

On the 10th October 2016, this week's CAG lecture at the Roman circus visitor centre (the second) was preceded by some business. CAG chairman Philip Cunningham announced that Mark Davies was stepping down from the CAG committee after 46 years. Philip presented a short illustrated tribute to Mr Davies at the CAG and presented him with a leaving present. Mr Davies was, formerly, deputy curator at Colchester Castle Museum. He gave his first lecture to the CAG in 1971 and led his first guided tour in 1975. In 1976, he published his first article in the *CAG Bulletin*. He led a CAG excavation at Olivers Orchard in Colchester in 1983 which produced a coin hoard. Mr Davies has served as chairman of the CAG on several occasions and, also, held other offices and performed other functions for the CAG, including the writing of members' obituaries. To general laughter, Philip concluded that this was not Mr Davies' obituary. There was a round of applause and Mr Davies then gave a short speech of thanks.

The Martello Towers of Essex

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Mr Kennell is a native of Clacton-on-Sea in Essex and he pursued a career in the construction industry. The lecture was based on his own extensive research, including documentary, cartographic and photographic as well as interesting personal evidence. Mr Kennell set out the structure of the lecture – in five sections – and then progressed through these at a great rate, covering a lot of material and even including a joke. The final section of the lecture was in the form of a photographic walk along the Essex coast via the surviving Martello Towers and the sites of some of the lost towers. The lecture was very interesting, even more so if you know the Essex coast and the places mentioned. Mr Kennell provided the audience with a completely different angle on the Essex seaside towns of Clacton-on-Sea, Frinton-on-Sea and Walton-on-the-Naze! Martello Towers were small coastal artillery forts and they were built all over the world. They were also constructed on the coasts of southern and eastern England to defend against invasion during the Napoleonic Wars of 1803-1815. The Essex Martellos were all built in the Tendring Peninsula, from St Osyth to Walton-on-the-Naze, in 1809-1812. It was recommended that 30 be built in Essex: however, only eleven were actually built and, of these, only six survive. Before the Martello Towers, the coastal defences in the Tendring Peninsula consisted of signal stations and batteries, such as the two batteries at Battery Point at Frinton-on-Sea which were associated with a defensive chevaux-de-frise at Chevaux-de-frise Point.

The eleven Martello Towers in Essex were identified as 'A' through to 'K'. Tower 'B' (Beacon Hill at St Osyth), Tower 'G' (Holland Haven) and Tower 'J' (Walton cliffs) have been demolished, while Tower 'H' (Holland Marsh) and Tower 'I' (Battery Point at Frinton-on-Sea) were lost to the sea. The surviving six Martellos are Towers 'A', 'C', 'D', 'E' and 'F'. Tower 'A' is at Stone Point, St Osyth. Tower 'C' is at Jaywick. Tower 'D' is at Eastness (Great Clacton). Tower 'E' is at Clacton Wash and Tower 'F' is at Marine Parade West ('Clacton cliffs') in Clacton-on-Sea. Tower 'K' is at Walton-on-the-Naze (overlooking the backwaters). Martellos were designed to house an officer and a couple of dozen men. However, the Essex Martellos were not garrisoned, and troops were sent to them as required from the large military encampment at Little Holland. Martello Towers were built of brick: they were 10 metres high and their walls were up to 4 metres thick. They were designed as circular gun-platforms, each equipped with three guns which were mounted on the flat roof and which could traverse the full 360°. Being circular (or oval on the east coast), and having very thick walls, they

were resistant to incoming cannon fire. They also stood within their own defensive enclosures. The Redoubt at Harwich was built as the supply depot for the Essex Martello Towers.

The Martello Towers in Britain never saw action. They were eventually decommissioned, sold off, and re-used – as signalling or coastguard stations, for example - into the 20th century. Some (Towers 'A' and 'F', for example) were even re-commissioned and used as lookout points or gun emplacements in WW1 and WW2. Surviving Martellos are now historic monuments.

Essex is famous for its seaside towns, but the Essex coast is not just about the seaside - it also has a long history of centuries of defence. With the Martello Towers, there is some overlap between the two. In the 19th century, day-trippers from London used to travel by steamship to the end of Clacton pier and then walk along to view Tower 'F', and there are sunny seaside holiday postcards which include Martellos! The surviving Martello at Walton-on-the-Naze has, until recently, formed part of a holiday caravan park while the Martello at Clacton-on-Sea once formed part of the famous Butlin's holiday camp. The Martello at Jaywick is now a community arts building and, appropriately, the Martello at St Osyth now houses a museum, as does the Harwich Redoubt.

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