

Colchester Archaeological Group



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Colchester Archaeological Group

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Committee 2008-9

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Mr B Colbron, Mr G M R Davies, Mrs D Hardy, Mr D. Harrison, Mr C Hunt, Mrs A Moore, Mr A White, Mr P Cunningham (co-opted).

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Don Goodman, Chairman CAG

We have again enjoyed another highly successful year for the group, with all events, lectures, and trips being well attended and membership being around 158. It gives me great pleasure to report this and it reflects how well the officers and committee have worked together to make Colchester Archaeological Group one of the most active and highly respected archaeology groups in the country.

The CAG archaeological excavation of a possible Tudor Hunting Lodge and associated well at Lodge Hills, Wormingford has attracted great interest locally. It has given us much pleasure to be able to involve the community by giving tours of the site and school educational visits. We have also given a number of presentations about the excavations to WEA groups and historical societies. We also had a wonderful training day at the site for Colchester Young Archaeologists' Club organized by Pat Brown, all of these activities help to meet the conditions of our grants (see below) but are a joy to do.

I am pleased to report that we have been successful in receiving generous financial support for the CAG dig at Wormingford from Dedham Vale & Stour Valley Project. This has enabled us to pay for professional help, namely Howard Brooks of the Colchester Archaeological Trust who has assisted us in finds processing and analysis, together with fieldwork team training and also in the preparation of reports. We are also able in our small way to support the work of the Colchester Archaeological Trust who are always ready to assist the Group in many ways.

Further financial support has been generously granted by Essex and Suffolk Water plc to enable us to publish a 'reader friendly' booklet about the site available to the general public. We hope to have this published during the spring of 2010.

Pat Brown is standing down as leader of Colchester Young Archaeologists Club this year and I wish to record our sincere thanks to Pat and her teams of helpers for the many years of enthusiastic efforts they have given to the CYAC. As an individual the skill, knowledge and work Pat has put in to CYAC has been greatly and affectionately acknowledged to me by the Museums Service, parents and many members of our group. Pat on behalf of all of the above thank you.

EDITORIAL

Pat Brown

Several members commented favourably on the printing and paper of last year's Bulletin - this is entirely due to our excellent printers who are extremely patient with your wayward and inexpert Editor. We would like to be able to have colour photos, but to do this would considerably increase printing costs, and don't forget that if you want colour - and extended articles too - you can ask for a CD. If you want a printed version as well this will cost you £4.00.

We are all missing James Fawn and I hope you will read the obituary in this issue, as well as a reminder of his sense of humour in "A Letter from a tombstone". Another great character whom the Group - and the wider archaeological community - has lost is David Clarke, whose obituary you can also read.

A "first" for the Bulletin, I'm sure, is Les Peck's poem about his adventures in the Wormingford Well. Few of us knew that Les was a spare-time poet, and a very amusing one at that.

This year we have gained several active new members. What about some of you putting finger to keyboard with your thoughts, experiences, pieces they have always wanted to publish.....? We do range beyond the Colchester area. And don't forget my suggestion last year of a "Letters" page where you can voice your views, comments or criticisms (Bulletins of other societies do have them, and a bit of controversy adds spice to our sort of publication which has to be concerned to some extent with detailed technical recording)..

COUNCIL FOR BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY

Report by Raymond Rowe

This report could be headed "Money, Money, Money" with no reference to the archaeology we are all interested in. Clearly we can not expect world wide financial problems to pass us by with no effect on our interests. Over the past year, losses of jobs in archaeology have happened and places at universities to train new archaeologists seem to have been reduced.

The majority of active archaeology is sponsored by commercial activity and funded by developers. In 2008, 93% of all archaeological investigations were initiated through the building planning process, following concerns that building development could harm the archaeology. The Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) 2 years ago did a survey that showed there were in 2007 some 6865 people in paid employment and this had grown by 4% per year over the previous 10 years. However since the "credit crunch" some 345 archaeology jobs were lost in the period October to end of December 2008. These represent 1 in 12 of the jobs in commercial archaeology. As an example the University of Manchester Archaeological Unit closed in July 2009 after the withdrawal of university support (the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit is not thought to be affected).

It has been announced that the Government would spend an additional £3bn on capital projects, and these will no doubt be welcomed when they come on line. To put it in perspective, the Office for National Statistics gives the total value of construction work in the UK during 2007 as £122bn. The report in British Archaeology gives much more detail on this survey. This highlights a real problem, and we should try and do anything we can to keep archaeology from being ignored by those who control the national money box at this time.

Stonehenge is still being discussed. The Minister in early March in reply to a Parliamentary question said the Government had stated their commitment to delivering the environmental improvements at Stonehenge, including a new visitor centre facility by 2013. The Stonehenge project board has recommended to the Minister a location for the new centre. This recommendation is being considered. The CBA is continuing to press the Government to ensure that financial pressures do not lead to all options being dropped.

The CBA AGM is to be held in Shropshire for 2009. It will be a weekend event, with visits and lectures, packed lunches, a dinner and drinks reception. For a member it costs £135 plus the cost of getting there and accommodation. This is probably good value, but the AGM has been allowed only 30 minutes in the programme on Sunday morning. Is the AGM and its importance being lost sight of?

The CBA, in the June/July edition of British Archaeology, questions the way English Heritage has spent money on two of their projects shown on TV. Kenilworth Castle had its garden made over to reflect what it was in the 16th century. It was based on contemporary written descriptions. There was it seems very little archaeological evidence for the very expensive reconstructions. Could all this work and money have been better employed?

After the local CBA regional re-organisation CAG remains in the Mid-Anglia Group.

COLCHESTER YOUNG ARCHAEOLOGISTS' CLUB

Report by Pat Brown

During the winter term we had a session with Dr Mark Curteis of Essex Record Office who brought a selection of coins, old maps and photographs and talked about how they could be used in addition to the archaeological record. We made Roman sandals, and we had a session making stained glass out of transparent paper when Nick Rowe, one of our long-standing members, explained the work he had been doing in his course on stained glass at the Sixth Form College.

After Easter we went to Ipswich Museum and Town Hall, to see the exhibition curated by Caroline MacDonald on Anglo-Saxon coins and other finds, and then made our own beads and coins out of material which could be hardened at home. In June we tried to see how much would survive of a burial after many years, and what these remains might tell us about the person buried.

In July we visited the Group's Wormingford site, where the younger children had a taste of geophysics, metal-detecting, digging and finds processing, while the older ones worked on survey and drawing. This was very popular and well-attended, and we should like to thank the Wormingford team for all the hard work they put in.

Pat Brown has resigned as Leader of Colchester YAC, and as a consequence the Colchester and Ipswich Museum has taken over. National YAC recommended that the Branch break for the autumn and re-form in December as "Colchester and Ipswich YAC", two groups to be run in the two museums, with Laura McLean in charge at Colchester and Caroline MacDonald at Ipswich. Jean Roberts, Rita Bartlett and Carole Bartle are resigning as Assistant Leaders, and we should like to thank them for all they have done for YAC. Barbara Butler and Pat Brown will continue as Assistant leaders.

CAG will continue to be associated with both local and National YAC. New Assistant Leaders from among our members will be welcome – contact Pat Brown.

OBITUARY

DAVID TYRWHITT-DRAKE CLARKE MA, FMA, FSA, FRNS

G. Mark R. Davies

As successor to Rex Hull as President of the Group, David Clarke was only the second person to have held this office. Although for the last 20 years his home in retirement was at Combe in Oxfordshire, he continued to maintain a close interest in the Group's activities. During the 25 years that he was Curator of the Colchester and Essex Museum (1963 to 1988), he had been a lively and enthusiastic promoter of Colchester's museums and archaeological heritage.

Born at St Albans on 30th September 1923, David Clarke was educated at Haileybury College, Hertford, where his interest in history began to develop. In 1941 he won a minor scholarship in Classics at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. But war service intervened in 1942 when he joined the Royal Signals, based first at GHQ (Home Forces) at Hounslow, then with the Special Boat Service (8th Army) in Italy. The latter posting inevitably enabled him by one means or another to become acquainted with some of the major classical sites on the Bay of Naples and in Rome.

Returning to Cambridge in 1946, he graduated the following year in Classics and Classical Archaeology. This led to a studentship at the British School of Archaeology in Athens, where he catalogued the school's museum collections, travelled widely in Greece and excavated at Old Smyrna. In 1948 he was appointed Lecturer in Classical Archaeology at the Farouk I University in Alexandria.

In 1949 he returned to England, taking up the post of Keeper of Archaeology at Leicester City Museum where the next 14 years were spent productively immersed in its museums and local archaeology. Having re-organised the archaeological galleries twice, he originated the Jewry Wall Museum project which came to fruition in 1966. He also instituted the regular annual reporting of fieldwork in Leicestershire in the County Society's Transactions and was instrumental in creating a post of Field Archaeologist. In addition, from 1955-63 he also found time to act as Honorary Secretary of the Leicestershire Archaeological Society during which time membership almost doubled to nearly 500 members.

Whilst at Leicester David married fellow archaeologist Joan Kirk FSA, whom he had first met when they were both working on Sheppard Frere's excavations at Canterbury in 1947. From that year until their wedding in 1957 Joan was an Assistant Keeper of Antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, doing fieldwork in Oxfordshire and publishing articles on Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon topics. She was also responsible for the museum displays at Chedworth Roman villa and dug for Kathleen Kenyon at Sabratha and Jericho. Although a busy family life ensued with the arrival of four children, Joan never lost her archaeological interests.

On moving to Colchester in 1963 David put his talents and previous experience to good effect. The ground floor of the castle was cleared and its tarmac replaced with parquet flooring so that temporary exhibitions could be staged. A series of informative, readable and well-illustrated booklets was soon produced which set a high standard for other museums to follow. These included a Castle Guide (regularly updated), one on the Hollytrees, a Town Hall Guide, Visitors Colchester (before the onset of modern tourist promotion) and two booklets, entitled 'Camulodunum and the Temple of Claudius' and 'Colonia Claudia Victricensis', which were later revised and published as a co-authored volume double the size called 'Roman Colchester'. David also persuaded the distinguished Colchester-born historian Geoffrey Martin to revise Benham's Town Guide (more than once) to a high, though fittingly popular standard, but like many others he was sadly unimpressed when this highly regarded guidebook was later discontinued in favour of a slight offering of dubious quality.

The Hollytrees Museum had its Venetian window replaced and was redisplayed following re-allocation of part of H.W. Poulter's flat for the use of the Essex Archaeological Society's library. This also enabled a costume gallery to be created and the expansion of its collections curated by Valerie Mansfield. The Natural History Museum was re-cased too and after nine years of waiting Holy Trinity church was finally handed over by the diocese for the creation of a new Museum of Social History in 1973. Another major addition which David oversaw was the conversion of Tymperleys in 1987 into a Museum of Colchester clocks, mainly those in the collection bequeathed to the town by Bernard Mason.

During the 1960s, seaside confrontations at Clacton between Mods and Rockers caused them to be dispersed by the Police with the result that many found the Castle Museum an accessible, alternative meeting-place. Hence, it is traditionally recalled, the Sunday admission charge was introduced. This was later extended to every day during the summer months and the income was kept in a special suspense account for use on important museum projects not covered by the annual revenue estimates. David Clarke used his powers of persuasion to keep the Treasurer's Department at bay just long enough for the accumulated sum of £107,000 to be used in 1991 to fit out the former Alston's warehouse (previously Mason's) as the Museum Resource Centre. This building was a timely acquisition for the growing museum service and provided much needed offices, conservation laboratories and storage, as well as study areas for the public to consult the collections and their associated records. It continues to act as the hub of the Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service today.

Another significant development for which David takes the credit was the creation of a Schools Service funded by Essex County Council. This later broadened its remit to today's Education Service, though now funded differently. Over the years storage of the reserve collections was upgraded, documentation improved and, within the limited funds available, the whole of the Castle was gradually redisplayed.

One of David's most important and lasting legacies was the re-founding in 1964 of the Colchester Excavation Committee which in due course became the Colchester Archaeological Trust Ltd. Ros Dunnett was appointed Director of Excavations, followed in 1970 by Philip Crummy, for both of whom the Castle was at first the base of operations. David provided essential advice and support throughout, serving as Honorary Secretary himself from 1972-1988, and when more working space was needed he was instrumental in persuading the County Council to provide accommodation first at East Hill House, then at 12 Lexden Road.

When David was going out in the town on a museum task or visiting a site, he would usually don his white coat. One day in 1969 local newspaper reporter Bill Tucker spotted this distinctive figure hastening up the High Street with others in his wake and guessed that something exciting might be afoot. He was duly rewarded with a scoop on the discovery of the second Colchester hoard of over 14,000 medieval coins found on the old Boots the Chemist site opposite the Town Hall.

David Clarke was a fellow of both the Society of Antiquaries of London and the Royal Numismatic Society. As a Fellow of the Museums Association, he was a fervent advocate of professional standards in museums. He served on the Association's Council and was Chairman of its Education Committee 1971-76 and subsequently Chairman of Examiners. In 1971-72 he was a member of the Paymaster General's Committee on Provincial Museums. He also served on many other museum and archaeological committees at county and regional level as well as locally. Significant among these was the Essex Society for Archaeology and History (formerly the Essex Archaeological Society), which owns a constituent part of the collections and gave the Colchester and Essex Museum the second half of its name. As well as being the Society's Curator, David took on the demanding duties of Editor from 1972 to 1986, transforming its annual Transactions into the prestigious Essex Archaeology and History, which it continues to be.

Making museums and the national heritage available to as wide a public as possible was dear to David Clarke's heart. He was an able and entertaining lecturer with the skill to enthuse his audience however knowledgeable they were on a subject. If a visitor to the museum arrived with a query, he would invariably spend twenty minutes or half an hour giving them a full and authoritative answer, even on seemingly unimportant subjects. The effect was to provide endless good will and 'customer satisfaction' in the museum's favour, although very occasionally it could cause some confusion, as when a member of the Architect's department might arrive to consult him on some minor issue and in due course retreat from his office not remembering what he had gone in for.

For all his liveliness and ready wit, David Clarke suffered from occasional drowsiness which for those who did not know him could cause some alarm, if in his office after lunch, or mild amusement if in a meeting. It was not until fairly late in his career that he was diagnosed as having narcolepsy which could be treated. During CAG lectures he would often appear to doze off, but he always seemed to take in what was being said as by the end he would invariably come up with a poignant question or comment.

It was through David's good offices that the CAG met for its Annual General Meeting on 25th October 1965 in the newly created Castle lecture room, now named after Charles Gray, and has continued to do so ever since. He enjoyed acting as the Group's chairman in 1982-85.

Joan Clarke died on 13th October 2007 and David Clarke passed away two years later on 27th November 2009, aged 86 years. At his funeral fitting tributes to his life and work were paid by their four children, Caroline, Michael, James and Rachel, and several of the grandchildren, who read some of his numerous poems. One of these reflects his love of cats and sense of humour –

To my tutor's cat

You cat, who dream the hours by,
You listen for the mouse's squeak.
I listen to my tutor's Greek
Which is the happier, you or I?

David Clarke's seemingly boundless energy, wit and enthusiasm in the cause of museums and archaeology, including the CAG, will long be remembered by those who knew him. We offer our condolences to his family and thanks for a life rich in service and achievement.

OBITUARY**JAMES FAWN***G. Mark R. Davies*

Ambrose James Fawn, who died on 4th November, 2008, aged 79, was the Group's longest serving member. Although born in Sheffield, James was brought up at Cheltenham where he attended Cheltenham Grammar School before gaining a degree in Physics with subsidiary Mathematics at the University of Bristol in 1950. He then served in the RAF during National Service.

Colchester became his home in 1953 and remained so for the next 55 years, enabling him to develop what became an all-consuming passion for archaeology. He had come to Essex to work at Bexford Limited, an I.C.I. subsidiary company, at Manningtree, where he progressed from Plant Physicist to Plant Manager for Solution Preparation, Solvent Recovery and Plant Development. After thirty years' service with the company, he found himself able to take early retirement with the opportunity to devote his energies to archaeology.

The CAG was still at an early stage of its existence when James became a member in 1961. After twelve months he was elected to the committee, on which he continued to serve in various capacities for the next 46 years. He was at one time Public Relations Officer in succession to Len Gant, rising to become the Chairman from 1972 to 1975. In 1979 he was elected Treasurer, an office in which he continued to serve the Group diligently for nearly all of the next 26 years.

But it was in the field that James was particularly active and probably at his happiest. He quickly joined in the excavations proceeding under the guidance of CAG Chairman Felix Erith FSA at the multi-period site, especially well known for its Bronze Age cremation cemeteries, at Ardleigh; and it may be no exaggeration to state that he participated in some way or other in all the Group's excavations and fieldwork from 1961 to within a short time of his death. The Group's Annual Bulletins, of course, record all those achievements with many articles written by James himself.

