



Colchester Archaeological Group NEWSLETTER

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Diggers return to Fordham (page 4)

Looking Forward

I hope everyone is well and staying safe in these strange times we are living in. Back in February with the assistance of Tim & Geoff I started to put together the lecture programme for the autumn. By March I only had a couple of slots to fill then the world turned upside down. I have managed to put together a full programme of lectures however at this stage we don't know in what conditions we are going to be able to deliver it. With this in mind Tim, Geoff and I set up a zoom meeting to discuss options. October is still a way off and I felt it was too early to consider cancelling the whole programme. We have two areas to look at firstly if we proceed at Roman Circus House and we have to maintain social distancing it will significantly reduce the number of people we can have in the room. They may also be a lot of people who are not happy to venture out whilst the virus is still with us. Finally we have to consider what to do if our lecturers are unable to get to us. Taking all of this into consideration we are looking into the possibility of filming the lectures and making them available to the members via YouTube for a small fee. Tim and Geoff are looking into the technology and are planning a test event over the summer. When we have more news we will let you know.

Looking forward to seeing everyone again when it is safe to do so.

Christine

Chair Colchester Archaeological Group

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Summer Programme 2020

This year's summer programme had to be cancelled due to the epidemic. This was a disappointment to all of us after all the hard work organising events had taken place. Members should have had their money returned to them by Geoff. If you are still owed money please contact him..

CAG on Zoom

Tim Dennis has been organising a general discussion meeting on Zoom every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon at 4pm so that members can keep in touch and share information on their projects. Contact Tim or Geoff if you are interested.

The Committee and the Cropmarks group have also been meeting using Zoom to maintain contact in these troubled times despite being in lockdown.



Fieldwalking Training Day With Howard Brooks and Adam Wightman



This CAG event took place at Roman Circus House on Saturday 22nd February. Due to the 'hands on' nature of some of the training attendance was restricted to 25 places, which were quickly snapped up.

During the first session of the morning, Howard Brooks took us through the early days of fieldwalking, and the origins of the Essex System. He showed us how, using the Essex System, a fieldwalking grid is marked out, and how a fieldwalk should be carried out. He then gave us an overview of how to analyse the finds, how to weigh and record them, and finally how to plot the results.



Polished flint axe head

After discussion followed by a short break for coffee etc we returned to our seats for the second session led by Adam Wightman. With the help of Tim Dennis, who projected images of actual struck flints on to the large screen at the front of the room, Adam described the differing knapping characteristics evident on struck flint that are used to help identify when they were made: ie Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic or Bronze Age. The examples shown, and many other wonderful flint tools, were passed around the room giving everyone the opportunity to handle them and see in more detail the characteristics described by Adam. This resulted in much discussion and many questions, which Adam and Howard continued to answer well after the training, was due to end.

Our thanks go to Howard and Adam for making the morning so informative, interesting and enjoyable.

Post Training Update: The training had been arranged to take place shortly before a CAG Fieldwalk was due to take place in the hope that its finds would help identify the age of cropmarks in an area studied by CAG's subgroup the Cropmark Study Group. We had hoped to do this in early spring but the flooding during the winter (which delayed the cultivation of the field) had already made this unlikely. Sadly any hopes that it could go ahead a little later have been dashed by Covid 19 and Lockdown.

Local “stay at home” Archaeologists discover unknown historic sites using cutting edge technology

Geoff and Tim put together this Press release on our use of Lidar which was picked up by BBC Essex. Geoff was interviewed one afternoon to explain Lidar to the listeners. This was also printed in the Essex County Standard on 20th June.

The word archaeologist usually brings to mind a figure dressed in sunhat, shorts and muddy boots, crouched with trowel in hand, scraping away in the bottom of a hole. Well, the Coronavirus and ‘social distancing’ has put paid to that, at least for the time being. However, a small group of archaeologists from the Colchester Archaeological Group have continued finding new and lost archaeological features in the local area from the comfort and safety of their own homes, using a new technique called Lidar.



Roman Roads. Partial lidar overlay on Google Earth. The well-known Colchester to Manningtree Roman Road and a spur heading east towards Horsleycross Street, showing as faint light grey lines. A section of the spur is still followed by a modern lane.

Lidar stands for Light Detection and Ranging and can measure small variations in ground level from an aircraft, which can then be plotted on a map using shades of grey or colour to denote different ground levels. In our case, a lighter shade indicates higher ground, and a darker shade indicates lower ground. The technique uses a low power laser which is fired millions of times per second as it rakes the ground below, and is normally done in the winter months when there are few leaves on the trees. This means that it can see variations in ground level in woods and forests, which cannot be seen in aerial photographs such as those taken from satellites on Google Earth. The raw data have been made available by the UK Environment Department for free download, and much of East Anglia is fortunate to have full and recent coverage thanks to the National Lidar Programme.

Dr Tim Dennis, formerly in Computer Science and Electronic Engineering at the University of Essex, has developed a range of image processing software which greatly enhances centimetre-scale height details in Lidar scans, and plots them as precisely-aligned overlay images on Google Earth, suitable for examination by enthusiastic colleagues. The raw data from interesting features can also be used to create a 3D model which can be rotated and viewed in minute detail from all angles. The team has so far located several hitherto unknown or forgotten prehistoric, Roman, medieval and even recent earthworks, together with sections of Roman road in the Colchester area, all of which will be investigated more closely once the current lockdown restrictions are eased. Lidar is also very effective at finding buried gas and water pipelines – these can be highly misleading as they closely resemble Roman roads!

Dr Jess Tipper, Archaeological Advisor for Colchester Borough Council commented, 'these are unique and valuable sites, which further our understanding of Colchester's rich heritage, and I look forward to adding them to the Colchester Historical Environment Record, online at: <https://colchesterheritage.co.uk/>.'

For more illustrations of local examples from Tim Dennis with input from Dr Jess Tipper and Jim Pullen. Go to http://caguk.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Lidar_News_Item_Final_030620.pdf

A VE Day contribution

As a contribution to the this years celebration of 70 years since VE Day, CAG have archived the 2007 project "Survey of World War Two Defences in the Borough of Colchester" by Fred Nash on the CAG web site where it can be inspected or downloaded by members. See John Mallinson's article on page 16.

FIELD-WORK REPORT

Site Report

Excavation on the Fordham site has re-started on Sunday 21st June following the government guide lines of 2 metre distancing and provision of PPE, There is a limit on site of six people so a rota has had to be drawn up. It has been a difficult time for practical archaeology during this crisis. We have not been able to continue our excavation at Fordham since last December, first due to the excessive amounts of water on site, then due to the epidemic. We did manage a few days counting CBM in February. However, everyone is looking forward to getting back despite the current restriction.

PREHISTORIC CROPMARK STUDY GROUP

Sally Bartrum, on behalf of the Prehistoric Cropmark Study Group

There was an excellent turn out of 12 members when the Group last met on 4 March 2020 . One member couldn't attend as he was already in self imposed isolation following his return from Italy a couple of days earlier. Little did we know then that we would all be in a similar situation before the end of the month!

