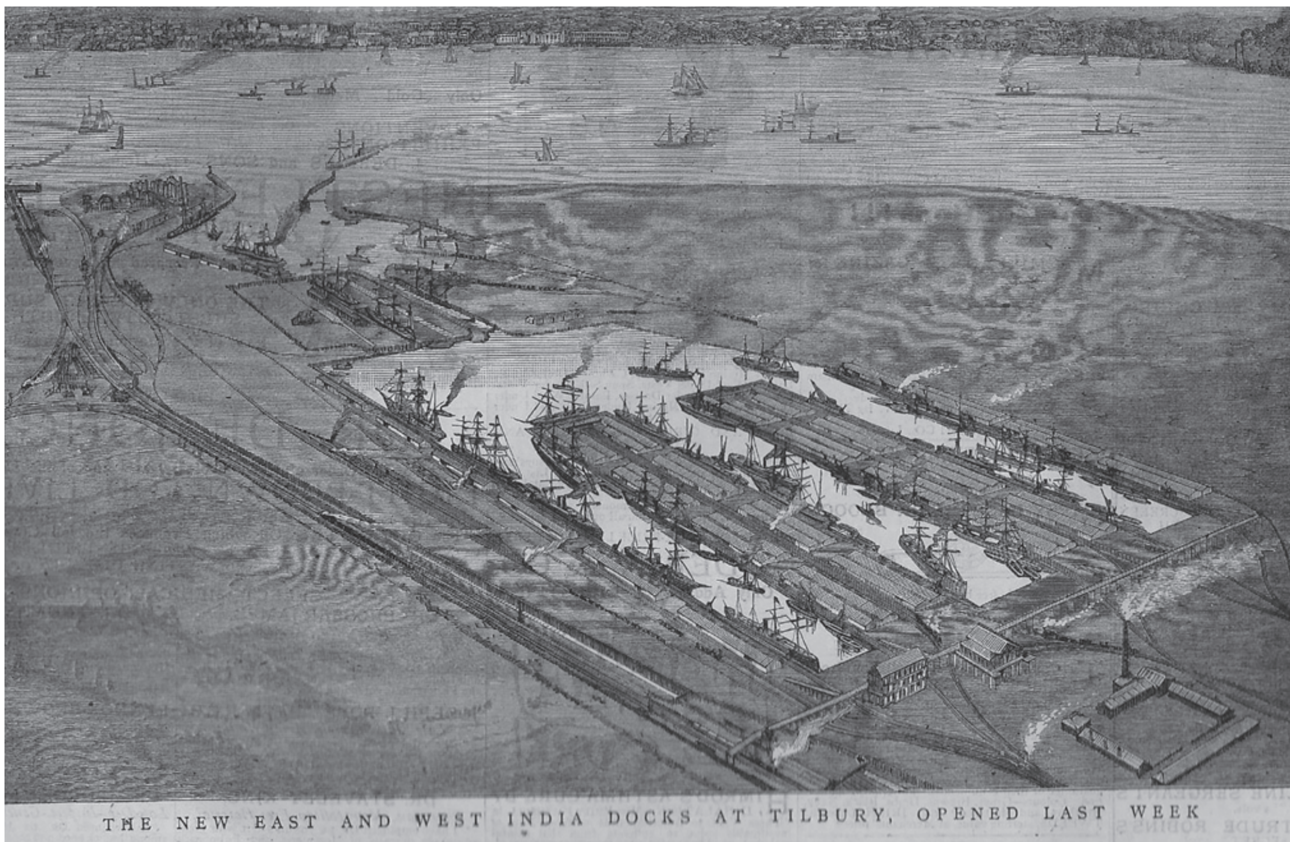
Corner property 1 Arthur Street. The shop area was the Mission Room with Haslock's living accommodation above. Image from Google Street View.



Men waiting for work at the West India Docks. Illustrated London News 20/02/1886. Author's collection.

Main dock contruction at Tilbury. Cassells Family Magazine 1886 p.221. Author's collection.

Map of Grays Thurrock 1897 with an oval marking the Grove Mission District. Image from https://oldtowns.co.uk.



View of Tilbury docks as at its opening. The Graphic 24/04/1886. Author's collection.

