Colchester Archaeological Group

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Colchester Archaeological Group

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Committee 1998-2000

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The Bulletin editor for 1997 was Mr R Shackle, and for 1998-2000 Mrs R Thomas

INTRODUCTION TO MILLENNIUM BULLETIN
John Mallinson - Chairman of CAG 1998-2000

Members of Colchester Archaeological Group are a disparate bunch. The ranks include a sprinkling of real archaeologists, of course, and we have historians of every period and persuasion. But we also have scientists of every shape, size and discipline, geographers, classicists and artists, as well as teachers, lecturers, librarians, local government officers, farmers and industrialists. You name an occupation, and we can probably produce a member.

What is it about archaeology that attracts people from such a wide range of backgrounds?

Archaeology is in many ways a strange and unique discipline. It lies firmly alongside history and anthropology in seeking to uncover and explain mans past. Its methods must be rigorously scientific, and it requires knowledge and use of many disciplines including physics, chemistry, geology, forensic medicine and many more. But unlike physical sciences an experiment (or dig) can never be repeated. Information not found or not recorded is lost forever. Nor can any theory ever be proved. Provided it fits the available information it is as valid as any other, and this affords the opportunity for endless speculation.

I believe that it is this opportunity for speculation that gives archaeology much of its appeal. We all like a puzzle, and the chance to stretch our imagination in search of a solution. And if we can't come up with a rational explanation we can always join the professionals and fall back on the convenient catch-all explanation - "ritual purposes".

Add to that the wide variety of ways in which information on which to speculate can be obtained, and it is possible to see why so many different types of people want to get involved. The CAG Committee try to meet this need, and try to fulfill the Groups object "to educate and to promote ... an interest in archaeology", by providing a wide variety of activities in which members can participate. In the last year, in addition to our winter lecture programme, our spring visit to the West Country and our full summer programme, individuals and groups have participated in four different digs, field walking, graveyard recording, the national cellar survey and many other activities.

Many of these pursuits are reported in the following pages. I hope the articles will "educate and inform", but I hope they will also entertain, and provide the opportunity for many hours of informed speculation.

EDITOR'S NOTE
Ros Thomas - September 2000

In this Millennium edition of the Bulletin you will find not only the lecture notes for three winter seasons, but also a series of articles and reports designed to illustrate some of the wide range of activities undertaken by members.

The group would like to offer thanks to Richard Shackle who retired as editor for the CAG Bulletin in Autumn 1999. The following pages illustrate some of his other continuing interests as a historic building expert and lecturer.

COLCHESTER YOUNG ARCHAEOLOGISTS' CLUB 1994-2000
Pat Brown - organiser of Colchester YAG, and Group Secretary

Colchester Young Archaeologists' Club started up in April 1994 - to some extent a revival of "Young Rescue" which was run by Mike Corbishley in the 1970s. Indeed, Mike ran the second meeting of the Club, with his "dustbin" and an exhibition of corn-grinding with a hand quern. Since then the Club has had a steady average attendance of 16 out of a membership of around 30-40. Undoubtedly the Club has benefited from the increase of public interest in archaeology, with programmes like "Time Team" which most of the children watch avidly. The National YAC has also expanded greatly since 1994, and a lot of our members are National members also. National YAC helps us with ideas and information, and ensures that all branches keep to high standards of safety and child care.

Most of the members want to "dig" and are disappointed to learn that, for insurance reasons, they cannot take part in a "proper dig" until they are sixteen (although recently the Cressing Temple Field School has accepted twelve-year-olds, and one of our members took advantage of this.) So our activities have had to be based on crafts, talks, museum-based activities, and visits, though we have also done some field-walking and surveying, including recording the gravestones at Holy Trinity, Colchester. We have been to Elms Farm, West Stow, Flag Fen, St Albans, Ipswich Museum and Bury St. Edmunds (joining Bury YAC) as well as local sites. We have also been visited by a Viking lady and Anglo-Saxon seamen. Craft work is particularly popular, and we have made pots, runic Christmas cards, jewellery, Egyptian coffins, Roman shoes and many other things which they can take home. Roman and medieval cookery has also been attempted, with varying edibility!

None of this would have been possible without the constant support of the Museum staff, who allow us the use of the Charles Gray Room for our indoor meetings, and the parents of the children who are wonderfully supportive. I should also like to thank all those who have been regular helpers - Merissa Bent, Pam Tedder, Blanche Anderton and Denise Hardy.

Like many activities for this age group (9-16) there is a high turnover of members, but some develop a long-term, serious interest and do their work experience in museums or archaeological units, going on, we hope, to take up a career in archaeology.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE COLCHESTER CONSERVATION AND ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP
Graham Mollatt - CAG representative

In 1998 I took over as the group rep. on the MOD Colchester Conservation Group and to date I have attended four meetings. Groups like this have been set up nationwide to liaise with local interest groups concerned with conservation of flora and fauna and sites of archaeological interest which fall within the boundaries of land administered by the MOD.

Among the papers that I received from the previous rep. was a very old map of MOD land around Colchester on which were around 130 red-marked sites which are included in the Colchester Sites and Monuments Record 1 (SMR), but there was little information as to what they represented. Therefore at one of the meetings I requested from Jo Yeates, an MOD archaeological representative stationed at Aldershot, a set of the ministry maps of our area. Jo supplied these, and on perusal it became clear that the sites marked on these maps were considerably fewer than on the map I had inherited. Jo was about to leave her post at the time, and her successor, Ann Lieu, informed me that they had no other knowledge of additional sites. At this point I made contact with Martin Winter, Archaeological Officer of Colchester Museum Service, to compare his SMR maps but they proved to be similar to my originals. I was then able to obtain a set of more up-to-date SMR maps from Paul Gilman of Essex County Council Heritage Conservation which gave clearer information. I am now intending to meet with John Mallinson and Mark Davies to decide if there are any sites in particular which CAG wishes to visit and investigate, and to decide on further plans.

RECORDING COLCHESTER'S UNDERWORLD - A CELLAR SURVEY FOR COLCHESTER - INTERIM REPORT

David Radford (Colchester Museum Service)

Several teams of volunteers are currently working on a year-long survey recording Colchester's historic cellars. The project is being organised by Colchester Borough Council's Museum Service and CAG. The survey will plot where archaeological deposits have been destroyed by cellar construction and record any interesting internal features that may survive. The survey teams are relying on the goodwill and co-operation of homeowners and shopkeepers in the town, and hope to make a significant contribution to our understanding of historic Colchester.

The teams are recording cellars of all ages, from the medieval stone undercrofts that lined the High Street, to the Victorian coal cellars along East Hill. Some Colchester cellars contain remains of Roman walls and drain arches, while others contain features such as chimney bases, fireplaces, old ship timbers and wells. The cellar below what was the Castle bookshop even has a spring running through it!

The information recorded will be entered onto an `Urban Archaeological Database' (UAD) currently being compiled by Colchester Museums and funded by English Heritage. English Heritage is paying for the country's top thirty historic towns to set up these databases as part of a national `Urban Archaeological Strategy'. The databases will provide the basis for an up-to-date assessment of the top urban archaeological centres, and lead to the development of strategies for future research and management of the archaeological resource.

The database will record on digital maps the areas of the town that have been excavated, which, together with data from commercial boreholes, will help the Museum to map the archaeological deposits of the town and predict where archaeology is likely to survive. The principle user of this information will be the town's Archaeological Officer, Martin Winter, who is responsible for monitoring the planning applications received by the Borough Council and initiating archaeological recording where necessary.

One of the properties already visited is The Minories First Site Art Gallery on the High Street. The building was built in the early 16th century, although it was remodelled in the later 18th century by the local baymaker, Thomas Boggis. There are three cellars: one is full of rubble, but the other two are accessible and contain a number of interesting features. Under the Minories Cafe the 16th century cellar retains much of its original brickwork and characteristic Tudor herringbone flooring. Under the eastern exhibition room the cellar contains well-preserved Tudor brick storage alcoves and traces of blocked-in steps leading up to the High Street. Like many other properties along the High Street, the Minories would have a cellar accessible directly from the street. The cellars and undercrofts of large medieval town houses in Colchester were often rented out separately from the properties above and used as shops or storage areas, and we are hoping to find more traces of blocked-in medieval street entrances along the High Street. Another example is already known to exist at the Red Lion Hotel.

As the team go around the town they are also picking up interesting pieces of historical or anecdotal evidence from property owners which is adding to our knowledge of the resource. Our current understanding of the dating of many timber-framed buildings in the town comes from surveys undertaken by the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments in 1922 and the Department of the Environment in the 1950s. Quite often the dating for the buildings is quite conservative, and closer inspection shows that many are older than first thought. For example, No 8 East Hill is recorded as an 18th century property by the Department of the Environment List. However, the owner explained to the cellar survey team that the deeds date to 1622. Similarly, the survey of the cellar of No 54a Priory Street revealed a timber with what is known as a nicked chamfered stop, indicating that the building was built after the siege in the 17th century rather than the 18th century date in the listing.

Many of the volunteers are new to this kind of recording. Richard Shackle, who includes among his talents an expert knowledge of historic buildings, gave a short training session and provided some initial guidelines, but for the teams it has largely been a question of learning on the job. There are a number of building styles that are commonly encountered in early cellars; for example, in the 16th century brick was used as a fashionable building material for the well-to-do. Between 1580-1630 a technique of laying bricks called English Bond became widespread in the houses of the wealthy. After 1630 this was eclipsed by the use of Flemish Bond. These early types of brickwork can provide important

clues for the dating of cellars. Often cellars have been rebuilt or refaced with later brickwork. Part of the detective game is to shine the torch around the nooks and crannies searching for a patch of earlier brickwork which will reveal the origins of the structure.

Around 100 cellars are known to exist from records in the museum, but the actual number may be closer to 200. The present survey has already added to our knowledge, but final results will not be known until after the conclusion of the project later in 2000.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY AT HIGH WOODS COUNTRY PARK
Report by Philip J Wise, Colchester Museums

Members of the Colchester Archaeological Group have recently taken part in a combined field-walking and metal-detecting project within High Woods Country Park, a public open space owned and managed by Colchester Borough Council. The survey took place in March-April 2000 and involved members of CAG and the Colchester Metal-Detecting Club. The project was co-ordinated by Philip Wise of Colchester Museums and Simon Johnson, who undertook the project as part of his A-level studies.

The survey was centred on NGR TM 002 267. Two fields were systematically studied using transects 25m apart and each transect divided into 25m lengths. The transect was walked from south to north or vice-versa, with finds being collected along a 2m wide strip. A substantial part of the study area was also metal-detected although lack of detectorists prevented full coverage.

Previous finds in the area have included large numbers of lead musket and pistol balls of possible Civil War date as well as a small bronze coin of the Empress Faustina (AD 141-161), a 17th century bay seal, and assorted Roman, 18th and 19th century coins.

The present survey produced a wide range of finds of different dates and materials. The oldest finds were an Early Bronze Age barbed and tanged flint arrowhead, pieces of Roman sandy greyware pottery and a fourth century Roman bronze coin. However the most numerous finds were post-medieval in date. These included clay tobacco pipe bowls and stems, fragments of glass wine bottles, sherds of imported Westerwald pottery made in the German Rhineland, and pieces of English slipware and salt-glazed stoneware.

Especially interesting were a small group of mid-17th century artefacts, including a silver Scottish twenty pence coin of Charles I, four lead powder measures and a copper alloy book clasp. The largest single group of finds were some eighty-five musket balls which were studied in detail. The balls were weighed and measured and found to be suitable for firing from a range of Civil War firearms. There was also a significant quantity of lead casting spillage which is believed to be manufacturing waste from the production of musket balls.

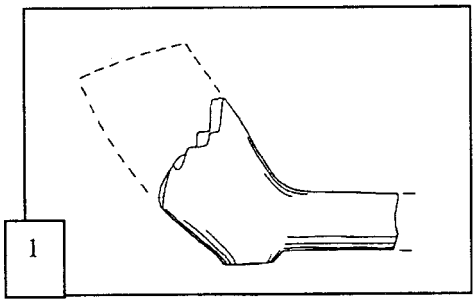
This evidence suggests probable military activity in the area during the Siege of Colchester in 1648. It is known from the contemporary Siege Map that there was a gun emplacement, Fort Rainsborough, to the north of the river Colne. The recent survey, although by no means conclusive, may help to pinpoint the location of this fort.

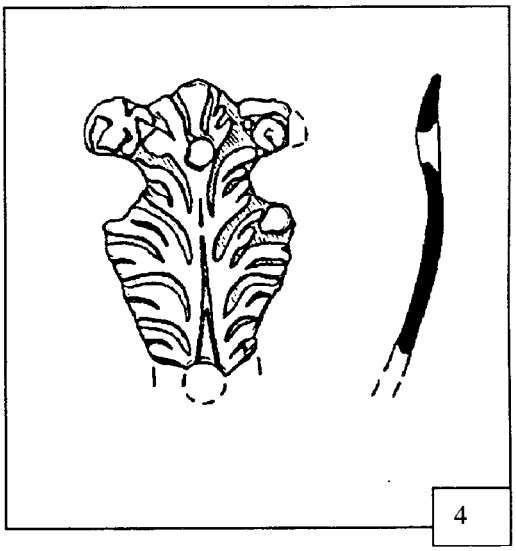
Colchester Museums are very grateful to all those who assisted in the survey. It is hoped that a selection of the finds will go on display in Colchester Castle Museum in the near future.

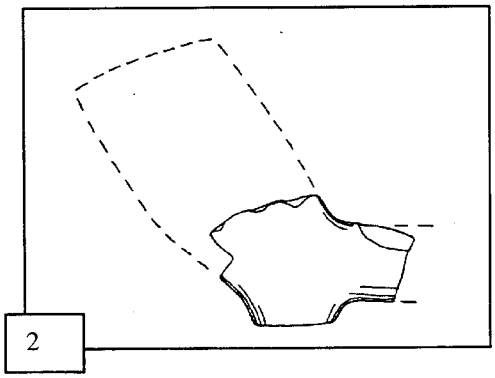
Archaeological Survey at High Woods Country Park - finds illustrations

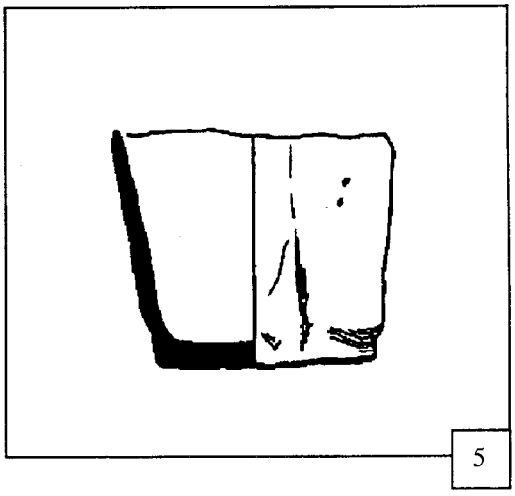
1) Clay tobacco pipe bowl fragment. c. 1660-80
2) Clay tobacco pipe bowl fragment, c. 1670-1700
3) Clay tobacco pipe bowl, rouletted rim and base, c. 1670-1700
4) Copper alloy book clasp, 17th century
5) Lead powder measure, mid-17th century

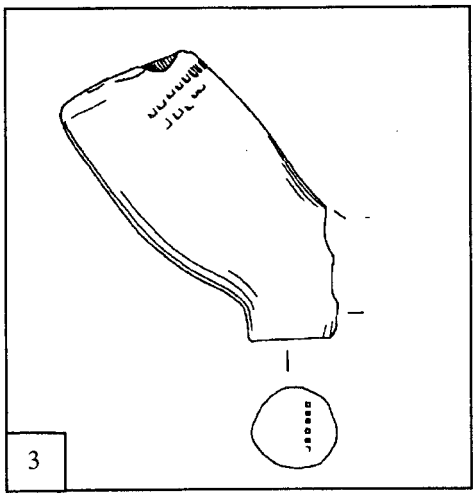
(All illustrations by Sue Holden)











CHURCHYARD SURVEYS IN THE COLCHESTER DISTRICT

Report by Noreen Proudman with additional notes by Freda Nicholls

The need for such surveys has been recognised for a considerable time and some work has already been carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Group and reports published in the Annual Bulletins Vol. 24 (1981) and Vo125 (1982). The group has recruited many new members since then who may be unaware of the reasons for the need for this type of work. The upkeep of churchyards has become increasingly difficult and costly, ancient crafts such as wielding sickle and scythe are not likely to become available again and many churchyards are being "tidied up" by the removal of monuments to allow easier access for grass cutting machinery. Redevelopment in the area around redundant churches also has to be considered.

During the summer of 1999 a group of CAG members, Pat Brown, Anna Moore, Freda Nicholls, Noreen Proudman and Rosemary York-Moore, began to record the gravestones in St Martin's and St Runwald's churchyards. The group worked to plans drawn up by John Mallinson. Recording followed the Guidelines suggested by the Council of British Archaeology and Rescues. In addition a comparison was made with a survey carried out in the mid-19th century by Frederick Arthur Crisp which is available for consultation in the Local History Section of Colchester Public Library.

Survey of St Runwald's

The churchyard at St Runwald's did not surround the church, which was located on the High Street, near the Town Hall. The church was demolished in 1878, and monuments from the church were moved to St Nicholas - now also demolished. Some of the stones placed in the graveyard on West Stockwell Street were moved from the church, although not all graves were cleared as can be seen from an article published in the Essex County Standard of February 5 1965. My attention was drawn to this article by Olive Hazell, one of Colchester's Blue Badge Guides. This article refers to work carried out in the High Street to place a new manhole. A lead and wooden coffin was found in a vault which would have been under the floor of St Runwald's church. The coffin contained the remains of Anna Maria Taylor, wife of an 18th century druggist, whose premises were on the High Street. Mrs Taylor died in 1795. The report continues that the placing of her coffin crowded earlier burials and seven skulls were found underneath. The main conclusion which can be drawn from the present survey is that considerable changes have been caused by erosion since the 19th century survey. Dedications on some graves have completely disappeared apart from a few strokes or letters and others remain legible only in part. The erosion does not follow any particular pattern: in some case early dedications are legible while more recent have been eroded. Occasionally the eroded section is in the middle.

The survey recorded 39 stones (Plan on page 9). Many of these were foot stones, placed back to back with headstones and it was assumed that both belonged to the same grave. Of the 39 stones four were double stones, which in one case (No. 3/4 on the plan) did not appear to refer to members of the same family. Other double stones did record family members, e.g. Peter and Elizabeth Deval, recorded No 21, and their daughter Mary Blair, recorded on No. 230. One double stone No 34/35, records only one name across its width - John Stebbing. The remainder of the dedication is completely eroded. There is one grave with a headstone, footstone and coffin stone (33/38/39) but the headstone now has the inscription facing to the west. This may indicate that stones have been moved. Another example is the headstone for John Deval (No. 26)A. The footstone is No. 36.

By discounting double stones, foot stones and the coffin stone, twenty four stones were recorded. This includes a group of eleven stones lying flat in the south west corner, and some of which are broken. These are the oldest stones - one has a date 1666 and one records its removal from St Runwald's church. Crisp records eight names in this group; now only five can be deciphered.

Among the stones lying flat are two dedicated to Samual Mott and his wife, Temperance. Both bear coats of arms, although these are now too eroded to be identified. Samual Mott died in 1698. The stone is broken in two parts (No. 9 and 13 on the plan) but part of the inscription can still be read:

'Here lieth Saml Mott Gen. Twice Mayor of this towne
who departed this life.…… Jan 1698 in the...

The stone dedicated to his wife reads:

'Here lieth interred th...Ms. Temperance Mott
... late Samuel Mott Gen.... This life ye 19
of Ma . in y 23 yeare'

In this group of graves (No 12 on the plan) the stone is dedicated to William Keymer and Ann his wife, Charles Great Keymer and Priscilla his wife, and William Keymer Jun. And Jane his wife. A further inscription reads:

"The remains of the above was removed from St Runwald's Church 1878. "

This is followed by the text:

"The trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and shall be changed. "

The Keynes family is also recorded on stone No 31, which is now only partly legible, with a large section eroded from the middle. This refers to:

"John Keymer, Second……..……of Charles Great Keymer……..

The last legible dedication is:

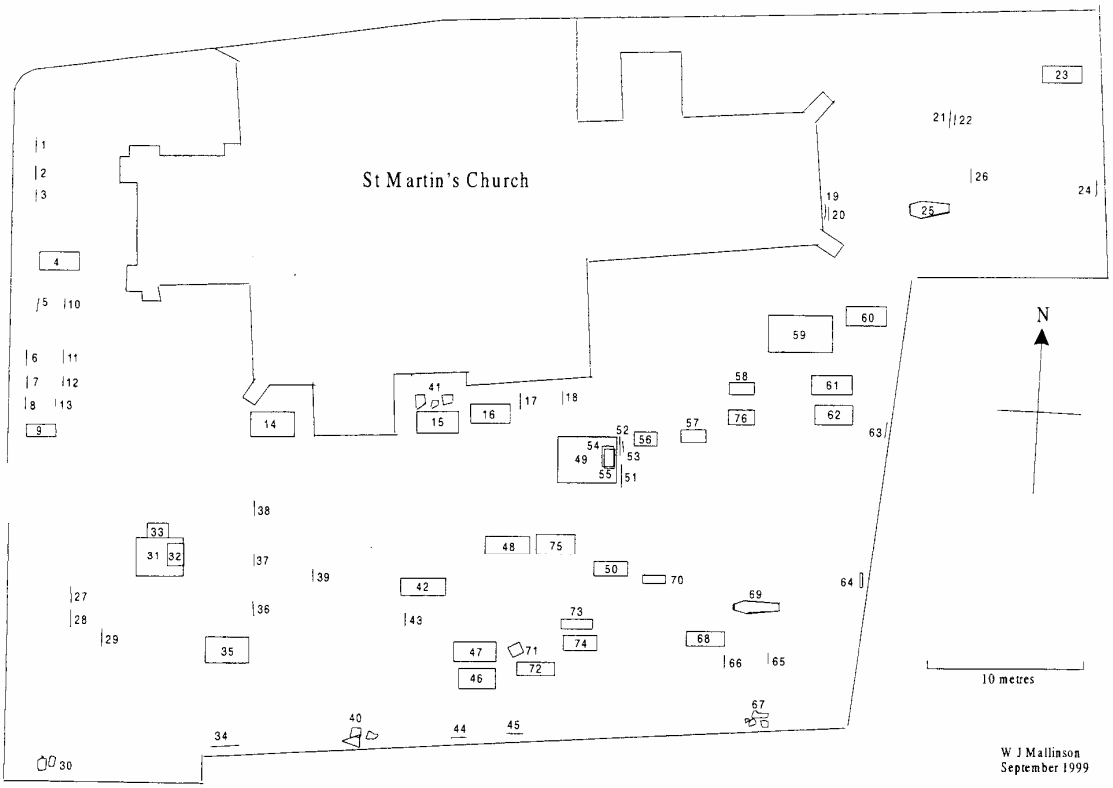
"Charles Toll Keymer eldest son of the late Charles Great Keymer who died June 1825 aged 36"

(It has been suggested that "Great" may be a corruption of Groot and that there is a Dutch (Flemish) connection here). The stones recorded in this survey were dated from 1666 to 1835, and of the twenty-four recorded, only fourteen could be recorded by name.

Survey of St Martin's and Holy Trinity

During 1999 St Martin's was also surveyed. Mr Crisp recorded only 54 monuments in the churchyard, but our survey noted 76. Of these only 36 had headstones, and many had poor legibility. We recorded only partial details of 52 deaths, 21 females and 23 male, and perhaps 8 children.

Holy Trinity churchyard has been surveyed by the Colchester Young Archaeologists and the report is still being prepared. The full details of the 1999 survey of St Martin's and St Runwald's, however, are now lodged with the Colchester and Essex Museums. Work has been continuing during the summer of 2000 on the churchyard of St James the Great, East Hill.



St Martin's Church and Graveyard
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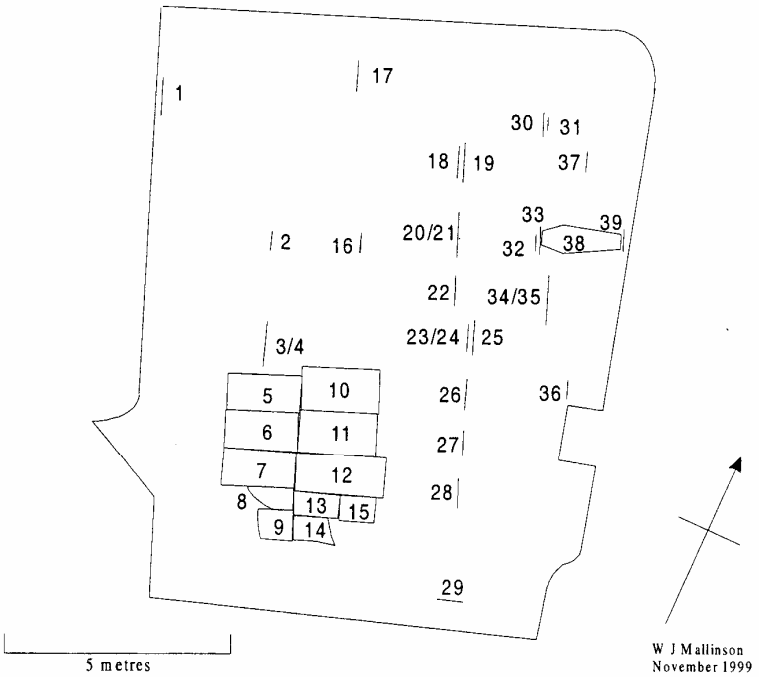

St Runwald's Graveyard
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Book Review

The Archaeology of Ardleigh, Essex - excavations 1955-1980
Report No 90, 1999, Heritage Conservation, Essex County Council

Review by Harry Palmer

This publication was launched by a very successful social function held on August 4th 2000 at Colchester Castle.

Colchester Archaeological Group was formed from a WEA class taken by Dr John Morris MA (and later by Mr Hull, MA FSA) in 1955. Mr Felix Erith, the owner and farmer at Vince's Farm, Ardleigh, became a member of the group and invited CAG to carry out investigations on his land. He had already made considerable finds of Bronze Age urns etc. and his enthusiasm gave the Group great impetus and brought in many new members. A photograph reproduced in the new book about the excavations shows this early group at the end of an excavation of one phase of the digs.

CAG was fortunate to have this opportunity to dig on such a splendid site, which gave the new group a "start in life" from which it has never looked back. A good account of the work and discoveries are given in the new publication - well worth its £17.00 cost.

Obituary

COLIN BELLOWS
Contributed by Pat Brown

Colin Bellows, a long-standing member of the Group, sadly died on Boxing Day 1999. He had an abiding interest in archaeology, and in Colchester's archaeology in particular. He was probably best known as a member of the Management Committee of the Colchester Archaeological Trust, and as Chairman of the Friends of the Trust, where his services were greatly valued. He travelled abroad and visited many famous sites, was a regular attender at the Monday lectures and often came to the Group's social events. He will be greatly missed, not only for his wide experience of the workings of local government in relation to planning and archaeology, but for his warm and friendly personality.