Fieldwalk: Many members of the Group had attended the Fieldwalk Training at RCH on 20 February, and most of the group had volunteered to help to organise the proposed Fieldwalk in Wormingford which, with landowner's consent, we hoped may have taken place in late Spring.

Ongoing Research: Howard Brooks of CAT had passed on a request from a group of landowners within our extended study area which was met with much enthusiasm from everyone at the meeting. An initial approach to meet representatives of the landowners was made but like the Fieldwalk has been put on hold for the foreseeable future.

Practical Archaeology: Some of the group were planning to meet in Little Ropers Wood in early April to continue our culinary experiments by making nettle soup in the pots we made last summer. Although this wasn't possible later in the year we hope to attempt to make thread/string from fibre obtained the stems of nettles (bast) and, being ever optimistic, we hope to try produce enough to make some sort of textile from it.

Zoom Meetings: Staying Home and Staying Safe is a great opportunity to spend many hours on Google Earth searching for previously unknown cropmarks, and several of the group have been meeting regularly on Zoom to share our latest discoveries and the results of online research.

May 2020

ROMAN ROADS GROUP

The Roman Road from Balkerne Gate

Geoff Lunn April 2020

As many of you will no doubt be aware, Colchester Archaeological Trust has recently begun excavations on the site of the former Essex County Hospital in Lexden Road. This is to be a multi-phase project which will gradually cover most of the site as old buildings are demolished to make way for new accommodation, and is expected to last for at least three years on and off.

The first phase was begun in February of this year, and consists of investigations under the present car parking area at the front of the old hospital building on Lexden Road. This is of particular interest to the Roman Roads Group, not least because this is the area where the famous Colchester sphynx was discovered in 1899, but it was also anticipated that part of the Roman road from the Balkerne Gate towards London would be revealed, as its supposed route traverses the old car park. However, at the time of writing, the area where we expected to find the road has revealed very little. This is of course disappointing, however not wholly unexpected, as it turns out that this area was heavily landscaped prior to the tarmac being laid for the car park, and this consisted mainly of bulldozing away the lower reaches of the car park to a depth of almost 2 metres in order to create a



*Looking back along the route of the Roman Road towards the Balcerne Gate.
No trace of the road is now left.*

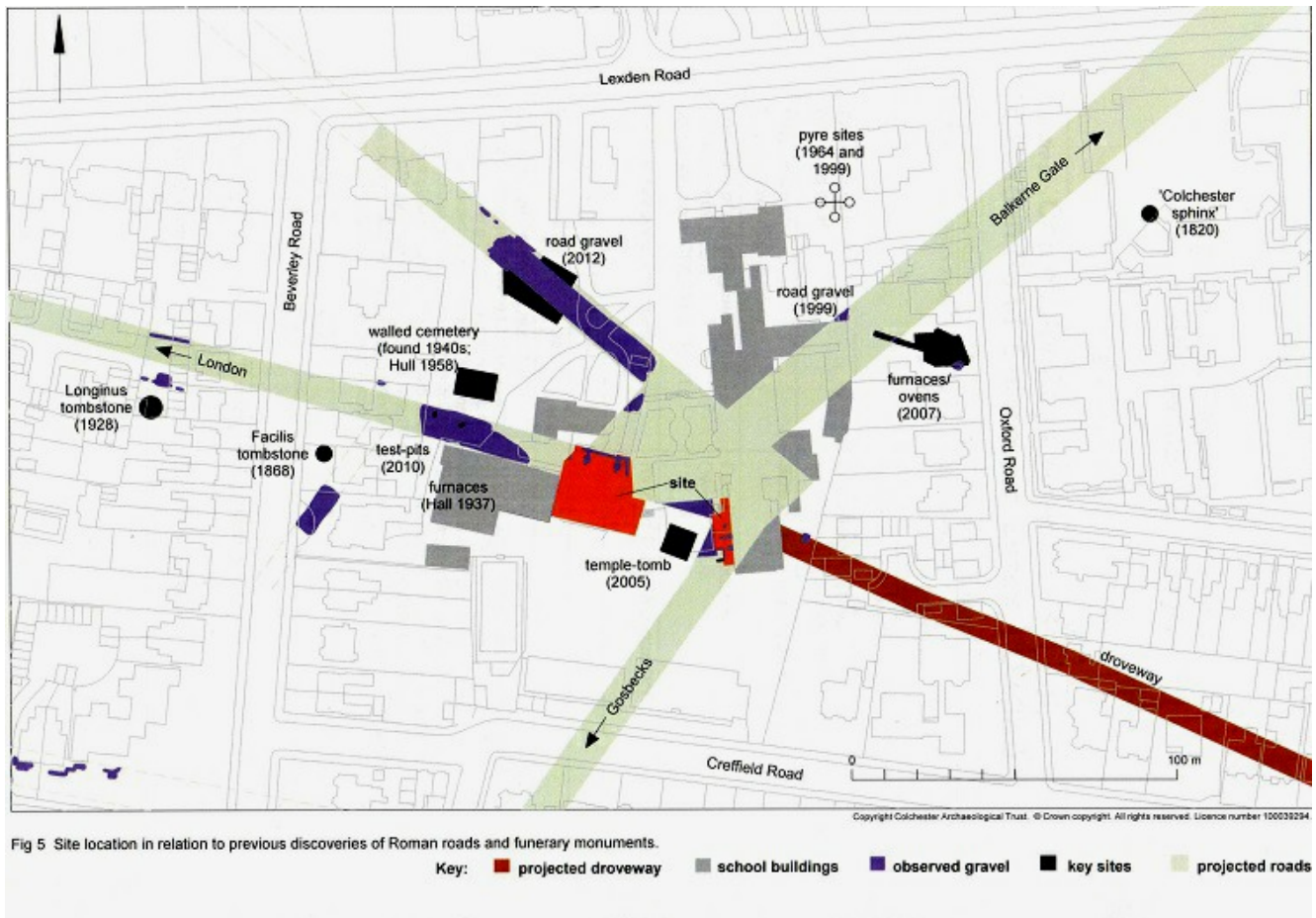
sloping but even surface from the front of the building down to the grass verge alongside Lexden Road. So it would seem that this part of the road at least is now in a landfill site somewhere on the outskirts of Colchester. All is not lost however, as it looks likely that at least part of the Roman road may still be intact underneath the former Radiography building which runs alongside Oxford Road, and which is due for demolition and subsequent archaeological investigation in a later phase.



*Frank Lockwood sitting on
the metalled surface of the
Roman road from Balcerne
Gate in the rear garden of
the Colne Lodge. 1984.*

My reason for relating this little story though, is not to bemoan the loss of part of the old Roman road, (although I have to admit to being a tad disappointed), but to discuss the discovery from the various records of past excavations by CAT and others (including our very own Frank Lockwood in the garden of the Colne Lodge) that the main road leading from the Balkerne Gate towards London, does not actually head in the direction that I would have expected, ie along Lexden Road. In fact, it heads for what appears to be a terminus of several roads now lying under the playground of the Colchester Royal Grammar School (CRGS), and if anything, it's direction is towards Gosbecks rather than London. Some of you are no doubt already aware of this, but it came as a bit of a surprise to me. Time to look at the maps perhaps?