In 1875 he moved a short distance to a curacy at St. Luke's, Millwall, on the Isle of Dogs, under its first vicar, Jesse Hewlett. St Luke's, like St. Matthew's, was a new parish created to serve the expanding dockland. It was bounded by the West India (1802) and recently built Millwall Docks (1868) on three sides and the Thames to the west. A newspaper report two years later suggested that this appointment was specifically so that he could work with the vast number of sailors constantly through the docks and river. It reckoned that almost two thousand visits had been made to ships in the previous year, with portable libraries having been offered for the use of crews on long voyages. [7]More generally, many of the ways in which this parish was worked gave Haslock experience and ideas which he later used in Grays. [8]

Whilst in Millwall he was ordained priest. Perhaps it was his lack of formal qualifications which had made this so long delayed. [9]

A Family Man

During the years in East London Frederick Haslock also had a family life, but possibly one that had its difficulties. After his marriage to Hannah Ladbury in 1863 the couple appear to have had five children in quick succession, of whom only two definitely survived to adulthood. Whilst this was not unusual in that period it must still have been an upsetting experience. Whether Hannah had health issues, possibly resulting from serial pregnancies, almost one a year and then loss of children, can only be surmised but census returns of 1871 and 1891 show her living with family members on the south coast apart from Frederick. The returns for 1881 show her with Frederick in Millwall but also with a 'companion', a Louisa Nelson, which might suggest a need for some type of support. Looking ahead, it was whilst living with their eldest son on the Isle of Wight in 1892 that Hannah died and in 1895 Frederick Haslock and Louisa Nelson were married in London. [10]

...And so to Grays

In 1885 Haslock moved to a curacy in Grays Thurrock where a plan was discussed for him to lead a new work in the east end of the town. Details took time to resolve and for a few months he served as curate in Chiswick. However, by late 1886 the vicar of Grays, the Rev. R.H.Brenan, invited him back to the town as a mission priest.

The area in which he was to work lay between the older riverside town of Grays Thurrock with its active wharves to the west and rural Little Thurrock to the east. To the north, and slightly overlapping the area, had been brickfields where the existence of blue clay had created a major source of employment. Just to the south the docks at Tilbury had been opened only months before Haslock arrived. In this area significant housing development had recently taken place where previously had been a few isolated dwellings. A grid of roads with long stretches of 4-6 room terrace cottages arose, much as still seen today.[11] This area was to be known as The Grove Mission District.

This development was mirrored in many areas of the St. Alban's diocese on the borders of London,[12] and

had led the bishop to establish a fund towards the provision of ministers and buildings.[13] A grant from the fund was to pay £200.00 towards the salary of the new mission priest and a contribution towards employing a Scripture Reader.

Arriving in November 1886 Haslock had to find a base from which to operate, for he had no church building or vicarage. He found a vacant shop, with living accommodation above, on the corner of Arthur Street and Gipsy Lane, and on Sunday 5th December he held the first services there. He made an appeal for help towards suitably furnishing the room. If more could be raised it would go to help the extreme sick and poor. He had no funds at his disposal for this purpose. He had visited nearly 400 homes in the district over the previous five weeks and had seen what a challenge he faced. The situation he found was as bad as anything he had seen in East London. 'I find here great poverty, great distress, and irreligion'.[14] This was despite new housing and proximity to the countryside.

The First Winter

Haslock was always happy to use newspapers when publicity could advance the causes that concerned him. Early in 1887 he took a reporter from the *Essex Times* around the district, calling into several homes. The result was a report in that newspaper headed : *'THE DISTRESS IN GRAYS: APPALLING SCENES'*. [15]

The article gave a vivid picture of the neighbourhood. The reporter had been shocked by the state of the streets. Deep mud was everywhere.[16] He was not surprised that many parents failed to send their children to school, a walk of a mile. In any case children were often in no fit state to attend school for 'hundreds…have scarcely bread to eat or clothes to wear'.[17] In numerous homes furniture and clothes had been sold or pawned to buy bread. Many slept on the floor or on beds of straw. Instances were given, a family with nine children 'all pinched with hunger and clothed in rags', a man who had walked to Lancashire and back looking for work, a family with five children with earnings of 22s in six weeks all of which was owed in rent.