James always had two or three projects that he was working on. His scientific background made him particular about accuracy and precision, and he liked nothing better than to argue a point of interpretation. But he was invariably generous in giving all the help, advice and support that he could to others. Having taken part during the 1970s with Kay de Brisay FSA in the excavation of several of the Essex Red Hills, notably at Osea Road, Peldon and Tollesbury, he developed a special interest in ancient salt-making along the Essex coast. This was put to good effect with the Group's publication (in memory of Kay de Brisay) of 'The Red Hills of Essex' in 1990 of which James was the main joint-author. In 1996 he assisted Prof. Peter Cott with the geophysical survey of the important late Iron Age and Roman site at Gosbecks – work that has been continued by others. Another favourite subject of his was Roman roads, a number of which he helped excavate locally.

There are several archaeological and heritage-orientated organisations in Essex which James Fawn supported and at whose meetings he was regularly to be seen. One of these was the Essex Society for Archaeology and History, whose various activities he enjoyed, including the annual Morant Dinner. He served on the Society's Council for a number of years (1994–96 and 1997–2002) and was a member of the Library Committee. He also represented the Society on the Colchester Archaeological Trust Ltd. from 2002, serving as a member of that body's Council of Management. In fact, James was a long-term supporter of the Trust and several of his articles have appeared in editions of the Colchester Archaeologist.

For a number of years James represented the Group on the Essex Archaeological and Historical Congress's executive committee and he was a Congress representative on the Advisory Committee for Archaeology in Essex. If there was an archaeological conference, annual symposium or seminar being held in the county, or indeed further afield, he would generally be likely to attend it. In pursuit of his researches James made full use of the facilities of the Museum Resource Centre, where he was a regular visitor, and he was an active member of the Friends of the Colchester Museums.

If there was only one thing that James Fawn could be remembered by it would have to be the project that probably gave him, albeit modestly, the most personal satisfaction. This was the excavation of a develop-

ment site in Beverley Road, Colchester, which he himself organised in 1996 and carried out with assistance from other Group members under difficult circumstances. Its special significance was that here in 1928 had come to light one of the most famous Roman tombstones found in Britain which Colchester's Castle Museum displays among its prize exhibits. On it is depicted in fine detail the mounted figure of Longinus Sdapeze, a Thracian cavalryman in the Roman army, with his personal details and career inscribed beneath. The one very significant feature, however, that was missing – his face – was retrieved by James's careful excavation, together with several other fragments, so that now the complete sculptured portrait of Longinus can be viewed in all its original splendour of nearly two thousand years ago.

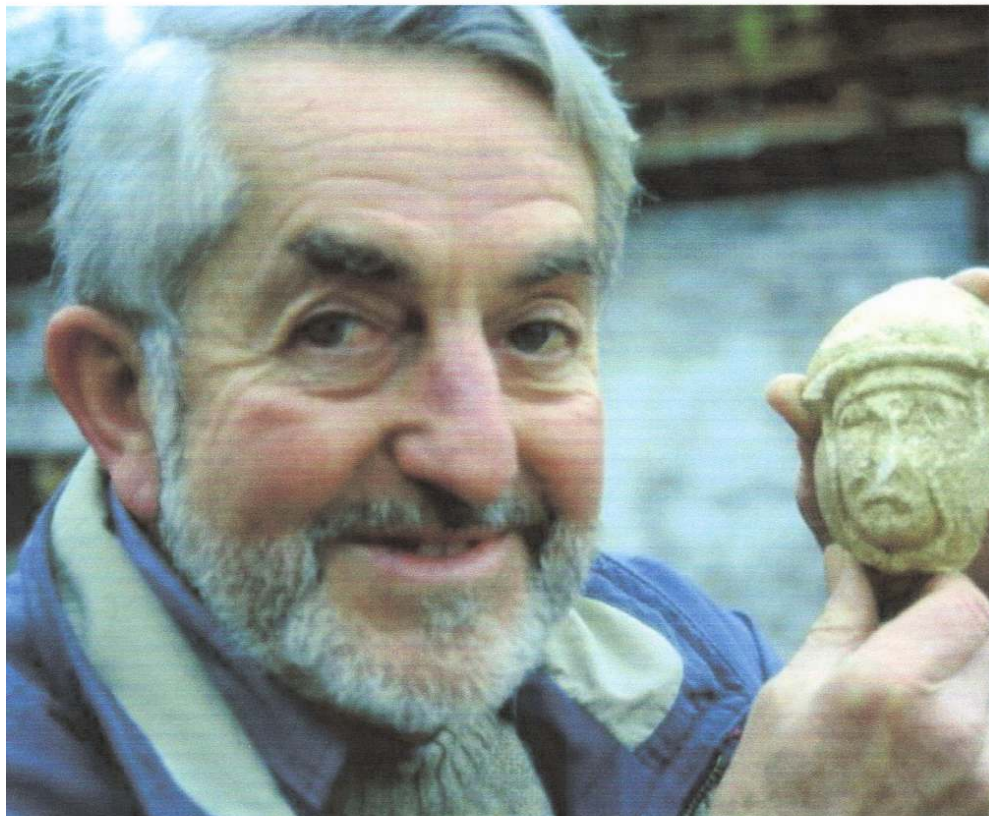
James Fawn, always known to his family as Ambrose, had many friends, who will miss his good humour and interesting conversation. He will be remembered as a kindly, courteous and thoughtful person who was always ready to help others. He remained ever cheerful and will be long thought of fondly by all who knew him.

Ambrose James Fawn BSc.

Born 5th March, 1929, at Sheffield.

Died 4th November, 2008, at Colchester.

Photograph of AJF with the missing face of Longinus – by courtesy of the Colchester Archaeological Trust.



In memory of James Fawn

Several files were found on James's computer relating to archaeology in Colchester. Among those which had never been published I selected this one, relating to the finding of the missing face of Longinus from his tombstone in Colchester Museum, as an example of his quiet and quirky sense of humour. (Ed)

A Letter from a Tombstone

James Fawn

I am the tombstone of a cavalryman in the Roman army named Longinus Zdapeze, long departed. I have lived in my retirement home, Colchester Museum, for over seventy years during which I have been unable to see because I lost my face a very long time ago. Last year it was restored to me, along with some other bits, and suddenly I found myself looking at the kind lady who was very intently sticking it back on. I am not given to expressing my feelings, being made of stone, but I was most pleased to regain my sight in such a fashion. Not all facelifts are as successful as mine and everyone says I look much better for it.

I was able to read your admirable Newsletter for the first time, No 74, which contained a report of the finding of my face. I found this most interesting because I was not present at the time. However, the chap who found it says that the account needs a little correcting and he asked me to tell you what he told me, to avoid confusion in the future. Some people are sticklers for accuracy, fussy I call it.

Although the Colchester Archaeological Trust gave sterling assistance and advice and is continuing to do so, it was the Colchester Archaeological Group whose members carried out the excavation and found some of my missing bits, including my face, amateurs' luck. The bits were not in a different location but at the spot where I was found in 1928 beside a Roman road and looked as if they had just dropped off me as I was lying on the ground. I don't remember the circumstances and so I can't tell you how it happened, but the finder of my face says he is trying to work them out. I wish him luck.

I like to see people during visiting hours, but don't expect much conversation!

DECORATIVE BRICK FROM LODGE HILL, WORMINGFORD APRIL 2009
(from the main hunting lodge trench, found by Dick Mariott on 7/4/09)

Report by Francis Nicholls

Don Goodman and I visited the Bulmer Brick Company to see if we could get some professional identification of the piece of decorative brick and its likely usage.

Peter and Tony Minter are fairly sure that the find is a quarter piece from a square of large brick or tile used for outside wall decoration. They have a similar (whole) piece, but made from white clay. The whole configuration would look thus:



Their ideas for its usage are a) A decoration as a pair in the spandrels either side of an arched door and/or b) As a horizontal line (a string course) around a building. In both cases they add status to the construction. Peter Minter explained something of the background to this type of decoration.

Cardinal Wolsey, on visits to Rome on behalf of Henry VIII, noticed the decorative value of moulded terracotta on the outside of many buildings. As a result, skilled Italian workers were brought in by him during the construction of Hampton Court. (Italian craftsmen were apparently also employed during the building of Layer Marney Tower). However, after Henry had fallen out with the Pope, the Italians made a swift retreat and took with them the art of moulding terracotta. Several attempts were made by English craftsmen to copy terracotta but with little success. Instead, they created a new art of hand decorating large bricks or tiles using trowels (much the same as we use today) when the clay was 'leather' hard. Our brick clearly shows sharp lines from the point of a trowel in the indents. He dates our brick/tile as about 1530 to 1570

We also took with us some other interesting bricks from the site. The small half-moon moulded bricks are reckoned to be from decorative pillars, perhaps either side of an entrance door. They are thought to be too narrow to be coping bricks from the top of a wall.

The large approx 11" x 5.5" bricks are really tiles. Our example clearly shows water wear and fits in with the floor of the gully in the NW corner of the site on the other side of the fence..

We also took with us what we thought was a typical Tudor brick from the main Lodge site. Curiously, Peter Minter puts this as a very early 16th c. example. Like so many other things on our site, this just adds to the many questions we have yet to answer!

TWO SILVER COINS FROM THE CAG EXCAVATION AT WORMINGFORD

Report by Francis Nicholls

During 2009, the site continued to reveal further large amounts of building fabric, together with individual finds linked to the 16th and 17th centuries.. Amongst the finds have been a small number of jetons and coins.

The two coins detailed here are a silver 'Thistle Merk' of James VI of Scotland and a silver sixpence of Queen Elizabeth 1st. Finds like this help to refine the actual dating of the early buildings which once stood on Lodge Hill. The King James coin is particularly interesting because it is Scottish and dated 1602 (one year before his accession as James 1st of England). This find is a one-eighth Thistle Merk with a value of 1/8d The obverse side shows the Scottish lion, with the inscription

JACOBUS 6 DGR SCOTIORUM (James VI. by the grace of God, King of the Scots)

The reverse shows the Scottish thistle with the words REGEM IOVA PROTEGIT

1602 (Jehovah protects the King 1602)

The Elizabeth 1st silver sixpence dates from 1561-1566. One side shows the crowned head of the Queen in front of a Tudor rose with the words

ELIZABETH..D.G.ANG.FRA.ET.}HIB.REGINA.(Elizabeth by the grace of God, Queen of England, France and Ireland). On the reverse side is the shield of arms with the words POSVI DEVM. ADIV-TOREM. MEVM (I have made God my helper).



James VI of Scotland. One-eighth silver Thistle Merk 1602

Owing to problems with photographing the actual Wormingford coin, the above shows a good example of this coin.

The reproductions above and below have been enlarged and are not to scale



Elizabeth 1st Silver sixpence 1561-1566

Corinna Claudia vicinensis , which were later revised and published as a co-authored

A RARE IRON AGE COIN FROM THE GROUP EXCAVATION AT WORMINGFORD

Mark Curteis

An Iron Age (or Celtic) bronze coin (BM 1938) was recovered from the topsoil at the site at Lodge Hill. The details of the coin are as follows:

Obverse: winged horse (Pegasus) left, looking back, below 'CAM' (fig.1).

Reverse: winged Victory standing left, holding palm branch, before 'CVN' (fig.2).



Fig.1



Fig.2

The coin clearly conveys the name of its issuer (CVNobelin) and the location of the mint (CAMulodunum). Cunobelin (Shakespeare's Cymbeline) describes himself on some coins as being the son of Tasciovanus. He appears to have united the territories of the Catuvellauni and Trinovantes making him the leader of the most powerful kingdom in Britain. He was described as 'King of the Britons' by Suetonius.

The coins of Cunobelin are conventionally divided into early (with more 'celticised' designs) and late issues (with more developed or 'classical' designs). The coin from Wormingford belongs to the early series (dated c.AD 10-20). The earlier coins are much rarer than the later, developed, issues and this coin is a comparatively rare type of the early issues. Thus it is a rare and interesting coin.

Fig.3 shows the distribution of coins of this type and the Wormingford coin clearly falls towards the centre of the distribution pattern which is focussed on Colchester. Only fifteen other examples are known to have been found in Essex. Three were recovered during the excavations of the temple site at Harlow while seven have been recorded from Colchester itself. Of these, five were recovered from excavations and these are now in Colchester and Ipswich Museums. Two of the excavated coins were found at Sheepen and it is likely that they were minted there. The site has yielded not only much evidence for metal working but also the pellet moulds that were used for casting the blanks onto which the coins' designs were later struck. Further afield, three examples have been recorded from Suffolk, two from Cambridgeshire while none at all have been recovered from Hertfordshire, again emphasizing the rarity of this particular type.

Although the coin is in bronze, Cunobelin also issued coins in gold and silver. However, this does not mean we can assume that the coins worked in a denominational way or that they functioned as currency in the modern sense. They were seen to have had a value and coin finds tend to be associated with high status sites such as elite residences and temples. However, such a value could have been symbolic, ritual as well as financial.

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Figure 1: Distribution of coins of type VA.1731 in Essex and Suffolk

WORMINGFORD LODGE HILLS: WELL EXCAVATION

Philip Cunningham

During a study of a lost Tudor hunting lodge on the top of Lodge Hills in Wormingford Essex the geophysics section of the Colchester Archaeological Group identified a small circular feature on the site using a magnetometer. Surface excavation found this to be a brick lined well to the Northwest of the main Lodge building. A deep excavation of the well was conducted over a number of weeks in May 2009 and eventually required the use of a specially made tripod as a fixing point for a series of pulleys systems and other safety devices.

The principal digger was Les Peck who, as the well became deeper, was lowered in on a harness, using block and tackle. Similar was used to bring the excavation material up from the depths. The principal pulley men were John Mallinson and Philip Cunningham. After a layer of demolition rubble, the bulk of the well was found to contain a gravel infill. Finds included bone, wood, pottery and metal objects such as rivets and nails.

At about twenty three foot down (8.) the level of the water table was reached. A pump and generator were then brought in to lower the water level as the excavation progressed, adding to the engineering complications and further limiting working space at the bottom of the shaft.

Well construction methods: Research by Neil Catchpole (Dedham Vale Countryside Officer) provided information on how wells were dug in this period (see diagram p.15). These were first started by constructing a strong wooden ring beam or kerb, (1.) probably of elm with a number of sections jointed together to form the ring using wooden dowels. Bricks were then laid on top of this beam and the soil excavated within and underneath it.

The whole construction, known as a steening, (4.) then gradually sank down as the brickwork was built up on top and the ring undermined by the well digger. The process was continued until the water table was reached and beyond.

The Lodge Hills well used special, hand made chamfered bricks laid without mortar, although the original section above ground may have been mortared. Seventeen bricks make up the complete circumference and are held rigid by the weight of soil and infill (5.) behind, pushing against the wedge shaped bricks. These bricks have been dated by Pat Ryan (author of "Brick in Essex") as mid to late sixteenth century.

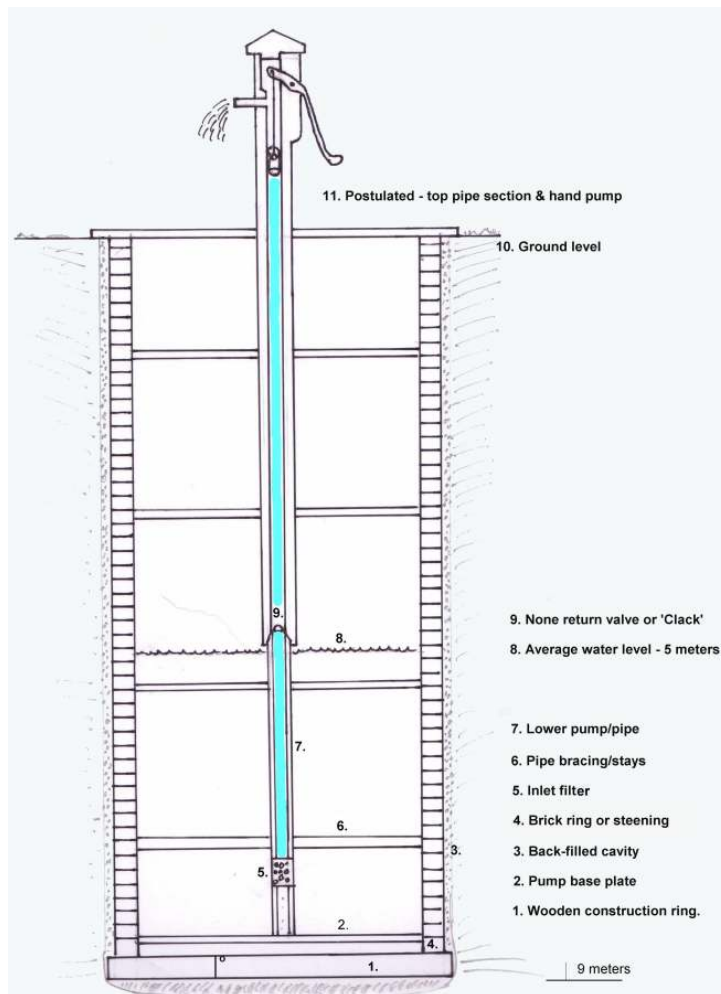
The well is approximately 5ft across and at the end of the excavation was found to be 30ft (9 meters) deep, at which point the original beam ring was discovered intact, on top of a geographic layer of clay.