The map below is a copy of a map presented to the Roman Roads Group by Howard Brooks of CAT, soon after I joined the group a couple of years or so ago. Howard's map is based on excavation work done by an



enthusiastic schoolmaster named AF Hall (with some of his students) in the 1930's and 50's on the site of CRGS, as described in Roman Colchester, Hall, 1958. Over subsequent years, additions and corrections have been made to the map based on excavations in the area, so that Howard and the archaeologists at CAT feel that they have a reasonably accurate representation of Roman road activity in that area. What seems pretty certain is that the main road from the Balkerne Gate heads straight for this "terminus" (there have been a number of small excavations in recent years which appear to prove this), and does not head up Lexden Road as one might expect, but in fact appears to be heading for Gosbecks, if anywhere. When the road arrives at the terminus, our Roman ancestors then had a choice of three roads to take (and a possible droveway), heading variously towards Gosbecks (Cunobelin's Farmstead?), Stane Street towards Braughing and Ermine Street (and London), and the pottery kilns at the west end of the Sheepen site. A kind of Roman version of the Maldon Road Roundabout!

In fact, the Roman road from Colchester to London appears to branch off Stane Street in the area of Marks Tey, where the modern A120 (Stane Street) now branches off the A12 towards London – in Roman times apparently it was the other way around. What we don't really seem to know is the chronology of these various roads, since there has not been sufficient investigation so far to date them. So, one can imagine that a road between Balkerne Gate and Gosbecks would have been important in the early days of the Roman occupation, but why then create a branch off that road at CRGS, heading vaguely eastwards, with yet another branch at Marks Tey, finally heading towards London? Knowing the Romans as we think we do, surely we would expect them to have built a road in a pretty straight line between what were after all two of the most important towns in Britannia at that time? Curious?...

The Villa to Parish (V2P) Sub-Group

Neil J Short

In the time period following from the December 2019 Newsletter the world has changed just a little and, in line with all other CAG activities, formal gatherings of the V2P Group have been stopped. However, one further V2P meeting (held on March 2nd) was squeezed in just before travel and gatherings restrictions kicked in.

At this last meeting, my primary target was to address the translation of the earlier and current accumulation of research data into likely sites for further specific investigation. The Task requires the Team to look to identify potentially unknown sites within the review area together with locations of early and all but certain (albeit no longer standing) churches. Certainly, a challenge! A next stage Task action plan has been developed and been issued to all V2P Team Members. To support this Task delivery, discussion with the RRG has re-confirmed the benefit of a combined baseline map to begin to consolidate the RR and V2P information gained.



The key to the next few “active” months (whenever they may be) is the analysis of information received (through use of the above baseline map) to identify hot-spots for further research, including the potential of field-walking. To date, areas of interest are being developed/researched within Fordham parish (Church wall image), both the current “villa” site and one near to Archendines, together with sites in Wakes Colne, Chappel and (potentially) Marks Tey parishes. It is also clear that to achieve the answer to the task set, we need to develop a more holistic analysis of the wider landscape in addition to specific site exploration. In support of this, further contact with Essex County Council Archaeology departments (thanks to Maria Medlycott) has been made to assess likely spacing of Roman sites and settlements within our target area.

As something of a related but side item, a sunny day in late February offered the chance for me to have a go at some Geo-Phys with Tim, Geoff and Jonathan at a site south of the current Crepping Hall. Lidar and earlier research have offered the potential of medieval housing platforms near to a Hall site. As some may remember, there is a Domesday reference to a village of Crepinga. An old, now lost, village may, of course, suggest a nearby early medieval church and/or a relationship to a nearby Roman site. Roman settlement sites are known or suggested

in nearby Wakes Colne and Chappel parishes. A lot of ifs and buts with tenuous linkage but who knows...

Clearly the immediate future re V2P activity remains unclear as with other CAG activities. All we can do at this time is keep safe and hope for a return to action later in the year...

Colchester Archaeology in Virtual Reality

Mark Jeffcock

What do you know about Virtual Reality? VR? It's the goggles you wear on your head to play games, or watch 3D movies. Over the last few years it's been slowly growing in popularity, though it's still far from commonplace. But the technology got better last year, and social distancing will probably give it another push - because it doesn't just have to be games or movies but can be used as another social application as well. In VR, I can be 'embodied' as a cartoon version of myself, an avatar, and meet up with friends or people with common interests - and not only looking at each other like Skype or Zoom - we can inhabit a virtual world to look at, explore or learn from.

A few other technologies have handily come along at the same time, some game engines are user-friendly enough for customers to learn, and photogrammetry (the creation of 3D models from lots of photographs) has become more practical. Maybe you can see where I'm going here - it's possible in some social applications to build a 'virtual world' which can be populated with a mixture of created items, some of which can be realistic models of real-world archaeology. Then they can be visited via virtual reality headsets, either by individuals or small groups and wandered around, learnt from or played on. Here is my Avatar in a world about Colchester's Roman walls.

The intention here is to provide some light-touch historical education; with some positive touristic boosting of Colchester. Why am I doing it? I went on the only event tour of the only other archaeological site I know of in AltspaceVR (Chaco Canyon Culture), and at one point the guide asked 'who has ever been to an archaeological site' – and of the 25 attendees, only 2 (including me) had - the group was mostly Americans and they don't have enough history to visit. So, as the vast majority of world will never visit Colchester, but this is a way that they might be able to easily do so, both now, and in the future as VR becomes more prevalent.



The joy of these creations being a virtual worlds is that this is archaeology that can be closely accessed and you can't damage. It can be taken seriously if you wish, but can also be used in fun ways that can't be done in the real world. For instance, at St. Botolphs priory I built a ladder so you could climb to the top, as my daughter said she wanted a view from high-up, looking over the ruins.

Entering the Jumbo world you are immediately on the parapet, 34 metres high, with the sound of the wind, a view few of us will ever get to experience. Some information about the tower is displayed in the observation room on the very top, derelict in real life. After a visit to information boards, I've also encouraged visitors to 'fly' around the tower to try and appreciate the scale, and enter the roof space and the tank itself.

If you are interested they are all best viewed in a VR headset, such as an Oculus Quest or Vive. But AltspaceVR can be downloaded to a PC and viewed in 2D, though it is difficult to navigate this way.

Here is the link to the 'hub' world, which contains some basic info about the history of Colchester, a large copy of John Speed's 1610 map of Colchester to walk on, and portals to the other three worlds:

<https://account.altvr.com/worlds/1332747442256347280/spaces/1354936368026878798>

If you do download AltspaceVR, you are taken through a tutorial, and you would need to switch on access to 'Worlds' (use Menu> Settings> General> Enable Worlds Beta) before you try to access the worlds (on their web-site search the worlds for keyword 'Colchester' and favourite them).

I intend to do some more virtual worlds in the future, and when life returns to normal could show people how this works. Though if you have your own VR headset, maybe we'll run across each other in virtual Colchester.

The Story of a Fallen Eagle

Francis Nicholls

This article is about an archaeological find of potentially national importance.