ABRAHAM NEWMAN OF MOUNT BURES: From Farmer's Son to Lord of the Manor

Ida McMaster

Research into village history often uncovers one particular character whose actions stand out, compelling one to investigate him further: just such a person was Abraham Newman of Mount Bures. Scattered fragments of this life appeared in *"Mount Bures: Its Land and Its People"*, (McMaster and Evans 1996), but it seemed that Abraham warranted a fuller version of his amazing and distinguished position in the village.

His background history

Abraham was born and baptised in Mount Bures in 1735, the younger son of Thomas and Anne Newman. Father Thomas was a tenant farmer of Mount Bures Hall and its farmlands. The Hall was then, according to a later occupier, *"mean, low and damp and not at all suitable for the principal house of the village"*. The house was in fact considerably enlarged in 1854. Thomas Newman was church warden here for many years from as early as 1741, dying in 1790 at the age of 88. He had been preceded at the Hall by a Robert Newman (1722) who was described also as a miller of Boxted (1). Search was made in that local church register for any signs of Robert Newman but without success. He could have been from the Suffolk Boxted, in fact. The Mount Bures will of a William Newman (1717) (2) bequeathed two freehold houses and their hereditaments in Mount Bures. The first house was left to his loving brother Robert Newman which had been lately purchased from Mr. Jordan Harris and the second house to his loving sister Susan Golding, widow, which had been lately purchased from Mr. Thomas Newman.

These two properties cannot be identified at present nor has it been possible to establish with certainty whether William and Robert were related to Thomas Newman at the Hall. Neither of William Newman's two houses could have been the Hall, of course, which was at that time firmly owned by the Cressener Lords of the Manor with a clear sequence of deeds as evidence. The Manor court rolls during that period however were apparently not being recorded due to the fact that the then Cressener Lord, Edward (3), lived mainly in Hamburg. One more record of Robert Newman appeared when he baptised a child at Mount Bures in 1735, the same year as the birth of Abraham Newman, our main subject. Perhaps the Robert Newman branch returned to Boxted and their milling. It is interesting to note that a century later there were Newman millers here again in Mount Bures when they built a new windmill (c. 1816), sited just south-west of our present Thatchers Inn. The Inn itself was built by John Newman, the miller's son, originally as a double tenement (two cottages) (4). This family of millers also hailed from Boxted where further research would be most valuable; certainly the christian names of both groups are decidedly repetitive. Some descendants of the later family are still present in Mount Bures today and again occupy the original Bake house cottages (now Catchlands) close to the now demolished mill (5).

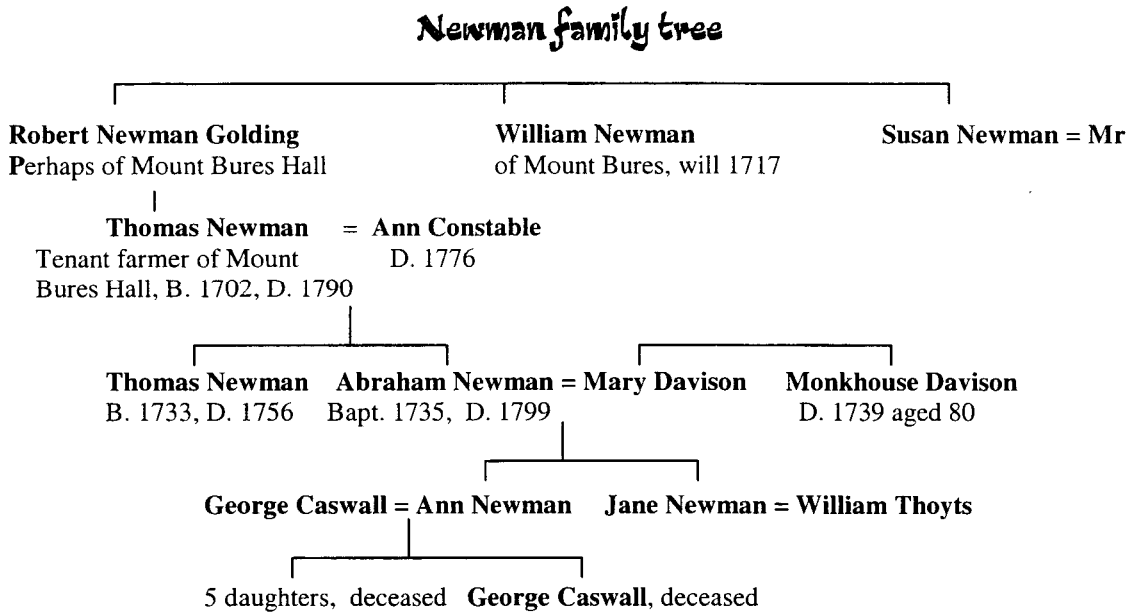
Abraham Newman's early years

His mother, Anne Newman (nee Constable) was a daughter of that same family which later in the century produced the famous artist John Constable. Anne died in 1776 having lived in Mount Bures Hall for very many years. Her eldest son Thomas junior, born 1733, was destined to die in 1756 at the early age of 23. The vicar left a particularly considerable entry in the register concerning the large vault to be provided for the unfortunate young man (6). Special fees were arranged for it. It was to *"lie in the churchyard at the end of the chancel"* where it is still identifiable today.

Abraham, then aged 21, had probably not expected to farm the Hall lands and therefore had made his way to London where, by the age of 35, he had become an exceedingly wealthy grocer of Fenchurch Street (7). One imagines that he was able to sell much of his father's fresh produce from Mount Bures in this way. Certainly he never forgot his childhood roots, as will be seen.

He married Mary (nee Davison) and two daughters were born to them, Ann and Jane. These two girls while still minors were bequeathed vast fortunes under the 1786 will of their uncle, Monkhouse Davison (8). A sum of £104,000 was placed in Trust for their benefit. Davison was described as Abraham's brother-in-law and was also a grocer of Fenchurch Street in the City of London. Since Abraham

appeared to have no further siblings, apart from Thomas above (deceased), it seems likely that Monkhouse was the brother of Mary, Abraham's wife. Perhaps Abraham learned his trade or was apprenticed to the Davison family originally. He was nominated Trustee for his daughters' huge fortunes in the 1786 Davison will. Nevertheless Abraham was himself equally successful a decade earlier judging by his numerous land purchases in Mount Bures and elsewhere, as follows.



Abraham's estates

Notions and Smiths farm 1778, 76 acres, Withers Farm 1778, 54 acres; Akermans (Takeleys) 1779; Reedings land, 16 acres, and cottage 1780, now Elms farm on which he erected the present *"capital messuage"* 1782; Pylates (Herds Pasture) with 38 acres 1780; Godfreys Farm (Old House) with 29 acres 1780, all in Mount Bures alone.

There were numerous other properties as well. He was not able to purchase the Lordship of the Manor with the Hall and farm lands until 1790, the year his father died. That year he inherited, also from old Thomas, Peartree Farm, alias old Brookhouse alias Martyns atte the Brooke, a very well documented property dating from before 1494 which Thomas had owned freehold since c. 1769 (9). The house stood at the north end of Peartree Hill and was retained by Abraham as his main country home which later he bequeathed to his elder daughter Ann. His younger daughter Jane received his main London residence in Fenchurch Street according to his 1796 will detailed later. Probably Abraham was able to invest his daughter's legacies to a certain extent towards various transactions. Old Brookhouse was demolished before 1829 when daughter Ann (Caswall) died. Whether or not it was a customary stipulation in the 18th century both Abraham and Ann in their wills ensured particularly that the husbands of their female heirs should not have administrative rights over their wives' inherited incomes. In Ann's case three of her four surviving daughters had well-placed husbands - namely Major General Claud Bourchier, Sir John Round of the famous Birch family and Colonel John Rolt. But the sums bequeathed were considerable and reflected grandfather Abraham's vast acquisitions and business acumen, together with his care for his female heirs.

The Kingsbury connection

During his life one senses that Abraham had a particular friendship with the Kingsbury family headed by Joseph and his second wife Martha. Joseph had in his early years been gamekeeper at the Wormingford Hall, eventually becoming tenant farmer at that establishment. The Kingsburys were very small landowners by comparison with Abraham and it appears that, when Joseph was eighty, he and Martha were settled in Mount Bures as Abraham's tenants at the new Elms Farm which had been commissioned by Abraham in 1781/2. It was a most superior *"messuage"* and included 48 acres, some being the old Brookhouse/Peartree fields. Joseph was over 30 years older than Abraham and he did not survive long after the move, dying in 1786, though his wife Martha lived on until 1808 when her will (10) showed

she was still at Elms farm. Joseph's will bequeathed considerable property in various villages, providing well for his children and daughter-in-law, a widow; his son Robert having predeceased his parents. (10a)

Martha appeared to receive very adequate provision in Joseph's will although at her death only two freehold properties were recorded. She did not figure in Abraham Newman's generous will as did several of his other farming tenants. They must have been well acquainted having lived within a stone's throw of one another for some eighteen years and perhaps old friends for much longer. Wills are most revealing document: Joseph Kingsbury's own father, John, apparently bequeathed his wife adequate property in lieu of that stipulated in her marriage contract. On the face of it he sounded fair but he added a codicil a year later stating that if she opposed his arrangements and insisted on her "dower" and "thirds" then she would forfeit all the gifts in his 1718 will. Most of his so-called gifts were in Trust for his sons in any case. He even listed his household effects for her use down to the bed and linen items attached. Not at all the usual loving type testament and Joseph did not emulate his father's example. Very many of these Kingsbury lands were purchased in turn by Abraham Newman before his death (11). When judging by his will it might seem he was the proverbial soft touch to his friends and his heirs since even Joseph's daughters sold some of their marriage trust lands to Abraham. His deeds form a fascinating jigsaw to interpret.

Abstract of Abraham Newman's Will, proved 1799 (12)

Abraham Newman executed a remarkable forty page (20 sheets) last will and testament which one would have judged a veritable feast financially for his legal advisers in 1796 when it was compiled. His two loyal friends over many years, however, had been Robert Parnther senior of Bedford Square, London and his son Robert Parnther, junior, of the Inner Temple who were always his main Trustees. His cousin, Charles Newman, then of Mount Hall, his tenant and third Trustee, also featured constantly. All names and properties in this lengthy will are mentioned for family history research purposes. Much legal jargon has been omitted of necessity.

Abraham desired to be buried in a leaden coffin as close as possible to his dear and affectionate wife Mary whose death had occurred in 1783. She was buried in a vault at the Church of All Hallows, Mark Lane, Staining, an area close to Fenchurch Street where her husband had his grocery establishment. Abraham expressed the preference to be buried at Mount Bures church if it was at all possible to move his wife's coffin there. Apparently it was not possible in the event, since his burial is registered at Staining in 1799. This was a great pity perhaps since he so obviously loved the village of his birth.

His bequests reflect considerable generosity to all who served him in any capacity. The two churches of All Hallows and Barking parishes each received £50. Sadly the former church was demolished in 1870 but its great 70-foot tower still stands. (13) Although All Hallows fell down in 1671 it was rebuilt. There appears to have been a manor of Staines pre Conquest and a will of 1281 records *"All Hallows de Staining cherch and All Hallows de Barking cherch in Marte (sic) Lane"*. Staining All Hallows is thought to have been one of the earliest stone churches in London c. 1140, built perhaps to avoid the unwelcome burning of wooden structures common at that period. It is connected with the present St. Olave Church, Hart Street, London, well known as Samuel Pepys' parish and burial place. The numerically larger proportion of poor people in city areas probably accounted for Abraham's smaller bequest of only £25 to his own village church at Mount Bures. The poor were to be informed of this gift at the earliest service in church on the Sunday after his decease.

To resume, the following hospitals each received £100: St. Bartholomew; the London Hospital, Magdalen Hospital; the City of London Lying In Hospital and the Smallpox Hospital. Significantly the Marine Society of London was allocated £500, perhaps reflecting how much Abraham had depended on foreign imports for his prosperity (see ref. 17). Employees Mr. Colin Bays, Mr. Richard Cresen , Mr. William Jackson and Mr. Robert Whitehead, clerks at his grocery business, each had £100, though Mr. Thomas Huntley, servant there, had £200. Those over one year's service £20 each. Those under I year £10 each. Other household or domestic servants £10 apiece. Apparently Abraham had housekeepers in several of his major properties, Mrs. Elizabeth Holt and her three childen at Porters in Ballingdon each received £100. The children's sum to be invested at 4% until they came of age for their maintenance. To Mrs. Betty Powell, housekeeper at Brookhouse, £200 or a£20 annuity for life at her choice. Farming tenants Mrs. Deborah Groves, widow of Joseph, Mr. Hugh Pettitt and Mr. Peter Pettitt all benefitted by £100 each. Others, Mrs. Ann Hall, wife of Thomas of Otter (sic) Belchamp (N.B. Belchamp Otten) and her sister

Mrs. French, widow, £100 each as also Mr. Thomas Shirley of Mile End, Colchester. Cousin Charles Newman at Mount Bures Hall and his wife Elizabeth had £500 and £100 respectively with £100 to each of their children. To Mr. Charles Newman at the Valley Farm Mount Bures and to each of his children £100. Mr. John Davison of Hilltop Westmoreland £500, presumably a relative of his wife Mary. To each and every of the children and grandchildren of his late uncle John Newman of Middleton Gate House in Essex, farmer living at his death, £20. To the Parnthers father and son £300 and £100 respectively, also to Michael and Isabella, children of Robert Parnther junior £100 each. William Thwaytes of Fenchurch Street, grocer, and his wife Jane £500 and £100 respectively. (NOT his daughter Jane Thoyts - author's note)

Probably the most illuminating paragraphs of Abraham's will ran as follows: *"Whereas it is my intention to give to each and every female child of my daughters, Mrs. Ann Caswall and Mrs. Jane Thoyts the sum off I5,000 provided such children are not more than eight in the whole, total £120,000. If more than eight the sayd sum to be equally divided".* As happened constantly this was to be a Trust Fund until each child came of age or married earlier. Interest to be paid to their parents meanwhile. Trustees were both Parnthers, John Lambert of Cornhill, London gentleman, and Jane Thoyts. Several pages of administrative directions by Abraham accompanied this bequest. Husbands were excluded as usual.

Ann Caswall received besides the gift of £3,000 cash sum, both the Manors and lands of Mount Bures Hall with the old Brookhouse farm together with the Manor of West Bergholt Hall and its lands recently purchased of John Hadley Esq. of Colchester. Younger daughter Jane Thoyts received a £7,000 bank annuity Trust also the Manor and lands of Goggeshall *[sic]* Hall with the Rectory and Tithes purchased of Richard Benyon and others. More lands and estates in Barking and Daggenham *[sic]* in Essex. Messuages and lands in Fenchurch Street, Lime Street and Billeter Lane in the City of London, together with a messuage in the Strand in the County of Middlesex in the occupation of Joseph Greensill. Jane's Trustees, also for Ann above, were the Parnther duo and Cousin Charles Newman who were directed to permit the tenant of the Barking and Daggenham *[sic]* farms and lands namely Philip Choate, his wife or two sons to carry on the tenancy there as per the conditions already pertaining, as long as they pay the £150 per annum rent. Likewise Ann Caswall's Trustees also gave security to Charles Newman for life in his occupancy of Mount Bures Hall and lands at £175 yearly rent. Charles had to collect Quit Rents as usual but was allowed Land Tax. If either daughter predeceased their husbands the Trusts passed to these spouses only for life and then to the children of said daughters. Abraham did not forget his sons-in-law however. George Caswall received £7000 and William Thoyts £3000 as outright gifts.

Abraham specified for Ann all his personal effects at Brookhouse Mount Bures, goods, furniture, plate, linen, china, wine and other liquors, live and dead stock but excepting money or securities for money therein. Likewise for Jane all his Fenchurch Street house contents excepting monies, goods or effects in trade there, with, additionally, his house and farm at Porters in Ballingdon, Essex.

George Caswall junior, grandson, aged 2 years, £5000 in Trust in bank annuities until the age of 21. In the event that he died before attaining that age then it would pass to all his brothers or sisters. Both Parnthers, Jane Thoyts and John Lambert acted as Trustees in this case. George junior predeceased his parents. He was unmarried with four surviving sisters.

Abraham named eight Trustees who benefited by £200 each, all to receive expenses from his residuary estates, any remainder of which went to daughters Ann and Jane equally divided. Several other important items were included, the first being Abraham's intention not to deduct any debts of legatees to himself, saying *"whereas William Thwaytes may find it inconvenient to pay over £70.000 plus interest thereon, he is at liberty to pay at 4% interest in nine instalments at equal four monthly periods over three years from the date of my decease".* William's securities for this sum to be passed to Abraham's Executors.

The Webb Family Trusts

The second item was a sum of £3000 to be invested in a Bank Trust for William Webb aged ten years, son of Mrs. Mary Webb, until his coming of age at 21, interest meanwhile for his maintenance. His mother Mary also had a£1000 Bank Trust fund together with an annuity of £300 per annum for life, the latter secured from certain lands owned by Abraham in Ardleigh and Dedham. Namely three quarters

share of a freehold farm (unnamed) with the Parsonage and Tithes purchased of Reverend Marshal Lugar (14). Also the Manor and lands of Martells Hall purchased of Thomas Wright Esq. Both Parnthers and Mrs. Jane Thwaytes were trustees. In the event that Mary Webb should die before her son William reached 21 then her remaining Bank Trust fund with any interest that accrued was to pass to William. In the event, however, that William should die before 21 then his £3000 Bank Trust Fund went back to Abraham's daughters via his estate.

Nevertheless Abraham went to great pains to secure Mary's annuity of £300 appointing John Round of Colchester and Charles Newman of Mount Bures Hall as new Trustees should the annuity not be paid. These two gentlemen were instructed to continue William's trust and to transfer any issues or proceeds of sale on the Ardleigh and Dedham properties into Bank stocks until William's age of 24 years when the entire above bequest matured for William's sole use subject only to his mother Mary's £300 annuity. Should he die before 24 leaving no heirs then the above Bank trust lands again reverted to Abraham's daughters. If, in fact, William left heirs then they inherited in turn. Mary is mentioned again in codicils to Abraham's will, see following. William Webb survived to marry the Reverend Lugar's eldest daughter Sarah c. 1806 when he was 21. They lived at Ardleigh Court, once the Rectory, naming their first-born, a son, William Newman Webb. Was this a tribute to his benefactor or, as one suspects, was William, son of Mary Webb, perhaps a natural son of Abraham? If so he was probably born around 1785/6 after Abraham's wife Mary died. The Reverend Marshal Lugar lived at Ardleigh Park where, the record states, William Webb kept his hounds (15). Young William had progressed greatly it appeared.

First Codicil of Abraham Newman 22nd February 1799

An Act made 26th year of George III was the basis for another of Abraham's Trusts. It was an Act for Providing a proper Workhouse and better Regulations for the Poor within the parish of Barking in Essex and for regulating the Common Wharf within the Town of Barking. An Annuity of £100 out of the Rates or Assessments to be made for the relief of the poor within the said parish was to be paid to Abraham or his Executors at Barking aforesaid quarterly each year during the natural life of Elizabeth Holt of Barking which said annuity was secured by a Deed Poll under the hands and seals of three Directors of the said Act, Edward Hulse, James Hatch and George Spurrell dated 12th November 1796. Since that date Abraham had lent and advanced to the above Directors the sum of £1000 at 5% per annum to secure the annuity. Abraham was assigned the Rates and Assessment to be collected for the relief of the Poor which he or his Executors were to hold until the said £1000 and interest should be fully paid. Following this curious arrangement Abraham's four main Executors, George Caswall, William Thwaytes, Robert Parnther the Elder and Charles Newman, were charged with forming a Trust from the above Deed Poll and capital investment for the benefit of Elizabeth Holt and Mary Webb during their joint lives equally. Elizabeth had been Abraham's housekeeper at Porters property but Mary Webb had no named abode. She was not included in the Ardleigh list of 1796 either, though she was at Porters when Abraham died. If either lady should die the whole Trust passed to the survivor outright. Abraham certainly cosseted his ladies at every step. Mary Webb headed the field. Among other lands purchased since 1796 Abraham held some at Fordham and Mount Bures purchased of Joseph Lavender, William and Martha Grimwood's lands at Mount Bures and a half of Manor and Lordship of Kelvedon Hall, Essex all added to Ann Caswall's main Trust. The other half of Kelvedon Hall, also purchased from Vincent Eyre, was added to Jane Thoyts' main Trust previously recorded.

Further messuages, farms and lands at Ardleigh purchased of Elizabeth Rogers (16), were added to the main Fund held by Trustees John Round and Charles Newman for the benefit of William Webb already detailed above.

First Codicil witnesses: Charles Druce, Edward Brown junior and Richard Ewens.

2nd Codicil dated 2nd March 1799

This addition to Abraham's will was made only six days before his death, which probably occurred at his Fenchurch Street home, since he appeared in the Staining Burial Register for burial there on 17th March, aged 64. The Codicil, however, was attested on 13th March by the oath of two gentlemen, Charles Druce and Richard Ewens, both of Fenchurch Street in the parish of St Catherine Coleman, London. They confirmed that the writing was indeed Abraham's.

I give to Henry Pettitt, late of Brook House, the use of my farming stock, utensils or implements of husbandry at Porters and direct the Trustees and Executors of my will to permit him to occupy the lands which I hold at Porters for 3 years from my death without paying any rent. He providing outgoings, taxes and finding and providing a house and cart and one good milk cow for the use of Mrs Webb, Mrs Hall (? Belcham Otten) *and Mrs Powell (?* late of Brook House), *my housekeepers at Porters, during that time, and leaving all my stock etc. there at Porters at the end of three years. Trustees not to charge the ladies rent over that period or any other expenses, taxes etc. to be paid out of Abraham's Estate. Also Henry Young should be permitted to live in the house he occupies without rent for 3 years and the gardens at Porters to be kept up for that period with expenses to the estate not exceeding £150 per year.*

To the end Abraham's thoughts were for his faithful retainers. Probate was granted to his Executors on 16th March 1799. Officials of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury were Sir William Wynne, Knt, Worshipful Charles Coote and Worshipful John Sewell. See Ref. 17 for further research into Abraham's business activities.

References

1) McMaster Collection of deeds, ERO Colchester, ACC 54; 119
2) William Newman, will at Chelmsford ERO D/ABR 30/170 1729
3) McMaster L *The Cressener Lords of Mount Bures.* Colchester Archaeological Group Bulletin Vol 38 (1995) 7. (Will No. 3)
4) Private deeds of Messrs. Greene King, Brewers, Bury St Edmunds
5) Private deeds of John Cowlin, Catchlands, Mount Bures *Ibid (1)* above.
6) Church Registers of St John, Mount Bures. ERO Chelmsford D/P 281.1.1 (1756)
7) Ibid. (1) above Also PRO B11/1321
8) Ibid. (1)above. Also Index of Prerogative Court Canterbury, London (1793) - June 307 special
9) Ibid. (1) above. Also ERO Chelmsford, Ref D/DB F134 (1772)
10) Will of Joseph Kingsbury, Ref ERO Chelmsford 472 BR 27. Also will of Martha Kingsbury, ERO Chelmsford D/ABR/30/270, Also will of John Kingsbury the Elder. ERO Chelmsford, D/DYK 54
11) *Ibid* (1) above. Also McMaster & Evans: *Mount Bures, Its Lands and Its People* (1996) 89-92
12) Will of Abraham Newman 1796 PRO, Prerogative Court of Canterbury B 11/1321
13) History of St Olave's Church, Hart St., London, with acknowledgement to John Cowling, Rector
14) Erith, FH: *Ardleigh in 1796* (1978) which includes a list of all inhabitants.
15) *Ibid.*
16) Elizabeth Rogers' lands were probably Ardleigh Hall as Isaac Rogers took a long lease there in 1793 (p.28)
17) Burial Registers for All Hallows Church, Staining (1757-1801) GLMs 4955, Guildhall Library
18) *Ibid.* Ms 08594-633 (1766) The firm of Davison, Newman & Co. grocers and importers of West Indian produce at the sign of the Three Sugar Loaves and Crown. 14 Creechurch Lane, Leadenhall Street, London EC3 (founded 1650)

TUDOR TOWER AT TENDRING PARK
Report by John Wallace

Tendring Park within the Manor of Stoke, at Stoke by Nayland, Suffolk, was first recorded in Domesday Book. Over the centuries it was owned by a number of distinguished families: in 1421 Alice, heiress of the de Tendrings, took it into the powerful Howard family when she married John Howard. A later owner, their grandson Sir John Howard, was created 1st Duke of Norfolk of the Howard line in 1483.

There was a good deal of building activity taking place in Stoke during the 15th and early 16th century under the auspices of the Howards. The Church tower and the handsome brick north porch were built. At Tendring work also went on, as evidenced by reference to payments to the brickman and carters who brought timber, and to the carpenter '*for the new building'* as recorded in the Household Book of the Duke of Norfolk. It was probably during this time that the brick built tower, now a ruin, in Tendring Park was constructed. At this period it was not unusual for such a brick tower to be erected adjacent to an existing timber framed manor house, as here, and a recently discovered 1580 survey of the Manors of Stoke carried out for Sir Thomas Rivett, the then Lord of the Manor, confirms the existence of such a timber-framed building on this site with a tower:

> *"the said Sir Thomas hath in his own hands as before one larg and faire Dwelling House built wt timber except one Turett of brick which hath bene sufficient for the Estate of a Duke..."*

This written confirmation of the tower's Tudor origin is particularly apt, as the Elizabethan surveyor was the well-known Ralph Agas, a native of Stoke by Nayland, who ended his days here.

On the 1723 Estate map of Tendring Park the tower can be seen to the rear of the house, and another later house plan, found amongst the papers of Sir John Soane at the Soane's Museum clearly shows the tower butted up into the rear north west corner. Photographs dated 1946 show the complete tower standing behind the stable block which was designed by Sir John Soane when the old house was demolished and a new Hall built further up the hill in 1784. There are also photographs of the tower taken in the 19th century from the garden of the Soane-designed house.

The tower stood approximately 50ft in height with three floors above the ground floor. At the top were six Tudor-style chimneys, only two of which appear to have been genuine, as evidenced by the possible bases still in situ in each corner of the south wall of the ruin. Some time after the Second World War the tower was burnt down, leaving the ruin to mark the site of the original timber-framed residence of the Howards and their predecessors.