Just below water level, a wooden post (7.) was found embedded almost vertical in the silt beneath. After a fur-



ther nearly nine feet of excavation, a rope was secured around the beam and the timber hauled out in a complex set of manoeuvres, given its length and weight. The timber was found to be 12ft in length, nine inches square along most of its length and probably made of elm.

Originally thought to be part of a windlass, on inspection the whole timber was found to be bored through with a diameter of around two inches. The top end of the timber was tapered and a 'strainer' (5.) nailed on one side three feet from the lower end, leading to the inner bore. The timber post proved to be the bottom section of a timber pump which had rested on a wooden, boarded floor (2.) at the base of the well. This post was probably one of two or three bored pipes held into each other by a spigot and socket joint, made watertight by a tallow seal. The posts were held upright by the use of crossbeams (6.) positioned in



Acknowledgements: The top part of the above sectional diagram is based on a drawing in John Vince's short booklet on 'Wells and Water Supply' (Shire Publications 1978). The lower section is based on actual CAG findings at Lodge Hills.

a series of sockets in the side of the well at various intervals. Wooden water pipes were once used widely and in Tudor times created by boring a hole through the centre of a tree trunk using a huge "shell" or "spoon" auger having a blunt, notched point and a blade like that of a gouge or curved chisel. The augur had a long shank and a large handle, usually turned by two men. The boring of just one pipe took two men about a week to complete and great skill was needed to keep it in a true line without turning astray. The wood was bored whilst still green and unseasoned. To prevent shrinking and cracking the wooden pipes were then stored in water.

The top pipe section of a wooden pump would have a larger five inch bore and a machined, cylindrical 'bucket' fitted inside. This was levered up and down inside the barrel by the pump handle. The 'bucket' or plunger was also made of elm and had a leather flange or sleeve around its circumference to make it air tight. Using a leather valve, water could only enter the moving 'bucket' from below on the down stroke and was then lifted when the handle was pulled up and the valve closed under the weight of the water. A second weighted leather valve called a 'clack' (9.) was situated between the lower and upper sections of the pump to hold the water at an intermediate point in the piping. Water was sucked up through this lower valve by the upward action of top 'bucket' or plunger.

This system of water extraction has been known since Saxon times and was succeeded by lead piping from the 18th century. If the pump is contemporary with the well the Wormingford pumping mechanism is of a very early date.



Photographs:

- P. 14 Les Peck about to descend the well.
 Construction ring or kerb.*
- P. 15 Filter in pump.*
- P. 16 Looking up the well shaft.*

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REDIGGING THE WORMINGFORD WELL*Les Peck*

On Tudor times upon a hill that overlooked the Stour
 Of brick and wood they built a Lodge that had a three-floor tower
 It is reported widely that Queen Elizabeth did call
 To view the hunting of the deer, and stay at Smallbridge Hall.

With what we have uncovered, and it's difficult to tell,
 That thirsty work it must have been, 'cause they went and sunk a well
 This wasn't just a temporary shaft. but dug with Royal fury
 Water deed for the kitchen, and maybe for a brewery.

What we found beneath the ground, a circle made of brick
 With tapered ends to fit the bends, a cunning Tudor trick,
 The second course did reinforce what we had first suspected,
 A third and fourth and we were sure, a well we had detected.

The query, if and how, shall we clear and keep,
 John's survey said, don't be misled, the water's down quite deep
 Se who've we got (who's none too bright!) and doesn't mind hard labour
 Les's name, into the frame, "It's just his sort of caper".

An engineer with all the gear who knew his 'elf and safety,
 Donned hard hat, boots and harness, and went about it bravely,
 Of four inch wood the tripod stood, above the cavernous hole
 Les lowered down, into the ground, to be a human mole.

And so we dug into the pug with Philip as the "banksman"
 John took the strain, took the pain, as the buckets up and down ran,
 Then at lunch came the crunch, to raise the muddy digger
 I heard it said o'er cheese and bread, "I'm sure he's getting bigger".

Day by day we followed the clay and a beautiful brick surround
 Six yards in, I'm up to my shin and the water table's found,
 A cheer, "What's here? I've uncovered a great lump of wood
 But why would you dump a windlass or pump? To re-use they normally would.

Circular top, square as we drop with a hole bored into its centre,
 Nine feet long, going strong, but no plaque to name its inventor
 Rubble and tile engulf the pile, with frustration I dig the compaction
 This rotten tooth within my booth, the answer must be Extraction!

Bowline knot around the lot, it's ready to be lifted
 Muscles taut as they ought, "I think it might have shifted!"
 Haul again, almighty strain, it's given up the fight
 Twelve feet long, six men strong, and so it's made the light.

What could it be, that we did see, not one of us could say
 But Anna's chat suggested that "It's not for small finds tray!"
 One thing is sure, the aperture is bored right through the middle
 A filter built above the silt - can someone solve our riddle?

Room to work within the murk, we're now in blackened crud
 Of artefact there is a lack as we wallow in the mud
 Several bones, stick and stones, and now we've found the kerb
 This foundation ring supports the thing, we're best not to disturb.

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Nearly done, lots of fun, with most things skyward bound,
Except to tell, that something fell, the thirty feet straight down;,
As Newton's Law came to the fore, and with it came a bucket,
The muffled word from Les was heard and something like "Oh, —— it!"
(Thank heaven for hard hats!!)

Nothing left of a hole bereft of all its backfilled treasure,
Remove the tools, go down with rules, for to make a final measure,
Then "banksman" Phil, with camera skill, records this gloomy shaft
And from this mire we now retire, to the Crown and a quenching draught!

A few facts about the Well

*All measurements are given in feet and English. This helps to retain the historical flavour
whilst at the same time confusing anyone under the age of forty!*

Depth to water 17ft.		Bottom section of pump/pipe (probably elm)
Total depth 31ft.		Length 12ft
Diameter		
- Top	3ft. 9ins.	Width 9ins. x 9ins.
Bottom	3ft. 3ins.	Centre hole 2.Sins.
Bricks used approx.	3100	Spoil removed 390 cu. ft. (14 cu. yds.) !

Kerb (width 6 1/2 ins, depth 5 1/2 ins.)

Used whilst sinking the well, probably made of elm. (Readily available, lasts a long while under water). Like a wooden cartwheel rim (no hub or spokes), made in four pieces and joined with dowelled halving joints on their ends to create a circle. Bricks were positioned on top of the 'kerb' and the well diggers removed soil from its centre and beneath it. The whole structure slowly descended to the required depth, whilst more bricks were continually being added to the top. This method gave a safer working environment from collapse.

GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY at COGGESHALL ABBEY, COGGESHALL (BRAINTREE) ESSEX NATIONAL MONUMENT NO.29426

Report by David and Aline Black

Coggeshall Abbey, built in the mid 12th century, was dissolved in 1539. Some of the Abbey buildings remain but not the Abbey church some of whose foundations can only be seen occasionally as parch marks in the lawn to the north of the 16th century manor house. Coggeshall Abbey is renowned for its early English brickwork.

Excavations in 1914 uncovered brick bases of western piers of the church nave, together with fragments of the screen walls between them. These were dated to the mid 12th century. Parts of the north and west walls of a large chapel north of the nave were also found. These, together with an eastern extension of the church, (lying under a private garden and so not accessible for investigation), were believed to be 12th or 14th century. The plan of the Abbey church, based mainly on parch marks, was published in 1922.(1) Investigation by Gardner in 1955 was confined to the buildings still standing and to a few test holes to confirm foundation lines. No further work on the church itself was carried out and his published plan of the church is the same as that of 1922(2)

Aim of this geophysical investigation

To investigate the layout of the Abbey church and compare it with the published plan.

Method

The area accessible for survey was constrained by surface features. To the west of the transepts the church foundations lie under herbaceous border, bushes and a road; and so it was not possible to survey here. To the north the herbaceous border and mature trees and to the south the paved terrace and garden wall also limited the survey area. However, to the east, the hedge which had restricted earlier survey no longer exists and surveying was possible right up to the bank of the river Blackwater.

Three survey techniques were used; magnetometry, resistance and ground penetrating radar (GPR). The area surveyed differed slightly in each case in order to survey the maximum area possible with each method. (A resistance meter can be used in herbaceous borders and under low branches; a magnetometer with auto data logging and GPR cannot). In each case an appropriate grid was laid out.

For the magnetometry survey a Geoscan Research FM 18 Fluxgate Gradiometer, owned by Colchester Museum Services, was used. The resistance meter used was a Geoscan Research FM15, owned by Peter Cott. In both cases the data was downloaded into a laptop computer on site and processed using InSite software from GeoQuest. For the GPR survey an Utsi Electronics GV1, which works over a frequency range 200 - 600MHz, was used. The GPR data was processed by Dr Tim Dennis, Department of Electronic Systems Engineering, Essex University, using his own software.

Discussion

Other than recording the location of a water pipe, the geophysical image from the magnetic survey showed only "noise". This is not surprising because Coggeshall Abbey brick is quite strongly magnetic; there is still much of it in the garden borders and so presumably also randomly scattered under the lawn, obscuring any response from the foundations. The image from the GPR survey at ca. 0.4m depth shows only the water pipe, but the best GPR image of the church foundations was found at 1.3m depth. To our surprise, the resistance survey provided by far the clearest image.

Based on the resistance and GPR images a revised plan of the eastern end of the church was drawn and superimposed on Gardner's plan.

The most notable discovery is that the eastern end of the church is ca.5m shorter than had been believed. The eastern extremity is within a metre of the river bank. The enclosed areas NE and SE of the transepts are also more clearly defined. The main E-W foundations continue across both the north and south transepts. It is unfortunate that the water pipe and old hedge line obscure the foundations to the south east of

the transepts.

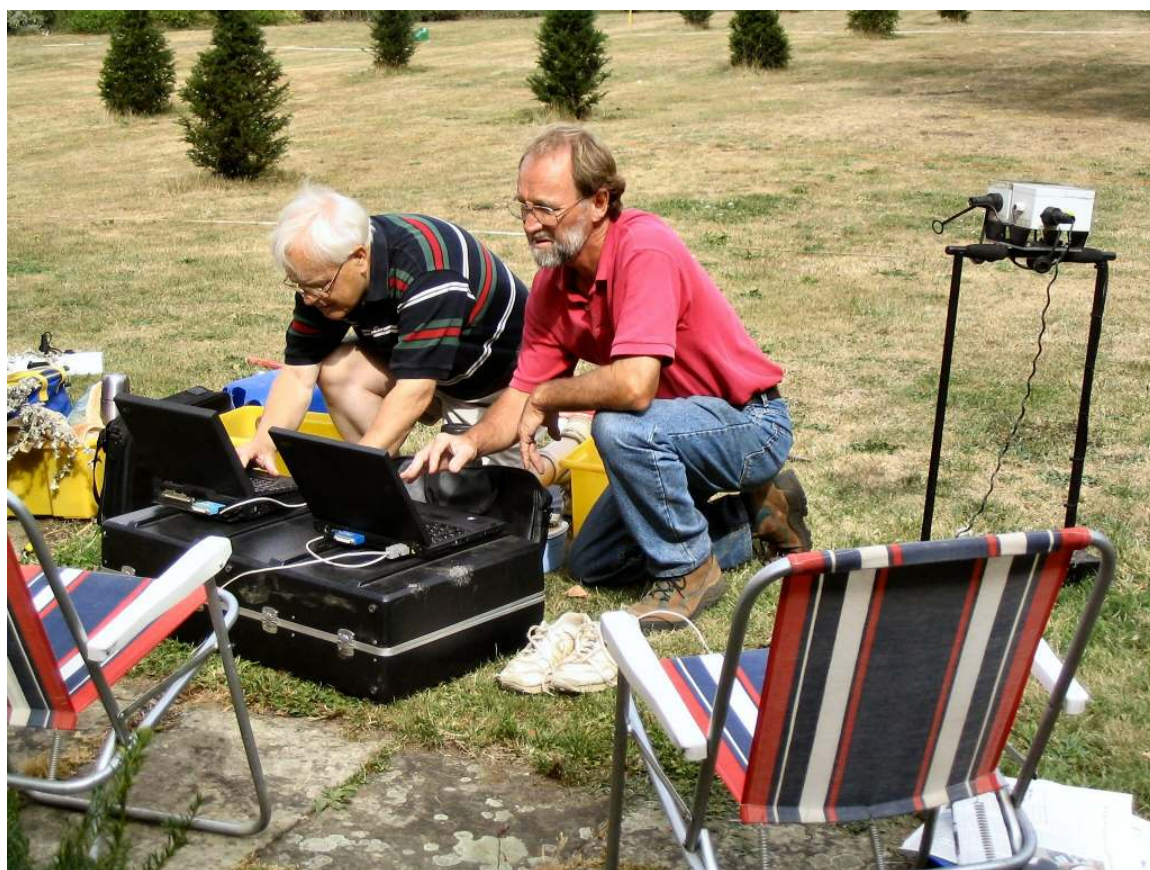
Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Peter Cott for his help in the resistance survey, and to Tim Dennis for the GPR survey and processing the data from it; also to Mr and Mrs Roger Hadlee, the owners of Coggeshall Abbey, for allowing us unrestricted access to the Abbey site and for their interest in our efforts.

References

1. RCHM Essex iii (1922), 166
2. Gardner JS, Journal British Archaeological Association, vol XVIII (1955) pp19-32

The above is an abridged version of the full survey report, which includes coloured illustrations and photographs, published in the CD version of this Bulletin.



David Black working at Coggeshall Abbey with the late Peter Cott.

FLISPES, EASTHORPE: A RADITIONAL TIMBER-FRAMED BUILDING*Richard Shackle*

When I first saw Flispes it had not been lived in for at least 20 years. There were holes in the thatch and a general air of decay. The last use of the house had been as a children's play house and a hen roost. Since I recorded it, the house has been renovated and is now a comfortable modern home.

It is an inline house of five bays with an integral floor in the first four bays and one bay open to the roof. The first four bays follow the standard medieval plan of service bay, two bay hall and parlour bay. The purpose of the final bay is unknown but it was probably a kitchen or a workshop. It is important to note that the building is unjettied. It is built of oak, with close studding and tension braces. The original infill between the studs would have been wattle and daub. The roof was thatched.

The plan of the ground floor (Fig1), as originally built, was as follows. Starting at the north end, the first bay was the service area, next to the cross passage. There were three doors off the cross passage into the service area, one led into the buttery (wet stores such as milk), one led into the pantry (dry stores such as bread) and the final one opened outwards and gave access to the stairs. The next two bays were a floored hall with a cross passage at the north end. As far as I could tell, there was no partition between the cross passage and the hall. The east wall of the hall had the cross passage door in one bay and a hall window with diamond mullions in the other bay. The west wall had the cross passage door and a small window in one bay and a lateral chimney stack in the other. In the south wall there was a door through to the parlour and peg holes for a high end bench. The parlour was the same size as the service bay. It had one small window in the east wall and another in the west wall, so it would have been poorly lit. It would not have been as cosy as most parlours as it acted as a passage to the fifth bay of unknown purpose. The extra bay had one door to the parlour, one door through the rear elevation (west) and a door in north elevation on the upper floor. This presumably was accessed by a staircase and led to the room over the parlour. The room open to the roof had only one window, on the east side of the ground floor. The interior of the south wall had a series of mortices, vertical and horizontal, which must relate to either a kitchen or a craft workshop.

The upper floor consists of three rooms (Fig2). The one over the service bay, which is accessed by a staircase from the cross passage, is lit only by a small window in the rear elevation. A door led from this room into the large room over the hall. This room is lit by a small window in both the front and rear walls. It seems likely that there was a fireplace in this room but as the chimney has long gone we cannot be sure. This room has a door leading into the room over the parlour. This room has one window in the front wall and one in the rear, but in opposite corners. This room has a door in its southern wall, which presumably led via a staircase to the kitchen/workshop.