Whilst detecting in 1995 on an arable field to the north of Coggeshall, a strong, clear signal indicated an object made of non-ferrous metal lying somewhere below in the wet ground. At 15cm down, the object turned out to be a piece of irregularly shaped metalwork, with bits sticking out of a clod of clay. With some of the clay removed from the object on site, it appeared to be a small figurine.

After taking CPS readings, it was removed for closer examination.

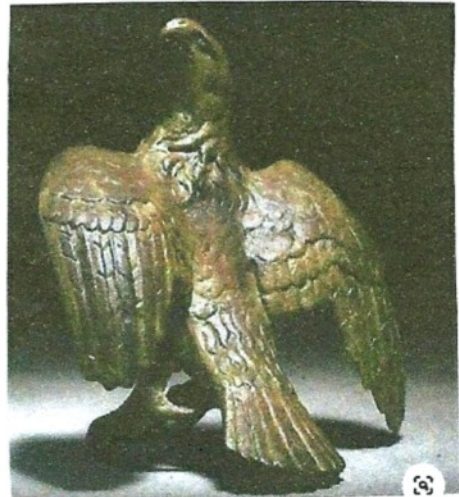
After further soil removal, it became clear that the figurine was that of a bird, made of bronze with a wingspan of 6cm.

Three Roman period coins had previously been recorded within 750m of the find, so initial research was directed to metal finds from the Roman period. After a short time of domestic book research, it became likely that it was small Roman eagle, albeit still largely hidden in its clay covering.

It was carefully wrapped in acid-free paper and stored awaiting advice



The Coggeshall Eagle



A Roman Eagle

The research at home threw up a number of intriguing questions. The eagle was a powerful symbol for ancient Rome. In 10 BC, Gaius Marcus decreed that the eagle alone should be the defining emblem of Roman power.

The Coggeshall eagle was smaller than those on legionary standards but the quality of workmanship, especially in the details in the feathers, which were visible from the clay soil, pointed to an item of importance. Could it have formed part of a Roman Official's regalia? Could it have been attached to something like a baton?

In fact, it was similar to the copper-bronze bull's head found on the old Post Office site in Head Street in 2000. This was thought to have been fixed to the end of a cattle drover's baton, displayed as a sign of office and as a practical object. The bull's sharp metal horns were used to prod cattle straying within the walls of the town!

However the eagle's true role in Roman life would have to wait for expert advice.

The eagle was found in 1995, prior to the Portable Antiquities Scheme. Access to expert Finds Liaison Officers was still a thing of the future. However expert advice was available in Essex at the time and the recommendation was to carefully clean the object with a soft brush together with the careful use of a wooden toothpick.

The partly cleaned eagle began to reveal some of its secrets. It was unusual in that it had a short, non-aquiline beak. Furthermore, it appeared to have a small crest on its head. Its claws had parallel indents underneath, as though it was designed to sit on a horizontal pole or wire.

If this was not an eagle, what was it?

The answer came shortly afterwards. An article in a metal detecting magazine reported that a bronze bird of similar description had also been recently found with the aid of a metal detector and it had been identified.

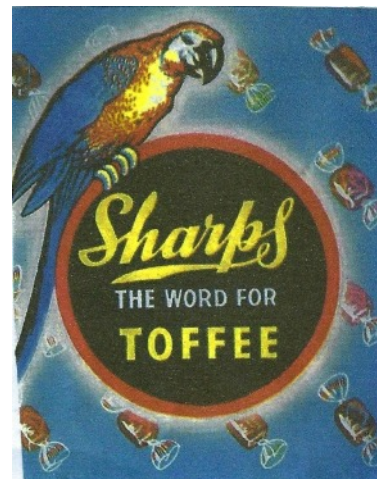
The find was reported to be a bronze parrot from the late 19th century! The parrot was the trademark of the makers of Sharp's toffee.

These parrots were given away to sweetshops, probably inside decorative wire cages. They stood on counters to attract the younger customers to buy Sharps toffee.

The eagle was a Victorian advertisement and not an important piece of Roman regalia!

Oh dear!

Superbia et ante ruinam exaltatur
(Pride comes before a. fall)



The Lost “Beacon” between Stanway and Lexden Preston Boyles

This article was first published on the web-site Old Colchester and District in pictures on the 29th March 2020 and is reproduced here with permission of the Author

There was once a mysterious obelisk-shaped landmark, often referred to as a ‘beacon’, located on Gryme’s Dyke between Lexden and Stanway. The northeast part of Stanway parish has been called Beacon End since the middle ages – Beacon End Farm (now Beacon End Courtyard), located on the north side of London Road nearly opposite the junction with Villa Road, was in existence from at least the late 1300’s, and was named after something called “the Beacon”, itself first mentioned by name in 1414. This ‘beacon’ was located somewhere south of the farm.



Fig 1. Christopher Saxton’s map of Essex from 1576 – a tall object is shown as a landmark between Lexden (to the northeast) and Stanway (to the southwest). Stanway is depicted where Stanway Hall and All Saints Church were located (now the Zoo). St Albright’s church on London Road was actually a chapel-of-ease in the medieval and early post-medieval periods, being a subsidiary of All Saints

The structure is first shown (but not named) on Christopher Saxton’s 1576 map (the earliest surviving county map of Essex), which depicts it as a tall landmark sited between Lexden, to the northeast, and Stanway (what we would now call Stanway Green, around the Zoo, where the manor house and All Saints church of Stanway were located), to the southwest. It next appears on a map dated to the 1590’s, which shows it in the same location and portrays it as a tall object shaped like an isosceles triangle. This map also locates it close to a road, which formerly ran from Lexden’s Church Lane, through Gryme’s Dyke and across Stanway Heath (now a hous-



Fig. 2. Map from 1590's showing a triangular landmark southwest of Lexden and northeast of Stanway

ing estate), joining Warren Lane just north of Heckfordbridge; this road went out of use in the 1800's, when Stanway Heath was enclosed for farmland. John Norden and John Speed's 1610 map of Essex was the first to name the landmark as "The Beacon", again locating it between Lexden and Stanway and showing it as a tall, roughly triangular-shaped structure. Dutch cartographer Jean Blaeu then published an atlas in 1646, which again showed "The Beacon", clearly depicting it as a tall triangular object in the same place.