References:

SROI: H.A. 108	Tendring Park Manorial records & maps, (also 1580 survey by Ralph Agas)
J Payne Collier	Household Book of John Duke of Norfolk 1481-1490
Rev. CM Torlesse	Some Account of Stoke By Nayland (pub. 1877)
Coppinger	*History of the Manors of Suffolk*
Colchester Local Studies Library:	Plans etc. of Tendring Hall 1789/90
Wallace, J	Dissertation, 1991, Landscape History & Field Archaeology

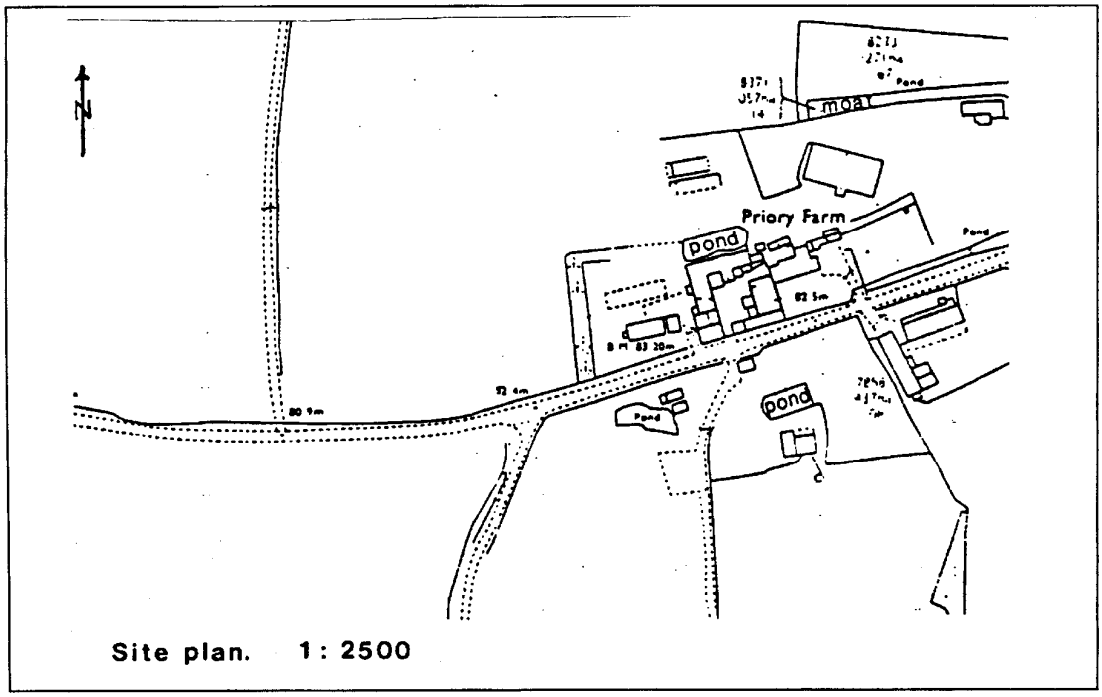
THE RUIN TODAY (From the N.W.)

Sketch plan of ruin of Tudor brick tower in Tendring Park

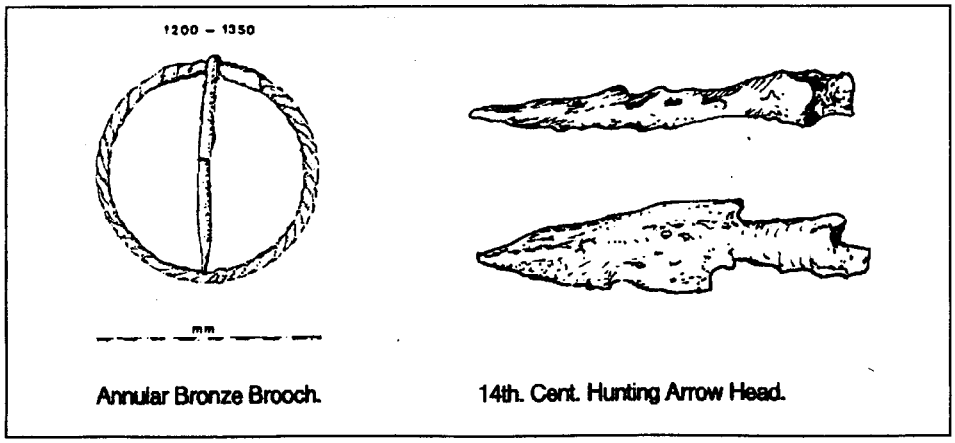
THE EXCAVATION OF A MEDIEVAL SITE AT PRIORY FARM, PRESTON ST. MARY, SUFFOLK

Vic Scott

The excavation, which started in 1992, is close to the present farmstead, which is itself adjacent to the medieval moat. (The 300 or so acres of Priory Farm contain at least six other medieval sites, as well as the moat associated with the former manor.) Prior to 1992 part of the site lay under an arable field, and this threw up a quantity of sherds each year. Included in this was some very hard grey ware, perhaps indicating medieval occupation earlier than the 13-14th century. When the farmer, Adrian Thorpe, discussed this with the Suffolk Archaeological Unit, it was suggested that a trial trench should be dug to find the source of the sherds. Since that date several members of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology together with Vic Scott and Ann Trewick of the CAG have continued to explore the site.



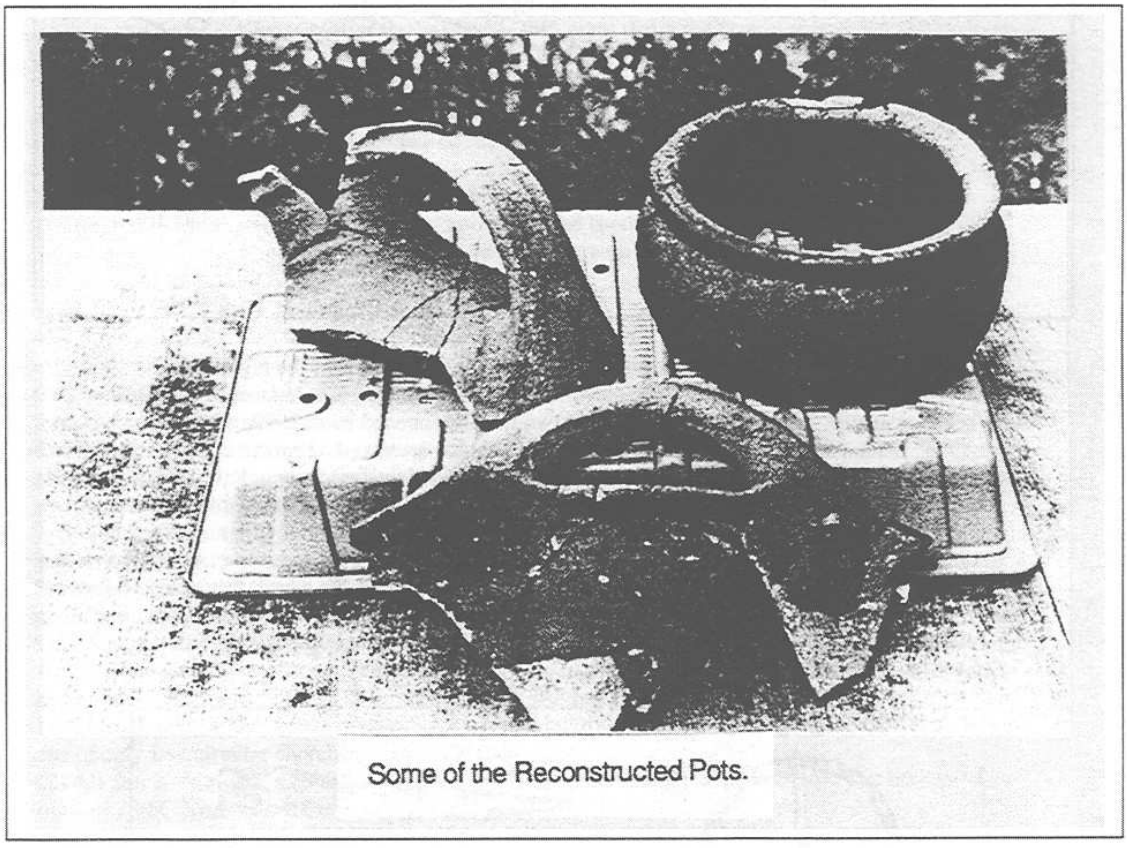
The site is approximately two miles from Lavenham, and occupies one of the highest points in the parish. The soil is yellow chalky boulder clay. Since 1992 something like ten trenches of various sizes have been excavated, and apart from the current two trenches opened up in 1999, all have been taken down to the natural soil levels. Various ditches, pits, cobbled areas and a hearth have been discovered during the years of excavation. So far no buildings have been identified, although the quantity of nails in some of the trenches suggest we are close to a settlement. Professional guidance when necessary is given by Edward Martin of the Suffolk Archaeological Unit. The quantity of 13th and 14th century pottery found over the last few years amounts to several hundredweights, and some reconstruction has been possible. Other finds include annular ring brooches, a chalk spindle whorl, fragments of quern stones, oyster shells, iron slag, nails, large burrowing snails in considerable quantities from quite a depth, and recently a 14th century iron hunting arrow head in almost complete condition was discovered in a pit which is still under investigation.



The greatest proportion of the pottery found is made up of unglazed cooking and storage vessels to which must be added a few unglazed jugs. Many of these pots are clearly sooted from use over a fire. Some are surprisingly large: ten body sherds from a cooking pot which were joined together gave a section of pot with a widest girth of 19cm although the sides are only 4mm. thick. This pot must have held quite a weight of liquid due to its depth and width, and the outside is still sooty. Some pots have holes just below the rim, presumably for suspension over the fire. Decoration is not common except for finger-pressing.

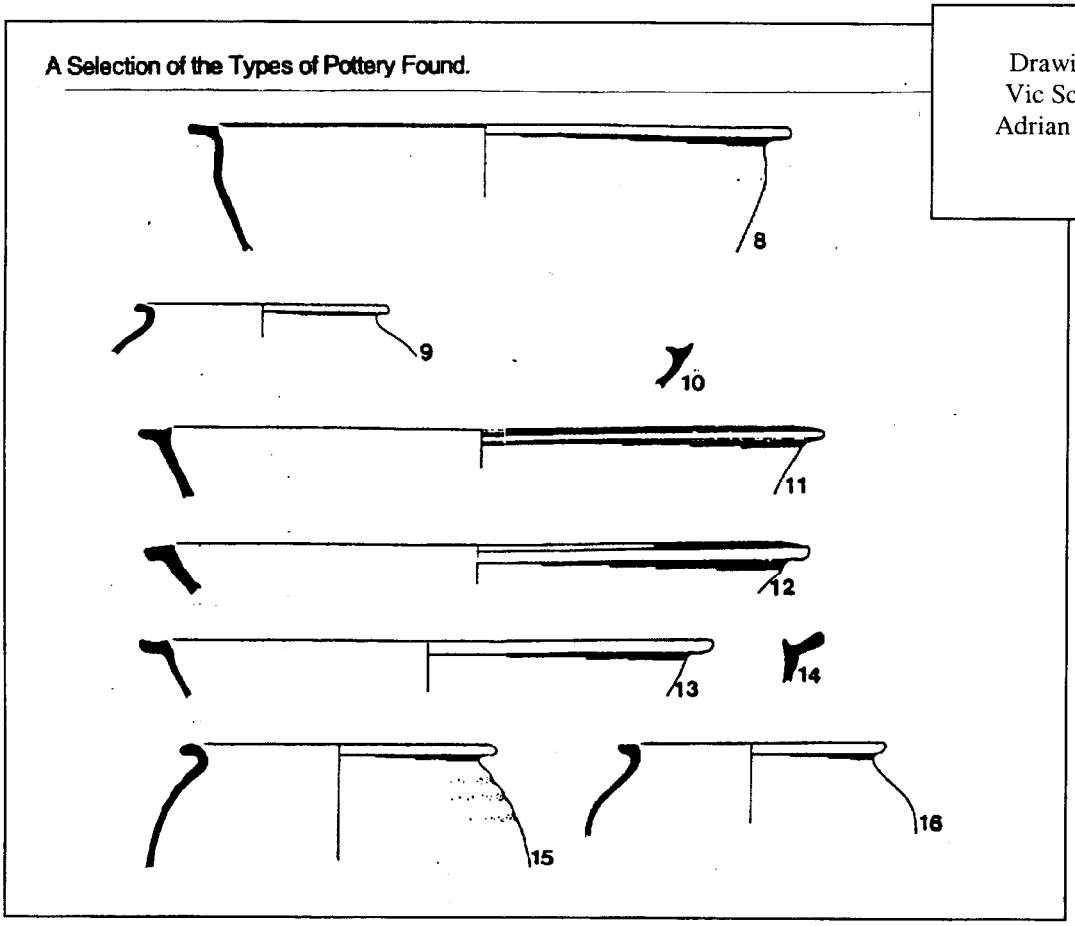
Few farming sites such as this have been excavated in the area so in the long run the dig has potential to yield some worthwhile information. At present the best asset is the large collection of pottery. In the 13th and 14th centuries the rural pottery industry was extremely localised, so any evidence of the types of pottery being used, or even made on the site, will be valuable.

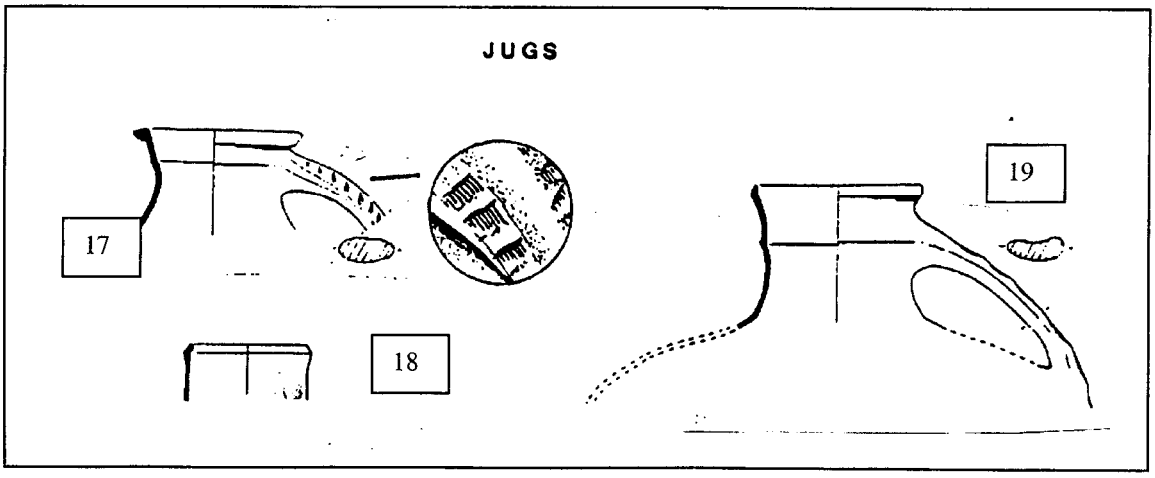
Bedsides the other Medieval sites already mentioned above, there is an interesting Roman site only 500 metres away, which was the subject of a Time Team television investigation a few years ago.



Some of the Reconstructed Pots.

8. Darkish-brown fabric with round white sands and grog. Fawn inside, darkened outside, with wipe marks. Large piece of rim from a 36cm diam. pot
9. Russet-brown sandy fabric on a thin grey core. Brown and grey-brown smoothish surfaces.
10. Black surfaces. Russet core with round white sand grains and grog. Not long enough to establish correct profile.
11. Firm surfaces on a brown sandy body with some grog and organic matter. Large thick-walled vessel, Sooted on the outside.
12. Similar to 11, but dark brown or black surfaces and sooted heavily inside.
13. As 12.
14. Similar body. Black surface. Most extraordinary rim profile.
15. Similar body. Black surface. Large piece of flint showing at break. Four joined pieces make up a section 110 mm x 140 mm.
16 Similar body. Brown surfaces. Sooting on rim, neck and exterior.
17. Fine hard grey-brown fabric with taupe surfaces (buff on the lower part inside). Thin walls 3-4 mm thick. No glaze. A beautiful handle widening and flattening at the top, has unusual combed decoration (see inset.)
18. A buff body and buff surfaces. Fine sand, micaceous. Probably a jug.
19. Brown sandy fabric and unusual mottled yellow-grey surface with protruding sand grains. Twelve pieces have been joined to make the drawn example. Fifteen more pieces recovered. A very squat jug



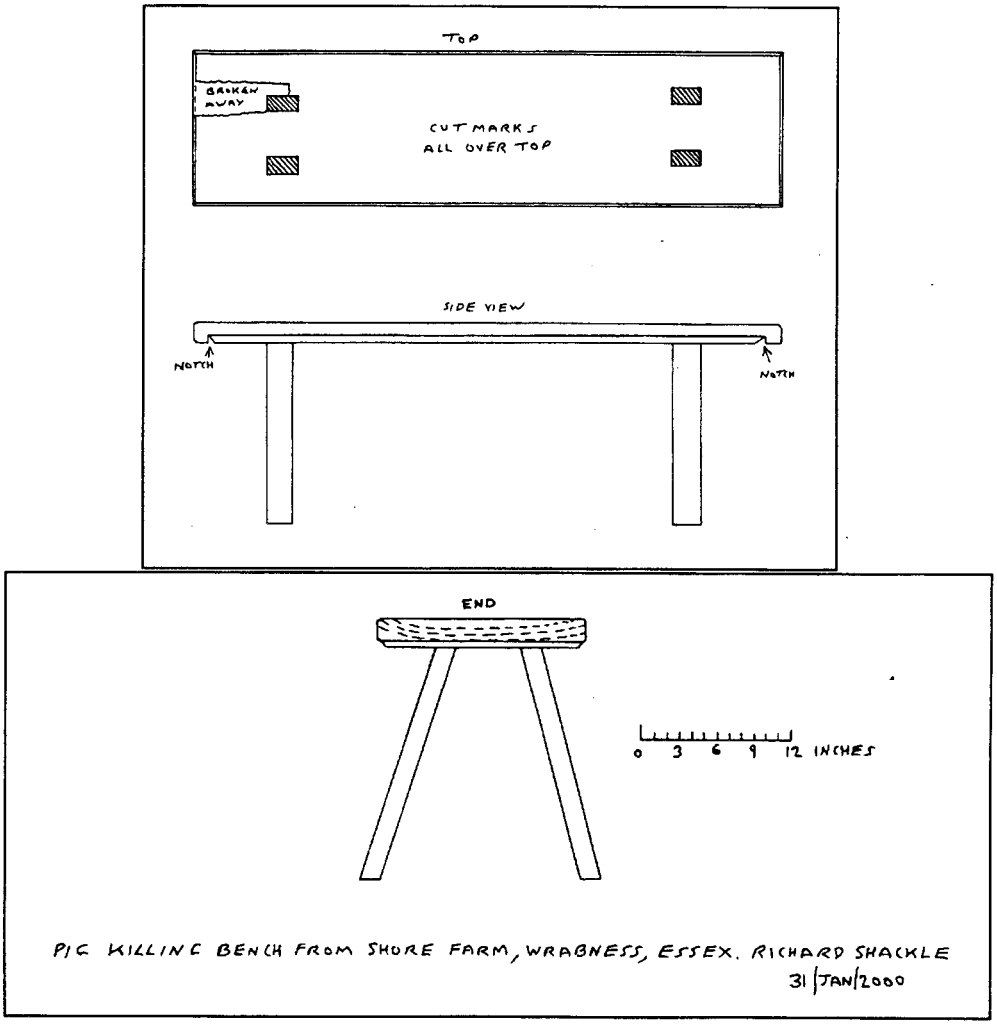


A PIG-KILLING BENCH FROM WRABNESS
by Richard Shackle

About 1990 a wooden bench was found at Shore Farm, Wrabness in an outbuilding near a pig sty. The bench which is in private ownership in Coggeshall is almost certainly a pig killing bench. The bench (fig 1) consists of an oak plank, 5 feet long and 2 inches thick. The plank has been cut tangentially from an oak tree as can be seen by the end grain.

The bench top is beautifully made with a bevelled top and carefully chamfered underside. On the underside, about one inch from each end is a notch; which is used to tie down the pig during the process of scraping off the bristles with hot water. The chamfer on the underside carefully takes in the two notches. The top face of the plank has many cut marks from butchering pigs. The four legs are replacements made of softwood.

Ian Stratford gave me the following information. These benches are called "cratches". He has seen photographs of examples from Lincolnshire and Cornwall. The Cornish example had handles for carrying. He thinks the Wrabness example is smaller than most and may have been used for killing young or small pigs. There was a famous breed of small Essex pigs developed by William Russell Hobbs and Lord Weston at Marks Hall Estate in Essex in the 1850's. Kelly's Directory says Shore Farm, Wrabness was farmed by the Robinson family from 1848 to 1929 at least. The directory entries have the Robinson family down as farmers but not butchers, so we cannot tell if the Robinsons butchered the pigs themselves or brought in itinerant butchers.



A SELECTION OF LOCAL FINDS
Report by Richard Shackle

Artefacts from the River Colne, Colchester

In the September 1999 The Environment Agency drained the River Colne between North Bridge and Middle Mill. In the silt at the bottom of the river Mr Dines found the following two interesting artefacts:

1) A pipeclay toy horseman

This small toy 7x4.5x2.5cm represents a knight on horseback. The head is now missing. There are smooth patches with central holes where the detachable arms and legs were formerly fixed. Fig (1) shows the side view and head on view of the figure. Geoff Egan of the Museum of London who talked to the Group about medieval toys in November 1999 thought the horseman was probably 16th century. There are several toy horsemen in the Museum of London, made of various materials.

2) **Clay crucible**

A small clay crucible (Fig 2), width at top 6.75cm, width at base 3cm and height 3.5cm. It is thin walled with a pouring lip in the rim. Round the pouring lip, both inside and outside is a black deposit. It is probably a crucible for purifying metals and Roman in date.

3) Bone amulet from Colchester

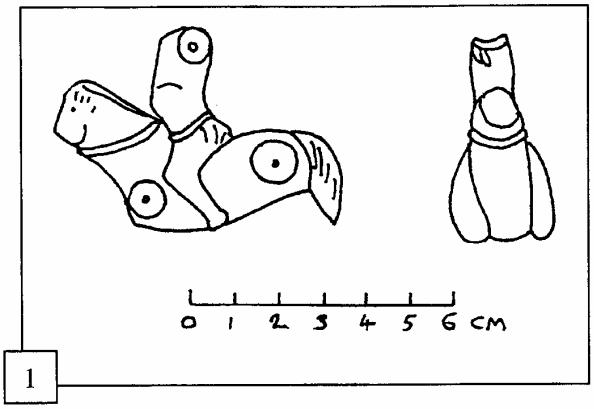
In 1999 Miranda Locker found a small bone object beneath a tree behind Greyfriars, Colchester (Fig 3). The object is 7.8cm high, 2.5cm wide and 1.Ocm thick. It is made from a long bone cut in half. The right hand drawing of fig 3 shows the back of the object where you can see the central channel of the bone. You can also see on the back, at the base, heavy erosion where the bone has rotted away. Miranda looked in the CAR volume on Roman small finds and found that the only comparable object was an amulet. It was a phallic amulet about the same size and with a similar sized central hole. If this is an amulet, could it be a very stylised Roman Goddess, with the long straight piece at the top being the head and neck and the long straight piece at the base being the legs? The central hole presumably enables the amulet to be incorporated into a neck lace or hung from the wrist.

4) Lead plaque from River Colne

In April 2000 Mr Dines found in the River Colne at the Hythe a small lead object (Fig 4). It is a thin object 6.25 cms high and 4.5cms wide. There is a small wrapped round hollow support at the base. On the flat front of the object is a drawing of a ship and an inscription. The inscription is incomplete and presumably in Latin. There are no recognisable words. The function of the object is unknown but I wonder if perhaps it was attached to a staff as a badge of office?

5) Bone object from River Colne at Cowdray Avenue, Colchester.

In April 2000 James Hamilton-Smith found in the River Colne at Cowdray Avenue a bone object. It is 18 cm long and about 5 cm wide. It appears to be made a from a cattle long bone with the ends sawn off. About 2 cms from each end, is a hole which goes right through the bone. These holes appear rounded on one side and square on the other. The two main faces of the bone, where the holes come out, have been cut back to make them flat (see fig 5). What is the function of this object? I can think of three possibilities: 1) Part of the rigging of a tent 2) Part of the tensioning of a weaving loom 3) Part of a small ladder.



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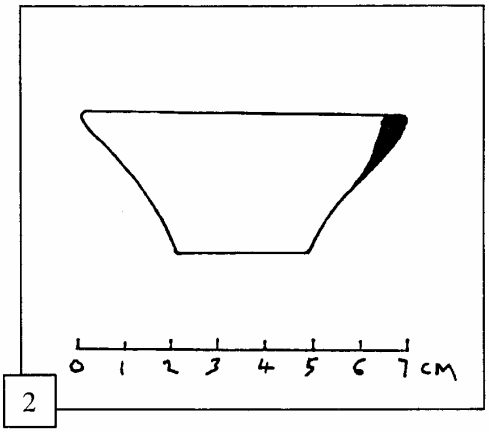

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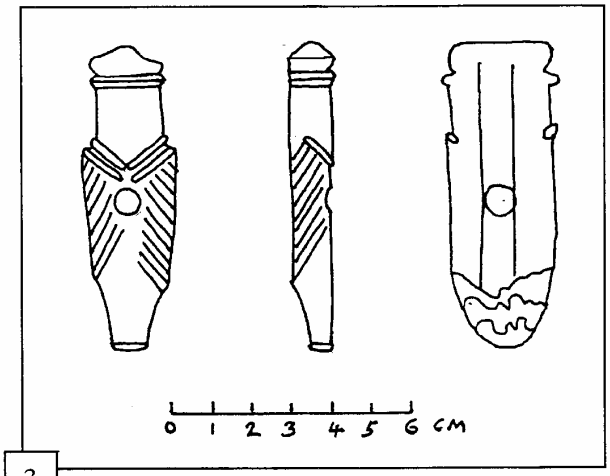

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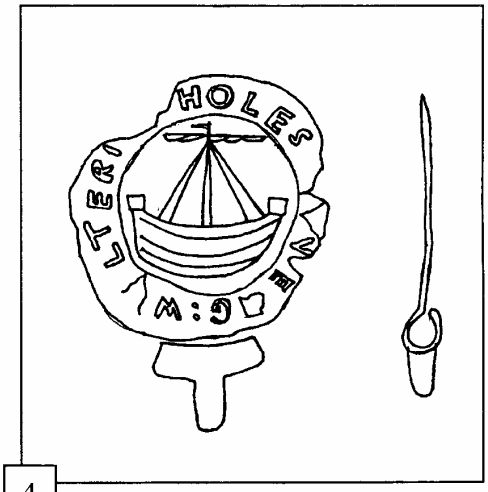

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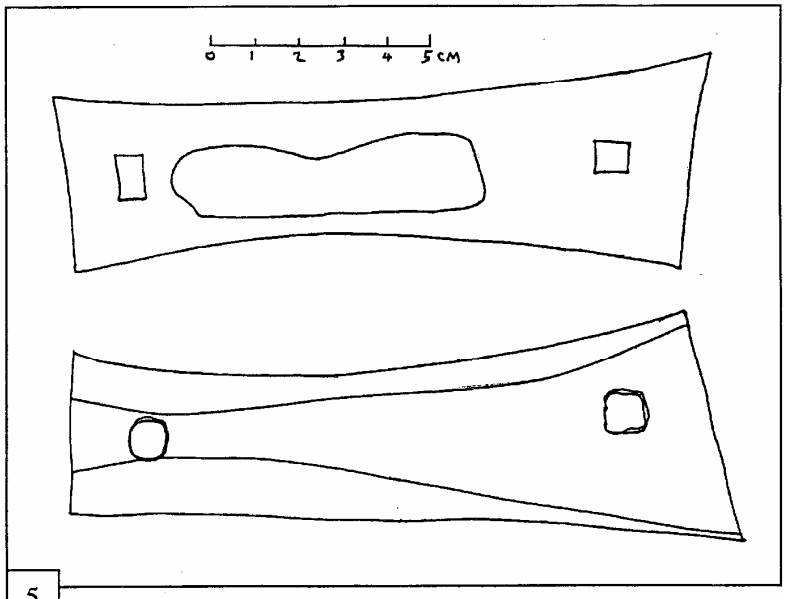

5

WINTER LECTURE NOTES - 1997-2000

SOME GALLO-ROMAN SITES COMPARABLE TO GOSBECKS.