How did the house work? The two service rooms at the north end seem straight forward enough but could one of them have been a parlour? The hall still has its cross passage but it is floored over and has a chimney: probably a brick chimney but possibly a timber chimney. The high end has peg holes for a bench but people sitting on this bench would have been sitting at right angles to the fireplace. I suggest that the householder and his family sat on a detached bench facing the fireplace and that the high end bench was only installed in phase two when the internal stack was built. Note that there is a large hall window at the front but only a small window in the rear elevation. This is because in an open hall you usually two large windows to control the smoke, whereas if you have a chimney, smoke control is not necessary. The room beyond the hall is probably a parlour but it lacks the privacy such rooms usually have. The room at the southern end could have been a kitchen but the food would have to have been carried through the parlour to reach the hall. There could have been a detached kitchen to the rear of the back cross passage door. This would have given easier access to the hall and avoided the danger of a fire in the kitchen burning the whole house down, especially as it was thatched. The stairs leading down into this room from upstairs, could just have been a fire precaution to allow people an escape route if the way to the stairs by the cross passage was blocked. This all leads to the idea that the end room had some non-domestic use. The rooms on the upper floor all lack privacy, as they all either have a stair and a door into them or two doors one either end. The room over the hall was probably the most desirable as it was the largest and probably had a fireplace.

The front elevation (Fig3) has a sort of symmetry, if you exclude the southern bay (kitchen/workshop) you can see that there is a pair of windows top and bottom in the end bays. All the windows have unglazed diamond mullion windows suggesting that the house was built before 1570 when glass got cheap enough for

ordinary people or that it was low status and the owners could not afford or want glass. Note the small extra window in the hall window bay, this was inserted later to give more light to the hall. There is an erecting notch on the post next to this window. This notch indicates that the post was pushed up at some stage, perhaps to repair the ground sill. You can see a halved and bridled scarf joint in the top plate over the extra bay, showing that the extra bay always was part of the building.

The rear elevation (Fig4) has a similar symmetry to the front. If you exclude the extra bay you can see that the outer bays are mirror images of each other. The high end bay of the hall is completely unframed, showing that there was a lateral chimney stack. As the upper floor is also completely unframed it suggests that there was a large fireplace in the room over the hall. We cannot tell whether it was timber or brick. The door into the kitchen/workshop has a very plain door head, as did the cross passage doors, but they no longer survive.

We will now consider the individual trusses, starting with K/L (Fig5) at the north end of the service bay. There are peg holes in the lower studs, several of which line up horizontally, suggesting shelves in service rooms. Outside of the north east post you can see four small vertical mortices. These suggest that a small fence was attached to the building at this point. The roof had been lost from this truss but it undoubtedly would have been very similar to the other roof truss. Truss I/J (Fig6) had lost some of its lower timbers but these can easily be reconstructed using the empty pegged mortices. There were two service doors which opened inwards and a stair door to the east which opened outwards. On the upper floor there was a door connecting the room over the service bay to the room over the hall. The lack of framing above this and all the other internal trusses except one added to the lack of privacy that the inhabitants suffered. Truss G/H (Fig7) is the central truss of the hall. There are no braces on either floor to triangulate the building. The queen strut roof with windbraces is probably decorative to make the main room over the hall look more impressive. Truss E/F (Fig8) separates the hall from the parlour. There are two narrow plain doorways one above the other. The peg holes for the high end bench can be seen in the lower studs. Truss C/D (fig 9) separates the house proper from the kitchen/ workshop. There are two very plain doorways one on each floor, the upper one presumably had a staircase up to it. Note that the roof above the tie beam is fully framed, suggesting that there was a need to keep smoke or smell from going into the house from the kitchen/ workshop.

Truss A/B (Fig 10 internal view) is very complex. There are many mortices in the mid plates, both facing outwards and down through the middle of the mid plates. The chamfers on the mid plates seem to stop about a foot short, on either side of the central post. What these features represent is hard to say, but they could be something to do with cooking, brewing or weaving. The bridging joist seen in cross section half way up the central post is for a later inserted floor. The truss is fully framed right up to the apex.

The only major change to the building was the demolition of the lateral chimney stack. The empty bay in the west wall, on both floors, was filled with rough timbers, wedged in. A large new brick chimney stack (Fig 11) was built backing on to the cross passage. This made the cross passage at this point very narrow with barely enough room to get to the service room doors. It may be that a new door was made in truss I/J, just inside the west door. The studs were missing from this part of the wall. This would have enabled people to go past the chimney straight into the service area, where there may not have been a dividing wall between the two rooms. The cooking may have been done at this new fireplace, allowing the old kitchen (?) to be floored over to create more space. The siting of the new chimney would allow the householder to sit on his bench at the high end and face the fire, even though it would be about 15 foot away. Another change was the construction of a new screen against the flank of the stairs in the service room. This screen was made up of vertical boards, painted white with at least two horizontal battens.

We get all the discoverable documentary history from the book by A.R. West called "A history of Easthorpe, Essex". Flispes was a detached part of the manor of Bockingham Hall, comprising six acres. During the 14th and 15th centuries Flispes was occupied by the Flisp family. There is a will of Richard Flisp who died in 1419. Late in the 15th century the Flisps were replaced by the Ardleigh family. By 1576 Peter Spilman was in occupation, followed by William Eatney who died in 1592. The Eatneys kept the farm until the death of William's wife in 1611, when it passed to Anthony Ashe.

What is the dating of the house and its later internal brick chimney? The halved and bridled scarf joints of the top plates finish about 1600. The clasp purlin roof comes to Essex either in 1500 or 1550 depending on which authority you consult. Queen strut roofs with vertical struts come in about 1550. Diamond mullion windows in main rooms finish about 1600. Taking all this into account, the most likely date is somewhere between 1550 and 1600. The new brick chimney is likely to be 1650 or later as that is when brick becomes cheap enough for ordinary householders to afford. If we look at the documentary evidence the most likely time of construction

for our building is either 1576 for Peter Spilman or circa 1590 for William Eatney.

Flispes is a fascinating transitional building half way between the old medieval house with its open hall and the new fully floored houses with internal brick chimney stacks, such as the lobby entrance houses with their central stacks. It is surprising to find a house of this date and size with thatch. In this part of Essex most of the surviving houses of this date are tiled with thatch confined to farm buildings. We think of Easthorpe as being a rural village but this house is in fact only about 150 metres from the old London to Colchester Road, so the activity in the extra bay may be related to access to a good main road. I should like to thank Dave Stenning for his help and advice in the preparation of this article and for the illustrations and photographs of the model he made of Flispes.