Fig 3. Norden and Speed's map of Essex, 1610, shows what they refer to as "The Beacon", a roughly triangular-shaped landmark to the southwest of Lexden and northeast of Stanway

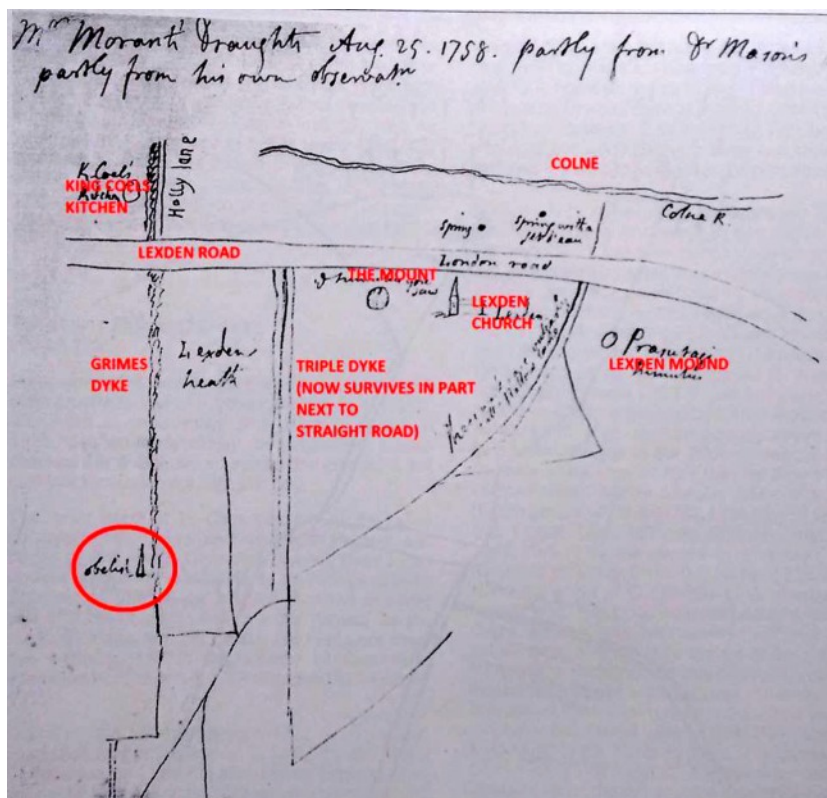


Fig 5. My annotation of Morant's first sketch plan of 1758. Shows the obelisk in relation to other landmarks

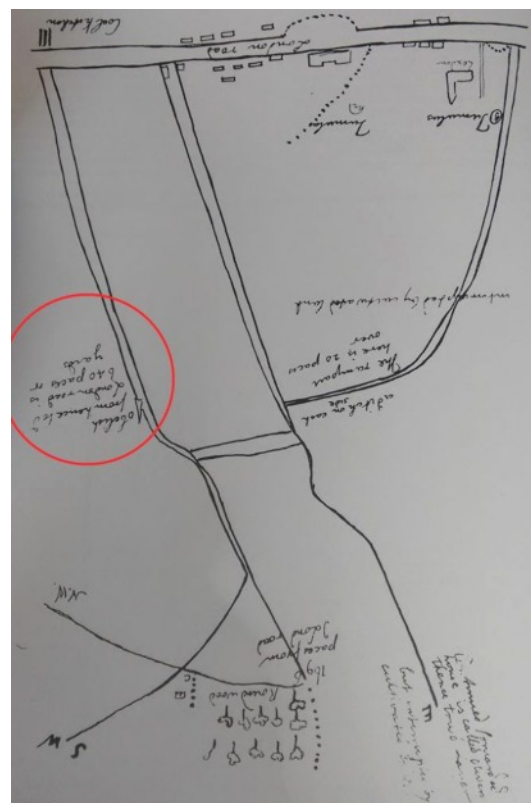


Fig 6. The second of Philip Morant's 1758 sketch plans. I've had to reorientate it, so that north is at the top of the page. It again shows what he calls the "obelisk" on Gryme's Dyke, with a note: "obelisk from hence to London road is 640 paces or yards".

And that's all the evidence there is for "The Beacon" – a farm name from the late 1300's, a reference to the 'Beacon' after which it was named in 1414, a triangular object called the 'Beacon' on 16th – 17th century maps, a couple of rough sketches from 1758 showing a similarly-shaped obelisk in roughly the same place, and a reference to a beacon or milestone on a much later OS map, apparently in the wrong location (if indeed it is the same thing). It may have been a Roman milestone – there is some scant evidence for a Roman road (HER entry MCC7619) running eastwards from London Road, just west of the Westside Centre, across what is now the Tolgate Retail Park, heading roughly towards where the obelisk stood. It may also have been a Roman tomb marker – the foundations of Roman "tower tombs" have been found around the Colchester Grammar School area. Who knows! It seems to have disappeared without a trace sometime after 1758, the last time anyone is known to have recorded.

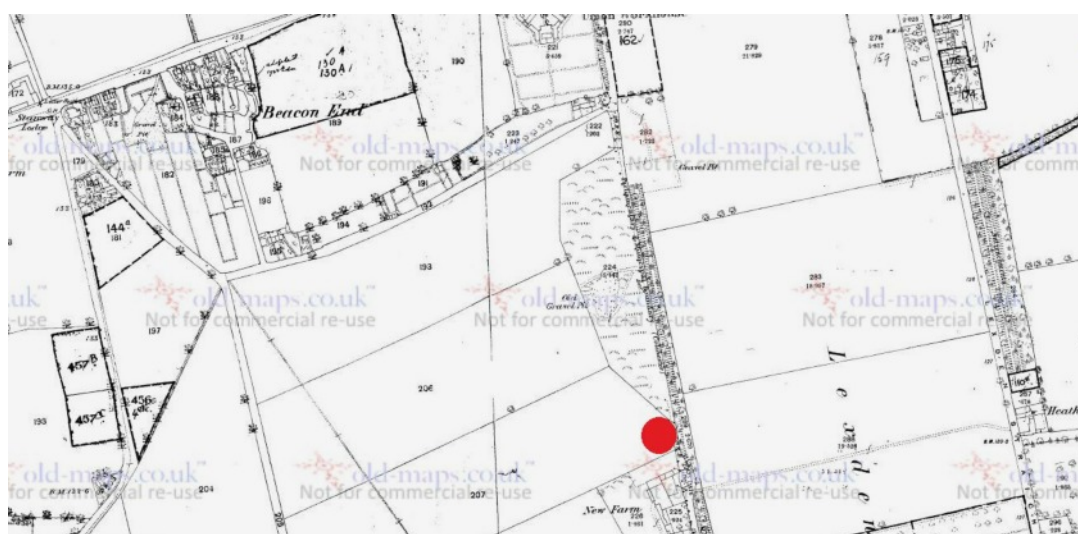


Fig. 7. The 1876 Ordnance Survey of the area of Morant's obelisk. No such landmark is mapped - the red dot is about where Morant says it was, close to New Farm, which developed in the 1800's after the enclosure of Stanway Heath



Fig. 8. Also shown on the 1876 OS map is this note - "Supposed Site of ROMAN MILLIARY OR BEACON", just southeast of the junction between Straight Road and Dugard Avenue, on what was once Shrubend Dyke. This is further southeast than where Morant marked the obelisk he saw - perhaps an error on the part of the OS map makers?