The account provoked strong reactions. Many shared the reporter's shock and were happy to donate to alleviate the distress or to work through the church and other institutions to provide soup, meals and clothing. In this period there was much debate as to how to ensure that emergency help was given in a responsible and fair manner. In Grays it seems that Haslock was already seen as the right person to ensure the just distribution of relief as being familiar with the really deserving cases.[18]

Others rejected the reports of great distress as untrue or, if true, the moral failure of the victims. Reflecting on that winter, Haslock spoke of the numerous abusive letters he received but he believed that some 200 families had been kept from starvation by the combined efforts of the mission and others. He agreed that some could do more to help themselves but saw no reason why children should be allowed to suffer for the weaknesses of their parents.[19]

The conditions exposed by the *Essex Times* were hardly surprising. That winter fell in the midst of a long period of economic depression. Locally this was reflected in the situation at Tilbury where the great hopes at the opening of the new docks in April were soon dashed as they failed to attract the expected business.[20] Work was on a casual basis, meaning daily queueing at the dock gate in the hope of a few hours work, and pay was only 4d a day (compared to between 5d and 8d for local bricklayers). Tilbury was to be the scene of industrial action a year before the Great Dock Strike of 1889 when, again, local newspapers drew attention to reports of families in desperate conditions.

The poor were an ever present reality in these years and clergy such as Frederick Haslock could have spent all their time trying to alleviate distress. What they did was a recognition both that it was the least that Christian charity demanded and that they could not expect the destitute to take any interest in worship or other church activities so long as they had empty stomachs.

Despite these demands Haslock was also working out his wider role. Here his immediate concern was to obtain a building for worship. Fortunately help was at hand.

HELP THE POOR in the most effectual manner by sending new and cast-off clothing, boots, books, pictures, toys, carpets, musical instruments, jewellery, curtains, furniture, etc., etc., to the Rev. F. Haslock, who sells them at low prices, at jumble sales, to those in need. The sales are held at frequent intervals, for the benefit of the poor (700 in number), of All Saints Mission District, Grays, Essex. All parcels will be acknowledged if name and address of the sender are inside. Nothing is too much worn or dilapidated.

Appeal frequently published in To-Day*, a general interest magazine, which Frederick Haslock endorsed in 1895.*

Notes

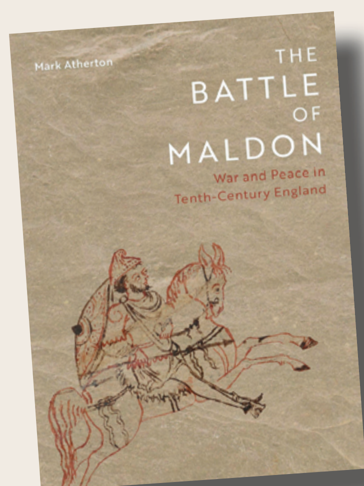
1. Genealogical information used in this article – military records, census returns, birth, marriage and death registrations – were accessed through www.findmypast.co.uk.
2. *MA* (*Morning Advertiser*) 12/09/1870. Newspaper quotations in this article were accessed at www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk unless otherwise noted.
3. Features of this hostel survive in Wombat's City Hostel, Dock Street, E1.
4. LMA (London Metropolitan Archives) DL/A/B/004/MS10326/304 for ordination papers. A testimonial of character was signed by the rectors of Spitalfields and Whitechapel, and the vicar of St. Benet's, Stepney. Owen Chadwick *The Victorian Church Part II* (A&C Black 1970 2nd. Ed. 1972) pp. 243-251 for an overview of urban ministry at this time.
5. St. Matthew's had been carved out of the parish of St. George's in the East. By the late 19th century it was proving surplus to requirements and the building was eventually demolished just before WWII. See also note 31.
6. *ELO* (*East London Observer*) 05/06/1875.
7. *ELO* 29/12/1877.
8. St. Luke's had been carved out of the parish of Christchurch, Isle of Dogs, which itself had been taken from the parish of All Saints, Poplar. The church was largely destroyed by bombing in WWII and was later replaced with a more contemporary facility. David Coleman, Eve Hostettler and others *The Anglican Church on the Isle of Dogs* (*Island History Project 1984*) p.18ff.
9. LMA DL/A/B/004/MS10326/334 for ordination papers. A testimonial of character was signed by the rectors of Poplar and Stepney, and the vicar of St. Luke's, Millwall.
10. Two children definitely made adulthood. Curiously, Annie has not been found recorded in any census after 1871 until 1911. She attended the funerals of her brother, Frederick George, and father, Frederick, both in the autumn of 1906. She then appeared in subsequent census returns, first as Principal of a home for ladies in Southend, Essex, and later of a similar establishment in Staines, Middlesex, where she died in 1947.