References

West, A.R A history of Easthorpe, Essex, 1989

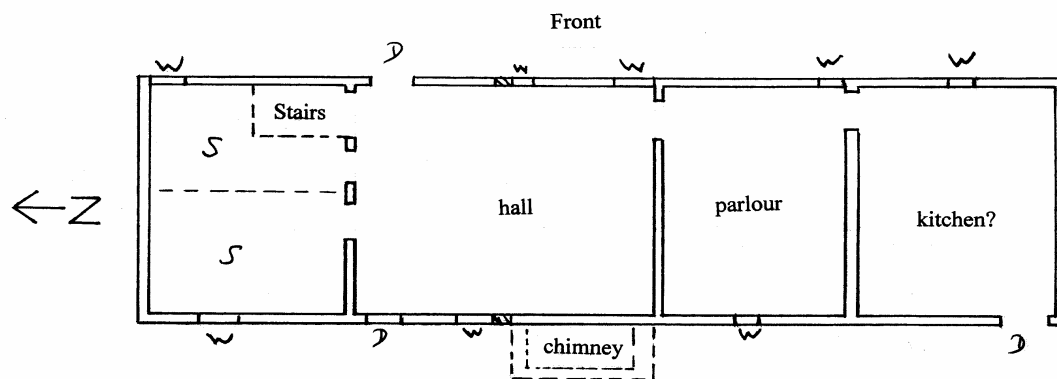


Figure1: Flispes, Easthorpe, plan of ground floor

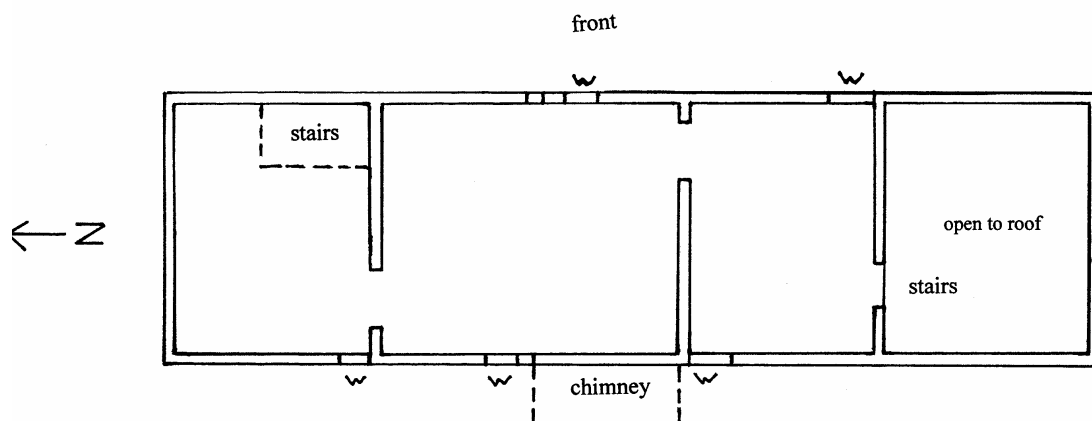


Figure2 : Flispes, easthorpe, plan of upper floor

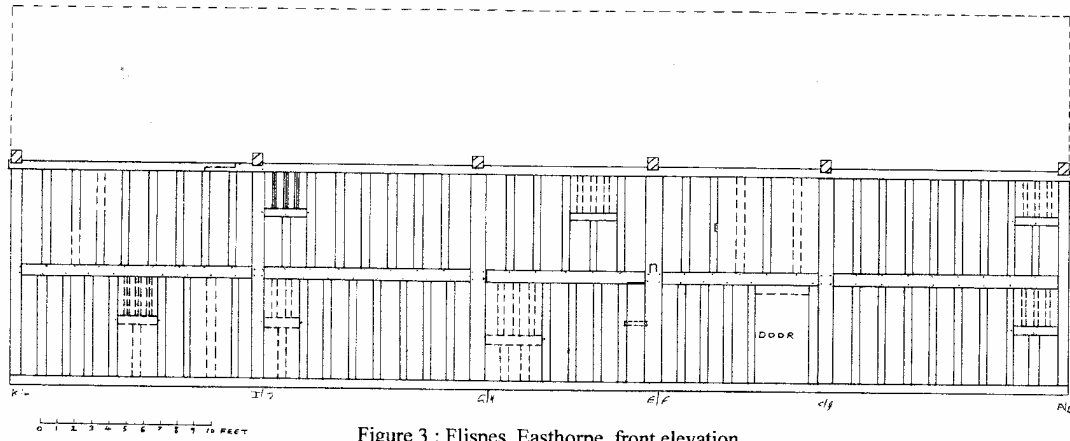


Figure 3 : Flispes, Easthorpe, front elevation

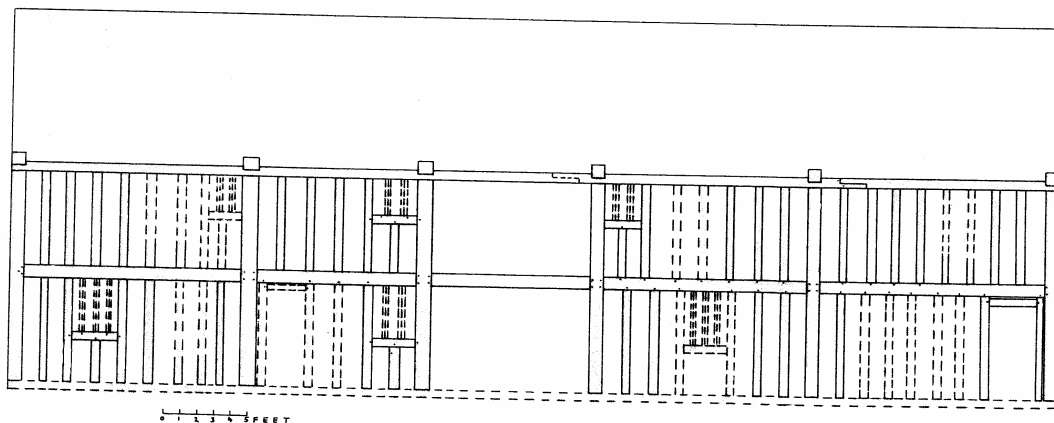


Figure 4: Flispes, Easthorpe, rear elevation

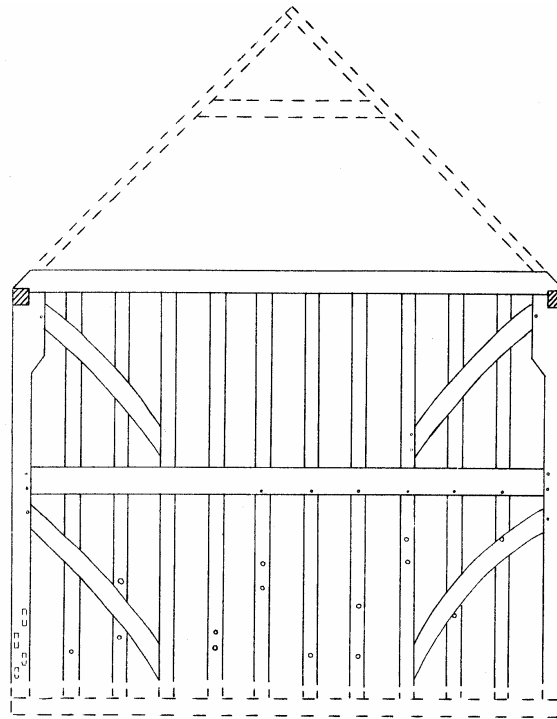


Figure 5: Flispes, Easthorpe, truss K/L

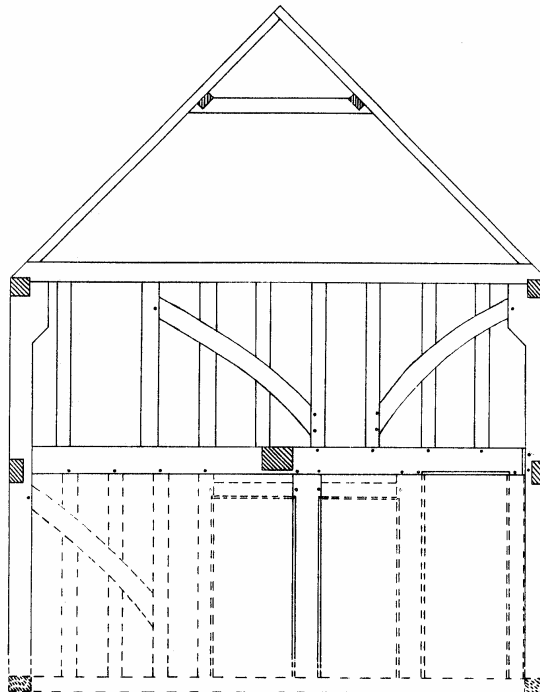


Figure 6: Flispes, Easthorpe, truss I/J

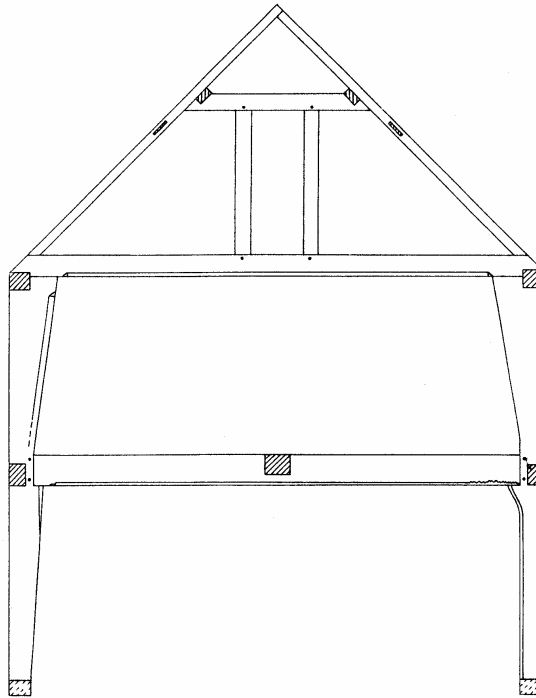


Figure 7: Flispes, Eastthorpe, truss G/H

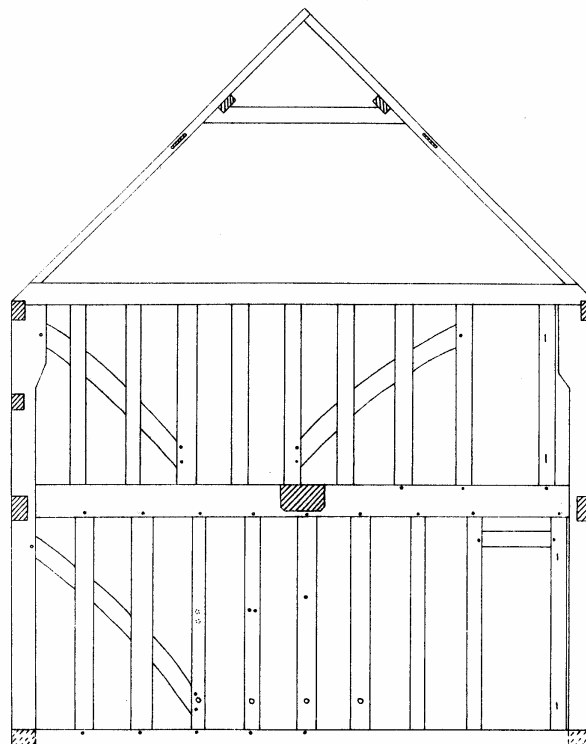


Figure 8 : Flispes, Eastthorpe, truss E/F

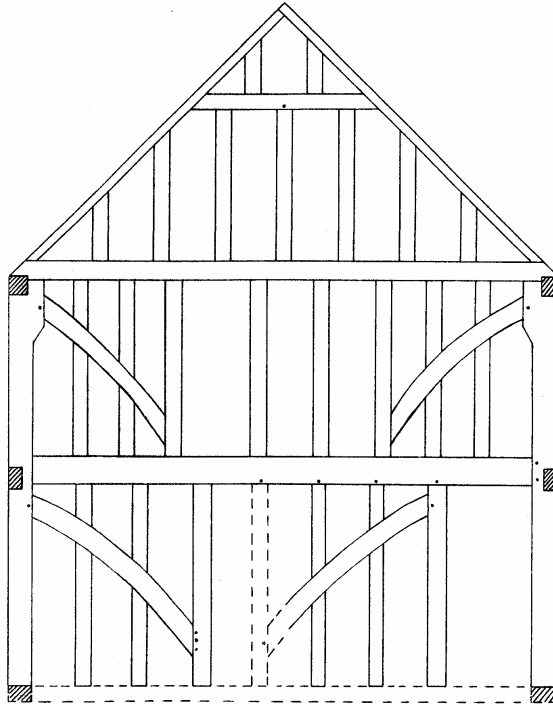


Figure 9 : Flispes, Eastthorpe, truss C/D

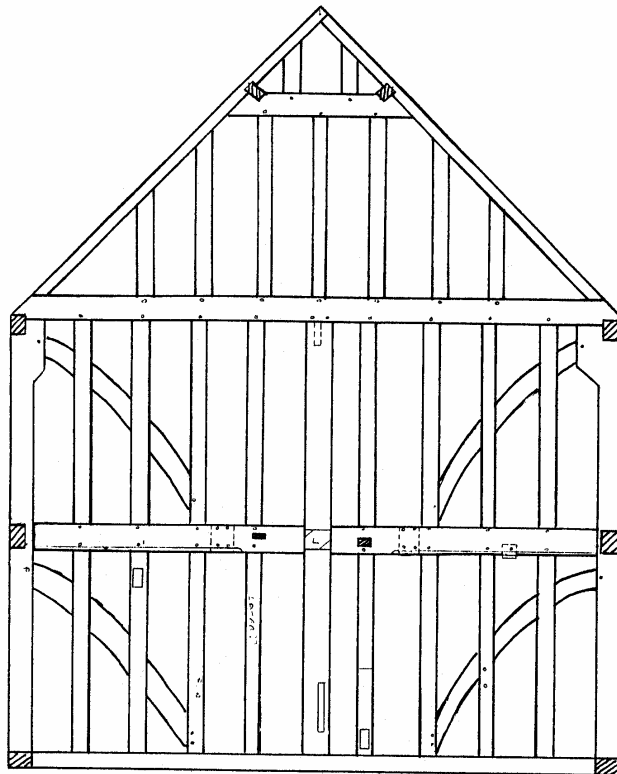


Figure 10 : Flispes, Eastthorpe, truss A/B

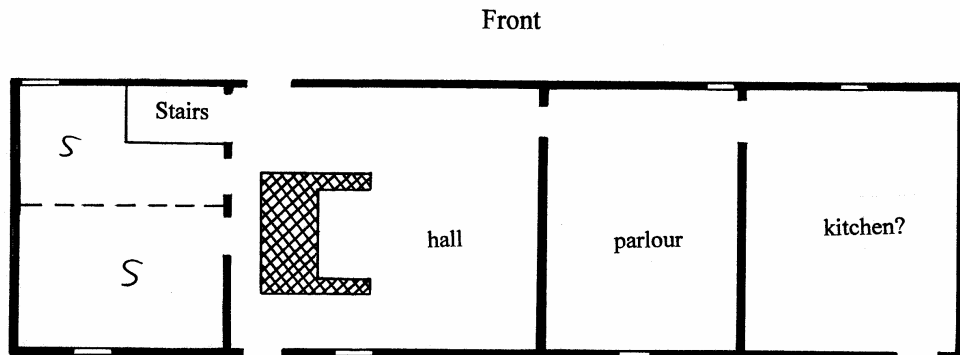
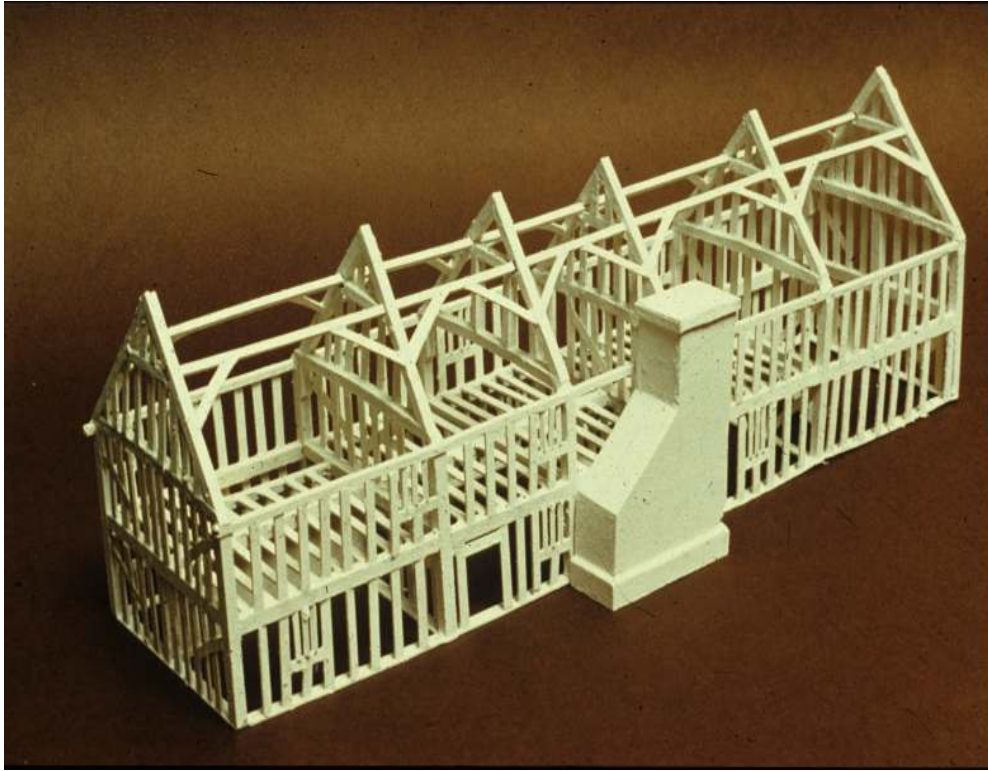


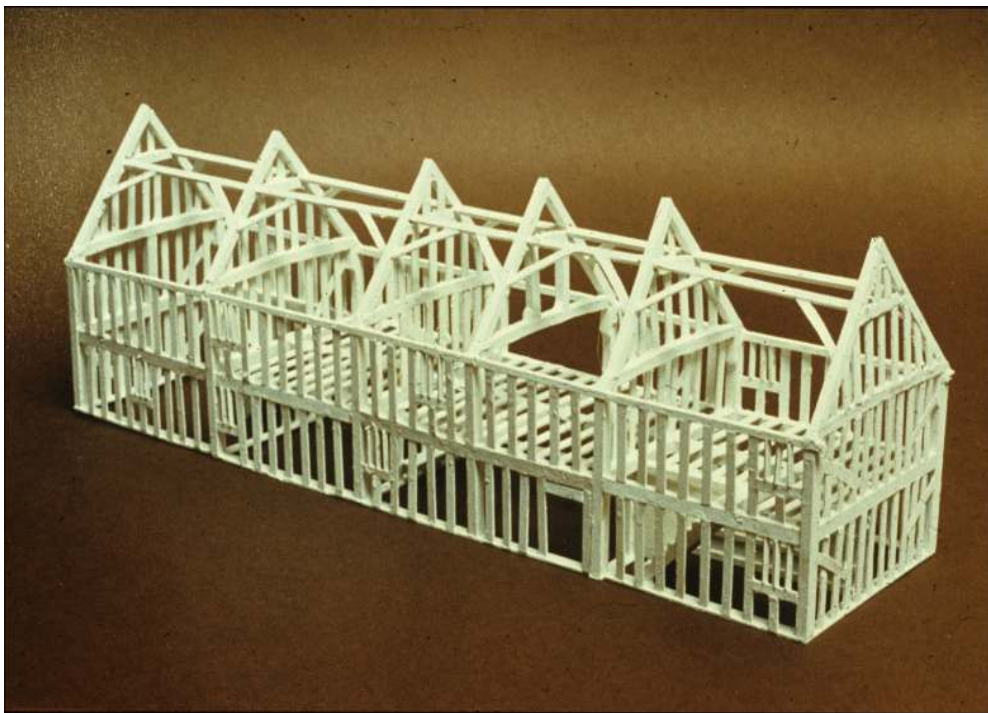
Figure 11 : Flispes, Eastthorpe, plan of phase 2



Flispes, Eastthorpe, after renovation, with bay window replacing chimney stack.



Flispes, Easthorpe: Model - View to South-East



Flispes, Easthorpe: Model - View to South-West

BOOK REVIEWS**Europe's lost world: the rediscovery of Doggerland**

V. Gaffney, S. Fitch and D.J. Smith (foreword by Tony Robinson)

Review by Gill Shrimpton

Until recently we'd hardly heard of Doggerland, and the book paints an amazing picture of a lost landscape and throws a whole new light on our understanding of the Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic peoples.

The first chapter deals with the geological history and background, with charts showing the extent and retreat of successive ice sheets. It includes a re-examination of the huge quantity of items dredged by trawlermen from the seabed of the North Sea, i.e. bones and fossils of extinct animals.

This is followed by chapters dealing with the Mesolithic, a remarkable account emphasising again the huge changes which took place during this largely undefined and very long period.

At the beginning there was no "British Isles" and by the end our coastline was becoming apparent and entirely separate from Europe. It would seem it was a culture defined by a landscape due to cooling temperatures and there is clearly much more to learn—an exciting prospect!

The book is quite scientific in presentation and very well illustrated with easy to understand maps and charts.

Finally, as well as providing an insight into the lives of our ancestors it gives us dire warning of the effects of climate change and rising sea levels on future generations.

Anglo-Saxon Crafts

Kevin Leahy (Tempus 2003)

Review by Anna Moore

(available from the CAG library, ref. V975)

Kevin Leahy is the Principal Keeper for Archaeology at the North Lincolnshire Museum, but it is as National Advisor on Early Medieval Metalwork for the Portable Antiquities Scheme that he became better known recently, when he was called in to assess the Staffordshire Hoard.

This book was written in 2003 and is a very comprehensive account of the crafts and craftsmanship of the Anglo-Saxon period. Evidence comes mainly from archaeology and the study of finds, with a limited amount of information from manuscripts. Grave goods provide a great deal of the material from the early Anglo-Saxon period, but from the time of the introduction of Christianity, evidence has to come from elsewhere. This gap has been filled by finds from urban excavations and from greatly increased reporting from metal detectorists through the Portable Antiquities Scheme. Many of the examples in the book come from Coppergate in York (better known as Jorvik). The author has also drawn on evidence from Scandinavia, Europe and Ireland, as well as the work carried out by re-enactment groups and experimental archaeologists, such as at West Stow.

Each craft in the book has its own chapter, and each chapter is broken down into sub-headings covering tools, methods of working and finished articles. The longer chapters are naturally those on wood/timber and metalworking, but other Anglo-Saxon crafts such as glass-making, leather-working and textiles are all described clearly and in detail. However, it is perhaps in the description of some of the minor crafts that the period really comes to life. For example, there is a discussion of how metal wire may have been made; recipes for two types of black ink used for writing manuscripts; the description of the brassing of cast-iron bells to enable them to ring (or, as the author points out, clank).

The book is well illustrated, with colour plates of many famous artefacts, such as the Fuller Brooch from the British Museum and the silk 'St Cuthbert's stole' from Durham Cathedral. Perhaps more interesting are the numerous line drawings, many by the author himself, showing techniques of manufacture. A few more of these would have been useful. For instance, in Chapter 1 there is a paragraph on a bed found in a burial illuminative than the rather wordy description, as would an illustration of the finer points of grubenhauser

with an account of a possible reconstruction. A line drawing in this instance would have been much more illuminative than the rather wordy description, as would an illustration of the finer points of grubenhauser construction.

These are minor quibbles however. For a comprehensive and detailed account of a fascinating subject, which provides not only a useful reference, but also 'a good read', this is the book to go for.

REPORTS OF LECTURES 2008-9

THE IRON AGE ENCLOSURE AT TEYBROOK FARM, GREAT TEY

CAG Fieldwork Team

6th October 2008

Report by Jean Roberts

John Mallinson and Don Goodman, prompted by Pauline Skippins, Site Director, told us about the site, after the formal meeting of the AGM.

The site had been known about from 1975, when aerial photographs, taken by Mrs Ida McMaster, revealed a rhomboidal site in a field at Teybrook Farm, Great Tey. Magnetometry by Aline and David Black in 2005 confirmed the existence of a ditched structure, which they located accurately on the ground.

In 2007 Mr Richard Browning, the owner of the land, gave permission for trial trenches to be dug by the CAG Fieldwork Team which exposed a large ditch containing Iron Age pottery. It was decided to continue to explore the site and the obliging farmer supplied a digger and driver to take off 30cm of the topsoil over about a third of the 0.4 acre area inside the surrounding ditch. Linear, circular and rectangular features were found, as well as the entrance in the ditch. One of the circular features was a round house surrounded by a deep gully full of material, including a triangular loom weight, a point for leather work, fragmented pots, and burnt flint. Near the end of the first year dig, a cremation burial (F09) was found, at the end of one of the linear features. This burial was subsequently thought to have been a wooden box containing pots and other things with a haunch of meat on top of the box. The box had collapsed exposing 9 pots, a lid, 5 beakers, a flagon, copper alloy strip (? from the box) and vertebrae from an animal.

At the start of the 2nd year more of the inside of the site was stripped and 5 more burials came to light. In burial 2 (F106) 3 beautiful copper alloy brooches were found, together with 5 pots, a flagon, an almost pristine platter and more animal bones. Burial 3 contained another platter, a hone stone, small shears and a cylindrical object with what are thought to be rivets. In burial 5 were 6 pots, tall jars, a disc, cremated human bones, a tazer, and more animal vertebrae.

By the end of the dig in 2008 the whole of the inside of the ditch had been stripped and a small ditch outside the entrance was found which could have been a drainage ditch.

Conclusions are that the site was an Iron Age settlement site c 200 -50 BC and then a burial site in the very late Iron Age. As the farmer needed the field for crops the whole site was backfilled, leaving lots of questions still unanswered.

MRS ABIGAIL ABDY AND HER RECIPE BOOK OF 1665

Shirley Durgan, formerly of Essex VCH

13th October 2008

Report by Janet Harrison

Mrs Durgan discovered information about the Abdy family at Essex Record Office in documents of Copford Parish and Copford Hall.

The family originally came from Yorkshire. Antony Abdy was a London merchant, he became an alderman in 1630 and Sheriff of London in 1640. His son Thomas was born in 1612 and married Mary, b.1617, co-heir of Lineas Corsellis, in 1638. In 1641 Thomas was made 1st Baronet of Felix Hall, Kelvedon. Mary bore him three children, Jane b.1639 died young, Rachel b.1640 and Abigail in 1644. Mary died in 1645.

In 1647 Thomas married Anne Soames and had more children. As Abigail grew up she helped her step-mother with the younger children and around the house. She collected recipes and wrote them in a brown-covered book with roughly cut paper. In 1673 Abigail married Sir Mark Guyon, a clothier of Coggeshall. He had two children from a previous marriage and Abigail bore him a child. Sir Mark bought Dynes Hall at Maplestead. Abigail died in 1679. Sir Mark married for the third time. He died in 1690 and is buried in

Coggeshall church.