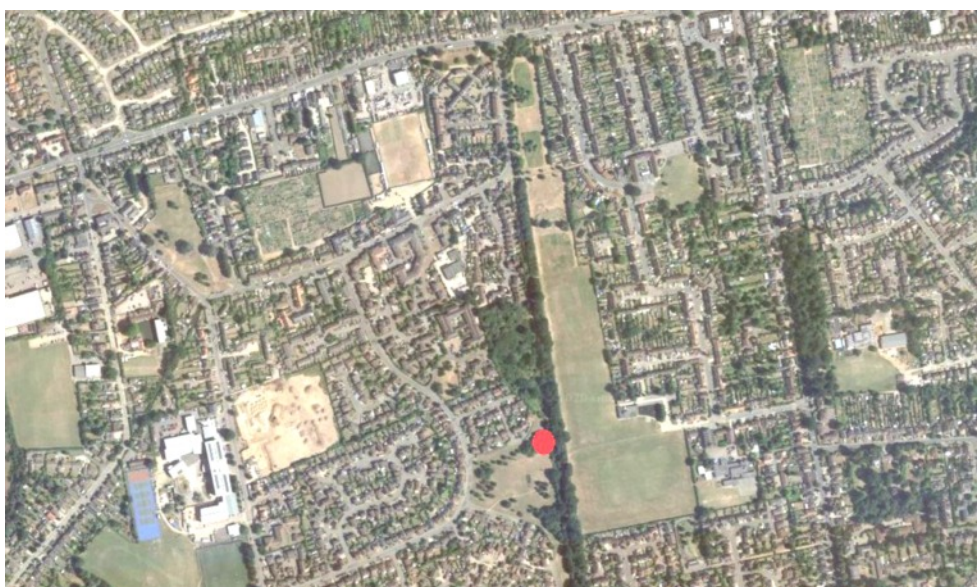


Fig. 9. Modern satellite image - the red dot is roughly, where Morant saw an obelisk in 1758



Fig. 10. Modern satellite image of the area, which I've annotated. The dykes are shown in orange, the Roman London Road in blue. Beacon End Farm, recorded since at least the late 1300's, is in green,

Observation from John Mallinson on the Beacon

I saw the beacon report when it first came out, but some of the accompanying maps and sketches are new to me. I did briefly wonder whether it was in fact "my" tumulus, (The Mound, Prettygate) and that Morant had got his knickers in a twist, but actually mine appears in about the right place on Beacon Fig 5. I cycle past the alleged spot on my way to Co-op (or used to until recently) - it is on National Cycle Route 1 no less - and there is not a trace, though maybe the magic Lidar would show an invisible bump.

WORLD WAR TWO DEFENCES IN THE BOROUGH OF COLCHESTER John Mallinson

In 1993, Essex County Council began a project to locate and record the county's World War Two defence sites with the aim of providing an historical and archaeological database of the sites within the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER).

By 2004, 1,900 sites had been located, visited, photographed and recorded across the county. In the Borough of Colchester, 279 had been recorded, mostly along the Eastern Command Line, which bisected the Borough, and around Colchester itself. All of these were already on the EHER and were resurveyed and recorded by Fred Nash, military Archaeologist, at that time attached to Essex County council. However, it was known that many more remained to be tracked down in the rural areas. These included a range of Home Guard defences, several of the enigmatic British Resistance sites and, importantly, the Borough's World War Two airfields and their outlying accommodation sites. In the latter part of 2004, with the interest and enthusiasm of Colchester Archaeological Group, the completion of the Borough became a possibility. This became reality when the group made a successful application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for grant funding through the Local Heritage Initiative scheme, and with a final funding element provided by Colchester Borough Council a joint endeavour to discover the remaining WWII sites, as a single World War Two Defences in Rural Colchester project, could begin.

Under the advice and supervision of Fred Nash, the Initiating Phase of the project began in April 2005 followed by the detailed research, location and surveying work over the following 22 months. By April 2007, 109 sites had been located and documented by the project teams. A late discovery brought the total to 110.

During the summer of 2007 the results were compiled and added to the 279 already on the Essex Historic Environment Record. This data, covering all the 389 sites in the Borough, under the authorship of Fred Nash, was published in 2 large volumes and presented to Colchester Archaeological Group in December 2007*. It has now been added in full to the CAG website (www.caguk.net/publications) where it is freely available for inspection.

It makes a fascinating read. Have a look and see what sites there are near you, and next time you go for a walk have a look for them. We would like to hear what state they are now in, particularly if there has been any change since the time of recording. You will probably already be familiar with your local pillboxes or airfield runways, which are prominent and almost indestructible features of the landscape, but you might have tank traps lurking in your local undergrowth, or the remains of barriers along the sides of your local road. It is even possible that your garden shed is an old ammunition store, or that that scruffy farm building down the road is part of an airfield dispersed site. You may even be lucky enough to have the remains of a secret resistance bunker in your local wood.

Of particular interest are the bases of spigot mortars. The spigot mortar was a particularly lethal anti-tank weapon. Lethal for the defenders, that is. The mortars only had a range of about 100 yards and were notoriously inaccurate, so when you had a Panzer tank with a big gun on the front coming towards you at 40 mph, you might if you were lucky be able to get off one shot, after which..... well, let's just say it is a good job for all involved in the Defence of the Realm that they were never



SMR 21125

used in anger. It is thought that many more mortar bases remain to be discovered, lurking unrecognized or buried in front gardens and field corners, so next time you stick a fork in the ground and it goes clunk, take a careful look. You never know.

* A few hard copies are still available for distribution to Libraries, Local History Groups or other interested parties. For further information please contact CAG Sales.

Great Tey Roman Villa – A Postscript

John Moore

In the last CAG newsletter I wrote an article about the Villa, attempting to pull together all the known information about the site. I was left with a number of unanswered questions, and further research has shed a bit more light. I suspect, however, that this will be my final word on the subject.

1. What happened to the finds from the first excavation in 1956?

This excavation was made by Maurice Campen of Feering, with assistance from H.D. Bennett. They were well-known local amateur archaeologists, who spent over twenty years excavating Canonium, an Iron Age/Romano-British site on the border between Feering and Kelvedon. Apparently, Campen became involved with Great Tey by chance. One day around 1955 he was surveying the extensive Roman brick and tile in Great Tey Church when he fell into conversation with Harold Fairs, the farmer at Warrens Farm, who had ploughed up Roman material on his farm in 1953. The upshot was an invitation for Campen to excavate the following year¹. The finds were recorded as window glass, painted wall plaster, C4th coins of Constantine I and II, Magnentius and Decentius and a Samian stamp of Borillus. It seems extremely likely that Campen retained them himself, as the following brief biography of the man's working methods will demonstrate.

Campen's many excavations in Essex were not well recorded, but he was known to have an extensive private museum to which CAG members paid a visit in 1960. After he moved from Feering to Snape in Suffolk in 1963, Campen continued excavating, mainly at Snape itself and Hacheston. Here his excavations were well documented by the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology, and the following two extracts from their 1964 Journal are representative of most of Campen's work.

19. *Hacheston, Bridge Farm.*

A toy pot 1½ in. tall, a bronze pin and an antoninianus of Aurelian (M. & S. 232) were also found and retained by Mr. Campen. (Site reported by D. J. Nicholls, excavated by M. J. Campen). (I.M. 964-68).

Campen died in 1984, and his will is revealing:

I BEQUEATH the contents of my museum containing Roman remains as follows:

- (a) To the Braintree Museum all articles found at Stebbing White Notley and Kelvedon in the County of Essex
 - (b) To the Framlingham Museum all articles found at Lower Hacheston and Wickham Market and elsewhere in the County of Suffolk
 - (c) All other items I give to my wife and my daughter Mary Christina
- Campen absolutely to be disposed of as they shall decide

Any finds from Great Tey would have gone to his daughter Mary, as Campen's wife pre-deceased him. Mary never married and died, intestate, in 2016. As the local Council could not trace any living relative, they provided her with a Public Health funeral, and her estate was placed on the government's 'Unclaimed Estates' register. It has now been claimed by person or persons unknown, so the trail of any finds has gone cold.