    Frederick George obtained a degree at Cambridge, was a private tutor and then was ordained. He died a few weeks before his father following an operation for appendicitis. The sick father was not told of his son's death *BEH&I* (*Barking, East Ham & Ilford Advertiser*) 06/10/1906.
11. 'Parishes: Grays Thurrock', in *A History of the County of Essex: Volume 8*, ed. W R Powell, Beryl A Board, Nancy Briggs, J L Fisher, Vanessa A Harding, Joan Hasler, Norma Knight and Margaret Parsons (London, 1983), pp. 35-56. *British History Online* http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol8/pp35-56 [accessed 1 February 2021].
12. Historically Essex was in the Diocese of London. In 1845 it became part of Rochester diocese. In 1877 it was incorporated in the new diocese of St. Alban's. The diocese of Chelmsford was not created until 1914.
13. *Bishop of St. Alban's Fund: A Memorandum* (1891). A copy of this booklet was in a pack of material donated to All Saints by a member of the Seabrooke family which included other items from Haslock's time.The present author saw this material in 1976, and also photographs of former clergy including two of Haslock. It has not been possible to discover what happened to this when the church was made redundant in the mid-80s. Fortunately a typed copy of this booklet was kept, and of two others (see note 25).
14. *ET* (*The Essex Times*) 11/12/1886. *The Essex Times* was consulted at the British Library.
15. *ET* 29/01/1887. Also *ET* 12/02/1887.
16. Seemingly the behaviour of some residents did not help the situation as indicated by a later note in the minutes of the Grays Thurrock Local Board of 24/01/1889 & reported in G&TG (*Grays & Tilbury Gazette and Southend Telegaph*) 26/01/1889 : 'It was ordered that public notice be issued cautioning persons throwing dirty water and refuse upon the footpaths and roads and especially against depositing foul or liquid matter in the Board's gulleys'.
17. ERO (Essex Record Office) E/ML 206/2. The log book of Arthur Street School (Girls) for 06/02/1889 records : 'Many children staying at home because they have no boots'.
18. *ET* 26/02/1887 & *ET* 12/03/1887. .
19. *ET* 20/08/1887. For issues and opinions about addressing distress in this period see, for example, George R. Boyer *The Winding Road to the Welfare State* (Princeton University Press 2019) pp. 68/70/76-82 and Gareth Stedman Jones *Outcast London* (1971 Verso ed. 2013) Part III.
20. John Pudney London Docks (Thames and Hudson 1975) pp.100-105. Stedman Jones pp.117/118.

Book Review

Mark Atherton

The Battle of Maldon. War and Peace in Tenth Century England.



239 pp, maps, monochrome photographs. Bloomsbury Academic Publishing, London, 2021

ISBN 978-1-350-13403-4 card covers £ 21.99 Hardback £69.00

The 11th century manuscript in which the poem we now call "The Battle of Maldon" was written down was already damaged and only partly present when Sir Robert Cotton brought it into his library at Ashburnham House, London in the early 18th century. The disastrous fire of 1731 which destroyed a large part of Cotton's library would have erased all memory of the manuscript and the poem had a transcript not already been made. Fortunately generations of students of the English language have recognised the artistic merit and philological interest of the verse, as well as the historical importance of the events it records. We are not so well provided with Old English records of any kind – much less momentous Essex events retold in heroic verse – that we should disregard the testimony of a poet who may well have known personally some of the characters named in the poem.