Mrs Dorothy Harrison of Pink Cottage, Copford wrote a short article about Abigail's recipe book in 1920. The book is entitled "Mrs Abigail Abdy her book" and dated 1665. This was the year of the plague in London, thought to be the bubonic plague. The book contains thirty recipes in Abigail's hand, three in a different hand and seven in yet another hand. The majority of the recipes are for medicines with six specifically for plague. There are medicines for consumption, smallpox, colds and rickets, for eye ointments and even some for horses and for "a very good drink for a Bullock". There are not many recipes for food but there are a few for cakes as sugar was more available by this time. Mrs Durgan handed out recipes for Plague water, Consumption water, "Balls for a horse that hath a cold" and Paris Pye, but I don't think I will try any of them.

WORLD WAR TWO DEFENCES OF COLCHESTER

Fred Nash, Military Archaeologist, Essex County Council

20th October 2008

Report by Ron Cattrell

The evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk in the summer of 1940 of over 200,000 men and the loss of their equipment, armour and heavy guns resulted in the possibility of a German invasion and it was considered that the area around Colchester would be an ideal location from which invading forces could launch an attack as it was within a reasonable distance of London and the Midlands and had good rail and road connections.

After the events of 1940 a full-scale programme was put into operation to construct defences which included anti-tank defences, strong points, the building of pillboxes, gun emplacements, anti-aircraft gun sites and road barriers.

The Eastern Command Line was the first defence line to be constructed which utilised the River Colne as a natural tank barrier and also the rail line as far as Mount Bures was defended with machine gun positions and barbed wire entanglements protecting vulnerable points.

Colchester was declared an "anti-tank island" and had an anti-tank ditch dug around its perimeter. This was protected by pillboxes, infantry positions and road barriers which in many cases were manned by the Home Guard who were allotted the task of manning the internal defences of the town. From an under-equipped defence force in 1940 it became a much more formidable organisation by 1942 with anti-tank, anti-aircraft and coastal batteries supported by infantry units. The strength of the Home Guard had risen to over 2000 men who had a large range of weapons in their armoury such as 2-pounder anti-tank guns, heavy and light machine guns and 6-pounder Hotchkiss guns.

The coastal defence of the area around Mersea Island was the responsibility of the Coastal Artillery who had 4.7 inch guns in location on the island. The one at Cudmore Grove Country Park had 2 guns supported by searchlight facility and guarded on its flanks by pillboxes. West Mersea was defended by a very similar Coastal Artillery battery.

The air defences were operated from three airfields, namely Boxted, Wormingford and Birch. The first two airfields were bases utilised by the US 8th Air Force whose personnel flew Mustang fighters and light bombers. Birch airfield was never an operational base for the 8th American Air Force and was only utilised as a glider base for the British 6th Airborne Division in their assault to cross the Rhine into Germany in the later stages of the war under the code name of "Operation Varsity".

The remains of bunkers and hideouts which were to be used by the Auxiliary Units of the British Resistance were built in great secrecy. These units were trained as saboteurs to operate behind the German lines from their bases in dense woodland. The Gravel Pit Wood in Copford is an excellent example of this type of facility and other such facilities were established in Chest Wood, Layer-de-la-Haye, Wivenhoe Wood and Maldon.

The legacy of this period is duly illustrated by the anti-tank defences in Castle Park, Colchester, the sea defences of Mersea Island that are falling into the sea through coastal erosion, the airfields that have been returned to farmland and of course by many of the pillboxes and steel defences which caused traffic hazards and were cleared from our roadsides once the threat of invasion had ceased.

The recording of the Borough's World War II defences began in 1993 and has continued over the past 14 years. The condition of each site and the possible survival of each site has been noted in the Essex County Council Historic Environment Record.

THE SFB IN ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

Jess Tipper, Suffolk CC Archaeology Service

27th October 2008

Report by David Black

Dating from the 5th to 7th century the variously named Sunken Featured (or Sunken Floored) Buildings "SFB's" have been found throughout North Western Europe, where they are known as "Grubenhaus" (meaning pit house) and in England (mainly East Anglia and Lincolnshire) where they are found quite often on Early and Middle Anglo-Saxon sites. Common to all of them is the lowering of the surface level inside the building.

SFB's typically appear as a sub-rectangular hollow in the ground, about 3m by 4m, and are usually (but not always) found with postholes (2 or 6, sometimes only 1) in or around them. They are often interpreted as post built structures, shaped a bit like a tent, with a raised wooden floor and a small shallow cellar like cavity (only 100 to 250mm deep) underneath.

Since their discovery in the 1920's these buildings have been subject to much archaeological debate as to their purpose and use but this is still poorly understood. Were they huts, houses, barns, weaving sheds, workshops, animal pens? Was the floor of the building at the bottom of the pit (a sunken floor building) or were planks laid at ground level to act as the floor (a sunken feature building)? Remains of planks have been found in two burnt out SFBs at West Stowe.

Characteristic of the buildings is the large amount of debris found within them - pottery shards, animal bones, loom weights. Did this fall through gaps between the floor planks or were the Anglo-Saxons so squalid that they just dumped their rubbish around themselves?

The lecturer has examined in some detail the sites at Mucking (Essex), West Stow (Suffolk), Bloodmoor Hill (SW of Lowestoft) and West Hesterton (Yorkshire), examining debris and its distribution. Most but not all of the animal skeletons were disarticulated and so could have fallen between the planks. Examination of distinctive pottery shards revealed that only 10% or so of a particular pot was in a specific building and the rest was spread over quite a large area.

In the lecturer's opinion most of the rubbish commonly found within SFBs is not contemporary with the occupation and use of the building but was dumped after it was taken out of use. Was this the precursor of Council rubbish dumps?

DEFENDING THE HARBOUR: LANDGUARD FORT

Dave Wood, Trustee Landguard Fort Trust

3rd November 2008

Report by John Wallace

A map was shown indicating the strategic location of Landguard Point, dominating the entrance to the River Orwell, especially the deep water channel on the north bank. There were a number of fortifications built on this point, the first being an earthwork (bulwark) in 1540. In 1543 Henry VIII had two block houses built which eventually deteriorated and a new fort was built 1626. It was square with a bastion at each corner. This was a major fortification guarding not only Felixstowe but the gateway to the east coast before the Humber. In July 1667 Dutch warships attacked Landguard Fort. It was defended and the Dutch repelled by the Duke of Albany's Maritime Regiment (forerunners of The Royal Marines).

In 1717 a new fort was built of brick with 15 – 20 guns. The site was used to test various firing techniques and ammunition against arrangements of ships' rigging to try out its effectiveness. In 1744 a new brick fort was built in the form of a pentagon (which survives today), Captain Philip Thickness was Governor 1753 – 66.

Sir Thomas Hyde Page was the engineer who dug wells and extended the fort c1871

Access from the fort to the outside area was via farmland owned by a Col. George Thomlin which caused some problems. This was however solved by purchase of the land by the Government for £1900. A photograph of the drawbridge (dated 1858) at the entrance to the fort was shown. In 1875 a 38 ton, rifled, muzzle loaded gun provided the main defence. Also around this time a seven gun casement battery was constructed, facing the river. This housed four 12.5 inch and three 10 inch rifled, muzzle loaded guns. A semi-circular block attached to the casement contained the barracks and the internal defensive position.

In the 1880's a special minefield was laid in the river adjacent to the fort. The mines were filled with gun cotton, an explosive material which is only safe when wet. The mines were individually connected by wires to a central control building in such a manner that they could be exploded electrically exactly under the target vessel. In the 1900's breech loading guns were installed.

In WWII a boom was laid across the estuary. In 1956 a special gun to counter motor torpedo boats was placed in a tower. The gun had a firing rate of 72 rounds per minute

A slide showed the site of three gun emplacements in the left battery dating from 1891. It housed two 6 inch and one 10 inch guns. The 10 inch gun utilized a special hydro – pneumatic drop mount which required very deep emplacement allowing it to retract below the top for re-loading after firing.

The fort was disbanded as a coastal artillery unit although part of it was used as a radar plotting room during the Cold War period.

Record of personnel serving at the fort

1528	126 men
1662	12 officers 110 men
1870	4 officers 80 men
1898	3 officers 3 men
1930	3 personnel
1931	

FACETS OF STONE TOOLS, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO FLINT DAGGERS

Hazel Martingell, free-lance illustrator and flint specialist

10th November 2008

Report by Tim Dennis

Hazel Martingell is very well-known to the Group, and describes herself as a freelance illustrator and lithics analyst, both of which were evident in her presentation.

The manufacture of stone tools is thought to have originated in Africa around 2 million years before present, with the first evidence in west Asia/south-eastern Europe around 1.5 years ago. Interestingly, a parallel expansion seems to have happened further east, with identical forms appearing contemporaneously in India. There is evidence that the use of flint tools stops where bamboo becomes common.

With recent discoveries of worked flint objects from Pakefield and Happisburgh, the start of the Lower Palaeolithic in Britain has quite recently been pushed back to around 700,000 BP. The creatures who made these tools were, of course, not modern humans, or necessarily direct ancestors. *Homo Heidelbergensis* is the most likely candidate. After an absence during the Ipswichian interglacial, early modern humans appear in Britain from around 50,000 BP. Industrial flint working in more or less sophisticated forms continued up to the early 20th century, with its use as a "strike-a-light". With new and restored buildings using knapped flint for structural or decorative purposes, the skills are still practised.

The basic flint-working techniques remain the same throughout, so characteristic features, like a well-formed striking platform, bulb of percussion and edge retouch can usually differentiate a worked specimen from one that has formed naturally by frost shattering or from plough damage. Even the earliest specimens show astonishing skill in execution, and many are works of great beauty.

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The basic flint-working techniques remain the same throughout, so characteristic features, like a well-formed striking platform, bulb of percussion and edge retouch can usually differentiate a worked specimen from one that has formed naturally by frost shattering or from plough damage. Even the earliest specimens show astonishing skill in execution, and many are works of great beauty.

Hazel's research interest lies in flint daggers, which in Britain have a characteristic broad blade which differentiates them from the slender types found in the flint-bearing regions of northern Germany and Denmark. Around 12 are known from Essex alone, all associated with river valleys, the main communication and trading routes of post-glacial times. The aim of the research is to illustrate and catalogue in one publication the specimens dispersed in museums and private collections, records of which may be limited to a hand-written entry in an acquisition list.

POTS, PANS AND PINS: ROMAN FINDS FROM RECENT EXCAVATIONS AT DRAPERS' GARDENS IN THE WALBROOK VALLEY, THE CITY OF LONDON

James Gerrard, Roman Specialist, Pre-Construct Archaeology

17th November 2008

Report by Hazel West

James Gerrard has been excavating a site in what was the upper Walbrook valley in the City of London. Until the Victorian era, this area had been the gardens of the Draper's company and was therefore largely undisturbed with no medieval remains. The demolition of a 1960s RBS building presented an opportunity for excavation.

The area was subject to water logging and throughout the Roman period much effort was put by them into trenching and making and repairing wood lined channels and wooden pipes. The wet ground has meant that the finds have been excellently preserved. Previous excavations, adjacent to the site, had produced pots and metal work indicating that it was the industrial part of Londinium.

The earliest evidence found was of a possible track way made of branches or wooden slats (64AD). Could it have been a way onto ramparts during the Boudican raids? Other early wooden structures included a collapsed tower, a door with fittings (Britain's oldest door?), an oil pot with its footings removed and the coffin of a baby who was probably less than 6 months. Several other small coffins were discovered. Rubbish was covering the site and a drainage channel went alongside it.

Overlying the early findings were many buildings of wood and clay dating from the 3rd century. One that had been burnt down had evidence of a plank floor resting on wooden joists. Another fine floor had timbers 18" wide; was it a warehouse? A bread oven and shovel (results of tests not yet available) were identified.

These buildings were alongside a substantial channel that was crossed by bridges onto a parallel road way. The thinking was that the excavations were at the back entrance to the buildings.

In a tight area close to one of the bridges there were coins of Marcus Aurelius. (TRP 8,9,10). . Previously only 2 no.9s have been found at Bath and Wells respectively. Other goods found in the area included pots that had had holes drilled in them (to kill them i.e render them useless), a 5ft. high wooden ladder, ladies' heads from statues, a bronze cast iron mount, a ruler with inches and groups of three marked, a bronze bell of unknown purpose, a bear's head and more. Much seemed to originate abroad or at a distance from the site. There were Gaulish black slipped pottery sherds, a Gaulish wine amphora with an inscription, barrels with text in cursive script and in all 45000 sherds; 4000 of amphora and 5000 of samian.

The Hoard

By the 4th century wells were in use. In one the final hoard was found. The artifacts were buried in two sections. Curiously the newest objects were at the bottom and were separated by infill from the upper and earlier finds. Under the older objects were two Gratian coins 367-383AD. Above the infill were 20 bronze and alloy basins including 11 bowls, 2 buckets (similar to early buckets found in India), a cauldron (of a type common in Sweden), hanging basket (the sort of thing that was used in Christian liturgy), skillets, trivet, pack of Ilchester bowls from Amersham (classic Roman) and coins 335-341AD and 350AD. Were these collected and brought to Britain? and was this a ritual closure of the site?

BARBARISM AND CIVILISATION: THE SECRET OF ROME

Andrew Selkirk, Editor-in-Chief, Current Archaeology

24th November 2008

Report by Barbara Butler

Money made the Roman world go round and, what is more, it was the use of currency which made it one of the greatest, if not the greatest, civilization in the ancient world.

The Romans had a "bad press" he told us and mentioned a work "Rome, Robbery with Violence" by Neil Faulkner. who had argued the Roman Empire was crisis prone, unstable and doomed to collapse, a theory also argued by Martin Millett in "Power in Oligarchy". Such arguments, from ancient Rome's detractors, said Mr Selkirk, were built on the premise that success in the military sphere meant that Rome's Empire and commercial success was reliant on wars of conquest. The Boudican rebellion is indicative, according to the critics of ancient Rome, of immeasurable human misery and resentment against Rome. But, argued Mr Selkirk, the remains of the Roman villa at Dillington, with its mosaics and baths in a country location were completely undefended. Is this not an indication that Romans settled easily into Britain and were in fact mostly welcomed, he asked.

Civilisation, said Mr Selkirk, was indicated by the evidence that the Romans in Britain had spare time. Time for the public baths. He said Roman Britain was not militaristic, that the populace acquiesced and welcomed Roman "peace and prosperity". It was a "civilised era for Britain," he argued.

What was the attraction of the Roman "package"?, asked Mr Selkirk. People, he said had greater choice in their private lives and as an example he mentioned Catullus's poetry which is full of love and kisses. A Roman woman, he argued, could be "her own woman" and had to be persuaded to bestow her favours. Mr Selkirk illustrated his argument here by comparing Ovid and "The Art of Love" with the modern magazine Cosmopolitan. This he said was the distinction between barbarism and civilisation and argued that the Roman world was like a modern open society. The Roman economy, he said, was successful and prosperous, a market economy based on money. Those who disliked this compared it to a capitalist society.

It had been preceded by gift exchange and money had originated with the Greeks in Asia Minor, in Ephesus in about 550BC. Athens, he argued, adopted coinage and made leaps ahead to become the most important city in Greece. The invention of democracy was simultaneous with the use of money, he said and this was followed by a flowering of theatre, art and literature. But Sparta rejected both money and democracy. This community was more warlike, had few "experts" and its people were less skilled and declined as a result. Mr Selkirk compared Athenians praising Sparta to English intellectuals praising Russia in the 1930s and then he said it was only when Greece became part of the Roman Empire that it became "civilised" and achieved stability.

The secret of Rome's success was the free trade in the Empire, the right of migration and the right of marriage, said Mr Selkirk.

Money in the Roman empire caused social change, Society was more free and more open. The earliest Roman money, he said, was bronze and occurs about 450 BC in the Greek area around Naples. Wrecked ships found in the Mediterranean indicated the success of Roman trading. Then the Romans started using barrels instead of amphorae and might have obscured archaeologists' interpretation of wrecks as indicative of the decline of trade.

Mr Selkirk suggested that the walls were built around the town of Pompeii to deny entry to surrounding peoples who wanted a Roman identity, rather than for warlike purposes. This is indicated, he argued, by the language spoken in the Roman city, which changed from Oscan to Latin. The earliest British coin was 100BC when the country was dominated by hillforts and Britons started drinking from beakers and eating from plates. Distribution of Celtic coins matches those of Roman villas. Mr Selkirk compared the post Second World War German economic revival to the post Boudican rebellion situation in Roman Britain.

He argued the decline of the Roman Empire was due to the spread of Christianity and inflation and gave the Snodland hoard in Kent as an example. The thousands of coins found there were indicative of their worthlessness and rampant inflation in the late 4th century, he said. Post Roman Britain, said Mr Selkirk, was uncivilised as the large scale agricultural and pottery production was replaced by smaller scale cultivation and pot making in the "bottom of the garden".