2. What happened to the finds from the second excavation in 1965 onwards?

This excavation was performed by a group recorded as CARG (Colchester Archaeological Research Group²), under the leadership of John Blyth. The finds from the excavation are not recorded, apart from one, which seems to have been of particular interest, and which featured in an illustrated article in the Colchester Gazette on October 11th 1966. I have obtained two photographs, one showing the excavation of a tessellated floor and the other showing the find in question³.



The excavators are named as Graham Broughton, Reg Casbolt, Rod Peterson and Nick Smith. The find is the handle of a knife, carved in ivory. It appears to depict a figure with a somewhat pained expression on his face!

One might expect that this artefact would have found its way to Colchester Museum, but the Museum Service is adamant that no finds from either excavation have been deposited there. The knife handle, and any other undocumented finds, have disappeared from the face of the earth.

3. Where is Blyth's unpublished report (said to be in Colchester Museum)?

I was hoping that this report would provide vital information. In the bibliography of the excavation report of the 1998 Cressing to Great Horkesley pipeline is the following entry: 'Blyth, J.R.D. 1965, Great Tey Villa, unpublished report in Colchester Museum'. The Museum Service could not trace this report, so I asked the Historic Environment Consultant at Place Services, Essex County Council, to see whether she could track down the authors of the pipeline excavation report, which was performed by the now disbanded County Archaeology Unit. She managed to do so, and this is her verbatim reply to me: *"It turns out that the reference that you saw was not checked, and is entirely fabricated. There was a map only."* This map should be in the Museum Archives⁴ but the Museum Service cannot at present lay their hands on it.

Sources:

¹ Information from Peter Fairs, Warren Farm, Great Tey

² Howard Brooks of CAT, who worked on the excavation as a schoolboy, informs me that the group name was not CARG, but ARG (Archaeology Research Group), to avoid confusion with CAG.

³ © Peter Fairs

⁴ Information from Mark Davies, former curator Colchester Museum

Heritage Gateway (www.heritagegateway.org.uk), Essex Historic Environment Record 8709

CAG Bulletin No. 3 1960

Proceedings of Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History Volume XXX Part 1 1964

Last Will and Testament of Maurice James Campen 1984

Public Health Funerals Register, East Suffolk Council

Unclaimed Estates, The Gazette, 2019

"A Roman crop-processing enclosure at Great Tey, and other sites on the Cressing to Great Horkesley Anglian Water trunk main: rescue excavations 1998", Patrick Allen & Stuart Gibson. Email from Alison Bennett, Historic Environment Consultant, Place Service

The Will of Aethelric and Leofwyn

Alan Chaplin

This article is research following a V2P survey on Copford

Early history of Copford, Essex

The manor of Copford Hall was part of the possessions of Aethelric (d. c. 995) which he devised to Aelfstan, bishop of London, and his successors. Before c. 1086, the king gave 17 a. of it to Robert Gernon, who held lands in Birch. The rest of the manor remained in the see of London until it came to the Crown, presumably on the deprivation of Bishop Bonner in 1559.

Above is the recognised early known published history of Copford Manor.

The Deanery Church of St. Mary the Virgin Bocking, Essex

In AD 991 Aethelric, Lord of the Manor of Bocking, was amongst those who led men to fight the Vikings at the Battle of Maldon. The East Saxon army was defeated; but Aethelric survived until 995 and willed his lands at Bocking to Christ Church Canterbury, this became effective following his wife Leofwine's death in 1006. A consequence of this is that Bocking Church, built on these lands, has enjoyed a long and interesting relationship with Lambeth Palace and successive Archbishops of Canterbury and is known as one of the Archbishops' 'Peculiar' parishes.

Taken from the Church website. Source unknown.

Aethelric's Will

In looking at Aethelric's Will and associated documents I have made the following interpretation of events leading up to the drawing up of the Will.

In an extract from Aethelric's Will⁽¹⁾ it stated:

Here in this document Aethelric makes known to whom after his day he grants the possessions which God has lent to him. First of all, to my lord sixty mancuses of gold, and my sword with the belt, and in addition two horses, two round shields and two javelins.

And I grant all that I leave to my wife (Leofwyn) for her lifetime; and after her death the estate at Bocking is to go to the community at Christchurch,And I grant the estate to the west of Rayne to St Paul's, ... And I grant to Copford for Bishop Aelfstan both woods and open lands east of the high-road, and the enclosure at Glazenwood.⁽²⁾ And half the estate at Northho⁽³⁾ I grant to St Gregory's at Sudbury, and half to St Edmund's at Bedericesworth.

However, between 995 & 1000⁽⁴⁾ King Aethelred amends the Will due to Aethelric treachery and his estate is confiscated; Leofwyn, Aethelric's wife begs the King to re-instate the Will. The King reinstates the Will on condition that Leofwyn gifts Bocking and her *morgengifu* (wedding day gift) in Mersea to Christ Church, Canterbury. Then the following Charter is then drawn up:

Aethelric and his wife Leofwyn grant land in Bocking and Mersey to Christ Church Canterbury....

(It is noted in Harts, Charters of Essex, that Aethelric's name may have been added later.)

The remainder of Aethelric's estates then should go to Leofwyn's for the rest of her life then passed on as requested in the Will to various religious orders or Churches. (Copford going to Bishop Aelfstan, or his successor⁽⁵⁾). There is no problem in a woman holding land in their own right in Saxon society. Later historians may have overlooked this.

Please Note. I am assuming that below the spelling of his Aethelric's name would vary due to the skill of the scribes, transcription from old English into a modern form and time. I have not tried to correct this.

Earl Bryhtnoth and the Battle of Maldon⁽⁶⁾

Aethelric should have been at the Battle of Maldon (August 991) with Earl Bryhtnoth who is also his neighbour and fellow Ealdorman, Bryhtnoth had lands amongst others, in Lexden and Stanway, (adjacent to Copford) according to the Will of Aelflaed⁽⁷⁾ Bryhtnoth's widow. Would Bryhtnoth not have asked his fellow landowners and Ealdormen to provide men to fight the Viking/Danish raiders?

Extracts from the Anglo-Saxon poem "The battle of Maldon"

- a. Also Eadric wanted to support his lord,
his master in battle so he bore his spear
forth to the fight. He had good intentions
so long as he could hold with his hands
a shield and broad sword—he would validate his vow
when the time came to fight before his lord. (11-16)
- b. So the son of Ælfric encouraged them forwards,
a warrior young in winters, speaking in words, (209-10)
- c. So did Ætheric, a noble comrade,
quick and eager to go forth and earnestly fight. (280-1)

Extract from The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles⁽⁸⁾

A. 991. This year was Ipswich ravaged; and after that, very shortly, was Bryhtnoth the ealdorman slain at Maldon. And in that year it was decreed that tribute, for the first time, should be given to the Danish-men, on account of the great terror which they caused by the sea-coast; that was at first ten thousand pounds: this counsel was first given by archbishop Siric.