Mark Davies. 6 October 1997

Notes taken by John Mallinson

Gosbecks is a well-developed socio-religious Romano-Celtic site, comprising field systems, roads, settlements and, most importantly, a Romano-Celtic temple and theatre. Some or all of these elements are to be found in many Gallo-Roman sites and although all unique in their own way, share many common features. The temple at **Gosbecks** is thought to have been very similar to many Gallo-Roman temples and there is a fine reconstruction of a typical example at the museum at **Beaune.**

At **Joublin** the walls of a late Roman fortification are very similar to those found at **Le Rubricaire.** The temple at the opposite end of the site is of typical form, mounted on a plinth and with surrounding portico. The site also has a bath-house, forum and theatre of a somewhat unusual shape.

The late Roman town walls at **Le Mans** are amongst the finest to be seen anywhere. Further south at **Aubigne** the theatre, used for meeting purposes, overlies an early Iron Age fort and ring ditches. Here there is also a large market building, bath house and two temples.

At **Tours** the civitas was reduced in size towards the end of the late Roman period. The Romanesque Cathedral cuts through the surviving walls. At **Vieux Poitiers** is another theatre, and in the main town itself the 4th century Baptistery still stands to its full height.

At **Argenton** a museum has been constructed on the site of a market. Perhaps the most interesting site of all is at **Bibractium,** 12 miles from Autun, where a pre-Roman Hill fort was used as a site for a 1st century BC Roman Courthouse, a place where Caesar wrote part of his Gallic Wars. A new museum has been built at the foot of the hill.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL: ITS FOUNDATION AND ARCHITECTURE

Rev. Michael Whawell, (former Vicar and Hospitaller, St. Bartholomew the Less)

13 October 1997

Notes taken by Gill Shrimpton

This was an interesting and amusing lecture on the history and importance of a national institution. As Rev. Whawell pointed out, hospitals, like cathedrals, are living history and St. Bartholomew's has been established longer than most cathedrals. It was founded in 874 by an Augustinian monk, Rehir, who, the story goes, became ill on a pilgrimage to Rome and promised that if granted a full recovery, he would found a hospital. This he did: and built a church dedicated to the patron saint of healers in the area now known as Smithfields in East London. Within the monastic buildings was a hospital to care for the poor sick in the area.

Rehir was well connected in court circles and was able to obtain grants and livings to support the hospital. It expanded and took in lay brothers and sisters as carers. In 1546 under letters patent it came under the control of the Mayor and citizens of London and finally, in 1948, the Ministry of Health. It does however retain its Royal Charter, and is famous for its high teaching standards. Among those associated with the hospital are William Harvey (1578-1635) who discovered the circulation of the blood, James Abernethy, President and founder of the Royal College of Surgeons, James Padgett, surgeon to Queen Victoria (who admitted the first woman medical student), and Samuel Gee, inventor of Gee's Linctus.

The architecture is very well preserved, but the only medieval part remaining is the tower of St. Bartholomew's Church. Some of the hospital is housed in 18th century buildings, the most impressive part being the Great Square and fountain designed by James Gibb in 1859, and the Gatehouse of 1702 which was constructed of stone left over from St. Paul's. The hospital was bombed in the First and Second World Wars and survived the threat of closure in 1992.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN AERIAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN ESSEX

Paul Gilman, (Archaeology Section, Essex County Council) 20th October 1997

Notes taken by Bill McMellon

Paul Gilman's job is to manage the team that tries to put the results of aerial photography in context and give interpretations. He described the Sites and Museums Record (SMR) which contains all known records of finds and sites. This, he said, is the bedrock of their work.

One of the most important developments is a mapping project being developed in conjunction with the Royal Commission of Historic Monuments of England. This is a nationwide scheme, which feeds into English Heritage's programme for the protection of sites, and gives it a more objective basis for classifying sites etc. A quantification exercise linked to this identified some 20,000 oblique and in excess of 100,000 vertical photographs (at which point they stopped counting). To aid the National Library of Photography at Swindon, the country has been divided into landscape zones and then into blocks. This work should eventually lead to a database of archaeological sites recorded using common features and standards. It will, therefore, be possible to do computer searches on descriptions of particular features (e.g. circles above a certain size).

Various slides were shown, such as one of cropmarks at **Goldhanger.** The lecturer then concentrated on an aerial survey of the coast, which has been worked on for the last few years. Slides were shown to demonstrate saltmarsh erosion. The effects that this might be having on archaeological sites are not known. The Hullbridge Survey of prehistoric coastal sites, which had been carried out in the early eighties, had alerted him to a number of timber structures at **Collins Creek** (near Osea Island on the Blackwater). Carbon dating revealed dates from the mid seventh to mid ninth centuries. They were, therefore, of Saxon origin. A more detailed survey carried out in the two hours permitted by the tides showed them to be fish weirs, which may have been constructed by religious houses. Further work is being done to try to map wrecks and hulks in the inter-tidal zone. Oyster beds were also discussed.

A strange cropmark was shown, which was a decoy for fowling - a structure of ponds and waterways from which ducks could be driven to be shot. A slide was also shown of a red hill at **Peldon,** as well as various defences and forts.

Finally the lecturer discussed possible confusions generated by round features. A round shape at **Great Bentley** thought to be Neolithic had turned out after fieldwork to be of medieval date. Ground based research is sometimes needed to make sense of aerial photography.

TWO VIEWS OF FLORENCE. ORIGINS AND DEFENCE

Raymond Rowe, Group Member 27th October 1997

The lecture covered two aspects of Florence: the original settlement at Fiesole, and the defensive walls built around Florence during the 13th to 16th century.

Fiesole is an area where there is evidence of occupation going back to the middle and late Bronze Age (16-13th centuries BC). In 700 BC Etruscans chose the site for their walled city. The city was built on the tops of two hills and the saddle of land between. Its advantage as a site was that it was above the marshy flood plain of the River Arno, but was well placed for the north-south and east-west trade routes. There was also readily available building stone. The walls were built mainly in the 3rd century BC and were some two miles long, 2.5 metres thick at the base, and rising to 5 metres high in some places.

In 80 BC Fiesole was forced to become Roman (Faesculanum), and the site was redeveloped, the original Etruscan temple being over-built with a Roman one, and the rest of the temple area becoming a Roman Amphitheatre. A large bath house was also constructed. Slides were shown that gave evidence that considerable reconstruction had taken place, although not always accurately.

Florence itself was founded in the 1st century BC by the Romans as a town for retired army veterans. Fiesole was attacked many times, but retained its independence from Florence until 1125, when Florentine troops attacked and razed it to the ground. The area was then used for wealthy Florentines to

have summer residences. Development in the 1870s unearthed the archaeology and led to the present site and museum.

The second part of the lecture concerned the defence of Florence during the period from the 13th to the 16th century. It was during this time that the walls and the defensive towers and gates were constructed. The North Italian city states were in almost continual unrest, with frequent attacks on one another. Slides showed how the walls of Florence were developed, and finally removed in a period of town planning in the 1860s.

A brief description of the politics and the influence of the Medici was given, together with the problems caused by the French and Spanish armies. The siege of Florence in 1529-30 was described, and the contribution to the city's defences made by Michaelangelo. There was also a short consideration of the types of guns that could have been used in the siege.

CASTLE MALL EXCAVATIONS, NORWICH

Brian Ayers, (Recorder of Archaeology in Norwich) 3rd November 1997

Notes provided by Mike Matthews

Brian Ayers gave an outline of the origins of Norwich from the sparse recorded history in the 8th and 9th century, and the fuller details from the 9th century up to the well recorded recent excavations, such as the car park development in the 1970s, which allowed 28 large excavations to take place. In Anglo-Saxon Domesday 98 houses occupied the castle grounds, and pre-castle deposits study showed mainly earthwork defences. During the first castle construction period there was much landscaping round the site which destroyed most of the early evidence. The science of castle building and defence works changed greatly during the period from 1094-95, and a large stone bridge was built in front of the gate. In the 13th century there were additional changes to the structure. Further disturbance in the 17th and 18th centuries again destroyed much archaeological evidence.

In the Barbican ditch modern excavators have unearthed large pieces of masonry 4m in height. A 35 sq. m well shaft 75 ft in depth was found, the mediaeval footings and the bridge structure. In addition quantities of late Saxon and early mediaeval pottery were found, and a 16th century bird whistle.

The slides illustrated the daunting size and complexity of archaeology on this scale. By contrast the building work of the 1960s was carried out on the castle mound with no excavations, and the only recording was done by the curator who took a number of photographs of the work.

THE SOUTHERN FRONTIERS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN AFRICA: THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Dr John Alexander (Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge) 10th November 1997

Notes provided by Bernard Colbron

From the 15th century the Ottoman Turks occupied much of what is now Iraq, Egypt and the North African coast. By 1518 they had occupied the upper Nile valley, giving access to North East Africa up to the edge of the desert. After 1517 they turned to Islam, and as Caliphs controlled the spice route through the Suez area, which had previously been run by Portugese Christians.

Dr Alexander described a number of sites which he had been able to excavate following a fall of 70m in the level of the Nile as a result of drought. Of particular interest was a cliff top fortress, with armoury and weapon store, which had been built on a pre-Roman temple site. A Christian Church on the site had been reoriented towards Mecca and converted to a mosque for the garrison. The elite troops of the Ottoman Empire had been good engineers, and well organised. Amongst the artefacts found were nearly 20,000 pieces of textile and several hundred manuscripts, including military documents.

By the 19th century the soldiers had turned to farming and settled down, making dwellings of mud bricks. Excavation of these buildings revealed much leatherware, including a shoe. Pottery was very simple coil ware, but there were many important examples found. Textiles were of camel and goat hair, and there was evidence that dolls' clothes had been made. No shops or workplaces were found, only the barracks which had housed about 1600 people, all Ottoman military descendants.

ESSEX SAXON CHURCHES

Stephen Pewsey (co-author *of "East Saxon Heritage: an Essex Gazetteer")*
17th November 1997
Notes provided by Anna Moore

Stephen Pewsey introduced his lecture by quoting in Anglo-Saxon a poem that described the remains of buildings left behind by the Romans.

Christianity first came to Essex in the 6th century under Ethelbert, although this was fairly short-lived, and the process of Christianisation began again in 653 under Sigeberht. The kingdom of the East Saxons then included large parts of what later became Middlesex and Hertfordshire, so that St Paul's Cathedral stood at the heart of Essex.

St Cedd built a chapel on the old Roman fort of Othona at *Ychancaestir*, now **Bradwell-on-Sea,** and then founded minsters across the county serving wide areas, which were later in-filled by the founding of parish churches. Apart from Bradwell, none of Cedd's churches have been identified from the archaeology, but rather through architectural evidence. Another of the minsters was at **Tilbury** *(Tilaburg)*, which survived by being converted for several purposes including a hospital and a blockhouse, before finally falling into ruin. Some of St Cedd's other churches have been identified at **West Mersea, Prittlewell, Waltham Abbey** and **Barking Abbey,** which possibly exists under the present parish church.

Some Saxon churches have survived by being converted into parish churches, e.g. **Great Tey,** which has a 10th century tower and narrow, round-headed arches; **Corringham,** which is a Norman rebuild, with herringbone flintwork, **Trinity Church, Colchester, Bardfield.** There are no Saxon round towers in Essex. Saxon remains still exist in some churches, e.g. **Sturmer,** (a door) and **Fobbing,** (a window).

Some Saxon churches have survived because of their obscurity, such as **Chickney,** where the chancel is offset from the nave, said to represent the fallen head of Christ at the crucifixion, and at **Strethall,** where there are long and short quoins, typical of Saxon work. In areas where there was no church, crosses were set up where people congregated to worship. Part of the **Castle Hedingham** War Memorial is one such cross.

There is little evidence of destruction during the Viking attacks on Essex. Cnut had a church built at *Assington*, which could be at either **Ashingdon** or at **Hadstock.** The Saxons possibly still kept some pagan sites after Christianisation, e.g. **Thundersley,** named after the pagan god Thor, and at places where sacred wells or standing stones are associated with churches, as at **Ingatestone, Belchamp Roding** and **Newport,** where there is a so-called `leper stone'. The timber church at **Greenstead,** until recently dated to 845 and thought to be a shrine of St Edmund, has been re-dated to 1080 - after the conquest, but built in a Saxon style.

The Saxon period finally came to an end with the defeat of Harold, who was buried at **Waltham Abbey.**

VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE IN NORTH ESSEX: SOME RECENT DISCOVERIES

Richard Shackle (Group member) 27nd November 1997
Notes provided by Richard Shackle

Richard began his talk by explaining the layout of the standard medieval house, with its parlour, hall and service rooms. He then went on to talk about six buildings he had looked at recently. Three of these were definitely houses, one was a detached kitchen, one was a stable and one was of unknown function.

Butler's Farm, Wrabness is a medieval hall house with a Georgian brick front and a thatched roof. The medieval house, which was probably built in the 15th century, consists of an inline hall with a parlour, hall and cross passage. The medieval service end no longer exists and was rebuilt at a later date. The parlour has an original diamond mullion window in the rear wall. The parlour end always had an upper floor; the joists and original stair trap can still be seen. In the hall can be seen the remains of the hall window, complete with shutter runner, so the shutters could be pushed across at night. In the roof above the hall can be seen sooted rafters from the former open hall. It can be seen that although it was an open hall, the building always was thatched. The evidence for this are the sooty thatch battens which are still attached to some of the rafters.

About 1600, the house was modernised. A brick chimney was built backing on to the cross passage and a floor built over the hall. These improvements provide a less smoky hall and an extra room upstairs. The new floor in the hall was supported by a large beam, which projected out from the walls on either side and which was held in place by tusk tenons. To make room for the new brick chimney, part of the central tie beam was cut away.

In the 18th century the house was remodelled. An earlier outshed attached to the rear, was extended all along the back, obscuring the rear hall window. The front door was moved from the cross passage to a position opposite the chimney stack, thus creating a lobby entrance house. On the front elevation, all the timbers were cut away except for the top plate. A brick front was built with Georgian sash windows and a simple front door.

Various extensions were built in the 19th century, including a timber structure with gothic windows. Local legend says this was a chapel but it is more likely to be a sitting room.

The former **Bull Inn, Church Street, Coggeshall** is an aisled hall built in the 14th century. The RickSue hairdressing salon, next door is probably the parlour cross wing of the same medieval house. The medieval service end disappeared when its land was sold to the house owner next door. At the rear the aisle survives, complete with moulded capitols on the arcade posts.

About 1600, the house was modernised with a lateral chimney stack inserted in the rear aisle and a floor put in the open hall. In the 17th century, a framed ceiling was inserted in the room over the hall, to create a usable attic. Attached to the back of the parlour cross wing is a small narrow building, which may have been an early attached kitchen. Some years ago, during some renovations, a large ritual hoard was found. It consists of six pairs of shoes and was probably hidden away to protect the house from evil spirits.

Virginia Cottage, West Bergholt is a large cottage with several extensions. When it was being renovated, a few years ago, it was found to contain the frame of an unusual medieval building. This was a medieval detached kitchen, at least three bays long and two storeys high. It was close studded with tension bracing and a crown post roof. The structure was open to the roof as you might expect and had several diamond mullion windows. There does not seem to have been a medieval house near by, so presumably the building was moved here from elsewhere. There is some evidence that when it arrived at its present site, it was converted into a dwelling, but in the 18th century, it was drastically remodelled in to a cottage. A new wing was built on one end incorporating parts of the detached kitchen. One of the 18th century alterations was partition and door made of pine.

39 North Hill is a two storied brick fronted building with a 1930s date on the front. This front is deceptive, as the building has undergone at least two drastic remodellings. Behind the brick front is a timber framed building of *circa* 1600. It consists of a four bay range along the front, with a two bay wing at the rear. At the back, tucked between the front range and the wing, is a timber stair tower. To the north of the front range is a timber carriage archway, *circa* 1600, now blocked in. The function of this timber framed structure is unknown. The upper floor of the four bay front range was undivided, as was the upper floor of the two bay rear wing. These large undivided spaces suggest that the building was not a house. In the 18th century, an extra floor was added to the two storey building and it was refronted in brick. In the 1930s the extra floor was removed and the brick front remodelled. The building is now the "Ask" restaurant.

Beacon End Farm, Stanway has a fine medieval farmhouse and had until recently some of its farm buildings. There is a five-bay barn which incorporates some storey posts dating back to the 14th century.

This has now been converted to office accommodation. There was also a long weather boarded building with a corrugated iron roof. This timber framed building, perhaps dating to the 16th century, was demolished as it was thought too decayed to renovate. It was constructed with close studding and tension braces. It had three bays, two wide bays and one narrow one. The narrow bay had diamond mullion window with a shutter on side and a narrow door on the opposite side. Next to the central truss of the two wide bays was a wide doorway. The original roof had gone but there were seatings for rafters on the top plates. I suspect that the original roof was a simple rafter couple roof without purlins. The wide bays had a brick pammet floor which suggested that in the 19th century, the building had been used to house animals. I think it is very likely that this 16th century building was built to house animals and that it was probably a stable with the two wide bays being used to keep the horses in and the narrow bay being used to store the tack.

SAXON LONDON

Julian Ayre (Senior Archaeologist, Museum of London Archaeological Service)

1st December 1997

Notes provided by Noreen Proudman

The lecturer covered the period from the end of the Roman occupation of London until the Norman Conquest - a period of 650 years. The date of the desertion of London by the Romans is unclear but by 400 AD the city had shrunk, as is shown by evidence at Billingsgate, where there is a deposit of dark earth, and no sign of rebuilding, dated at 400 AD. There must have been some occupation, however, because the Anglo Saxon Chronicle records that in 457 AD the Saxons defeated the Britons who fled to London.

Difficulty arises in identifying the areas occupied. The Saxons did not build cities but lived in small dispersed communities. Pottery remains usually indicate two or three families. London was a prime site chosen by the Saxons because it was located on the borders of several Kingdoms i.e. East Saxon, Kent and Mercia, and this lead to its rebirth. A wic settlement was established, possibly because Mercia was landlocked.

Recent excavations show that there was settlement on the **Covent Garden** area by the 7-8th Century, and from the square mile to the Roman wall and the river. The Covent Garden site was the more open site, with the streets following a grid pattern, plots and buildings. A road which has been discovered can be dated to the 7th Century. A ditch, thought to be defensive, has been found at the Covent Garden site, and a coin horde in it dated to 850-860 AD. This is too early for defences against the Vikings and seems to indicate internal strife and that the wic was shrinking in size.

The development of the **Guildhall** site is dated 1020-1040 with streets constructed later up to 1066. In 886 AD Alfred reoccupied the city and the remains of his Saxon docks have been found at **Queenhythe,** an inlet with a city waterfront. This was the trading centre. **Old St. Pauls,** founded in 604 AD, would have been on the north side. Later terracing destroyed any remains of it, although traces of walls which are standing show that there were routes through them. Alfred recognised the importance of the Thames both for trading and as a route to the centre of England, and built burghs to protect it.

Methods of building

The Saxons used different methods of building i.e. wedge, wattle, turf, cladding and cobbles.- It is difficult to date buildings because they reused building materials and rebuilt damaged parts of older buildings, rather than using new materials to construct new buildings.

On the waterfront site building techniques included timber wall cladding thought to date from 900 AD. Carved wood has been found and identified as part of a three-tier timber house resembling the Staithe churches in Norway.

Docks

Since goods were sold directly from ships, no warehouses were needed. The docks consisted of small posts about 20cm high. After 100 years revetments were used, but are difficult to date because of the re-use of materials. The revetments seem to belong to the period of the Danish Kings. Another method of construction was layers of wood with silt allowed to fill the gaps. This may have been defensive or may have been constructed to ensure that boats could only land in recognised areas and so could not avoid paying taxes.

Finds included Carolingian brooches, dress hooks, a copy of a Louis Pius coin made into a brooch. Pieces of a boat identified as Fresian were found and are of interest because it is of a type not thought capable of crossing the sea.

Burials
Two burials were found at **Queenshythe.** One is of a female with posts placed between the knees and at the head. It is thought that they were to prevent the body floating away. There were two layers of bark and moss at the groin. A hole in the skull was at first thought to indicate trepanning, but a piece of skull was found inside the head and shows that death was due to a blow to the head. There may have been a small barrow over the body which has now been washed away. Nearby a cut grave with the body of another woman was found, who may have been an attendant. Other burial sites and barrows may have been washed away.

Industry
This took the form of cottage industry. Loom weights have been found on the **Covent Garden** site. (lgm, 30gm, 50gm.) A mould for making a brooch was found and a limestone lamp with an interlaced pattern. This is known to have been made in **Peterborough** and dates from the 9th century.

EAST ANGLIA FROM HALF A MILLION TO 40,000 YEARS AGO
Dr John Wymer FSA, FBA, (Director of the English Rivers Palaeolithic Survey)
19th January 1998
Notes provided by David Grayston

Dr.Wymer chose three sites in East Anglia to illustrate the evidence of Palaeolithic society in this area – 'society' because, as Dr Wymer was at pains to point out, these early East Anglians were not hunch-backed savages but were upright hominids which must have had a social structure and an intelligence that enabled them to make stone weapons and tools and hunt large prey in groups. Clothing and shelter would also have been needed in this temperate zone although there is no evidence to indicate the use of fire had been mastered. They were probably nomadic; moving around along rivers or across the open landscape of early and late interglacial stages.

Site 1. The **Bytham river** 500,000 years ago, before the major glaciation of Britain.
Site 2. The **Hoxne** site, Suffolk 300,000 years ago.
Site 3. **The Stoke Tunnel** rail cutting, Ipswich, 200,000 years ago.

The **Bytham river** once flowed from near **Coventry,** across East Anglia, towards **Lowestoft;** confirmed by the same geological strata turning up along its route with hand axes and other Palaeolithic finds appearing at **Lakenheath** and **Mildenhall.** The advancing ice sheet forced inhabitants southwards as it approached **Ipswich** while the Thames was pushed south from its Vale of **St. Albans** route to its present position. Later, with the retreating and melting ice sheet, gravels and boulder clay, up to fifty meters deep, were deposited over the landscape Some ice persisted, thawing later to create hollows or ice lakes, examples of such appear between **Colchester** and **Witham** containing deposits of contemporary organic material.

From the Hoxnian interglacial period (300,000 years ago) survive hand axes, scrapers and flake tools in the lake clay deposits. Evidence suggests the most common food animal to be horse followed by red and roe deer. The Hoxne excavations carried out in Suffolk from 1971-74 produced hand axes, stone clusters and stone cutting tools; microscopic examination of the cutting edges of the latter indicated their use - hide scraping or cutting, meat cutting, bone boring and wood working.

At **Stoke, in Ipswich,** the 1970 excavations in a railway cutting produced bones of horse and elephant, badly preserved, while excavations at an adjacent school site revealed an `elephants' graveyard' at three to four meters deep. Mammoth and straight tusked elephant skeletons were found from beasts which had apparently become bogged down in the tidal mud and drowned. Such bones, at other sites in England, bore marks of butchering with stone tools which preceded the teeth marks of scavenging animals. Dr Wymer concluded by saying that he believes a lot more evidence is yet to be revealed to the quaternary geologist.

2000 YEARS OF FARM HISTORY

Ashley Cooper, (Gestingthorpe farmer and author) 26th January 1998

Notes by Mike Matthews

Over the last fifty years Harold Cooper and his son, Ashley, have been studying and excavating at Hill Farm, **Gestingthorpe.** Pollen test studies showed that around 1000-2000 BC Neolithic man had cleared the land, causing soil erosion into the valley.

Rex Hull was shown samples of Roman tile they had found and suggested that it might be useful to dig some trial pits. Excavations were made and showed evidence of a late 2nd to 3rd Century AD Roman villa some 140 ft long by 60 ft wide with plastered walls and a hypocaust heating system. The walls were 2 - 3 ft thick at the base.

Finds included an unusually large amount of jet and shale objects compared to other villa sites. There was also evidence of bronze casting on the site in the form of a mould fragment for a figurine using the lost wax method. There was also evidence of some clay lump buildings.

It was estimated that the villa had gradually gone out of use as there is no evidence of destruction by fire or other catastrophy. From about 1200 AD the landscape had assumed a form that would be recognisable today.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY IN THE ESSEX INTERTIDAL ZONE

Peter Murphy (Environmental Archaeologist, Centre of East Anglian Studies, UEA)

2nd February 1998

Notes taken by R P Rowe

English Heritage produced a policy document, encouraging counties to survey archaeological remains in the inter-tidal zones of their coasts and estuaries. In Essex work had already been going on since early 1980s with a survey of sites, and noting of changing conditions due to erosion of the coast. This was done to facilitate management and protection of the sites. Most of the coast and estuaries have been covered, exceptions being the east coast of the **Dengie Peninsula,** where there are only very recent sediments, and **Foulness** where the military restricted area makes access difficult. Otherwise the coast has been surveyed, mostly on foot, from **Walton** to **Purfleet.**

Some testing of submerged levels has been done by auger boring, together with investigation of layers of peats and sediments exposed by the scouring of the tides and rivers. The example of an investigation on the River Crouch at **South Woodham Ferrars** shows an ancient land surface dating to Mesolithic and Neolithic times, the peat layers overlaid by mud sediments. The peat layers indicate that there had been periods when the area had been covered by fresh water vegetation, followed by salt water sediments from estuarine conditions.

Dating is mainly reliant on carbon and palaeomagnetic techniques, but is not always reliable. Artefacts are also used where found. One of the eroded land surfaces dated to the Mesolithic, 7000 to 8000 years ago. It showed evidence of burnt flint and struck flint tools and arrow heads. There was evidence that the site had been used by hunter-gatherers, who would have had a mobile life style. In those days the site would have been inland on the banks of a fresh water stream.

Samples taken from the sections of excavations can give diatoms, samples of pollen and seeds. In turn this can indicate the type of vegetation, and in the case of the diatoms indicate the salinity of the water, so depending on which type of diatom predominates it is possible to determine whether the site is adjacent to an estuary or a river.

Another site on the **Blackwater** was described. In Neolithic times **Osea Island** was a peninsula. A mud flat called **The Stumble** between Osea and the mainland is being quickly eroded. An investigation of surface finds was made by laying down a grid and recording positions of any artefacts. The team was also able to make small scale excavations at low tide in selected areas. Finds included both flint and pottery dating to 5000 years BC. The Neolithic buried soil levels showed a charcoal-rich soil which gave pollen results that showed the previous existence of a lime and hazel woodland. Bone survived poorly, and there

was no evidence of structures, but there were grains of cereals, mainly wheat and barley, together with flax, linseed, hips and haws, brambles, hazel and sloes.

On the Thames at **Purfleet** buried peat levels show deep deposits with a large content from yew trees, and indications of a wet woodland. Beneath the peat the lower land surface was rich in evidence: snails which indicated the type of environment, green-stone axes, a butchered aurochs' femur showing neolithic hunting and a charcoal layer stretching for about a kilometre. Burnt flint mounds are found on some sites. It is thought that these were used for cooking or steam baths.

Other sites have produced a range of finds; beaker pottery on the beach at **Clacton;** a 2m long paddle; wooden structures that could have been a landing stage, trackway or bridge over a mud-filled channel; Roman wattle and a timber including a cut mortise; managed oyster beds and storage pits.