By playing down the use of military power and ignoring the slave culture, Mr Selkirk sought to convince us the Roman Empire was the most civilised in the ancient world. His lecture certainly gave rise to a few comments as we went home.

TALES OF THE WHOLLY UNEXPECTED; or EXHIBITING BABYLON

Irving Finkel, Assistant Keeper, Dept. Of the Middle East, British Museum

1st December 2008

Notes taken by Mary Coe

Irving Finkel is the Assistant Keeper in the Dept of the Middle East at the BM and had responsibility for the 'Babylon' exhibition. He is one of only a few people able to read cuneiform. The site of Babylon was damaged in 2003 when the allies built a camp there. The BM did a survey and found that many people did not know that Babylon had been a real city or where it was.

Nebuchadnezzar II was a long lived king of the sinful but major city of Babylon during the 6th century BC. The exhibition begins with some walling of coloured bricks. One piece shows a composite dragon-like animal and another, a lion, both pieces having a blue background. Babylon had first been excavated by the Germans, beginning in 1897 and lasting for 20 years. All the finds were taken back to Berlin and some are in the exhibition.

The Tower of Babel is mentioned in the Book of Genesis, as an explanation for the number of languages spoken. The tower, properly called a ziggurat, was built in Babylon, as a structure meant to reach Heaven. God disapproved and stopped the work by causing everyone to speak a different language. The building was stepped to 70m or more high, and was the largest structure in the city. It was built of bricks of which 1 in 10 were stamped with the name of Nebuchadnezzar. The ground plan now exists only as a muddy ditch. The exhibition included four paintings which depict the Tower in different ways.

The BM has 130,000 pieces of clay inscribed with cuneiform and the exhibition includes many of them. Irving referred to them as 'dog biscuits'. One of these told of Nebuchadnezzar's building works. One tablet gives the principles of architecture with sizes and shapes based on the ziggurat. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon are known only from Greek authors, who describe them and how they were irrigated. There is no trace of them on the ground and they are not mentioned by Nebuchadnezzar. Gardens were common in Syria and Mesopotamia and Nebuchadnezzar almost certainly had one but it would not warrant a mention. The Gardens are the only one of the Seven Wonders of the World whose existence is not known for sure. A tablet lists the plants in the Royal Gardens of Merodach-baladan, who was king 100 years before Nebuchadnezzar. It lists 90 plants some of which are herbs still grown and one called 'slave-girls' buttocks'

The first siege of Jerusalem took place in 597BC, a date given in a chronicle, on a tablet which is now broken. In the second siege, the temple was destroyed and the people taken to Babylon. Here, a contemporary tablet agrees with the Old Testament account. A small tablet details sums of money paid into a bank by the king's chief eunuch who is named. His name and title also appear in the Bible.

The Babylonians had a large pantheon of gods but this changed to the idea of only one god, with many facets. A tablet lists the gods but adds that he is 'Marduk of' something. Marduk was the name of the chief god.

Rembrandt painted a picture of King Belshazzar, who followed Nebuchadnezzar, at a feast during which writing by the hand of God appeared on the wall. The words 'Mene mene tekel u-pharsin' were written in Aramaic but Belshazzar did not understand them. Daniel interpreted them as predicting the end of Babylon.

The Cyrus Tablet, written by the King of the Persians, was found at Babylon. It has been described as the first charter of human rights. In fact, the tablet carries propaganda, telling the Babylonians that life would be better under the Persians.

A large piece of a tablet gives recipes by Abaknana, an exorcist. Between the lines of writing there is a picture of a king on his throne and a man standing behind is carrying a pole. This may be a pattern for a model to be made as part of the recipe. A piece of papyrus has numbers written in Greek. It is an astrological table which has been derived from a Babylonian tablet. It is from the Babylonian number system that we divide the hour into 60 minutes and the minute into 60 seconds.

Some tablets were school exercises. One has a piece written in Babylonian, with a translation in Greek on the other side. Another, dating to about 500BC has the Aramaic alphabet written in Babylonian characters. Most people would have been bilingual in Babylonian and Aramaic.

At the end of the exhibition there is the shop, which sells two books. One tells the story of Babylon using the exhibition for illustrations and the other a much smaller book. As something different, Irving had arranged for a watch to be made with cuneiform numbers.

This was an excellent, interesting talk, with plenty of humour.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF RITUAL AND MAGIC

Mark Curteis, Heritage Learning Officer, ECC

12th January 2009

Report by Anna Moore

The significance that ritual played in the deposit of archaeological finds was up until recently out of favour but is now recognised as a suitable subject for study. Many objects did not go into the ground by mistake but were deliberately deposited, e.g. the famous gold stater of Cunobelin from Camulodunum. Most finds like this come from sites such as temples and shrines, or places associated with spirits and gods, such as springs and groves of trees.

Finds from sites such as the Witham Romano-Celtic temple, which is easily identified, are likely to have been ritually deposited, but other types of sites are more difficult to interpret; not all elements of a sacred site may have survived so ritual deposits may not be recognised. Metal detectorists may find ritual or votive hoards. Many ritual objects are miniature copies of items such as axes or swords; many have been ritually 'killed' by being bent or having holes drilled in them. It is thought that objects were considered to have their own spirit and that this 'killing' may represent the releasing of the spirit. Temples dedicated to different gods will produce different types of finds, e.g. a goddess may require jewellery to be deposited, whereas Mars would need weapons such as axes and swords.

Metal objects were often deposited in water, a convention which continues today, with coins being thrown into fountains. Human skulls were also sometimes deposited deliberately. Coins deposited ritually seem to have been chosen for the image on them.

Romano-Celtic temples were often placed deliberately on tribal boundaries, for demarcation; similarly water was seen as a boundary between this world and the world of the spirits.

A pattern has emerged from ditched sites, e.g. a cattle skull either side of the entrance; human bones in the corners with sheep/pig in between. There is evidence of the ditch being dug, deposits placed in them and then backfilled very soon after. In Mirebeau, France, a layer of black organic material consisted of centuries of deposits of vegetable matter, together with animal bones and ceramics, suggesting centuries of feasting and celebrating. Some sites consist of large pits (giving access to the underworld?) containing deposits. Finds of ritually deposited material help with the interpretation of a site and it is now thought that many Iron Age sites previously interpreted as hillforts may not be forts at all but ritual meeting places containing magical ceremonial areas with complicated entrances demarcating the interior from the exterior. At Hunsbury Hillfort, for example, human skulls were found with three holes drilled in them in order to hang them up; pottery was also drilled with three holes, three being a number with magical significance. A special type of decorated and burnished pottery was made solely for use at the hillfort; over 500 quernstones (perhaps associated with fertility) were placed in large pits scattered across the site. There was no evidence of domestic building but there was metal work to do with agriculture, also a wine strainer and a sword scabbard bent into three.

The deposition of ritual or votive objects continued well into the Christian period, up until at least the 16th century, as well as 'witch bottles' containing hair and fingernails etc to protect a household; objects such as shoes were still being deposited next to chimneys, windows and doorways into the 20th century.

DEVELOPMENT OF CASTLE PARK OVER THE LAST 400 YEARS

Ian Baaham, Parks and Recreation Officer, Colchester Borough Council

19th January 2009

Notes by John Spears and Pamela Pudney

Ian commenced by describing the park as the 'jewel in Colchester's crown' and outlined how this area of 60 acres of parkland had been generally available for public access for about two thousand years. The area contains two museums, the castle, Hollytrees House and other buildings. The estimated number of visitors annually is 800,000. It has a Green Flag award and a Green Heritage Award granted in 2002. The Upper Park and Lower Park are divided by the Roman Wall.

The John Speed map of 1610 shows Colchester Castle in decline and by 1629 it was sold by the Crown (Charles I). In 1683 John Wheeley, who had earlier demolished the top storey of the keep, leased the area in front of the castle for a bowling green; in 1705 both castle and grounds were sold to Isaac Rebow.

Hollytrees House was built in 1718 at a cost of £2000 and in 1723 Charles Gray took possession through marriage. He developed the gardens and was influenced by the contemporary English Landscape Movement based on the Palladian style. The castle then became a private folly within the garden.

In 1733 Charles Gray, who owned the freehold, renewed the lease on part of the castle to continue its use as a prison. Within the gardens he attempted to create a water feature in the form of a canal but this proved to be a disaster as the water soaked away! The area is now the formal garden below the temple. However, the recently restored summerhouse built in 1731 was successful as was the rotunda which was moved to its present site in 1737. The northerly aspect from Hollytrees looking towards Highwoods is magnificent and there is pressure from English Heritage to remove the children's play area, which it claims 'disrupts the view'.

Ian then described the Victorian legacy and how John Joslin – ironmonger and manufacturer of agricultural implements – campaigned for recreation areas for the working classes. The Botanical Gardens were opened in 1823 but were on subscription only. Joslin wanted free recreation areas for industrial workers. He petitioned for a public park but funds were not available. The Botanical Gardens closed in 1851 and the area was developed into Castle Road and Roman Road.

Eventually, a bequest by Richard Catchpole of £3000 became available; this, together with £4,600 by public subscription and £3,000 from the Council, resulted in the opening of the park on 20th October 1892 by Mayor Wilson Marriage and the Lord Mayor of London.

The bandstand was added in 1896 at a cost of £200 but there were some objections from churchgoers to Sunday concerts. There were disputes over dogwalking which was eventually allowed in the Lower Park but dogs had to be kept on a lead.

Finally, the War Memorial was built outside the gates in front of the castle at a cost of £23,000 and opened in 1923.

MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

26th January 2009

Report by Hilary Harvey

A Late 1st century roadside Casket Cremation Burial

Mick Matthews

This excavation took place in 2006, following work to discover the route of a possible Roman road from Long Melford to Stanway (Camulodunum). The site, which doesn't show up on aerial photos, is on a steep valley side in the Stour Valley, overlooking the river. There is a known settlement nearby. There have been various finds in the vicinity. The road near the burial appears to be in three phases - one fragment of pot found in the road has been dated to the 1st century. A magnetometry survey by Aline and David Black was not conclusive because of electric fencing nearby.

The burial was found after metal detecting following the finding of scattered pottery sherds disturbed by ploughing. It consisted of a lidded greyware vessel containing cremated bone, also a piece of turned bone, with an unusual 7-piece cosmetic grinder set with animal heads on the handles. There was also a bronze sphere of unknown function, and pipes which seem to fit it. Underneath was evidence of a manganese deposit or organic material, possibly leather, also mineralised cord - either a former for the bronze or a wick, possibly connected to the pipe for libations. Other finds were a glass vessel, molten glass, pieces of mirror which all suggest that it may have been a female burial. There was also a casket-locking mechanism lever, a copper alloy lockbolt and nail, and casket rings, all evidence of a casket burial similar to others in Essex and Hertfordshire. There was no evidence of food or drink vessels or of Samian pottery.

This is a possible ritual site, a burial by a road with a good view across the valley. The possible date is late 1st century, although it could be as early as late Iron Age. Work is continuing on the excavation of the road - this is very much an ongoing project.

"A Ferret's Tale"

Andrew White, Wormingford site director

This site is the group's fieldwork team excavation - it came about when there was a rabbit problem on Sandy Hill, Smallbridge Hall. The owners put a ferret in, which got stuck - when it was rescued part of a foundation was discovered. The Group was invited to get involved in the investigation. When checked, the bricks were found to be possibly Tudor.

It was discovered that a map of 1576 shows a hunting park on the site, and it is known that Queen Elizabeth I visited Church Hall (part of the Smallbridge estate) on progress, when she hunted. The 1777 map shows a lodge, succeeding maps show a building, but no park.

Despite problems with hedges and fencing, Aline and David Black's magnetometry and resistivity surveys show black blobs (indicating brick or stone) and ditches, which may be glacial features..

It was decided to excavate - the first line of bricks with non-mortared buttresses on the south site is now at least 80ft. long. Is it a boundary wall, or a promenade? The large black blob from the survey is a cellared building, with brickwork tumbled inside, although the best brick and tile appears to have been robbed out and used elsewhere.

A smaller black blob is a well, with unmortared brickwork, bricks chamfered to fit, very early Tudor. A feature near the well was found to be a sluice - a jumble of foundations built over.

There has been a huge number of finds - brick and tile, including a fragment of Flemish tile - pottery, including Bellarmine jugs, possibly from Cologne, glass, coins and jetons, which may be connected with hunting and leisure activities.

Personal Reminiscences of James Fawn

Mark Davies

James, although not one of the originals, had been a member since 1961, and Mark had known James since

1970. He was a physicist at Manningtree until the 1980's, then he had more time to devote to his other interests, including archaeology. After being a member for a year, James became PR officer for the Group, and continued being a Committee member until his death, including being Treasurer for 23 years.

James worked on many projects over the years. His tenacity ensured that he found the missing piece of Longinus Sdapeze's tombstone and the site was looked at again. James also worked with Peter Cott on the geophysics surveys at Gosbecks. James will also be remembered for his work on the Red Hills in the 1970's, and for his book "Red Hills of Essex" (1990) - Fawn et al (Mark Davies, Ida McMaster, Kath Evans) is still available.

As well as being tenacious, James was quiet, hardworking, studious and helpful. He attended meetings faithfully and was on various committees. He always encouraged people to get involved.

Mark showed slides of James on various digs and visits. He was usually to be seen wearing his trusty duffel coat, sitting on his three-legged stool. James was a regular attender on trips over the years - the first thing he did on sitting down for a meal was to choose the wine. He enjoyed the social side of life, and always had to have a beer mug with a handle. Mark summed up by saying that James had an engaging personality, good humour and old world charm.

EXCAVATIONS AT BARBER'S POINT ON THE RIVER ALDE

Jezz Meredith, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service

2nd February 2009

Report by Pat Brown

Barber's Point is the end of a promontory on the north bank of the river Alde, three miles from Aldeburgh. It is part of the Hazelwood Marshes Reserve, owned by Suffolk Wildlife Trust. The area around the Alde had been known from the 19th century to have several Romano-British salt workings (red hills), and Middle Saxon settlements. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

In 1907 an excavation had taken place producing Roman pot, tweezers with ring decoration, and Ipswich ware. This area, beyond the northern edge of the current site, is now largely eroded. In 1984 excavations brought up more Ipswich ware, and a Merovingian pot. A collection of pottery was made in the 1990's from the collapsing river cliff.

In 2003 a magnetometry survey was carried out by David and Aline Black. This revealed that the site was bordered by a double ditch. With this evidence of occupation, in 2004 Suffolk Archaeological Unit supervised a Local Heritage Initiative-funded training excavation for the Aldeburgh and District Local History Society. A contour survey showed a low mound roughly delineated by these ditches. Environmental survey by augering in transects showed the mound could have been an island, surrounded by land reclamation in the 17th and 18th centuries. The soil was part sand, part difficult clay and was stripped by machine. Finds included 3,000 sherds, much briquetage, flints, and lava querns.

Prehistoric finds comprised Middle Bronze Age flints, 2 Palaeolithic handaxes and Neolithic arrowheads.

Roman features were few, despite many finds, mostly pot and midden spread. Briquetage is unusual in Suffolk; these finds were largely of evaporation vessels, but 1,300 fragments might have come from a few vessels. However many salt-working sites have now been found around Snape and Sudbourne. The sea-level was probably rising in the Romano-British period, peaking at AD400, then retreating.

Saxon features and finds date from the 7th and 8th centuries. The ditches are Saxon. 2 graves were found, one of a young female, C14-dated to the 7th-8th centuries, with the head at the east end, so possibly Christian. The second was badly disturbed, of about the same date. There were 2 possible large post-hole buildings, one of which might have been a church. There was also a long, thin post-hole building to the south of the enclosure. Timbers on the foreshore were C14 dated 750-780 and might have been a fish trap. There was no sign of later Saxon occupation, which could be due to the Vikings or to environmental degradation. Jezz Meredith speculated that the church might have been moved to St. Mary's, Haslewood, where some Thetford ware had been found. There had been re-use of Roman brick and tile for Saxon hearths. There was some flint-tempered ware which could be early Saxon or Iron Age. Future work could be around the graves and there might be more traces of Roman settlement.

CHURCHES FACE EAST, DON'T THEY?

Ian Hinton, Dept. of Continuing Education, University of East Anglia

9th February 2009

Report by David Black

The title of this lecture is the most frequent question asked of the lecturer when he is using his compass to determine the orientation of a church. There has been research - some thirty to forty articles have been written in the last hundred years, and also Antiquarian interest.

Antiquarians (and William Wordsworth) believed that churches were aligned to face sunrise on their patronal saint's day. Other views included that churches faced sunrise on the day building work started, or that they faced sunrise at Easter. More recently, was a compass used to determine alignment since the direction of magnetic north has varied significantly over the centuries? There is also a fact to be considered that about a sixth of all churches have nave and chancel a few degrees out of line with each other.