There have been several modern editions of the text, and it features in almost every compendium of Old English literature – whether in the original or translated into modern English. It is not therefore a 'minor' poem, nor in any sense a disregarded one. Indeed, whole books have been filled with scholarly essays debating its various historical and linguistic points of interest. One of these is Janet Cooper's *The Battle of Maldon: Fiction and Fact* published in 1993, compiling a number of papers given at a conference reflecting on the events of 991 AD and their aftermath. The famous Anglo-Saxonist JRR Tolkien made some contributions to 20th century scholarship on the text, and produced an original tale from it: *The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthelm's Son*.

What then is the value of yet another version of the poem, given that no sensational new relevant information has come to light in 30 years? Atherton frames his approach in terms of both the military aspects of the story, and the ramifications of the battle's outcome. For those who do not know, the defeat of the English and the death of their leader (Ealdorman Byrhtnoth, one of the king's closest advisers) resulted in the English having to hand over a large sum of money to be rid of the Vikings. As Kipling noted more recently "And that is called paying the Dane-geld; But we've proved it again and again, That if once you have paid him the Dane-geld You never get rid of the Dane." And so it turned out.

Rather than just a dry edited version of the text and a facing-page translation, the present book places chunks of the Old English and Modern English alternately on the page so that the reader can follow the 'action' and experience the Old English at the same time. The original poem has the great advantage of a simple narrative path with few of the flashbacks and digressions that are found in elsewhere in OE verse. The word-order is quite intuitive too: Maldon is a good place to start exploring OE poetry. Atherton's text plays to these strengths without in any way oversimplifying the original or fudging the translation.

But what interest does this hold for miserable non-OE speakers? What else is there to recommend this book to us? The author offers chapters on aspects of the battle and its implications, as well as looking at the context of the English leader who had been a strong advocate of the Benedictine Reform – which likely affected his reputation. Other topics include battlefield tactics, legal disputes, the role of Thane's Guilds, the importance of kindred and much else, all discussed citing period sources in the original language and in translation. Wills and other relevant supporting documents broaden the focus away from warfare to the human lives of those involved.

Monochrome photos (Chelsworth, Maldon hythe, a re-enactment shieldwall, the tomb in Ely cathedral, etc.) add visual interest. Manuscript pages with illustrations show (near-)contemporary views of daily life. Six maps help to situate the various places mentioned. The photographs and manuscripts are unfortunately poorly reproduced in anodyne grey, which detracts from their usefulness. The text is set in a sans-serif typeface which gives it a pleasing clarity.

In all, this book is a good place to start for the student, military enthusiast or local historian looking for a grounding in the background to the text, the characters and the economic context, as well as the problems of working with a medieval text that survives only in one transcription made centuries after the original. Having read it closely, the student should be able to tackle the denser academic essays in Cooper's work or Scragg's edition. The paperback edition is cheap enough to win a place on the bookshelf of any serious Essex historian.

Steve Pollington

Rare Medieval Brooch

A rare and unusual brooch was recorded with the PAS recently, a nummular brooch made by soldering a hinged pin and catch to one face of a coin.

The coin itself is a silver penny issued by Ethelred II, dating to 1009 AD (North no.776) or, more accurately, it is a Scandinavian copy of the type. It features a lamb advancing with a banner, the so-called 'Agnus Dei' (Lamb of God) on the obverse with an illegible inscription. The reverse shows a dove in flight among quatrefoils and crosses. The surfaces have been gilded.

This coin issue seems to have invited modification to jewellery since many of the known examples have been turned into pendants, a common practice in the Viking period when coinage was still largely regarded as bullion. Nummular brooches appear to have become fashionable under Edward the Confessor (1042-66) and have remained in use into the reign of William I (1066-87).

Perhaps the coin's imagery had some special significance to Scandinavians, especially since so many were copied in either Lund or Sigtuna, Sweden. They can usually be identified by the 'bungled' legends which are the result of the copier not fully understanding what the letters meant. A large part of the legend on the brooch is missing because the coin's edge is nicked and damaged.

The brooch was found in Essex (findspot undisclosed) in the 1980s and has only recently been reported. The PAS reference is LON-902122.

A gold Angel coin of Henry VII (1485-1509)
found in the Saffron Walden area,
November 2021.

The angel was an English coin, based on the French *angelot*.
The name is taken from its image of the archangel
Michael slaying a dragon on the obverse