Of particular interest are the remains of salt-making in the form of red fired earth known as Red Hills. These contain briquettage associated with salt making. These show small voids where the material used to temper the clay bricks and fire bars has carbonised away. By using these small voids as moulds it is possible to establish that the temper included straw and chaff with some wheat had been used, indicating a possible farming connection with the salt-making in the area.

Another set of features that have come to notice in recent years are the linear alignments of stakes in the **River Blackwater.** These are thought to be of Saxon date, and the remains of fish traps, indicating fishing and management on a large scale, possibly associated with an ecclesiastical establishment.

It is clear that the inter-tidal area of our coast can produce much archaeological information that so far has not been investigated and recorded.

THE MYSTERY OF THE MALDON BURGH

Paul Brown (Chairman of the Maldon Archaeological Group) 9th February 1998

Notes taken by Lillian Morrow

Historical Sources:

At 912 the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records Edward the Elder, son of Alfred the Great, came into East Anglia and intended to build a burh at Whitton but came instead to **Maldon** and founded a burh there in 916. In 917 the Saxons besieged Colchester and captured the town with much slaughter of the Danish inhabitants. In the autumn a great force of Danes gathered to storm the Maldon burh but it held out and the Danes were defeated. In 991 the battle of Maldon took place in which the Ealdorman was killed and the Danes were paid off. The accuracy of the poem is open to question but this must have been Maldon's greatest period with a Saxon king living there.

The Maldon Archaeological Group have not carried out any recent excavations but in 1979-1980s several investigations were undertaken. A long trench was opened up along the Beeleigh Road. This site overlooks Elm's Farm. No ditch was found but a large pit, possibly wicker-lined, was uncovered. Some late Saxon pottery was recovered but most was Roman. A little *circa* 900 pottery was recovered later on the top of Maldon Hill, but again most finds were Roman.

At No. 9 London Road, during alterations at the back of the house, a deep excavation produced early Medieval pottery. Close to St. Peter's Hospital, at No. 20 Spital Road, a hump was investigated which continued along the rear of neighbouring gardens. The hump itself could not be excavated because there were trees on top, but a trench was opened up just below it. This revealed a shallow ditch and gully in which was a small pit which contained early Iron Age pottery.

Locating the ditch is important if the burh is to be found. Joseph Strutt, in 1775, sketched an enclosure, truncated by London Road, the boundaries of which are traceable on old Tithe maps but the parish boundaries cover a larger area than that suggested for the burh. Essex County Council subsequently produced a map of the supposed line of the burh ditch.

During the building of the Telephone Exchange a ditch was observed at the rear of the building but no exploration was carried out. Opposite the site at 9 London Road a Victorian brick wall has cracked along the line of the ditch. All these sites are on the line of Strutt's sketched earthworks.

The next site investigated was in a "V" shaped field at Elm Croft House which was being demolished. A ditch and some pits were found which contained early Iron Age pottery of similar date to the Spital Road finds which are about 100 yards away on the other side of Maldon Hill. Essex County Council opened up an area on the other side of the house and a further section of ditch was revealed.

A Roman bead was found in a garden at St. Peter's Avenue on top of Maldon Hill and Roman pottery turned up on the Youth Hostel site and also at the old Tesco site. In 1909 a Mr Gould identified the highest corner of the line of this ditch as the burh but the area was greatly disturbed in the Napoleonic period and therefore not reliable.

Three other sites have yielded some finds. The former site of the English Electrical Valve Company in the centre of Maldon produced early Iron Age pottery but no Saxon, and at St. Peter's Hospital a continuation of the ditch from the 20 Spital Road site was found. Finally a County Council excavation in the High Street produced late Saxon and early Medieval pottery.

Obviously Maldon Hill had been an important site in the early Iron Age, probably the start of Maldon, and there is some evidence of a Roman presence, but so far the site of the Saxon burh remains a mystery.

IPSWICH AND ITS HINTERLAND

John Newman, Field Officer, (Archaeological Service, Suffolk County Council)
16th February 1998 (Notes not available)

MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

Richard Shackle and James Fawn 23 February 1998
Notes taken by John Mallinson

Richard Shackle presented a review of a number of the more interesting timber framed buildings he had recently investigated. He first described in detail his investigations at Wood Hall, **Wormingford,** a moated manorial site whose principal building is 17th century, but incorporates features dating to the 14th century. In particular he described a semi-ruinous 3-bay building, joined to the main house by a long thin "corridor" structure. He showed slides of two remaining diamond-mullioned medieval windows, a medieval door, the evidence for two upstairs oriole windows and demonstrated that one of the bays of this building had contained a fireplace. The original purpose of the building remained unclear.

In the second part of his talk he described a number of buildings in **Fordham** which he had investigated on behalf of Fordham Historic Buildings Society, who are proposing to publish a book on the more interesting buildings in their village. His investigations included; Fordham Hall and its barn and granary and cart lodge, all probably 17th or 18th century, but incorporating many medieval features; the Moot Hall, a beautiful Georgian house with moat, built on a 14th century site; Fossett's, a 17th century cottage with diamond mullioned windows; and Old Timbers, a medieval hall dating possibly to the 15th century.

James Fawn began with a review of progress of work on the Roman road and villa at **Great Tey.** Recent excavations have concentrated on the point at which the road disappeared from aerial photographs, and confirm the presence of the road at this point, but have failed to find it further to the north. The excavations also confirm the presence of a ring ditch, probably Bronze Age, adjacent to the road on the west. James also confirmed that Peter Cott had completed a geophysical survey of the villa site.

After a lighter interlude in which slides were shown of a number of Group Summer activities, including the visit to Ely and attendance by members of the recovery of a crashed World War II aeroplane at **Mount Bures,** the talk concluded with an update on excavations at the Longinus Site on **Beverley Road.** In addition to the face of Longinus, a number of other missing parts of his statue have been recovered and identified. The south edge of the road has been defined, and several interesting finds recovered from pits on the edge and south track, including a complete skeleton, a unique amphora-shaped brooch tentatively dated to the early 2nd century, and a Trajan coin. Recent excavations to define the north edge of the road have revealed an unusual structure, constructed from reused brick and tile, whose function is still unclear. Work continues.

WALTON CASTLE AND OTHER SAXON SHORE DEFENCES

John Fairclough, (former Museum Education Officer for Suffolk) 2nd March 1998

Notes taken by Ann Trewick

Mr Fairclough has been researching the beginnings of Felixstowe and has found evidence to make clearer the early history of the town, dispelling some of the myths associated with events lost in time.

He explained the meaning of a Saxon Shore Fort, taking as his example the best preserved one near **Portsmouth** - Porchester Castle. Within a walled enclosure, indicating the size of such forts, are a church and medieval castle. The site guards the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour. The forts were strung out along the south coast from Portsmouth around to the East coast.

What evidence is there for one of these forts at Felixstowe? There is a plan and drawing of a lost castle at Felixstowe by John Shepherd, dated to 1623. It shows a rectangular rather than a square enclosure, with some ruins in one corner, and there appears to be only one gate. But forts were not necessarily standard format by the late 3rd century. The fort was situated off the present road to Felixstowe ferry, in the area known as The Dip. Sadly the remains are now under water, a victim to coastal erosion. Two other 18th century observations are important, particularly that of John Kirby. His 1740 map records a castle on the cliff and in his book '*Suffolk Traveller' of* 1754 he writes about *'stoneworks'.* He was a surveyor and so could be expected to be more accurate than others. In the 1780's Aaron Rathbone mentions *`the ruins on the beach'.* There is also no doubt that the Romans were in the Felixstowe area from the number *of* finds which have been made in the area from the coprolite pits in the 19th century to coins still being found on the beach after a storm today. There is some evidence that the original Priory, founded in 1086 with monks from **Rochester,** Kent, was inside the walls of the fort - as at Porchester there was a church. Later Bigod's son wanted to build a castle and there is evidence that he gave 48 acres *of* land at Walton in exchange. So a Norman castle was built inside the Roman fort, although it was demolished within a few years because Bigod fell out with the King. There is also some evidence to suggest that St. Felix's Bishopric *of* Dommoc was at Felixstowe as there seems to have been a church dedicated to St. Felix from early times within the fort walls. (In the 630's 'teachers from Kent' came at St. Felix's request when Paulinus was Bishop or Rochester.)

Mr Fairclough went on to talk about the problems surrounding the understanding *of* the Forts *of* the Saxon Shore as most *of* the written evidence comes from 'Notitia Dignitatum'. There is no original available and all we have are four 16th century copies of a 10th century copy. There is a list of seven forts, for example, although the plan shows nine. It has been difficult to say which names should be attached to the forts as we know them today. It is possible that Portia Adurni was Walton Castle, although Portchester has a prior claim. He also talked about the Classis Britannica and suggested that the Romans used water transport much more frequently than we give them credit for. He also talked about Carausius who had been given a special fleet to deal with the Saxon and German raiders and who declared himself Emperor of Britain towards the end of the 3rd century.

Finally Mr Fairclough suggested a possible link between **Colchester** and the **Colne's Peninsular.** Perhaps this was included in the land *of* the colonia (the Ness *of* the Colne) and re-established after the Boudiccan revolt. There is, after all, evidence *of* the Romans in the first and second centuries in the Felixstowe area before any of the Shore forts were built.

NEW LIGHT ON AN OLD PIT FROM ROMAN ARDLEIGH: CELTIC BEER AND RITUAL

Dr. Paul Sealey, FSA. 9th March 1998

Notes taken by John Mallinson *(The following notes are almost entirely quoted from a written summary provided by the speaker.)*

The cauldron pit at **Ardleigh** was excavated by members *of* CAG in 1972-73 and takes its name from a unique pottery vessel from the fill. At the time the purpose and significance of the pit was not understood, but discoveries elsewhere coupled with research by the speaker now offer a plausible explanation for the pit and its contents.

It was a steep-sided and circular pit dug c.45 AD to receive the ceremonial deposition of material from a nearby occupation site, part of which had been destroyed by fire. After deposition of this burnt material the pit was immediately backfilled to reinstate the original ground level. Within a decade it was recut, but the primary fill was left untouched. The location of the pit just outside a perimeter ditch strengthens the case for settlement boundaries as focal points for ritual deposits in the Iron Age and Roman period in southern Britain. It is linked to rites of termination attested elsewhere at the time of the Roman invasion, in Essex and Kent. Ardleigh differs from these in that it was made not in an existing pit or ditch, but in one dug for the purpose; as such it has a contribution to make to our understanding of the archaeology of native ritual.

In addition to the pottery cauldron, a group of pottery strainer bowls from the pit is exceptional. Three other sites are known where strainer bowls have been found associated with cauldrons, and in all cases the vessels were constructed of bronze. Strainer bowls are predominantly found in northern and western Europe, and it is now thought probable that they were used to season a local drink prepared in cauldrons, rather than imported wine. The main beverage was the Celtic beer drunk in northern and western Europe and mentioned by Greek and Roman writers, and this, or the honey-based drink, mead, are candidates for use with the strainers. The strainer bowl is an insular phenomenon that owes nothing to the Roman world.

THE ROMANS IN ANDALUCIA
Mark Davies 5th October 1998
Notes taken by Noreen Proudman

Mark began the 1998/99 series of lectures by talking about the major sites in Southern Spain which showed Roman influence.

Malaga: not remains of Roman Malaga although it was an important trading centre. There is a small theatre, now a museum, with expanding interpretation of the sites. Medieval and Moorish layers are visible.

Alcazara: This is likely to date from the Pre-Roman era.

Granada: not much is known about the Roman period in Granada, but there is an archaeological museum with some inscriptions. The Moorish style copied the Roman Villa style but this ended in 1492 when the Moors were driven out. The sites sit in sequence and include a Renaissance palace of Charles V.

Cordoba: has exciting remains. Although largely restructured, the remains of the Roman bridge are visible. The Roman colony was founded in 132BC and showed Carthaginian influences. A new railway starts on the site of a 4th century palace and here are remains of massive stairs belonging to a gateway. There was a temple to the Imperial Cult, a major architectural monument, now incorporated into the City Hall. The mosque sits on a platform and survived the reformation.

Seville: the National Institute is located at Seville and has free access (this is not unusual in Spain). There is a marvellous collection but no interpretation of the Roman period. Seville was the Colonia Julia Romeya and the high quality of life is shown by the sculpture. The cathedral stands on the site of the mosque but, unlike Granada, reflects the square of the mosque and a minaret survives. There is a Roman tombstone with a full inscription perfectly preserved. Across the river was another Roman colony - Italica - situated close to the home of the Emperor Trajan. This site is being opened up and given more promotion. It shows the site of a Roman farmhouse/villa. The amphitheatre lies in a valley between two hills and held 4000. There is access for animals, and passageways and pens below the amphitheatre. The site has been reconstructed but there are beautiful mosaics in the open, very well preserved.

Managua: Managua is located on a remote site north of Seville. There is a Roman platform 100' high. This was a socio-religious site.

Merida: Merida (outside Andalucia) is a gem of Roman architecture in Spain. There is a Roman temple (partly reconstructed) and a Moorish building in the background provides continuity. There is an Arch of Trajan incorporated into the Town Wall. Other features are the Forum, aqueducts, and an amphitheatre with an entrance in the side of a hill and steps leading down to the arena.

WHAT HAPPENED IN EASTERN ENGLAND IN THE LATER ROMAN PERIOD?

Chris Going, (Consultant Archaeologist) 19th October, 1998

Notes taken by Vic Scott

For the past two years Chris Going has been involved in "risk-mapping" for the insurance industries. He is director of Cambridge Architectural Research Ltd, a spin off from Cambridge University Department of Architecture. His principal research is the locating and mapping of unexploded ordnance. During the past two years he has worked on mapping projects with bomb disposal and other organisations in the Netherlands, Germany, and Italy, and on identifying war graves and massacre sites in the former USSR. He is currently carrying out an assessment of the Brenner Pass railway route and the missile testing range at Peenemunde on behalf of the German and Italian governments. He describes himself as an archaeologist, and is also known for his interest in Roman ceramics.

His interesting talk asked many questions, i.e. East Anglia is a rich agricultural area, so where are all the Roman villas? Were they of wood and clay, and therefore difficult to locate? Towns and defences ought to beat major road junctions. **Caister by Norwich** and **Colchester** are the only walled towns; why were the others left without defences? Why was the area inland from the forts of the Saxon Shore not fortified? What does a town wall mean? Does it show a lack of confidence or a show of confidence? Chris suggests there were few wealthy villas in East Anglia. Very few mosaics are found, and even if ploughed up and destroyed would leave behind an obvious spread of tessera etc. Also, where are the villas to go with various coin hoards? It is possible the wealth of East Anglia flowed straight across to the Rhine and perhaps further. Romans in Britain had their financial problems of balance of imports and exports as now.

In 1979 Chris arrived in Chelmsford and with Philip Kendrick designed a system of listing Roman pottery. Periods of economic expansion were noted by new styles of pot, and periods of decline as in the 3rd century, would see this coming to a halt with no new supplies of ceramics Repaired Samian and worn pots were still being used.

Richard Reece 20 years ago, wrote a paper on the development of Roman Britain in which he described Roman East Anglia as a vast overgrown garden, where sometimes exciting things are found. How does East Anglia compare with other areas of the Roman Empire? Villa remains are easy to see on the continent due to the building materials used. Villas in East Anglia may have been earlier than those with mosaics, therefore very little is left to find. Ceramics industries didn't revive after about 300 AD.

THE BLACK DEATH

Leigh Alston 27th October 1998

Notes taken by Anna Moore .

The name 'The Black Death' did not appear until the 17th century. The plague outbreak of 1348 reduced the population by up to 50%, with a great impact on later history. There had been a rise in population of 2m between 1100 - 1348, which did not recover. There were outbreaks of plague every decade until 17th century, and even in this century there was an outbreak in **Freston,** Suffolk.

The rat population in the central Asian steppes was driven into the towns by natural disasters, e.g. floods, from there the plague spread both east and west via the major trading routes. In 1345 there was the first recorded incidence of germ warfare when Kaffir was attacked and dead bodies infected with the plague were thrown over the town walls. By 1348 it had reached Italy and is mentioned in Boccaccio's *'Decameron'*, which talks about the plague spreading so fast that birds died in the air.

There were 3 forms of the plague: 1) Bubonic: buboes (purple, painful swellings) appear in lymph nodes, firstly in the groin: 60-90% of victims died within 3-4 days. 2) Pneumonic, which can be transmitted by coughs and sneezes and is therefore very easily spread. 3) Septicaemic, which affects the blood and causes rashes (the origin of 'ring-a-ring-a-roses'), and is transmitted by human fleas.

Rat fleas, which transmit the disease, can survive for up the two months away from the host rat and can live in bales of cloth. People knew that it could be caught from others, but did not understand the cause; contemporary theories included Act of God, divine retribution - it was even blamed on the Jews. It was also thought to be airborne, i.e. through damp marsh air. The plague arrived in England, at **Melcombe Regis** on the south coast, in 1348, then travelled north to **London** (1348-9), then further north, arriving in central and northern **Scotland** in 1350, thence to **Scandinavia,** i.e. through the trading routes. Death rates varied throughout the country, e.g. the Fens largely escaped.

The Black Death arrived in **Clare, Suffolk,** in spring 1349. Contemporary accounts reported 30% death rates; one result was a shortage of servants & workers. There was nobody to bury the dead, and due to the scarcity of labour, wages were increased threefold. It was reported that people had time for leisure & mischief and that the rich became poor and the poor became rich; landowners had to till their own land and grind their own corn.

In Clare, the records are based on the 90-100 bonded tenants, as these deaths would be recorded. The bulk of the records are from the manorial court, which met every three weeks throughout 1348/49. The first death among bonded tenants occurred 3rd February 1349, rising to 16 in April. After that, numbers diminish again. Therefore, plague in Clare raged for 2 months. 44-46 bonded tenants died, i.e. 50%. No ages are recorded but other records indicate over-55 age range had the highest death rate.

In the period before the plague, the land had been impoverished due to over-population, e.g. crop rotation had been abandoned in order to grow more edible crops; the shortage of food led to weakening of health, which meant that the population succumbed to the plague more easily. There are several references in records to "reason of the pestilence". In some areas there was nobody to sow seed or harvest grain, leading to major famine. In the Clare area, there was a full harvest because the outbreak took place in March/April and was over by summer.

The stories, often repeated, that villages were deserted because of the plague, are nearly always wrong, e.g. **Assington** was moved in order to create a park. The Black Death did away with the settlements arranged around small triangular greens, typically leaving one or two houses around the green, e.g. at **Tye Green, Bures.**

In the 50 years after the Black Death, bonded tenancies diminished and previous bonded tenants bought up the land of surrounding farms, e.g. a map of **Cornard** shows how land is not nucleated around the farmhouse, but scattered further afield. The amount of woodland increased because of the lack of demand for land for agriculture; this explains the number of oak-framed houses during the 15th & 16th centuries. Churches in the process of construction (e.g. **Kersey)** often changed in design due to the plague, as building was suspended because craftsmen were no longer available and styles changed in the interim.

Society fundamentally changed as a result of the Black Death; e.g. families were smaller - women were able to earn their own money and married later; standards of living rose, e.g. there were better clothes, better food, houses became bigger with private rooms, chimneys etc. There was a transformation from a peasant economy to a wage economy; the population was reduced to a level that could be supported by the land.

AN INTRODUCTION TO ESSEX GEOLOGY AND BUILDING MATERIALS

Ken Newman, (part-time Tutor in Earth Sciences, University of Essex Centre for Continuing Education) 2nd November 1998

Notes taken by Pat Farnell

The small audience who turned out on this cold and wet November evening were rewarded by a fascinating talk by Ken Newman. He was clearly passionate about his subject and any thoughts that Essex has "no geology" or that if it does " it is a boring one" were quickly dispelled at the outset.

The rocks of Essex, indeed East Anglia as a whole are the youngest in the country, being Tertiary and Quaternary in age. They consist of sedimentary layers lying in a syncline of chalk, laid down in the Cretaceous period, which comes to the surface at **Saffron Walden** in the north and **Thurrock** in the south. The sequence of rocks laid down on top of the chalk begins with the Thanet Sands and continues with the Woolwich and Reading beds, London clay and Bagshot beds. The Coralline unconformity at this level is covered by the red crag of the Pleistocene and finally by the glacial deposits of outwash sand and gravels, boulder clay and brick earth of the later Pleistocene. Each of these deposits appears at the surface somewhere in Essex and this makes for quite a complex geological picture. Mr Newman highlighted certain features that have affected the landscape and coastline.

London clay which underlies the whole of Essex shows in the cliffs at **Walton on the Naze.** It is overlain by the red crag marine deposits and these contain many fossil shells which are good climatic indicators and can therefore tell us of past environments. Apparently the red crag continues right across Essex and this has only been realised in the last 10 years. These two deposits are very subject to erosion and coupled with the slow sinking of the Essex coast have given rise to a rapidly crumbling and receding coast line in north east Essex.. Another interesting feature at Walton is the wave-cut platform of Bentonite, a volcanic ash deposit probably originating from volcanoes in Denmark

The north and west of Essex are mainly covered by glacial boulder clay, which has produced a drumlin-like landscape near **Halstead.** This boulder clay stretches as far south as Danbury Ridge and a line following roughly the line of the A12. Here it gives way to London clay and the Bagshot sands which cap the south Essex hills.

The Thanet sands surface at Orsett and the Woolwich and Reading beds appear at **Cornard** where they form large, very hard, jointed blocks known as Sarsens, and also at **Wicken Bonhunt** where they form ‘pipes’ in the chalk. This wide variety of deposits provides Essex with a diversity of building materials not found in many counties, from white chalk to buff coloured septaria, red-brick earth, puddingstone, and black flint. Mr Newman continued by giving examples of buildings utilising these rocks.

One of the most commonly used materials is flint which is formed in the upper chalk either as nodules or as solid bands of `tabular' flint. It has been used extensively in the churches throughout Essex both in rough form and knapped to give a more decorative finish. Examples include:- **Broomfield, Rochford, Maldon, All Saints, Little Lees, Purley and Foxearth,** which Mr Newman described as an "essay in flint"! St Johns Abbey Gatehouse and St Osyth Priory are also very fine examples of knapped flint Flushwork.

Surprisingly, the chalk itself has been used as a building material in the past and still survives in a few buildings in the north west of the county around **Saffron Walden.** The chalk blocks are usually plastered over, so are not always apparent but **Hornden on the Hill** has a visible chalk-based church wall.

Septaria which forms as nodules in the London clay is a buff coloured stone which has been used since Roman times and can be seen in the Roman wall of **Colchester,** the castle and the churches at **Salcott, Broomfield, Woodham Walter** and **Great Wigborough. St Osyth Priory** has a decorative finish of septaria blocks each encircled by small flints.

Red-brick earth has been used for hand-made bricks since medieval times and this was once a flourishing industry until, sadly, cheaper machine-made bricks replaced them. The **Castle/Sible Hedingham** area alone supported 9 brickyards, now all gone. Only the Bulmer Brick Company near **Sudbury** survives. Very early brickwork can be seen in **Coggeshall Abbey, St Giles Leper Hospital** and **St Botophs Priory. King John's Hunting Lodge, Copford church** and **Stanway Zoo** also feature old bricks. Brick nogging can be seen **in Paycockes, Newport High Street** and in houses at **Great Yeldham.**

Lastly puddingstone, a dark coloured conglomerate of pebbles cemented by iron can be found in churches in the south of the county. Examples of these are **Broomfield, Great** and **Little Lees, Heybridge, Ingatestone, Braxted** and **Great Bentley. Beeleigh Abbey** also contains some. This was a talk which helped us all to look at Essex buildings with renewed interest.

BRAIN VALLEY FROM THE AIR

Barry Foster (Air photographer) 9th November 1998

Notes taken by Raymond Rowe

For aerial photography, the choice of aeroplane is very important, slides showed types of plane, and their disadvantages, mainly with regards to visibility. Graphic descriptions of a first flight, and the problems of establishing relative positions of the aircraft and a particular archaeological site were clearly explained. The requirement to give instructions to the pilot while travelling at 100mph plus does not come easily. It is also important to remember the area, where the photographs were taken. A large number of slides can be difficult to catalogue, and sort.

The original object was to consider crop marks around **Cressing Church** where the Brain Valley Archaeological group had been excavating. The problem of looking for crop marks is not their scarcity, but the quantity caused by non-archaeological features. The geology, and recent farming, can produce interesting looking crop marks. Field drains and tractor marks, frequently show up, tracks made by horses exercising were shown that looked like a ring ditch, so it needs judgment and understanding to be sure that photographs are being taken of meaningful evidence. In many cases it requires further investigation on the ground to eliminate false indications.

Many slides showed circles, trackways and enclosures of various shapes. In some cases it could be seen that the crop marks indicated that what ever had caused it had influenced latter activities. For example, road alignments or parish boundaries. One example showed how a normally straight Roman road, exhibits a kink near **Rayne** apparently to avoid an earlier ring ditch.

The latest interest in field names, and their relevance to past history, can also gain from the search for crop marks. Ploughed-out boundary hedges and ditches show up and give in some cases an indication as to why the fields got their names.

It is also important to use aerial photography to record more recent changes to roads, towns and village layouts. For example, the way that areas formed by new bypasses become filled in with industrial building. Photographs from the air give much more detail than can ever be recorded in drawings of, for example, the expansion of a village. A series of similar photographs taken at intervals can also give a time scale to the changes.

CRESSING TEMPLE: A MANOR AND ITS BUILDINGS

David Andrews (Conservation Officer with Essex County Council) 16th November 1998

Notes taken by Bernie Colbron

The Cressing Temple site probably dates from about 1137 from a grant of land by Queen Matilda, heiress to the house of Boulogne, and given to the Templars. In about 1147 her husband, Stephen added a Manor house and increased the land area by adding part of the 'Witham Estate'. The Templars used the land for agriculture to raise money for the war in the Holy Land and held the land until 1308 when the Templars were arrested and their lands taken by the Crown. From 1308 till 1312 the Order of the Templars were suppressed and in 1312 Cressing Temple and lands were given to the Hospitallers. The Temple was owned or leased by various people i.e. John Edmondes c.1523, Sir John Smyth c.1539. Henry VIII dissolved the Hospitallers but they still exist in Malta and Rome.

The site was acquired by Essex County Council in 1987 from Mr. A L Cullen with grants from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the European Community and the National Heritage. However, in the latter half of that year Essex suffered an appalling night of gales which destroyed the roof coverings of the Barley and Wheat barns (both barns had nibbed tiled roofs when they were built). Without the roof cover it enabled a more thorough look at the timbers in the roof. Using tree-dating on the beams it was estimated that the Barley barn was from c. 1220 and the Wheat barn at c. 1260. There is an ongoing program of research and excavations.

There have been Roman finds at Cressing but no Saxon finds. There were more buildings on the site than there are today. Three other stone buildings have been located on the site and some post holes. Stone walls were found because of compacted floors used as foundations. Two of the buildings were possibly used for the warden's private use. Also on the site was a Timber Hall. The Wheat barn is younger by 50 years. In the survey of the roofs, scarfe joints and secret notches were found in the building of the barns and in 16th century they were replaced with crown posts. Barley barn is now smaller by six to ten feet after excavations showed earlier post-holes. Side walls are Hospitallers' walls with Tudor bricks underneath. The site passed to the Smith family in Tudor times. The Chapel was still used in 17th century, with the walled garden for pleasure. The cellars excavated in 1994 and it was found that the site had filigree glass. The house was recorded as having 20 hearths. Farm house was two buildings in 1613, an open-floor building with no small rooms 1680. There is also an 18th century building for which no known use has been discovered.