*Bryhtnoth statue
at Maldon*

Treachery

Aethelric may be the Aelfric (ealdorman)/Elfric mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles who in c.992 fled the Battle of Maldon after informing the enemy of the attack? This could explain his treachery and the confiscation of his land by King Aethelred.

Extracts from The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles⁽⁸⁾

A. 992. This year Oswald the blessed archbishop died, and Abbat Eadulf succeeded to York and to Worcester. And this year the king and all his witan decreed that all the ships which were worth anything should be gathered together at London, in order that they might try if they could anywhere betray the army from without. But Ælfric the ealdorman, one of those in whom the king had most confidence, directed the army to be warned; and in the night, as they should on the morrow have joined battle, the self-same Ælfric fled from the forces; and then the army escaped.

From an alternative copy of the Chronicle

A.992. This year Oswald the holy archbishop left this, and passed to the heavenly life: and Ethelwin the ealdorman died in the same year. Then decreed the king and all his witan that all the ships which were worth anything should be gathered together at London. And the king then committed the forces to the leading of Elfric the ealdorman, and of Thorod the earl, and of bishop Elfstan, and of bishop Escwy; and they were to try if they could anywhere betray the army about. Then sent the ealdorman Elfric and directed the army to be warned; and then during the night of which they should have joined battle by day, then fled he by night from the forces, to his great disgrace: and the army then escaped, except one ship, whose crew was there slain. And then the ships from East-Anglia, and from London met the army, and there they made great slaughter of them; and took the ship, all armed and equipped, in which the ealdorman was. And then after the decease of archbishop Oswald, abbat Aldulf, of Peterborough, succeeded to the bishopric of York, and of Worcester; and Kenulf to the abbacy of Peterborough.

The following year

A.993 In this year the king ordered Elfgar, son of Elfric the ealdorman, to be blinded.

Conspiracy theory

When was Aethelric's Will made? From the above we could assume that he was killed at sea in c.992. It is unlikely that he was taken prisoner and it not mentioned. It is normal that the Saxon elite would give some land or property to Religious institutions on their death. However in this Will, there is no mention of his son(s) or any other relative or kinsmen as one might expect. Was it therefore drawn up after Aethelric's demise between the Church, who do well out of agreement, and Leofwyn and then presented to the King to agree? There are seven bishops "witnesses" to the Kings Charter with Leofwyn.

Was the King being lenient with Leofwyn? And if so why?

The King is also known as Aethelred the unready⁽⁹⁾ due to the poor advice he receives.

Like Father, like Son?

Eadric Streona, was said to be by John of Worcester to be the son of Æthelric, a thegn (member of the Kings household) who attended King Æthelred's court from the late 980s onwards, he is said to have had about eight siblings. Eadric Streona was also a man who was happy to change sides between Saxon and Dane when it suited him. The most spectacular being the battle of Ashendon 1016 where he changed sides in the middle of the battle. He was murdered Christmas 1117 (possibly on the orders of Canut?) (As this is taken from his Wikipedia entry, it will need extra proof)

These accounts have all the stuff of a Shakespearian tragedy. There is probably more evidence out there hidden in Saxon charters. I am unable to find N. Brooks, "Treason in Essex in the 990's, the case of Aethelric of Bocking" which is mentioned in "Wills and Will-making in Anglo-Saxon England" by L. Tollerton. p.71, which could shine more light on the subject.

Sources

- (1) Anglo-saxon.net S1015 and S1218
- (2) Glazenwood, believed to be Glazenwood Hall near Coggeshall/Braintree.
- (3) Northho, unknown location
- (4) The early Charters of Essex by Cyril Hart, 1971, no30.
- (5) Bishop Aelfstan died in c.995-6 and succeeded by Wulfstan until c.1002-4, then by Aelfhun.
- (6) The battle of Maldon, various, on-line
- (7) The early Charters of Essex by Cyril Hart, 1971, no34.
- (8) The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, various translations, on-line
- (9) His epithet does not derive from the modern word "unready", but rather from the Old English unræd meaning "poorly advised"; it is a pun on his name, which means, "well advised". Wikipedia

Also useful sources:

The Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England (PASE): <http://pase.ac.uk> (Aethelric 37 and Leofwynn 2)

Wills and Will-making in Anglo-Saxon England, Linda Tollerton. p.71.

For more information of Brytold and the Battle of Maldon:

https://penelope.uchicago.edu/~grout/encyclopaedia_romana/britannia/anglo-saxon/maldon/byrhtnoth.html

Obituary Don Scott

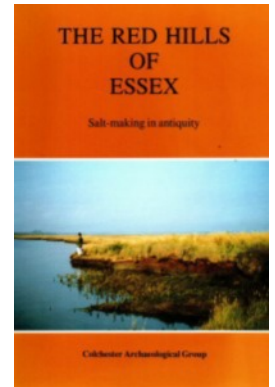
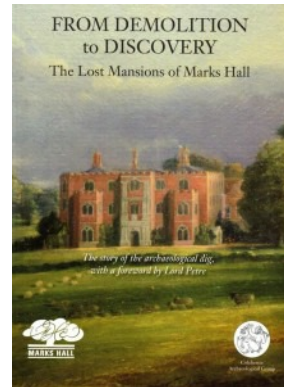
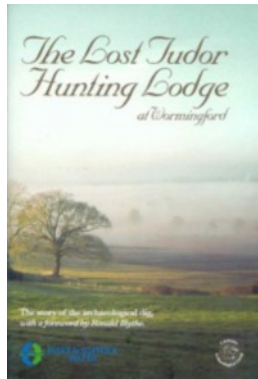
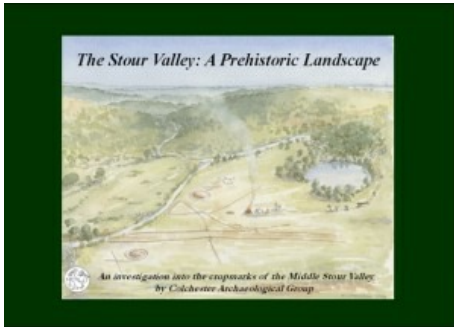
Don Scott was a Colchester Blue Badge Guide and member of Colchester Archaeological Group for many years. He and his wife Sheila often came on the CAG weekends away and the day trips. Before Don retired, he was a lecturer at the Institute. He trained as a guide at the same time as Anna Moore, Patrick Denny and myself.

Don gave up working as a guide a few years ago when his eyesight deteriorated badly. His wife Sheila taught piano and used to run one of the local choirs. Jonathan Pearsall sometimes used to bring Don to meetings.

Don was still quite active, but had broken his hip and then broke it again recently just before he died at the age of 93.

Barbara Butler

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Survey of World War Two Defences in the Borough of Colchester by Fred Nash, CAG and Essex County Council, Project report 2007. On-line edition 2020



The original Report is now divided into five downloadable pdf files from our website: caguk.net/publications

- (1) Prelims and Contents
- (2) Introduction, History to Appendices Site Grading and Inventory and map of Defence sites,
- (3) Section A: Sites Records SMR 8913-10961
- (4) Section B: Site Records: SMR 10962-20511
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Distance digging at Fordham

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