The lecturer's interest in church alignment began in 1997 when he realised that his two local churches were aligned quite differently. Since then he has checked the alignment of almost three thousand churches covering areas throughout England. He has concentrated on rural churches, sure that the alignment of most urban churches was determined by the plot of land on which they were built.

The alignment of Medieval churches varies between NE and SE. Victorian churches can vary with each other by up to 200 degrees, although most vary in the same range as the Medieval churches.

The choice of Counties in which to check church alignment was made for geographic reasons, and an early finding was that whilst alignment in eastern Counties differed from that in western Counties there was little difference between north and south.

The lecturer presented the results of meticulous analysis of his research into each of the theories about church alignment. He convincingly demonstrated that almost all of them - patronal saints' days, sunrise at Easter, compass alignment, could not be true. That pairs of churches on the same site rarely have the same alignment and that, where the nave and chancel of a church are misaligned, the chancel nearly always points more closely east, were interesting findings.

The lecture concluded with a summary of the positive findings so far: there is some correlation between the differing alignments in different parts of the country and the differing earliest harvest dates in each area; the building of churches on sloping land is biased towards east facing slopes, which may reveal earlier but unknown ritual sites which may have had an impact on village foundation.

THE EGYPTIAN COPTIC PERIOD

Frances Boardman, Freelance Egyptologist

16th February 2009

Report by Dorothy & David Townend

The Egyptian population experienced a period of complete breakdown and demoralisation firstly towards the end of the Pharaonic Era, then following Alexander's arrival, and during the reign of the Ptolemys. During the Roman occupation the Egyptians were regarded as second class citizens. When Christianity came with St. Mark in 50 AD. to Alexandria, the Egyptians looked at the similarities between it and their belief of 'divinity' and the 'after life'. Mark set up a school where the Gospels were studied, along with Maths and Astronomy.

The first Coptic Church was male dominated. Men went on pilgrimages into the Desert and wove baskets

nd ropes. They had a cross (known as an Ankh) tattooed on their right wrist, and Ankh have been found cut into pillars in Ptolemaic Temples.

Several important figures helped to develop the church in Egypt. St. Anthony in his early thirties followed the Christian ideas of Mark. He went into the desert where he lived for 33 years; his life story was translated into Latin and was important into the Middle Ages. A monastery was built on the site where he found a spring and had died. This monastery is still occupied today.

Pachomius, who had refused to fight in the Roman army, became a Christian on his release from prison. He tried to emulate St. Antony. He founded the first monastery. By the time of his death there were 900 monasteries. These were used as the basis for all the monasteries around the world. They used knotted ropes for saying prayers (later to become rosaries), called their leader Abba (where the word Abbot derives from), put together sets of rules for prayers and had set times for services.

Shenute was brought up as a Christian. He developed the idea that the monks would work at various trades and employed peasants to till the land. The monastery he built was like a fortress which gave a place of safety to the people. When his monastery was excavated documents were found showing he had instituted a legal system where he acted as an arbitrator.

The Coptic period was famous for its fabrics. They buried their dead in clothing and because of the dry conditions some of it is preserved. Roundels which were decorated and attached to clothing and braces woven in wool, along with woven pictures, have been found.

The Coptic language was most important. When the Nag Hammadic Library was discovered in the mid 20th century at the Monastery of St. Pachomius, apocryphal stories were found written around 390 A.D. The Gospel of St. John was written in Coptic between 160-170 A.D.

Many Coptic monasteries and churches remain in Egypt. The Monastery of St. Simeon at Anba Hatre shows monks' cells with stone beds. In Old Cairo there are many Coptic remains with several churches and graveyards. St. Mark's Cathedral in Alexandria is the most important place for Coptic worship where they still use the Coptic language for services. There are still ten million people in Egypt who are Copts.

COLCHESTER GARRISON

Andrew Phillips, Local Historian
23rd February 2009
Report by Bernard Colbron

Andrew started by saying that he was not an archaeologist - Colchester Garrison is in fact interesting to archaeologists and historians. It is the finest preserved and largest Victorian garrison in the country

It was only a garrison after the Napoleonic War. Previously soldiers were billeted (foisted) on innkeepers in the town. They were paid four old pence per soldier and six old pence per horse, which maybe showed the importance of the clientele.

The first garrison was built in the time of the Napoleonic Civil war. In 1740 Lexden Heath was included in the land of the garrison. It was scrub and bushes with plenty of dips and mounds. The soil from the footings of the garrison was used to make the heath flatter. By 1741 there was an encampment of 10,000 troops in tents during summer months.

By 1793 with the war against France the obligation to provide lodgings for soldiers and their horses, which were allowed to eat as much as they liked, became too much for the innkeepers. They "strongly objected" and demanded that strategically placed barracks be built.

In February 1795 new barracks were built south of Magdalen Street in what is even now Barrack Street. The garrison was enormous - the largest in Britain. Two storey wooden buildings on brick bases held 4,000 men, two to a bed. A building firm from London was awarded the contract. The cost had been estimated at five shillings per soldier but it actually cost one pound. The speed of building required had presumably been blamed for the increase. Colchester was chosen due to it being close to the east coast. There were also 1000's of troops billeted in Klacton (yes, this spelling was recorded) and Weeley.

A large hospital was built containing 400 beds. This was to accommodate the large number of service men that would be injured in the hostilities. Unfortunately large numbers of service men died not of war wounds but of infections caught whilst being brought back to camp and then to Colchester.

In 1803 Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion was expected. All surrounding parishes were on stand-by to drive all cattle inland and to burn all the crops at the outset of an invasion.

In 1817 the wooden garrison was sold and a return to billeting took place.

With the Crimean War things changed. Soldiers were living in tents originally intended for Turkey. A large number of wooden huts were built and shipped out for the mercenaries. However the new Tsar in Russia declared an end to the war.

The garrison site in Colchester was still owned by the army and in 1856 they used temporary huts, which were still in use 50 years later!

After the war the German Legion was disbanded and billeted in tents on the Recreation Ground. Germans were given the offer of being transported, free of charge, to the Cape (South Africa) and given three years' pay BUT this was only for married men. All this was to give the soldiers a better deal rather than returning to Germany. This excellent offer resulted in a rush of about 150 weddings, with 63 in one session. However, it later transpired that the Garrison Church was not authorised for marriages! The authorities at the Cape ratified all the marriages that took place.

Some thought that the church had been intended as a hospital but it is a purpose built, pre-fabricated wooden church which has lasted so well thanks to the good care by the army.

Over four years from 1856 the new Barracks were built. The Cavalry Barracks are the oldest in the country. They were built with horses below and riders above.

The garrison improved the lot of many soldiers in Colchester. They had a large gym built to provide boxing and other inside sports. A garrison racing track was built which also allowed football to be played. These activities helped to reach out to the townspeople. The Army provided bands for town events, and marching bands and displays. On special occasions they lined the streets of Colchester for parades to pass.

In 1914 Kitchener's Army arrived but that's another story!

A GLORIOUS PICTURE SHOW: 16TH AND EARLY 17TH DOMESTIC WALL PAINTINGS

Muriel Carrick, Art Historian

2nd March 2009

Report by Rosemary Joseland

The speaker was Muriel Carrick, Art Historian, who has made extensive studies of wall paintings in Essex and neighbouring counties. She has a particular interest in comparative paintings, and lectures and broadcasts as well as being involved in research for television programmes, and she is currently working on a painted scheme in Kent.

Muriel told us that the wall paintings are water-based and mixed with egg and are known as *sec - dry*. They are protected as long as the properties in which they are found are listed. Conservators, she said, never re-touch or fill in the paintings and no re-construction work is attempted at all.

We were shown some marvellous slides of wall paintings, beginning with a slide from Horsham St Faith, dated 1250, which had been found in the 1940s, as the result of a lightning strike. This painting, Muriel explained, was typical of the period and she told us of the connection with the Fitzwalter family and the building of a priory in the name of St Faith and an abbey in France. Apparently, a painting at the priory shows the first known depiction of a wheelbarrow, wheelbarrows having originated in China.

Another interesting wall painting was of a lady (now housed at Colchester Castle) possibly St Osyth, or St Uncumber, who apparently prayed that she would become unattractive and grow a beard.

We then moved on through the 1480s, the period which included a painting of St Michael weighing the souls in the Portcullis Room at the Tower of London and St Catherine in the Canons' Cloister, also in the Tower.

Ellys Manor House, at Great Ponton in Lincolnshire, was described as a 'must see', as it contains 'a rare English interpretation of French verdure tapestries' – as the wall paintings are described. They date around 1500 and are said to be 'the most complete, extensive and important domestic decorations of this date in the country'.

Hill Hall, near Epping, a fine Elizabethan mansion, features two rare and outstanding sets of 16th Century wall paintings of mythical and Biblical subjects and Muriel pointed out how like tapestry the border paintings were.

Muriel went on to show us further slides in Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire, the latter based on engravings, and we were able to compare similarities. Muriel told us that the painters would go from house to house, armed with pattern books, which accounts for the fact that it is possible to see the same subjects over and over again. It was also interesting to hear that mention can be found in wills of painters leaving their paints and grinding stones to apprentices.

SUMMER PROGRAMME 2009

Report by David Harrison

31st May Eltham Palace

On a warm, sunny day 40 members and friends travelled by coach to Eltham Palace in south-east London to visit the boyhood home of Henry VIII. All that is left of the medieval palace is the magnificent Great Hall but built on to it is the fantastic 1930's Art Deco home of the Courtaulds, textile magnates. We explored the two contrasting parts of the house and then wandered in the 19 acres of beautiful gardens with a moat and some remains of the medieval palace.

8th June Guided Walk

28 members met Mark Davies at St Leonard's Church, Lexden, on a pleasant evening with hardly any rain. We were guided round north Camulodunum past Lexden Mill and up to Lexden Lodge to the northernmost dykes. We then walked down to the river and crossed Sheepen Bridge, then the Avenue of Remembrance and up to Hilly Fields. We climbed up to the site of the mint, then along the top of the hill and crossed Lexden Dyke; on the way back to Lexden Church Mark pointed out a rare Edward VIII pillar box. We must again thank Mark for guiding us on such an interesting walk.

22nd June Gestingthorpe

18 members arrived at the farm of Ashley Cooper and his father and were treated for the next 3 hours to a guided talk and tour of the Roman villa discovered by Mr Cooper some 40 years ago. There is literally so much to see in the museum that 3 hours could easily have been spent there. Instead we were taken to see the site of the villa, then back to see the farming instruments display. All who attended wondered where the time had gone and we must thank Ashley and his father for being such interesting hosts.

13th July Summer Party

This was held at Frinton-on-Sea by kind permission of Angela and David Grayston. Some 30 members arrived to be confronted by a "bygones" quiz thoughtfully prepared by David. All we had to do was "name that implement" to win the Star Prize. It was a lovely dry evening and all enjoyed the food and drink provided. Our thanks go to Pat, Hazel, Jan and Dave.

DAY SCHOOL ON MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL POTTERY WITH HOWARD BROOKS: 18TH SEPTEMBER 2009

Report by Pat Brown

About 25 members and friends assembled in the Hawkins Room, St. Botolph's Church, to spend the day studying "Pottery in Essex from the end of the Roman period to the present day".

Howard started by giving us illustrated handouts showing the six main groups of material, together with a dating chart giving the subdivisions of each main type, and their appearance in the Colchester area. When he introduced a type he handed round specimen to each table of about four people..

:

1. Handmade Saxon pottery, and Ipswich and Thetford wares.

Early Saxon handmade pottery was coarse, often organic-tempered (such as we found on the Great Tey Bronze Age site). Ipswich ware, turned on a slow wheel and fired in proper kilns, was very rare in Essex: Thetford ware was more common but no Stamford ware had been found in the Colchester area. St. Neots ware had a "soapy" feel, and by C12 pottery was becoming thinner and not so coarse.

2. Sandy medieval pottery.

C11-C13: much of this took the form of grey cooking pots (as indeed had earlier pottery), but fine wares were glazed and/or slipped, and the Hedingham kilns produced a variety of glazed wares, sometimes green (kilns have been found). Creamy-slipped Colchester ware, and London ware (similar to Colchester, but darker) have also been found, as well as Mill Green ware, from near Ingatestone. As technology improved, pots became thinner and harder.

3. Glazed post-medieval orange bodied wares.

C16-C18: normally the commonest pottery on a post-medieval site, this was thick-walled, orange-bodied, with glaze on one or both sides, clear, but sometimes black. Metro slipware, with a clear glaze over patterned slip, was made at Harlow (Potter Street) for the London market

4. German stoneware.

Fired to a higher temperature than earthenware, this had a very hard grey, shiny surface, often dimpled by throwing salt into a kiln that had been firing for some time. Early C14-C15 wares are rare, but later (up to C18) are quite common. These include the so-called "Bellarmine" jugs, with faces, but more correctly "Bartmann" (bearded) Others were large drinking vessels.

5. Tin-glazed earthenware.

Late C16-early C18: known elsewhere as Majolica or Delft, white or blue-and-white, this had a thick glaze which chips easily. Plates appeared for the first time, also teacups, egg cups, and drug jars. Much came from Spain and Holland. Distinctive Staffordshire slipware (C18) had brown and yellow stripes, which were then stroked across with a feather

6. Modern ironstones (i.e. hard white glazed "china").

C19 on: abundant everywhere, it breaks with very sharp edges, and includes the ubiquitous "willow pattern".

To test what we had learned, Howard gave each table a bag of assorted sherds, all from the local area, and asked us to sort it into piles of the different types. This posed a challenge, and we spent much time agonising over the various post-medieval red wares - which Howard would then sweep into one inclusive pile!

He also gave us a chart showing the proportions of pottery fabrics found so far on our Wormingford dig. 67% was post-medieval red earthenware, but there were also much smaller quantities of tin-glazed earthenware, Staffordshire ware and later German stoneware. The assemblage was overwhelmingly Tudor in date, corresponding with its existence as a hunting lodge, but there were small quantities of prehistoric, Roman and modern pottery..

We all felt that we had increased our knowledge considerably, and were most grateful to Howard for letting us handle the actual sherds which both diggers and finds processors often struggle to identify. Thank you, Howard, for a day which was not only instructive but thoroughly enjoyable.

POPULARISING ARCHAEOLOGY.

Lecture by Dr Carenza Lewis, Cambridge University, Department of Archaeology at Castle Methodist Church, Colchester, 10 October 2009

Report by John Mallinson

Before beginning her talk, Dr Lewis showed a short DVD on the workings of the Higher Education Field Academy (HEFA). This properly belonged to the middle of her talk, but was shown at the beginning to avoid potential technical complications. It will be referred to at the appropriate point in this summary.

Dr Lewis began her talk by outlining her archaeological background. After graduation, she worked first as an archaeological investigator for the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England. In 1993 she was invited to join the newly formed Time Team, where she has remained as a regular presenter for 11 years. In 2004 she took a post as Lecturer in Medieval Archaeology at Cambridge, combining this with setting up an outreach and widening participation programme, which eventually evolved into the HEFA project.

The HEFA programme, she explained, aims to raise the aspirations, enthusiasm and attainment of 14-17 year-olds with regard to higher education via actively engaging them in carrying out their own hands-on practical investigations in small mixed-school groups, while making a valuable contribution to current academic research at the University of Cambridge. The HEFA programme gives participants the chance to spend two days running their own small (1m square) archaeological excavation within the living villages, with the aim of applying and developing a wide range of learning skills, boosting their academic confidence and giving them a taste of life and learning at university level. They make new discoveries for and about themselves, and in the process contribute to the university's CORS research into the development of rural communities and settlements in the past. The DVD showed examples of the programme in action, and the very positive reactions of the students who took part.

She then went on to describe the detailed archaeological outcomes of the project to date, particularly as it related to the four villages in Essex, which included Thorington and West Mersea. To date 28 villages, mostly in East Anglia, have participated in the programme. In each village, a series of test pits, usually in private back gardens, were selected at random, simply on the basis of people volunteering to allow them to be dug. It was hoped that analysis of the finds recovered would give a picture of the periods of occupancy at each particular point, and overall would give a picture of how the position and focus of each community had shifted with time. Detailed excavation results for some of the sites, including Mersea and Thorington, were presented. These and all other results, which are continually updated as new villages and test pits are added, can be found at: <http://www.arch.cam.ac.uk/aca/excavationreports.html>

In thanking Dr Lewis for her talk, CAG Chairman Don Goodman remarked on the value of the HEFA project both to our archaeological understanding of East Anglia, the positive effect on the development of the young people who took part, and the infectious enthusiasm and expertise which she brought to the task, a sentiment with which all of us present heartily agreed.

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