Cressing is not recorded in the Domesday Book but was probably included with Witham. On the site there is a small rural church with Saxon finds at the church - the site excavated is older than the church. The church is a distance from the manor house and no plausible explanation has been put forward for this unusual siting.

LAKENHEATH HORSE BURIAL

Andrea Evans (British Museum) **23rd November 1998**
Notes taken by Denise Hardy

Rescue excavations were needed at an Inhumation/Cremation cemetery found at the **Lakenheath Airbase.** The work was carried out by the Suffolk Archaeological Service and finished in October last year. At least 200 inhumation graves were revealed, only a few of which were cremations. They discovered 6th century warrior graves complete with their shields and swords. Amongst them was a female grave also buried with a sword, all indicating high status burials. Symbols on these objects were akin to the Sutton Hoo helmet's concept of horse riding. Towards the end of the excavation they came across an over-large grave containing a man in a coffin buried beside his horse. The skeleton lay on the left of the horse and was aged in his 20's. He was buried with his sword (with a short handle) on a belt, and a knife was found in the small of his back (not the cause of death). A shield originally placed on top of the coffin had a high-domed boss with silver sheeted riveted heads. There was no sign of trauma on the skeleton and therefore the cause of death cannot be ascertained - perhaps it was through natural causes. His horse was crammed beside him, the head faced the warrior, with a bucket next to the horse's head, (food for the Gods perhaps?) A copper alloy belt buckle was also found.

The horse was buried with his bridle, which was exceptional. It was decorated with gilt bronze fittings (corroded by the nose) There was a cruciform fitting on the brow which was made in bronze with silver applique. Small amounts of calf skinned leather survived on the bridle, and associated with the cruciform were gilt bronze discs - a decorated pendant fitting with silver applique complete with rivets in an owl-face design which would have dangled down. (c. 500 AD). Two identical ones were found at **Mucking,** having been adapted as broaches. On the cheek strap was decorated a gilt bronze piece (crouched animal) complete with crudely-cut bronze washers to stop it tearing the leather. The bit had four crucible fittings and is identical to modern bits. The bridle is also identical to ones found at **Snape, Gt. Chesterfield** and **Sutton Hoo,** although here there is a slight variation in design. The horse was 5/6 years old and was lame (as was the Sutton Hoo Horse) His death was probably from poleaxing as his skull was staved in. (Was there a disc on the forehead which fell off when the horse was poleaxed?)

After the skeleton was removed the weather conditions became inclement and excavation conditions were extremely bad and although the bones were in good condition they were very fragile and slightly fractured, so the British Museum were called in to block lift the horses head, sword and bucket. To be able to cut it away from the earth the head needed to be packed in sand first, then cling filmed. It was then wrapped in a plaster bandage, which is a resin-based sheet which "cures" in ultra violet light, which normally dries very quickly. However, because of the adverse weather conditions it took 24 hrs to harden off.

The best parallel to the Lakenheath horse burial is Sutton Hoo (c. 600 AD) This was also a block lifted excavation at Mount 17 in November 1991, but here the horse was in a separate grave alongside the warrior and was not wearing the bridle. The remains were partially bone/sand as was the warrior and

the bones were not in very good condition. The warrior's shield was underneath the coffin, and nearby lay a bucket cauldron containing a pot, a complex bridle with a mass of bronze fittings complete with iron links and an iron bit and snaffle with gilt bronze terminals interlaced with animal decorations. On the brow of the bridle, in gilt bronze, was a circular disc with pendant axe fittings. There were three rein links but only two at Lakenheath. It has been suggested that reins were not for holding, but were weighted down on the horse's neck.

Stray finds have been found in the South East regarding bridles, like the gilt bronze pendant axe which was the same period as Sutton Hoo, and at Faversham, a four way strap fitting in gilt bronze with silver applique and a four way brow/nose band found in East Anglia, but none of these as early as at Lakenheath.

Sutton Hoo burial was a higher status burial than at Lakenheath, but why did they bury the horses with such exceptional bridles? Did the warriors have bridles gifted to them? Was it hierarchy, or status given in death?

MEDIEVAL POPULAR RELIGION IN THE EASTERN COUNTIES

Dr Barbara Ward **30th November 1999**

Notes taken by Anna Moore

Dr Ward introduced her talk by saying that in one evening, only some aspects of her subject could be covered. Popular religion was found among all social groups and considerable change & elaboration was in evidence up until the time of Henry VIII and the Reformation. Certain people stand out during the period, for example, the mystics such as Margery Kemp of Kings Lynn and Julian of Norwich. However, religion during the Middle Ages was much more about ordinary people. Dr Ward concentrated during her talk on the parish churches and on the later Middle Ages because of the amount of information available. Her talk was accompanied by some excellent slides of churches in the Eastern Counties, where there are some particularly splendid parish churches.

The life of communities during the Middle Ages was punctuated by the 7 sacraments. Carvings on the font in Sloley, Norfolk, illustrated these:

Baptism, was done very soon after birth, within a week
Confirmation
Marriage - there was not necessarily a church service at this period
Mass - was weekly and also at the great festivals
Confession - which was made at least once a year; usually depictions in East Anglia show the devil escaping and a guardian angel in the background.
Extreme Unction

During the period, mass became increasingly central and elaborate; requiem masses became normal during 14th and 15th centuries - illustrated by a font at **Westhall, Suffolk.**

Visitation evidence shows the great wealth owned by parish churches, e.g. vestments, plate etc. These were sometimes owned by the chantries contained within the church or were bequeathed to the church. Essex has the records of visitations made by the Deans of St Paul's Cathedral in 1297 and 1458. The 1297 visitation to **Navestock** reports on the state of the church and that property included altars, vestments, chalices, a wooden pyx, a fan of peacock feathers, images of St Michael, Christ and St Thomas the Apostle, a bier and hearse cloth, 3 banners and a processional cross (broken). These were rich belongings for a small parish church.

A wealthier parish church would have correspondingly richer goods. An inventory of 1368 for **Cawston, Norfolk,** includes a list of gifts by parishioners and the rector, which included a book of the lives of the saints, cloths, candelabra and chalices. This shows how much the parishioners were involved with the church. Dr Ward pointed out the contrast between the interior of the church and parishioners homes.

It was important that parishioners were instructed in the Christian faith. In about 1250 statutes were made for the instruction of priests and parishioners. Manuals of penance guided priests taking confession.

Confession was more public than in modern churches, as there were no confession boxes, and priests used confession to give social instruction. Teaching was also done by visual means, e.g. the 7 deadly sins in painting or carving, illustrated by the carved bench ends in **Wiggenhall St Germans.** The 7 Acts of Mercy was another popular subject. Knowledge of the Bible was limited in rural areas, particularly of the Old Testament; stories from the New Testament were more popular, especially carvings depicting the Birth of Christ, although most of these were smashed during the Reformation. There is very little depiction of Christ's miracles or ministry, although the last events of Christ's life are fairly common, i.e. the Passion, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. The fact that God was held in dread was an important factor; the fear of God as Judge was illustrated by the painted wooden panels of The Last Judgement from **Wenhaston** in Suffolk. The Virgin Mary and the saints had an important role as intercessors, and could also be blamed when things went wrong, e.g. crop failure etc. Various cults emerged, e.g. at **Ashingdon** there was an image which was visited by barren women, and these cults were often closed down by the Bishops. Natural and supernatural myths were often interspersed with other themes, e.g. the Green Man and the Wild Man often appear in carvings.

Dr Ward emphasised the importance of the Mass as a group activity, both for the living and for the dead, the latter through the chantries, which were established to say masses for the souls of the dead. Religious Guilds provided similar services for more people; they had religious, charitable and social activities; they sometimes also played a political role, i.e. in the government of the town. The Guilds were not available to the very poor as dues had to be paid, and some were only for the elite. Social activities were important - records for **Long Melford** show that Guild members walked the parish bounds during Rogation week, during which prayers would be said and food provided.

Each church decided which aspect of the agricultural year would be celebrated and these were accompanied by bonfires, plays, dancing, tubs of ale etc. Social and cultural activity was integrated with religious practice.

Up until the Reformation, lay control was a notable feature. Churchwardens controlled the finances and the building and parishioners told the priests what they wanted. After the Reformation, ecclesiastical control took over. Parish churches were very much part of the wider Roman Catholic church, and parishioners would often take part in pilgrimages, e.g. to Walsingham or to Jerusalem. Dr Ward closed her talk by emphasising how important a part the parish church played as a symbol of a medieval parishioners' identity and pride in the community.

EXCAVATIONS AT NO 1 POULTRY, LONDON

Peter Rowsome (Senior Archaeologist, Museum of London Archaeology Service)
25th January 1999
Notes taken by Lillian Morrow

One of the biggest single archaeological excavations in the City of London took place between 1994-6 on the western bank of the Walbrook River on the corner between Cheapside and Queen Victoria Street near the Bank of England. Twenty thousand individual floors, walls and pits were excavated, including 60 Roman buildings and 50 Late Saxon/ Medieval buildings. Nine hundred Roman coins from stratified contexts, in excellent condition, were recovered including a Vespasian coin. The wetness of the site, close to the Walbrook, meant timber was well preserved and dendro-dating was possible. Eight to nine thousand environmental samples were sieved on site. Bones, seeds, and Stone Pine cones, possibly from Italy, were processed.

A pair of bronze scales with an inscribed pattern on the back of the dishes was recovered, and a wooden spade with an iron cuffing edge and attached leather pouch was found inside a Roman drain. It is possible the spade might have been used for clearing sewage sludge.

Land use: 50 AD London founded. The earliest dendro date is 52 AD. This was a virgin site with no evidence of a native settlement. The River Thames could be forded here and a dockside developed. A road from the east forum ran through the site, NW to **St Albans** and W to **Silchester.** Although a hillside site with a drop to the Walbrook of 7 metres, the area was heavily developed in the 50s by means of revetments and terracing.

In 50-55 AD a main road of hard packed sand and gravel was laid down with oak timber drains on either side. These drains were covered over with cross planks and had a fall of 1/100 into the Walbrook. The main EW road measured 700 metres widening to 900 metres.

One building had wooden sill beams internally, with two partitions of wattle and daub and joist and plank flooring in front facing the road. There may have been a plank boardwalk along the side of the street. There was evidence of Boudiccan destruction all over the site and that the buildings were very new when destroyed. Evidence suggests the streets were cleared and back in use fairly quickly but it was 5-10 years before some of the buildings were replaced. In 70 AD a building with large oak beams was erected, larger than the pre-Boudiccan predecessor.

Water was drawn from the Walbrook and stored in barrels imported from Germany. A large, shallow, wooden trough, with piped water running through, may have been used for washing purposes, and a clay based, wooden plank water reservoir 5x5 metres and 1.2 metres deep was uncovered. In the 90s 1200 broken rotary querns, and some large donkey stones, were reused to cobble a yard.

Late 1st century, Flavian buildings along the street were constructed with mud brick walls and chevron keying for plasterwork. Fragments of painted wall plaster were recovered. Buildings along the street seem to have been of mixed use. A double oven, possibly a bakery, and evidence for metal working was recovered, also a drip drain shared by two houses in close proximity, with truncated timber posts side by side still in situ. The roadside drain was substantial, 1.6 metres square, and constructed with reused substantial oak posts and plank sides. In 59-60 AD the EW road probably ran to the fort and in 70 AD a timber amphitheatre, later reconstructed in stone, and seating for possibly 8000 was built near the fort. The area within the walled town was very large and an estimated population of between 20-40,000 has been suggested.

In 125 AD, around the time of Hadrian's visit, fire destroyed the town and from mid to late 2nd century it went into decline. Generally buildings were not rebuilt and it changed to an administration centre. Some timber buildings were re-established and in the 2nd century in some cases stone was used to build on to the back of timber buildings. To the western end a large stone building with an apse and stone drain or culvert was constructed with a mosaic and hypocaust, possibly a small bathhouse. Towards the eastern end, in the last quarter of the 3rd century, a stone building was constructed with an apsidal end and a large mosaic, which could have been a temple. Late 4th century mosaics seem to have been lifted in pieces and reused

At the end of the 4th century there is a deposit of dark earth which covered stake holes and pits. By the 5th century the riverside wall and town walls were in decay. The Thames declined in volume to increase again in Saxon times. The evidence points to an abandoned Roman town.

To the west, from the 7th century onwards, a great Saxon trading centre sprang up. On the Opera House site a big settlement was laid out with streets, around the Savoy, up the Strand and possibly as far as Covent Garden. On the Poultry site nothing much took place from the early 5th century until the late 9th century when a number of sunken floored buildings were constructed, one of them, a cobbled sunken building, was constructed against a truncated Roman wall. A hollowed tree trunk had been used to line a Saxon well. Seventy metres were excavated and Roman remains were still visible with the drainage ditch and boundaries still respected.

A new road was built in the 10th century, the forerunner of Cheapside, and along Poultry and Bucklersbury rows of narrow buildings with earth floors and brickearth partition walls were constructed. A boxed hearth gave evidence for late 11th century metal working. A small market was established to the south of the new streets.

About 1070-1100 a plain rectangular Saxon church named St Benet Sherehog, with long and short work, was built over the Roman road but the soft fill of the ditches caused a partial collapse. It was rebuilt c. 1200-1250. Just south of the church a timber building produced a large number of crucibles with evidence for gold and silver working. Perhaps the church had craft guild connections.

By 1265 large commercial stone buildings occupied by the merchants and financiers were erected to the south adjacent to Bucklersbury. A great subterranean conduit was constructed which piped water from Tyburn Stream into town near Selfridges. It had arched cisterns along its route, and an intact fountain house with greensand door was discovered under the modern Cheapside road. Although the church was not rebuilt burials continued in the churchyard until 1840.

COLCHESTER MOSAICS

Philip Crummy (Director, Colchester Archaeological Trust) 1st February 1999

Notes taken by Ann Turner

Wall, floor and ceiling mosaics in Roman buildings were intended as an overall scheme. They were meant to imitate paintings that were also used for decoration. Very little wall mosaic has been found in Britain although a small piece was found during the Culver Street excavations. The majority of mosaics that have survived in Britain are all floor mosaics. So far 1,200 have been found in the U.K and 50 of these are from Colchester. It has been estimated that there were possibly between 2,500 and 5,000 at any one time. Mosaic floors did not become fashionable until the early second century and of those that are known, 50% date from the 2nd and 3rd centuries, mostly being in towns. By the late 3rd century they were not so popular but the fashion was revived in the 4th century mostly being found in villas.

Mosaics followed the expansion of wealth, as they were expensive in time and material to construct. It is thought that there was a school of mosaic makers each having their regional variations. There were possibly 15 mosaic masters in the country and they would have had several people working under them. The style of the mosaics found in Colchester and St. Albans suggests that the same person made them. The Colchester style is usually of a nine-panel pattern. Some mosaics had a main design in the centre with a border made up of a design of knots, rosettes and lozenges.

A mosaic was made by first laying a bed of stones over which a lime mortar was spread. A fine bedding mortar was laid on top to take the mosaic tiles. This mortar was made of crushed tile mixed in with the mortar giving a pink effect to the background. It also made the floor waterproof. The mosaic was usually made on site although it is known that some pieces were made off site upside down in a bed of sand. A cloth was placed on top to keep the pieces in place during transportation to the site. The whole mosaic was usually made by the same person and where others have done some of the work this can quite often be seen where the design has not worked out accurately. No pattern books have been found which suggests that the designs were carried in the maker's head. Where repairs have been made they have not always been to the same high quality as the original. Mosaics lasted for years and it is rare to find one on top of another.

Most mosaics were laid in the best rooms of the house where eating and drinking took place. Double handled drinking cups in the corners of the mosaic are a common design in the Colchester mosaics. It is thought the design represented good health. Other common designs were acanthus plants, lotus and ivy leaves, Greek keys and perspective boxes. It is estimated that there were possibly 300 buildings in Colchester that had a mosaic floor. London is thought to have had 100 and Silchester 44.

The earliest mosaic found in Colchester was that found in 1769 in Angel Lane but by 1825 it was in ruins. In 1885, Josiah Parish found two on North Hill and six where the Six Form College now stands. The large numbers from this area is due to the fact that little building took place in later years and this has helped the survival rate.

In the last century, Henry Laver found a small piece of mosaic in Balkerne Lane. He left it in situ and it was recently re-excavated. Several other small pieces have been found in the same area and have been left in situ. The fact that so few mosaics have been found in this part of the town suggests that this was not the wealthy part of Colchester.

The Middleborough mosaic, now in the Castle Museum, was discovered in 1979 and is the finest in Colchester. A quarter of a million tiles made up the mosaic and there is evidence that some of them were reused from other mosaics. The white tiles were made from chalk and the red from broken clay pots.

The excavation at Lion Walk in 1970 uncovered three mosaics and the Culver Street excavations found that at least 10 houses had a mosaic floor indicating that this was the wealthy part of town. The Berryfield mosaic is rather crude being made of thicker than usual cubes. A black and white checked mosaic has been found at the Mercury Theatre. Whilst excavations were taking place recently at the Co-op site in Long Wyre Street, parts of a mosaic were found. It was left in situ and the foundations of the new building were redesigned to preserve it.

Many mosaics have disappeared as they were laid over the hypocaust, which in later years was robbed out thereby destroying the mosaic. The sites of many small pieces of mosaics are known but after recording they have been covered up and left for future generations to find again.

RETIRED CHURCHES

Roy Tricker (Field Officer, Churches Preservation Trust) 8th February 1999

Notes taken by John & June Wallace

Roy Tricker said that he was unashamedly hooked on old churches since the age of four! He said there were 10,000 mediaeval churches in England with 500 in Suffolk, 680 in Norfolk and 536 in Essex. There was no more wonderful resource centre than the mediaeval church as such they stand there 24 hours a day even when "retired" - a word he prefers rather than "redundant". In his capacity as Field Officer for the Trust he said it was essential that the churches had to be retired with grace and dignity, not just abandoned.

There were three possibilities for churches which were no longer in use as places of worship; first there was demolition, secondly certainly a number that must not be demolished but be given alternative use e.g., community centres, theatres, or museums. Thirdly there are those much too precious for alternative use and should be preserved for posterity and remain consecrated and open to visitors. This is where the Trust's responsibilities lie, helped by 70% grant (from the taxpayer) and 30% from the Commissioners.

There are at present some 1522 of these churches nationally, administered by a staff of 17. He then showed a series of slides as follows, the first few being churches he admires and still in use:

1) **Eye**, which he calls `High Eye', the tower being l0lft high with wonderful flint flushwork.
2) **Thaxted** in Essex, which he called the "knife fork and spoon" church, as Thaxted was the centre of the cutlery business at one time. It stands above the town with the street of houses from all periods leading up to it.
3) St. John the Baptist - an impressive 181ft tall.
4) A spire in **Cambridge** built by Bodley, design base on a spire from Ashbourne in Derby, and explained that the spires were the roof of the tower.
5) Shot of the inside of the spire looking right up to the point, showing that it was completely hollow from the top of the tower upwards.
6) He then showed a little country church in Kent at **Fairfield** out on the Romney Marshes which he said was still welcoming pilgrims as, although it was often locked, there was a note on the gate saying where the key could be collected.
7) Showing key hanging on the wall of the house carefully outlined in chalk and well labelled with an additional note to "please return".
8) Interior shot of the church showing 600 year old timber framed construction and white painted box pews.
9) St Margarets at **Margaretting** in Essex showing timber construction of the Tower, 15th century
10) St. Edmund and St. Mary at **Ingatestone** showed the magnificent Tudor west tower constructed of brick which had mellowed over the past 500 years. Inside the brickwork is much brighter.
11) St. John the Baptist, **Little Maplestead,** a round building built by the Knights Hospitallers, being one of only five circular churches left in England.
12) All Saints, **Maldon,** a mediaeval church with a unique triangular section tower. The base shows signs of 13th C Norman building.
13) Inside the base of the triangular tower.
14) St. Andrews, **Greenstead,** whose nave is entirely constructed of large split logs reputed to be 1,000 years old and still in use. The wooden tower is in the traditional Essex style and dated about 1600. The chancel is built of Tudor brick.
15) St. Andrews, **Bramfield** near Halesworth has a 14th century detached round tower and a reed thatched roof.
16) Interior shot showing wonderful rood screen still full of mediaeval colour.

17) Close up of Screen, c. 1500
18) Close up of painted panels on the base of screen portraying the saints.
19) Close up of head and shoulders only of St. Matthew, which was clearly modelled on a local person, which Roy called 'a Suffolk bloke'.
20) St. Peters, **Cretingham,** Roy described the Cretingham murder when the curate slit the throat of the Rector. The core of the church is probably 900/1000 years old.
21) Interior shot shows hammer beam roof and what could have been the original seating with high box pews. These are the family pews which had to be paid for, and woe betide any non-family or stranger sitting there. Benches at the back of the church were provided for the poor.
22) Close up of fine three-decker pulpit although there only remained the 2nd and upper level. He pointed out the canopy above the top level which acted as a sounding board. Date early 1600's.
23) A further close up of the altar showing a three sided communion rail which is supposed to prevent dogs from getting too close!
24) All Saints, **Colchester,** is a retired Church which under the auspices of the local authority has been successfully made into a Natural History museum for some years. Of particular interest are the three light Belfry windows in the Tower.
25) Holy Trinity Church in **Colchester** and Anglo Saxon pre-conquest tower showing much re-used Roman brick and flint crowned with a low pyramid roof. This is another of Colchester's re-used churches.
26) ▪ St. Martin's, West Stockwell Street, **Colchester** which is now being refurbished by the Trust. They hope to re-open it in the near future.
27) St. Leonards, **Brightlingsea,** another retired church which is well cared for.
28) Close up of door which has had 500 years of opening and closing. The small iron boss near the door handle was pointed out.
29) Close up, and this is a sanctuary ring which would protect anyone seeking refuge in the Church once they had clasped it.
30) St. Mary Old Church, **West Bergholt** which was photographed alongside the Georgian Manor Hall. He explained that this church had become redundant as the village had moved
31) ▪ Close up of inside the belfry showing 14th and 15th century timbers.
32) Interior of the church showing the Royal Arms of King James which were found and reinstated when work was done on the Church.
33) Audley Chapel, part of St. Michaels and all Angels, **Berechurch.** This is an early 16th century addition to the Church, built as a burial chapel for the Audley family. The church itself is now used as a solicitors' office and they have proved most willing to hold the keys and welcome visitors.
34) ▪ Close up of monument in the chapel to Sir Henry Audley and his wife, dated 1608 showing him reclining in his armour with his children kneeling beneath.
35) A further shot of the interior showing superbly carved and coloured hammer beam roof.
36) ▪ Holy Trinity, **Halstead,** built by George Gilbert Scott, c. 1840 being an early example of Gothic Revival in the Early English style.
37) Interior shot showing the chancel arch of Galt brick
38) ▪ Next shot was of St. Mary's, **Bungay,** magnificent tall tower, the largest of the two churches in the town, dated from 1400.
39) View from the Tower showing the little church of Holy Trinity now the Parish church, nearby.
40) • **Willingale Spain,** St. Andrews Church with wooden belfry. Two churches share the same churchyard, St. Andrews being the retired Church.
41) Shot of interior of church showing the belfry resting on a tie beam carried by two posts with arched braces, 15th century.
42) Church of St. Christopher actually in the adjoining Parish of **Willingdale Doe,** but sharing the Churchyard of St. Andrews above, and now Parish Church for both.
43) • St. Mary's, **Fordwich** in Kent nearly hidden behind trees and the building in front which holds the key being the local pub, undoubtedly an attractive feature.
44) A close up of the porch.
45) Close up of a large gravestone in the churchyard with two skull and cross bones at the top.
46) The gravestone of his wife alongside but with only one skull and cross-bones.
47) • St. Peters, **Sudbury,** an imposing church set on the Market Hill dominating the centre of the Town, largely 15th century but with distinguished Victorian restoration. A recent grant from the Lottery Funds has been made for the repair of the organ.
48) Close up of high altar showing the unusually tall reredos.

The next few shots are not Trust Churches but ones which the speaker particularly likes.

49) Church of St. Peter, **Winchombe** in the Cotswolds built of beautiful oolithic limestone with its lovely golden colour.
50) Close up of one of the many gargoyles all round the church. He pointed out the detailed carving which could only be appreciated through a pair of binoculars and could have been a self portrait of the stone mason, a very human and lifelike work.
51) Church of St. Mary the Virgin, **Fairford** in the Cotswolds, another of the local wool churches. Church has 28 windows with magnificent mediaeval glass illustrating biblical stories. 52) A tombstone showing a realistic model of a cat.
53) Close up with the memorial to "Tiddles, the Church Cat, 1963 to 1980". It was placed by subscription and with special permission from the bishop when it was pointed out to him that the cat had attended church more times than the average parishioners!
54) Memorial showing Archbishop Sheldon in a **Croydon** church reclining in his mitre, robes and holding his staff, very dignified.
55) A slide of the front page of a recent Church Times, which showed four church dignitaries in various stages of nodding off or actually asleep, as a contrast to the dignified Archbishop Sheldon. 56) The final slide showed a memorial he remembers seeing in **Wormley** Nr. Broxbourne which was a close up of the heads of a man and wife with an apparent disembodied arm. This he remembers from when he was nine years old and from the stern expression on the woman's face "she obviously wore the trousers" were his finishing remarks.

• Retired churches under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust

ANGLO-SAXON SEA POWER

John Pullen-Appleby **15th February 1999**

Notes taken by Raymond Rowe

There is some debate as to whether Anglo-Saxons prior to the seventh or eighth century knew how to use sails. Sea born raids were made on the coast of England at the time of the Roman occupation, (Antonine Fires), Germanic sea born raids by the Chauci merged into Saxon raids. The evidence of the types of ships includes the Bruges boat AD 180 thought to be similar to a Roman boat, found at **Blackfriars.** This had a mast step for a square sail. The Nydam boats of AD 350-400, Oak ship and Fir ship were both thought to be mainly rowing. The Fir ship is thought by some as not stiff enough to have been able to support a sail.

There is evidence that in the sixth century that English pirates took captives, and demanded ransom. Frankish writing records captives taken, "Trans. marc" - indicating English ships. This came to an end due either to religious influences, or fear of a stronger Frankish sea power.

Ship burials give an indication of boat types. Snape boat probably 600 AD excavated in 1862, but we are not really sure of its shape. **Sutton Hoo** 610 AD was 98 ft long. This had a large beam in the bottom of the boat, and rowing Tholes cut off, so we don't know whether it was rowed or sailed. A reduced size replica of an Anglo-Saxon ship project sailed with aid of a sideboard, and could tack into the wind.

By the seventh century it is known that **Ipswich** had sea trade with the Fresians. The Utrecht ship is thought to be a river vessel, dated to about 800 AD. It was found in an area that was in its day the mouth of the Rhine before it silted up. The cog and the hule were both similar in design and were used from early middle ages to about 1300. They were also the major vessels of the Hanseatic League. A coin of Athelstan 1 (827 to 884), a Frankish denier, shows a sailing ship curved to fit the coin. An English boat found at Graveney of this period had no keel so it appeared to be difficult to sail, but, in fact, a half scale ship was found to be manageable.

Sea power became a demonstration of a king's power. Athelstan in 939, first King of all England, sent a fleet to ravage the coast of Flanders in support of Louis d'Outremer, King of France. Latter he advanced into Scotland by land and sea showing the strength of his fleet.

Towards the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, Danegeld and other forms of taxes were used to raise money and men for the building and upkeep of a fleet. A land area of 5 hides had to provide one man, and an area 300 to 310 hides was expected to provide a ship. The early part of the 11th century has many references to ship men and people who pay for ship men. It is also thought that some Vikings were encouraged to remain to provide expertise in sailing. Various ports in the south were expected to provide ships and men, for example **Maldon, Dover, Sandwich, Romney,** and **Hastings. Maldon,** being a half hundred, would have provided 10 men. It is thought these ships were mainly moored in estuaries. In battle the boats were used as a platform for men to fight from, with several lashed together.

In 1052 Earl Godwin, of Wessex sailed back from banishment in Flanders, and joined his son Harold, who had brought men and ships from Ireland, and seized the Isle of Wight, then sailed to London. The Bayeux Tapestry shows both Harold's and William's ships during the Norman invasion. Harold's ship shows positions for oars, except near the mast. William's ship does not show positions for oars but perhaps this is an error rather than a real difference. At the time of the invasion the English fleet was laid up in the Thames, possibly due to weather conditions.

HADRIAN'S WALL

Mark Davies, 4th October 1999

Notes taken by Anna Moore

Mark's talk was based on the sites visited by members of the group over the weekend of 26th-29th March. The Emperor Hadrian was a Spaniard who came to power in 117 AD. He came to Britain in 122AD and decided that a wall would be built from the Tyne to the Solway, 74 miles long (80 modern miles). The wall was planned to be built of stone and 10ft wide as far as the River Irthing, thereafter to be made of turf.

Mark's first slide showed the playing-card shape of the remains of **Pierse Bridge Fort** on **Dere Street,** a Roman Road. There are structural remains of a Roman bridge over the River Tees with stone piers that once supported a timber bridge. **Benwell fort,** which was constructed by the British fleet, contains the remains of a small temple 16 feet long; also an inscription from a major building which names the Governor of Britain, Aulus Plautius.

General Wade knocked the eastern end of the Wall down; there is one good section of the core in **Denton Hall Turret.** There are 2 turrets every mile plus one milecastle. The Rudge Cup, a copper alloy vessel from the Roman period, depicts the Wall and shows the turrets. At **Halton Chesters Fort,** a construction slab was put up by Leg II Augustus; each Legion had its own design.

A decision was made to narrow the Wall and to replace the turf with stone west of **Birdoswald. Brunton Turret** shows evidence of where the narrow wall was built on a wide foundation. There was a ditch in front of the Wall. The Vallum was a wide ditch with banks on either side, creating a military zone. **Poltross Burn Milecastle** had a pair of barrack buildings, a north gateway which had been reduced in size and a flight of steps going up to the Wall walk; this is a major piece of evidence for the height of the Wall, which is estimated at 15ft.

At **Birdoswald,** a network of buildings was found as a result of a geophysics survey and there is a new interpretation centre. Both the turf and stone walls are visible at this point. An inscription to Sylvanus was found on one monument. Two granaries have been excavated and some timber barns. There is evidence here slide showing stabling along back wall was earlier stabling which had survived because of the later additions. The large barn at **Badley,** had 8 bays of building, probably extended when reused. This was originally a cowshed or house, but by the 18th century it had become a multi purpose building with all services under 1 roof, 2 bays threshing, then the stables with loft above for corn, then a cow house, and a further two stables at the end, and finally all converted into one building thus ensuring survival of the whole. We saw a slide of a similar 18th century stable at Bury St Edmunds, and also saw slides of cart lodges, entrance in one end and out the other 19th century.

Another cart lodge with a granary at the end showing that the forts were occupied after the Romans left by local people who used them as strong points. Silver denarii found in a purse at **Birdoswald** had been deposited in 122 AD.

Pike Hill Turret was a lookout point built on a diagonal to the Wall. **Carvoran Roman Museum** is housed in a fort that lay behind the Wall. Some of the group walked from here along **Walltown Crags** passing a quarry that now cuts through part of the site and also passing **Walltown Farm,** which was built of stones from the Wall. The Wall has been robbed in several places for buildings. At **Vindolanda,** another fort lying behind the Wall, which was converted to a civilian settlement, there are reconstructions of turrets and part of the turf wall. There is also evidence of a late Roman Christian Church. Military and personal records were found here, having originally been thrown onto a bonfire, including writing tablets of thin wood.

At **Housesteads Fort,** there are the remains of the Commander's House and of the civil settlement, plus earlier features including some burials. The barracks here were eventually divided into individual chalets, providing evidence that soldiers had their families living with them. The hospital buildings include an inscription of a medical officer from Tungren.

At **Chesters,** the museum contains a collection of stones and inscriptions. There is an extensive bathhouse here which includes a row of niches. Close by there are the remains of the abutment of a bridge over the North Tyne.

Corbridge was a centre of military activity and also a town. It stood on Dere Street and was a major stopping point on the route to and from Scotland. **Hexham Abbey** was built of stones from the Wall and contains a tombstone with a carving of a Roman riding over the cowering figure of a Briton, similar to the one in Colchester Castle Museum. At **Bewcastle,** north of the Wall, there was a hexagonal fort and a shrine to Coccidius. The group came here to look at the remains of a Norman Castle and an Anglian Cross dating from the 8th century.

Mark concluded his talk by showing some slides of the Wall east of **Newcastle,** not visited by the group. At **Wallsend,** the fort was excavated in the early 1980s and is the centre of an Archaeological Park where a number of buildings have been reconstructed, including a section of Wall, a full-size bathhouse and the west gate to the fort.

TWO PANELS FROM ST. OSYTH

Philip Wise (Curator of Archaeology, Colchester Borough Council), 11th October 1999
Notes taken by Pat Farnell

Mr. Wise gave an interesting talk on two very rare Medieval panels originating from **Park Farm,** a hall house dating to around the 1370's and situated north of St. Osyth. These panels, one of which is on three joined wooden planks and the other on plaster, are fragments of the decorative scheme of what was a chapel or oratory on the first floor of Park Farm. Both depicting female figures, they are painted to a very high standard by what is believed to have been the same artist, and have been fairly closely dated to 1395 by the style of costume detail. A mystery remains as to whether the panels were created for and built into the original house, or if they were acquired and inserted at a later date. A thorough modern survey of the house needs to be done to try to establish this fact.

The wooden panel, long thought to be of St. Dorothea, the patron saint of gardens, but now believed to be the Virgin, was acquired by the Borough from Park Farm in 1919.It is rectangular and measures roughly six and a half feet by three feet. The figure is seated on a throne of the same style as King Richard II and she is draped in a blue cloak. Her hands are held slightly apart and the style of the tight cuff on her sleeve has dated the panel to 1395. At the top of the panel is an angel and a Latin script in black gothic lettering encircles the head and runs down the right hand side of the figure. It is a devotional prayer and translates as, "For when in love I had a part of the love of Jesus filled my heart"

The plaster panel, known as The Green Lady, was purchased in a Christie's house sale at St. Osyth's Priory in 1984. This second panel had been removed from Park Farm during the 1950's and included in the panelling of the priory gatehouse, although it is unclear why this should be, as no medieval documents show any connection between the two buildings. Also roughly rectangular in outline, this panel is somewhat smaller than the other one, measuring about four feet by eighteen inches. The standing figure is wearing a long green dress, which is richly decorated with gold edging and scalloping on the hem.

The tightly fitting sleeves, buttoned right down and coming well over the hand are also edged with gold on the cuffs. A gilt ornamented, padded headdress with a red veil completes the costume. She seems to be standing in a floral meadow and has a Latin inscription running round her head and down to the base although this is rather faint and incomplete and its meaning unclear.

Mr. Wise spoke about the history of art in the 14th century, saying that a major change in style occurred in the later part of the century as the gothic style spread across much of Europe. King Richard II was apparently a great patron of the arts, and possessed a diptych which is essentially a portable altar. This so-called "Wilton Diptych" portrays the presentation of the king of England to the Virgin Mary and dates to around the mid 1390's. He likened the style and high standard of art in the panels to that of the Wilton Diptych, and summed up by saying that the wooden panel of the Virgin is currently at the National Galley where minor conservation work on some loose paintwork is being done. Various scientific examinations are also being carried out in order to discover more about the construction of the panel and the pigments used in the paints. It is also hoped that x-ray and infrared testing will reveal possible hidden features such as the long suspected "hairy saint", St. John the Baptist. The Green Lady can still be seen in the Colchester Castle Museum

NEW EVIDENCE FOR A ROMAN ESTATE ON THE DENGIE PENINSULA

W.J.R. Clark (Amateur Archaeologist, Maldon Archaeology Group) 18th October 1999

Notes taken by Raymond Rowe

The Dengie Peninsular is about 250 kilometres square. It is bounded by the rivers Blackwater and Crouch and in the west by a line from Maldon to Burnham. The area has some evidence of Roman occupation, but for its size does not reflect the density of Roman villas else where in the region. There are many rectilinear field boundaries.

To establish the relationship of the field boundaries, the direction of the boundaries were taken from 25,000 : 1 map of the area. These were measured to within an accuracy of 1 degree. Places that would have been flooded, or had been disturbed by latter building or development were not considered. The resultant 5 areas were analysed, as angles west of north or north of east.

Block 1 and 2 were **St Lawrence Bay** / **Asheldam,** and **Latchingdon.** With a total of 305 measurements, the average is 10 degrees west of north, and 11 degrees north of east. Further 90 % of the boundaries were within 7 degrees of the average. For blocks 3, 4, and 5, the results gave an average of 19 degrees west of north and 19 degrees north of east showing the almost rectilinear shape to the fields.

In considering the differences between blocks 1 and 2 with those of blocks 3, 4 and 5. Blocks 1 and 2 are areas that are above 10 metres, where areas 3, 4 and 5 are below 10 metres. The assumption is that the fields were laid out at two separate periods. Initially say post-Boudiccan revolt. Then areas 3, 4, and 5 were laid out when lower lying areas were drained to increase yield, perhaps at the time of Hadrian, when it is known that the Fens were drained. The direction of the boundaries was possibly aligned with stellar references, as used at sea for navigation. It must be remembered that this was a period when the magnetic compass was unknown.

Archaeological evidence is needed to substantiate the proposal. An estate would need roads and access to river and sea for ease of transport, and there has been a search for the management headquarters. This would be a large complex, with storage barns and a headquarters building. It should be noted that Stonia is a name for a masonry building. This leads to the consideration of Asheldam, Steeple Stone and Mundon Stone Point. Asheldam has produced some Roman material, and Asheldam Brook was navigable to grain barges until modern times. Steeple Stone is also a possible site although there is no other evidence so far. Mundon Stone Point is at Lawling Creek, very close to deep water. There are pottery finds dated to first and second centuries, together with large quantities of septaria. On the seaward side there are clay cliffs some 2 to 3 metres high, but being eroded. A geophysical survey indicates ground disturbance, but more work is to be carried out.

SEDGEFORD HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH PROJECT (SHARP), AND DEMOCRATIC ARCHEAOLOGY

Dr Keith Robinson, (Associate Director SHARP) 25th October 1999

Notes taken by Lillian Morrow

This is a major research project based on the parish of **Sedgeford** on the B 1454 near Hunstanton in Norfolk, where the owners, Bernard and Susan Campbell of Sedgeford Hall, invited the Director, Neil Faulkner, to investigate their estate. The aim is an exercise in democratic archaeology which attempts to do away with an hierarchical structure. There is a 6-week training course each summer, which concentrates on helping people to acquire on-site skills in excavation, surveying, recording, geophysics etc based on method - material - meaning/ dig, record and interpret. Discussion with colleagues to float ideas is actively encouraged.

The accent is on public access, with a guided tour of the site every Friday, and communication through site boards and a yearly, jargon free, results report. The County Archaeological Magazine has covered the site, also Current Archaeology, and the Council for British Archaeology have offered to publish the findings, with the possibility of a book and CD-Rom. The University of East Anglia is accrediting a course on animal bones from the site.

Situated on the **River Heacham** with Peddars Way on the east and Icknield Way on the west this has been an important area on the north-south trade route from earliest times. There is strong Iron Age evidence from postholes and a small pit, and a scheduled Roman site in the village. In the medieval period the river was dammed to harvest reeds and the village seems to have shifted its centre. Documentary research is being undertaken and the large church, dedicated to St Mary, which has a round tower, is being recorded stone by stone and surveyed by geophysics and resistivity. The base of a substantial stone wall has been uncovered in the garden of West Hall, which may be part of the former priory.

The river has also been surveyed and random soil samples taken for analysis. An Anglo Saxon shoe was recovered from one of these pits but the main excavation area is in a field called "Bone Yard" where there are continuous burials on an E-W alignment all the way down the slope. Areas of clear separation were uncovered together with mass burials, and some burial pits in a haphazard fashion. The largest number of burials was in the lower sector with a greater number of juvenile burials. Few grave goods were present. The bones are recorded, numbered, lifted carefully, and soil samples taken from the stomach area with a view to recovery of diet.

A pony-sized headless horse was discovered, wedged between an adult and child burial. The rear end was also missing. Another burial contained a cluster of oyster shells possibly indicating the person had been an oyster catcher. There was some evidence of violence from head injuries. One female showed a marked spinal curvature and club foot but appears to have lived about 35 years. The site dates from middle Saxon but was then abandoned until the 11th or early 12th century with burials being placed on top of the earlier ones.

Finds include a Romano-British spoon, clay lamp, finger ring, iron ring, pins with dotted square heads, clip-on brooch, bronze stylus, decorated bone comb, loom weight with small bar to press the weave down, a late Saxon brooch, pottery, with some Ipswich ware, and a silver coin of the Saxon King Edwald in excellent condition, recovered from an old soil heap by a metal detector.

CARING FOR OUR HISTORICAL HERITAGE

Helen Paterson, (Project Officer for the Norfolk Monuments Management Project), 1st November 1999

Notes taken by Noreen Proudman

Helen Patterson, Project Officer for the Norfolk Monuments Management Project, and formerly of English Heritage, gave an interesting and informative talk on her work with both organisations. She illustrated her talk with slides which emphasised the difficulties encountered both in locating the sites of monuments - e.g. the bump in a large field may be a barrow - and in protecting them even when their location is known.

The speaker included landscape and farming as well as buildings and sites, and pointed out that monuments ranged from palaces to Neolithic flint mines. Although damage and failure to protect continues, Ms Patterson confirmed that organisations such as the National Farmers Union, the Country Landowners Association, County Councils and Wildlife Protection groups were now beginning to co-ordinate their work in order to provide better protection.

THE SCOLE EXCAVATIONS

Andrew Tester, (Project Officer, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service)
8th November 1999
Notes taken by Richard Shackle

Scole was a small Roman town on the border between Suffolk and Norfolk. These small towns were all native settlements. Attempts have been made to categorise them by using such characteristics as size, religious centres, town planning etc. The small towns in Suffolk are small compared with similar ones in Essex such as Heybridge and there were no towns in Suffolk as large as Colchester. If we look at a map of Iron Age Suffolk we see that there were no large urban settlements only large farms. One Roman small town which appears to have had Iron Age origins is Hacheston. If we look at a map of Roman Suffolk, we see that all the larger settlements are along the road system. The small towns grew up in response to the demands of Romano-British society. These towns were the equivalent of 19th century cow towns in America. They appeared quickly and disappeared very quickly at the end of the end of the Roman period. The Scole settlement was built on an important Roman road by a river crossing and the present bypass crosses the river to the west of the town.

There were two sets of digs, one to the north of the river by The Norfolk Archaeological Unit, and one to the south of the river by The Suffolk Archaeological Unit. The centre of the Roman town was on the north bank. The town included an industrial area by the river. Aerial photographs show a possible Roman fort and a field system which may be medieval. The excavations revealed two side roads and an Roman brewery complex, with a leat from the river and ditched boundaries. The 1973 dig revealed large quantities of Roman pottery.

The brewery complex consisted of a steeping pit, grain drying oven and a small oven for heating the wort. The grain dryer was made of a chalky clay. The making of beer was a very British activity not found very much in other parts of the Empire. Several native gods were associated with beer making. The brewing complex was abandoned in the 3rd century due to a rise in the water table.

In the steeping pit were found two reused roof rafters made of good quality oak timber. They were notched at one end and had spanned a building of approximately 5 metres wide. The timbers had been worked with an axe. Roman rafters rarely survive so this is an important find. Several wells were found, some were made of wood with carefully made joints, others were made from wicker baskets.

At least six burials were found. One was found buried in a roadside ditch on the north site. One burial consisted of an elaborate mock wooden coffin for a child. A woman was found buried in the peat: she was fully clothed with two brooches. There was a large piece of timber on top of her which may or may not have been used to hold her down in the peat.

Scole was a low status settlement with few buildings having tiled roofs. Most of the tiles found had been used to make hearths. Only a few coins were found and these were all of low value. Scole may have been the Villa Faustina of the Antonine Intinery, or that name may have applied to a villa nearby. If Scole was a poor settlement, the Hoxne hoard shows that there was a very wealthy villa not far away. The ditches were silted up and the site abandoned by AD 375. However the pollen evidence suggests no break in arable agriculture, so the Saxons must have continued to cultivate the Roman fields.

THE VIKINGS AND COINAGE
Mike Bonser, 15th November 1999
Notes taken by Vic Scott.

It is difficult to decide where the disciplines of archaeology and numismatics meet, but we begin with the first wave of Viking invaders, and the sacking of **Lindisfarne** on Holy Island in 790 AD. Before this the forces of Offa had kept the invaders at bay, but his death in 796 AD. saw the start of many Viking raids. **Holy Island,** which becomes cut off from the mainland at high tide, was ecclesiastically a great seat of learning, and after the Viking raid, Lindisfame was not rebuilt until Norman times. In 796 AD, the Vikings raided Tyne and Wear, and gaining confidence, came in force with many ships about 800 AD.

The second wave of invaders took place c. 990 AD when the original **Hexham Abbey** was destroyed. The present Abbey is Norman. A hoard of bronze coins was found there during excavations in the 1970's. **York** became the Viking capital, and Copper Gate at the junction of the Fosse and the Ouse became a large trading centre.

The Vikings were particularly interested in silver, broken jewellery ready to melt down and hoards of coins have been found in recent years, especially at **Torksey** near Lincoln. Martin Biddle, when excavating the Headmaster's Garden at Repton, came across an 8th century building with a mass of bones, knives, axes and a few coins of Alfred and Ethelred of circa. 871 AD.

The Viking Guthrum, who ruled half of England, was given the Christian name of Ethelstan. For a long while the Vikings issued no coins of their own, but eventually made poor copies of English coins, many of which have been found at **Thetford.** A few have also been found at **Coddenham** by metal detectorists. The Vikings wrote nothing down, and archaeological excavation has been the main source of information. One fact is fairly clear however, the Vikings used coins as bullion, and not for everyday use.

FARM BUILDINGS IN SUFFOLK
Philip Aitkens 22nd November 1999
Notes taken by June Wallace

Philip Aitkens started his talk by explaining that he had grown up on a farm near Bury St Edmunds and that farm buildings can tell us the history of farming through the years. Farmers rarely threw anything away and buildings were rarely discarded, merely enlarged or reduced as necessary, so many redundant buildings which have stood empty and unused for many years can still tell us a lot if studied.

Differences in the countryside and soils will affect the types of farm buildings, as he discovered in the 80's when he worked on a rural survey for English Heritage, There is a great difference in the types of buildings from West to East in Suffolk, from the poor soils of the Brecklands through the rich agricultural lands of High Suffolk, to the Sandlings in East Suffolk. In East Suffolk he found no aisled barns, the preponderance of these being through W. Essex and W Suffolk. He especially mentioned that the M11 was "the aisled barn country."

He said that John Theobald's article in the *Historical Atlas of Suffolk* showed that much of the clay lands were under grass from 1650 to 1750, dairy farming paid better than grain and many areas in High Suffolk were devoted entirely to pasture, although it was more common to have up to 30% under the plough. However towards the end of the century the ratio was more likely to be 50/50. And Arthur Young, a landowner of that period, reported that with the Napoleonic Wars and requests to increase grain supplies the ratio had increased to 80% arable and 20% pasture by the end of the century. This, of course, meant a difference in requirements for barns etc. from stabling and cow houses to grain and crop storage.

In late 14th and 15th centuries there appears to have been a lull in barn building but with the dissolution of the Monasteries and redistribution of land, asset strippers ripped down barns. Land was farmed more efficiently and barn building began again but with differences for changing use. Since the Napoleonic Wars there has been a slow decline in use of barns etc. until the present time. We are lucky so many survive, but we must guard against their destruction.

Amongst many slides shown explaining changes of use, carpentry, etc., a representative number are described below giving a picture of types, their functions, etc. The great aisled barn at Gazely (demolished in the 60's) showing the height of the roof. Shots of the arcade posts and aisles on the east, but also showing a smaller barn in situ recognisable because of the bracing, probably 5 bays then enlarged and extended in keeping with the landowners increased wealth. So from reading the timbers of the barns one can see changes in the wealth of the farm and even in the national economy.

Farmstead at **Mildenhall,** 2 large barns, 14th century aisled roof, brick nogging, 2 aisles, 1 end partitioned half way and at end cart lodge showing cart lodge at both ends, very rare.

Eastern half of county on clay soil, hard to drain and not ploughed through most of middle ages, only scattered settlements up to 19th century, but in Mid-Suffolk a lot of stabling which still survives because of the wealth through 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. **Royston Hall,** huge barn, early 16th century. House mid 16th century walled garden, and cow shed at back, - a complete site and still here. Slides of a barn divided with 2 threshing floors, 2 upper bays for corn storage and 2 bays below for stabling. Typical mid-Suffolk, shows use of stabling below with food storage for horses above.

Wingfield College, 2 tier roof with Queen Posts mid 16thC tree ring date showing tree felled 1527. There are no Queen Posts in Essex, Suffolk carpentry is quite different. Mid Suffolk farms generally smaller with corn growth for animal feeding plus family and trade.

East Suffolk has some substantial well built barns but not aisled. **Thurston Hall** 14th century barn ground storey brick flared headers (brick work painted pink with black headers), timber upper storey, Display of great wealth.

15th century Farmhouse, 14th century moat, big 16th century barn (not aisled), in front of house stable, cowshed. Dominant building on site barn, followed by stables, cow shed and out-houses. These were all part of the house, thus out-houses!

Good survival of stables in mid-Suffolk, even with changes of farming still kept the cow sheds which were re-built or used as stabling. **Cranleigh Hall** beautiful 17th century stables. Re-built in 18th century stalls through centre on both sides with hay loft addition,, 2 bays wide, with thatched roof, 17th century. No hay loft above. The time of the Napoleonic War saw lofts being added for storage. Slide of wattle and daub cart lodge, used for rearing bullocks then change of use in 19th century for raising beef cattle.

Series of slides of Kitchens - **Hitchin** in Suffolk, large Garage with great back double doors at far corner of house. Barn after Napoleonic War but before that it was a detached kitchen from 15th century - a house with a bacchouse - detached kitchen. In Suffolk many of these detached kitchens survive, nearly every large farm appears to have had one. Slide of kitchen at **Little Braxted** discovered by Cecil Hewitt in 1962 and just recently rediscovered. Pepper Tree Farm at **Hitchin,** kitchen with service room and loft above used as annexe for visitors, multi-purpose building.

Potash Farm, **Brettenham,** buildings gone downhill, early 19th century barn was actually a 14th century Manor House, extended in 16th century, then a new house was built plus an aisled barn, and old house turned into a second barn. Philip Aitken concluded this talk by saying that it shows these old barns, and buildings must be studied carefully as they have much to tell us if we know how to look.

MEDIEVAL TOY FINDS IN LONDON

Geoff Egar (Museum of London Archaeological Services) 29th November 1999

Notes taken by Denise Hardy

Thirty years ago social historians thought that medieval children did not have a proper childhood, their judgement based on the toys of their own era rather than that of many centuries ago. However this has now been corrected via archaeological and pictorial evidence. This was shown to us by the aid of illustrated slides.

A black and white sketch c1200 showed two boys clearly using strings to pull a knight on horseback across a table. Another picture was that of the Emperor Maximillian playing with toy knights on horseback - perhaps strategy for jousting? Dutch paintings showed scenes of side stalls selling toys, - wooden windmills and drums. One other depicts a child wanting a pewter headed toy. This identical item is now in the Museum, originally not thought of being a toy until this picture was discovered.

The earliest form of toy found made of sheet metal, c1200, was that of a crude headed bird complete with tail which had a whole in the middle of its body, maybe to insert a stick so as to rotate the bird. This is probably a one off, as was the 6/8 inch carved antler with a "peg doll" face on the top, c1200. These two items are thought not to have been made on a commercial scale but by a person known to the child.

We continue into the early 13th century with a hollow cast lead tin 1½ inch high knight, sword in hand on horseback. His armour was sketched onto the knight only. This was made in a six piece mould. It was in the early 14th century were we begin to find "mass marketing" of these knights, possibly sold via the pilgrim trade. These were extremely thin and fragile but now we see a style of fashion of armour with the horses as well. There has only been one contemporary ceramic toy knight found, this was at the Kingston ware kiln site; it was very crude and probably not a commercial success.

The earliest moving toy circa 1270 - 1350 is a beautiful hollow cast fledgling bird 2 inches high which stands on a frame. Tapping the tail made its body pivot backwards/forwards making its tongue, which was a different colour, go in and out. Gender came into play around the 14th century in the form of miniature ceramic jugs, the real ones being a centrepiece of furniture ware. It is thought that jugs were for girls and knights for boys!! A two part stone mould cast has been found at Hereford, so therefore if production of toys was made there it is feasible that they could have been manufactured almost anywhere.

By the end of the 15th century more kitchen equipment was being played with, Baser's akin to wooden bowls with metal tops on and vice versa - their equivalent being a Loving cup. Also lead tin cooking pots which could be moulded over an ordinary hot fire. Some pots showed they were used by pushing towards the fire. (Imagine letting a child play like that today!) Candle sticks and plates came into being by the end of the 15th century, with more lifelike miniature cookware by the late 16th century. In 1640 plates were often initialled and dated, many stamped with IDQ, a very skilled artist, who also sometimes added IHS, thought to be for propaganda purposes.

Miniature dolls, male and female, were probably made to depict fashions of the day, then given to the child to play with. In the countryside dolls were flat two-dimensional crude figurines with details of fashion shown on both sides. The earliest doll's house was German, c. 1500, high status with Gothic style furniture and `precise' pewter plates.

An extremely interesting talk was given by Geoff and left us wondering whether children came to harm without the aid of Health and Safety, either via the lead intake, burning or by the miniature cannons, earliest lead, the rest brass which were functional and highly dangerous. Let us hope it was not the children that played with them!

HYLANDS HOUSE - AN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

Nick Wickenden (Museums Manager, Chelmsford Borough Council) 17th January 2000
Notes taken by Lillian Morrow

There have been twelve owners beginning with Sir John Comyns, M.P. for Maiden (1667-1740) who bought the land in Hylands (Highlands) c. 1726 and had a two-storeyed red brick Queen Anne house built on a spur of land. A trench surrounding the house gave light and ventilation to a basement where racking for beers and wines still exist. A map of 1770 shows an estate of 400 acres. There were paddocks to the rear, a gate on the west led to the stables and servants quarters are shown on the west screened by trees. The grounds were in the geometric manner of the period. The house had a circular turn-around; the approach road to the front of the house is still there. About 175 yards away from the south front ran the Chelmsford-London road.

The property remained for three generations in the Comyns family who sold it in 1797 to a Danish gentleman, Cornelius Kortright (1764-1818). The red brick Queen Anne style was no longer fashionable and Humphry Repton, (1752-1818), landscape architect, was called in. The red brick was covered over with white stucco and "drawn-in" blocks to represent stone. The trench was filled in, the drive made sinuous and clumps of trees planted. An artificial lake was created with planted islets and the park enlarged to 213 acres. A low wing was built on the east side with a drum window and a tetrastyle Corinthian portico was carried through both storeys on the south front. The neo-Greek architecture and naturalistic landscape which Repton designed has survived but the symmetry of the house, completed in 1818, was done by Pierre Labouchere FHS (1772-1839), a Dutch Huguenot, who purchased the house with 584 acres. Labouchere added a matching west wing for the servants, and an aviary and conservatory were added to the east wing. A patron of the arts, he installed an engraving in the east wing with the drum window and commissioned a full sized Venus for the entrance hall, now in Thorvaldsens Museum Copenhagen. Two pairs of rundels, depicting day and night, by the Danish neoclassical sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770-1844) were installed. Also a plaster frieze in the staircase hall depicting Alexander the Great entering Babylon. By 1839 the estate had grown to 750 acres and passed into the hands of John Attwood (1781-1865) an iron monger from Birmingham. He screened the enlarged park from the high road to London with a massive red brick wall and closed the public road through the estate for which he had to pay three parishes compensation. He engaged J B Papworth (1775-1847) the prominent architect, to advise on enlarging the house. Papworth prepared designs for the grand staircase and ornamental furniture

Attwood eventually rebuilt the whole of Kortright's east wing and the back of Labouchere's west wing from the ground up to create a suite of grand reception rooms each richly decorated. Above these he built a suite of bedrooms, bathrooms, removed the dormered roof and superimposed a high-parapeted third storey containing a nursery. The portico was replaced with a wider, deeper Ionic capital entrance to accommodate carriages. Servants quarters, stable block and ancillary rooms were built up but demolished in 1971. The salon, dining-room and library were turned into a banqueting room and a staircase room added. The plaster ceiling in the banqueting room remained intact until a fire in the west wing in 1964.

In 1854, Attwood's possessions were seized by his creditors but no buyer was found and the house and estate remained vacant until 1858 when the house and a reduced park was purchased by Arthur Pryor JP (1818-1904). He renovated the banqueting room. Three succeeding owners made little change and Sir Daniel Gooch (1869-1926) carried out various improvements including a new arched entrance and a secondary oak staircase in the west wing.

The last owner, Mrs Hanbury (1922-1962), continued to live in the house after her husband's death and in 1966 Chelmsford Borough Council bought the estate and opened the park to the public. The Council tried to find someone willing to restore the house but eventually dry and wet rot set in and it was proposed to demolish the house in 1975 but with a Grade II listing this was forbidden. Lead from the roof was stolen together with two marble fireplaces. Eventually, in 1985 a grant from the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission, enabled the Council to start restoration work with a view to bringing the house back into use. Mr Esmond Abraham, Chief Architect, proposed taking off the upper storey and reroofing the building as in Labouchere's time. The portico was lowered and restored to the old design. External restoration work was completed two years later.

Restoration of the interior has been phased and samples of paint taken from every room and analysed so colours can now be matched to historical dates. Rotten wood has been replaced, pelmets and shutters repaired, and pilasters and skirtings restored. Plaster work has been pinned to the beams and reguilding carried out. A perimeter trench was dug around the house to help drainage and this carries the service piping. Two fireplaces have been recarved in Carrara marble and replaced together with an original mirror. Oil fired central heating has been installed using the old boiler room.

By 1998 the drawing room, library and saloon were restored, opened to the public in 1999, and can be booked for functions. It is licensed for weddings and these are becoming very popular.

The building looks marvellous and now has a Grade II* listing. The grounds were a horticultural showpiece in Labouchere's day and an application has been made to the Lottery Board for funding to restore the gardens.

WATERMILLS AND WINDMILLS IN ESSEX AND EAST ANGLIA

Roy Berry, (Vice Chair, Essex Mills Group), 24th January 2000

Notes taken by Chris Hunt

Roy Berry presented a talk on water mills and windmills giving a particular emphasis on those (or remains of those!) that can be found locally. The history of milling is as old as man. Hand milling using quern stones was used throughout prehistory. There is written evidence of a water mill used by the Greeks in BC85 and they were certainly in use in Roman Britain, and they were numerous in the Saxon period.

Early waterwheels seemed to have been developed in several places throughout Europe at the same time. Watermills harnessed the power of running water to turn grind-stones to mill the grain, the main types described were: -

1. Undershot: This was a Roman invention, common also in Saxon period. The lower part of the waterwheel came into contact with the water. The flow of water was often controlled by a sluice gate in a leet. The site of such a mill has been located at **Mount Bures -** in the shadow of the castle motte.

2. Overshot: Introduced in the Middle Ages, water was directed onto the top of the waterwheel causing it to rotate clockwise. This was a more efficient method but did still have problems if the water in mill stream was deep or turbulent.

3. Breastshot: Similar to the overshot mill but water was directed onto the waterwheel at axle level causing it to rotate anti-clockwise.

4. Tidemill: A form of undershot mill built on tidal water which used water that had been impounded at high tide by means of sluice gates. There is a fine example of a tidemill at **Thorrington.**

5. Boatmill: A very rare type of mill, in effect a floating watermill, and used mainly on the river Thames.

The role of the miller throughout the Middle ages was as a feudal servant, taking flour as payment for grinding the wheat, and often taking more then he should. The earliest record of a windmill in England was in 1137 in **Leicestershire,** another early one was at **Bury St Edmunds** in 1190.

Post-mills were the first type of windmill. They consist of a weather-boarded body, (to which the sails were attached), which could be revolved on a strong central post. They could be orientated to catch the wind. Towards the end of the medieval period smock mills and later, tower mills were developed. In both of these the body of the mill was a rigid structure, (usually brick), on top of which was a conical cap, holding the sails. This cap revolved on a track which kept the sails into the wind. It was during this time that the miller became an artisan - buying in wheat - and became a merchant miller. During the 19th C mills became 'flour factories', the largest watermill in Essex during this period being at **Beeleigh** (Maldon), this had 17 pairs of stones. The mill burnt down in the 1860's.

During the mid 19th C there was an increase in the supply of corn (linked to the repeal of the Corn Laws) and mills were developed on docksides. These mills became steam driven and used rollers to grind the grain which produced white flour. This really signalled the end of windmills as grain mills, although a few were used for other uses, e.g. drainage. There are examples of all types of mill in Essex and in fact Essex is the only county to have its own millwright. Many mills have been lost, not just by being left derelict, but by the great scourge of any timber industrial building - fire. During the 1890's there were 285 windmills in Essex, between the wars there were 14, the last working mill closed in 1950.

THE EFFECT OF THE CHURCH ON ANGLO-SAXON BURIAL PRACTICE

Dr Helen Geake, (Norfolk Museum Service) 31st January 2000

Notes taken by Noreen Proudman

Dr Geake introduced her talk by stressing the difficulty in isolating the effect of church practice which began with the arrival of Augustine in 597 AD, i.e. the end of the 6th century. Before that time, during the 6th century, graves at **Oxborough** already show cut graves and the orderly laying out of graves. Grave goods, used to date the burials, that the garments in which the person was buried and the goods accompanying the burial, had a coherence signalling e.g. an adult, a child, male, or female. Weapons indicated men; brooches and girdle hangers adult females. Other characteristics indicate cultural

groupings i.e. Mercian, Anglian, Saxon. Distinct types of jewellery indicate that cemeteries were not of mixed cultures. Cultural groups developed with England.

By 600 AD Germanic style of art appeared here. Jewellery was more delicately made. Anglian culture did not spread but Saxon culture is found in South and central regions. From 600 AD there were named kingdoms, and customs and fashions in clothes appear to have spread nationally. A theory that this spread could have been manipulated to indicate a seemingly universal culture disregarding geographical and political systems is discussed in Meaney and Hawkes 1970. At the time kingdoms emerge, individual customs are lost.

Why should this have happened and what clues are provided?

The inspiration may have stemmed from new objects coming in to the country, possibly from France, the nearest point to Kent, where these were first found. Cemeteries are first found in Kent and not elsewhere. Christianity was not demonstrated by being buried in a churchyard. The development of dynastic kingship brought a need to legitimise in which it was thought best to use old arguments and look back to a supreme ruler - Rome.

In the 6th and 7th centuries 20-30% of graves had no grave goods. By the 7th century whole cemeteries without grave goods were assumed to have been located around churches, but graves not located around churches were not necessarily pagan. The two types of burial can exist within a few miles of each other. There are only a small number of early Saxon graves from which to extrapolate, but it appears that in England grave goods and churches do not mix, whereas on the continent they do.

Church burials became common in the 9th and 10th centuries and, as indicated, 7th century burials can be traced, which leaves the question of where 8th and 9th century burials were located. Church burial was at first restricted, which means that most burials were in field cemeteries, but by 720AD field cemeteries were closed. What caused the closure and what was the alternative? Bishop Cuthbert (740758 AD) was responsible for burials in towns and the regulations elsewhere. Where did these burials take place? By the 8th century monasteries were being founded with the subsequent expansion of cultural life. In the 9th and 10th centuries, burial in a churchyard carried a tax and was therefore likely to be encouraged by the church.

BARKING ABBEY: ITS HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Mark Watson, (Heritage Officer, Valence House Museum and Art Gallery)
7th February 2000
Notes taken by Pat Farnell

Mark Watson's slides of Barking Abbey in the present day, show it to be a rather unprepossessing place with few upstanding remains, although the foundations of all its rooms have been identified and marked out in ragstone and concrete. In the last fifteen years, however, the borough has been carrying out excavations, and there are now plans to raise the profile of this important heritage site with the installation of interpretation boards. There will also be the setting up of a permanent museum near the abbey to display all the material discovered on the site. It was situated in an advantageous position in the south west of Essex at the junction of three geographical zones which contributed towards its wealth, woodlands and gravel farmlands to the north and marshes along the river to the south and east. Although documentary evidence is rather sparse, Mr. Watson did go on to describe the history of the abbey in some detail, starting with Bede's account of its foundation in 666 AD by Erkenwald, when it was known as a "double house", with men occupying one side and women the other.

The abbey seems to have suffered badly in the 870's AD, when an incident known as the "Viking Destruction" apparently led to the massacre of the nuns, and the abbey lay desolate for about 100 years. During the reign of Alfred the Great, however, it was refounded and it grew in importance throughout the Norman and Medieval periods until by the Dissolution it was the third wealthiest abbey in the land, possessing lands as far north in the county as Tollesbury. It was clearly a place of considerable importance even by the Conquest, as William I met there with the Saxon noblemen in the new year of 1066/7.

From its foundation until the reign of King John, Barking Abbey had a succession of abbesses, the first being Ethelberga, Erkenwald's sister. On its refoundation in later Saxon times, Wilfhilda was made its abbess by Alfred the Great after she declined to marry him. Other notable abbesses include the illegitimate daughters of both Henry I and Henry II, the wife of King Stephen and Mary Beckett, sister of Thomas.

Barking Abbey served many functions in Medieval times it was the focus of the town of Barking which grew up around it and had control over its market place and shops, and sole rights to the milling of flour for the area. A leper hospital was founded by the abbey at nearby Ilford in 1170's. It was even used as a prison and a place of education; Edward and Jasper Tudor (grandfather of Henry VIII) were educated there. The abbey did suffer considerable economic hardships during Medieval times however, much due to huge flooding of the marshes. By the Dissolution in 1539 only 31, largely ineffectual, nuns remained and the abbey church was destroyed and its foundations gouged out, leaving the hollow which is there today.

Mr. Watson concluded by describing an important archaeological discovery in the vicinity of the abbey. Following the demolition of a match factory in 1985, an early Saxon dwelling, dating to the late 600s/early 700s was discovered. Much material was found inside, including silver coins, bone combs, gold threads, large numbers of spindle whorls and considerable quantities of glass fragments of all colours. Large amounts of wood of the same date, including timber planks, have also been uncovered on the site. But nearby, and perhaps the most exciting discovery of all, was a glass-making kiln, the first known in northern Europe.

This talk stimulated much interest and prompted many questions, leading to the suggestion that this site, which hardly anyone had visited, would be an ideal venue for next year's "Day Trip"!

RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES IN THE SOUTHEND AREA

Ken Crowe, (Keeper of Human History, Southend Central Museum), 14th February 2000

Notes taken by Raymond Rowe

Recent archaeological discoveries in and around Southend have lead to a re-interpretation of past ideas. The Southend area has three soil types; London clay, gravels, and brick earth. The brick earth is a wind-blown deposit from 10,000 years ago.

In 1981/82 at Baldwins Farm near **Barling,** finds of Roman material were made, during excavation. Two years latter, while John Wymer was visiting the site, a struck flint blade was spotted. At the same time the drag line operator mentioned that he had seen a piece of wood sticking out of the gravel surface. The wood in fact was under a gravel terrace on top of a London clay surface. Excavation showed evidence of a stream, finds indicated a date of 100,000 to 200,000 years. Bore hole samples now indicate a date of 350,000 to 400,000 years, this puts it into the 3rd Hoxne glaciation. The area is now being covered by a watching brief.

In the **Hullbridge Basin, Battlesbridge** area, many Mesolithic finds have been made over the years. A local farmer had collected a number of flints at **Daws Hall.** Also flints have been collected from a garden at **Badgers Hall, South Benfleet.** These flints have now been evaluated and have caused a revision of thinking on the area. The ridge of land of claygate/Bagshot beds, runs through the **Thundersley** area. It is now thought that this may have been used as a seasonal camp in the Mesolithic age, while hunting took place in the Hullbridge basin area.

Early Bronze Age finds of pottery and flanged axe heads at **North Shoebury,** have been followed by finds from an area that had shown up as a crop mark in the 1920's, at **Little Wakering.** More recently at **Great Wakering,** features were found in the brick earth; late Bronze Age ditches, a pit kiln with pottery and pedestals, with possibly fire bars. A pit also produced a quern stone, and a comb used in weaving. There were also post holes that could belong to a four-post structure. Also of note, was a square bowl, use not known, with perforated sides and grooves on the outside as if it fitted into something.

Metal detectorists have found South East type bronze axe heads, from a depth of 0.5 M dated to about 650 BC. At **Barling** in 1991 a single edged knife and a mould for an axe head, with decoration on its outside, were found. At **Southchurch** crop marks seen from aerial photography showed a double ditched enclosure, possibly defended. This is now a protected area within a golf course. On Canvey **Island,** Roman pottery has been found on the fore shore. A lead token was found attributed to Kenwolf. These tokens were used to show that taxes had been paid at a port on trade goods. It is possible that there was a port near or just off Canvey.

Most recently, an area at **Shoeburyness,** known as the Danish Camp, has been released by the MOD. Investigation has shown a rectangular area behind the sea wall, with raised banks, standing over lm high. There are also signs of round houses, and a mound over an earlier Bronze Age site. The pottery is Iron Age, clearly a site that is going to modify further the view of the archaeology of Southend.

THE SMALLER HISTORIC TOWNS OF ESSEX

Maria Medlycott, (Essex County Council Archaeological Research Officer)
21st February 2000
Notes taken by Freda Nicholls

Criteria for urban status were that a town should have:
1. A defence system 2. An internal street pattern. 3. A market. 4. A mint. 5. A charter. 6. A good strategic position. 7. A population of some considerable size.

Billericay.
In the Billericay area there is evidence of two ancient sites, one in the late Iron Age and another in the Roman period. A farmstead was established in the late Iron Age and a ditched Iron Age enclosure probably developed into a small Roman town.
Medieval History: The name Billericay is not recorded until the end of the 13th century. The medieval town occupies the area between two main streets - High street and Back street. Billericay had a wooden market cross and a market house.

Chelmsford.
There is archaeological evidence of occupation from the Neolithic onwards but nothing to suggest that this was on a large scale. The town probably developed from a fort as a result of the Boudiccan rebellion and was maintained on a diminishing scale until c. 80 when it became an official but unremarkable small town on the S. bank of the river Can. Occupation was along the main London - Colchester road. The buildings were of timber and there was an official government *mansio* with a courtyard plan in the south-east corner of the town. In the 2nd century it was rebuilt in stone. A 4th century Romano-Celtic temple was constructed E. of the settlement area. Earthwork defences were built c. 170 but had been levelled by c. 220. There is no evidence of Anglo- Saxon occupation on the site of the Roman town.
Medieval History: Domesday Book records that the manor, on whose land Chelmsford was later built was farmed in demesne by the Bishop of London. The accepted date for the construction of the town is 1199-1200. The market was granted in 1199 and there is no evidence of occupation in the town before that date. The church of St. Mary which most probably dates from the foundation of the town was completely rebuilt in the late 15th century. By the late 16th century two streets had been created at N. of the market place. Excavation has revealed building plots of 12.5m frontage which were demarcated by ditches dug when the town was laid out.
A Dominican Priory was founded between Chelmsford and Moulsham, probably in the mid-13th century. Most of the main buildings were demolished at the time of its dissolution in the 16th century. The remainder disappeared in the 19th century.
Post-Medieval History: The river Chelmer became navigable at the end of the 18th century. During the Napoleonic wars Chelmsford was a military centre protecting London. Earthwork defences were raised c. 1802 but are now obliterated.

Braintree
There is some evidence of late pre-Roman Iron Age occupation. A short stretch of earthwork from this period survives in the grounds of Mount House. A small Roman town was settled between the rivers Pant and Brain

Medieval History: Mentioned in Domesday as a minor holding of the manor of Gt. Rayne, owned by the Bishop of London. Founded as a town in 1199 at the same time as Chelmsford, at the intersection of two Roman roads. The settlement spread out from a nucleus around the market place. There is some evidence that the area was replanned and laid out in a different alignment in the late 14th century. A new market was established in the 17th century and the town benefited from the wool and silk trade, the latter still existing today.

Brentwood.
The town lies on the Roman road from London-Colchester but there is very little evidence of Roman occupation. An Iron Age hill fort lies about a mile to the N. of the town. Brentwood is first mentioned in the 12th century in connection with St. Osyth priory when the monks were given permission to clear woodland at Brentwood. In the 13th century the monks were given permission to build a chapel. The ruins can be found in the high Street. A market charter was granted in 1227.

Castle Hedingham.
A small Roman settlement was located on the west bank of the Colne opposite the site of the medieval town.
Medieval History: A typical castle town which lies below the castle owned by the de Vere family. There is no town charter but a market was in existence in 1216. The market place was triangular but was infilled at a later date. The town was not enclosed in an outer bailey. The castle has a central ringwork within which the Keep survives, with two outer baileys. Parallel to the High Street there is a double ditch, one known as the Hanging Ditch. In the late 13th century the growth of Halstead led to the decline of Castle Hedingham as a town.

Halstead.
A Roman settlement existed a few miles to the N. of present day Halstead.
Medieval History: A market was granted in the mid-13th century. Its importance increased with the growth of the cloth trade. A college of just two canons was established in 1412.

Pleshey.
Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman finds have been recovered from below the castle earthworks. A Roman villa may exist about a kilometre W. of the castle.
Medieval History: The name Pleshey first occurs in the mid-12th century in connection with a castle belonging to Geoffrey de Mandeville. The first phase of the building comprised a motte with a single bailey, later the castle was refortified with the construction of the present upper bailey. The town was enclosed by penannular earthworks through which there are three existing entrances. In the late 14th century a college of canons was founded. By about 1500 Pleshey had declined to village status resulting in the preservation of some of the best preserved earthworks.

Thaxted.
Thaxted was granted a market at the beginning of the 13th century and but for the fact that it became the centre of the cutlery industry might never have developed any importance. There is no known reason for the choice of Thaxted by cutlers but the rapid growth of the town seems to be attributable solely to them. The two major buildings in the centre of town are a magnificent 15th century church and a very well preserved guildhall. There are also excellent examples of timber frame houses once owned by wealthy merchants.

Harwich
Harwich was founded by the Earls of Norfolk at the mouth of the Stour/Orwell estuary for economic reasons. It was granted a charter in the mid-13th century although a chapel is known to have been in existence at an earlier date. Harwich provided a deep-water harbour open at all tides and so grew in importance. It was granted a charter in the mid-14th century. Harwich also had a ship building industry by the 15th century and exported cloth. During the Napoleonic wars defence fortifications were built, the Redoubt being the last remaining evidence.

Horndon
A few Roman sherds have been found near the church and aerial photography has shown that there was extensive prehistoric and Roman occupation. Horndon may have lain on a prehistoric routeway to the lowest crossing point of the Thames.

Medieval History: Horndon was the location of a late 10th century mint and was also an important collection point for wool from the sheep on the surrounding marshlands. After the late 10th century Horndon declined and was little more than a village although it probably retained its market for its important wool trade.

Maldon

The Iron Age and Roman sites of present day Maldon were situated partly on what is now marshland to the N of the Blackwater and partly on the gravel ridge in what is now Heybridge. In both the late Iron Age and Roman periods it was an important port.

Medieval History: Saxon huts were found in the Roman settlement area of Heybridge. Maldon is first mentioned in the 10th century when Edward the Elder stationed his army there during the campaign against the Danes and built a *burh*. Maldon continued to be an important port shipping goods from Chelmsford to London. A Carmelite priory was founded at the end of the 13th century. The Hythe, the port area, formed a small distinct settlement.

Saffron Walden

Excavations in the town have produced flints of Neolithic and Bronze Age dates, while Roman finds have been made along the banks of the river Slade.

Medieval History: The early settlement of Saffron Walden lay to the SW of the present town centre. It is represented by the Saxon cemetery excavated at the end of the 19th century. The absence of grave goods suggests that this was a Christian burial site. Saxon pottery was also found. After the Conquest Saffron Walden was allocated to the de Mandevilles and it became the centre of their Essex and Suffolk estates. They built a castle on land between the King's Ditch and the river. The castle had double enclosure ditches. The bailey was oval in shape. Only the flint and mortar Keep survives. The town bailey like Pleshey was designed to contain a small urban community. A market was granted in 1141 after Geoffrey de Mandeville switched his allegiance from Empress Matilda to King Stephen. At the same time a Benedictine monastery was founded which later gained abbey status. The Abbey kept huge flocks of sheep which formed the basis of a cloth industry although it was the production of dyestuffs from the saffron crocus which was the main source of the town's wealth. After the 15th century Saffron Walden slowly declined. Other dyes replaced saffron, and other wool centres developed.

Waltham Abbey

Mesolithic flints and Neolithic pottery have been found in the area of the later Abbey building. Roman pottery has been found near the market place. Near the present graveyard a Saxon Christian cemetery has been excavated.

Medieval History: King Harold (Battle of Hastings) created a college of secular canons in c 1060 and its church is said to be his burial place. The nave of this church was rebuilt in Norman times, still surviving as the parish church. Geoffrey de Mandeville sacked the town in the 12th century. A house of Augustinian canons was established by Henry II and a monastic precinct was laid out. Saxo-Norman pottery has been found in the Abbey precinct. A market was confirmed to the Abbot in the reign of Richard I.

Heybridge:

The site of a temple, Heybridge may never have been a town but rather a temple focus.

Harlow:

Harlow was the site of an Iron Age temple and later a Roman temple. It would appear to have existed solely as a religious site.

Gt. Chesterford

Today Gt. Chesterford is only a village but it was once a fine, walled Roman town, second only to Colchester. The houses were thatched although the layout is unclear. A large Anglo-Saxon cemetery has been excavated and a temple which was out of town. There is also evidence of Bronze Age and Iron Age settlements.

READING DOCUMENTS OF THE LATE MEDIEVAL AND TUDOR PERIOD

Ken Hall (County Archivist, Chelmsford Records Office) 26th Feb 2000

Notes taken by John Wallace

The speaker said we would all learn to read Secretary Hand by the end of the evening, and photocopies illustrating Secretary Hand were handed out. He explained how many of the letters differ from today's style and that earlier scripts differed more than later ones. The example was shown on an overhead projector. The speaker pointed out some examples of letters such as "h", "s", "f", and drew attention to some capitals such as "ff and said that these should be learnt. The letters “i" and "j" were interchangeable. When there is a word containing "n's", "m's" & “u's" the letters appear to run together [Eg immunise] counting the uprights or minims is a useful guide. A photocopy of a will dated 1620 was handed out and it was pointed out that it would help greatly to know the overall content of the document e.g. Wills, Inventories, Customels, Account Rolls etc. as they generally follow a “formula" and these can be recognised. Each person in the audience was asked to transcribe a line in turn. The speaker then went on to show the use of abbreviations and said that they needed to be recognised. He showed a number of examples. A photocopy of an inventory was handed out and the audience once again read a few lines each in turn. The advice given was that the more you read the more you understand - practise. You need to recognise five or six basic letters and combine this with knowledge of the document. Ken's enthusiasm and skill helped everyone to read the documents as promised, even those who had not attempted this before. An excellent and entertaining evening's instruction.

SUMMER VISITS PROGRAMME, 2000

Report by Anna Moore

Monday 10th April: the Group re-visited Hylands House, Chelmsford. A few years before we had been to see the house before the start of the restoration programme, paid for by Chelmsford Borough Council. We were very interested on our return to see how much progress had been made, particularly to the very ornate drawing room and banqueting hall.

Monday 22nd May: Mark Davies led a large group on his annual walk, which this year left the War Memorial and, heading north, crossed the river, ending up in Highwoods Country Park. After an initial downpour the sun came out, and we had a lovely walk in Colchester's countryside before returning to the town via the newly restored Middle Mill.

Saturday 10th June: Our full day's outing was to Suffolk. We spent the morning at Wingfield Old College, where we were given a guided tour of the medieval building (with later modifications) and the church by the owner, Ian Chance. Lunch was at Walberswick and on the way there we stopped at Wenhaston Parish Church to see the famous painting of the Day of Judgement, known as the Wenhaston Doom. In the afternoon we visited the ruins of Leiston Abbey and the Garret Long Shop Museum, also at Leiston, before returning via Thorpeness and Aldeburgh.

Monday 17th July: Our summer party this year was held in Angela and David Grayston's barn at Crown Lane, Tendring. David organised a "What is it and what was it used for?" quiz based on his extensive collection of agricultural implements. We then watched two videos, supplied by Don Scott, of the recent visit to Wessex and the trip two years ago to Western France.

Long Weekend in Wessex: Over the weekend of 24-27 March 35 members and guests travelled west to explore the archaeological sites of Wiltshire, Dorset and Somerset, concentrating mainly on the prehistoric. Passing Uffington White Horse en route we went first to Avebury Stone Circle, West Kennet Long Barrow and Sillbury Hill. Over the following two days, we visited another chalk White Horse, at Westbury, the Cerne Abbas Giant, the museums at Devizes and Dorchester, the cathedrals at Salisbury and Wells, plus two more medieval churches, Sherborne Abbey and Iwerne Minster. We also saw a Roman townhouse in Dorchester, two hill forts - Maiden Castle and Old Sarum - and finally, Stonehenge. We could have fitted in another hill fort or two, but the weather was unfortunately against us.