



Colchester Archaeological Group NEWSLETTER

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CAG Members at the London Mithraeum with our guide, archaeologist Dr Andrew Lane

Chairman's Report

A Happy new year all. I write (wrote? am writing?) this on December the 4th (sorry Alan, late again) a few days after the diggers dinner held on the 13th, which I sadly missed this year as our household was struck with Covid a just few days before.

No doubt, a good time was had by all. However, I did attend the CAG Christmas party on the 4th which was well organised by Sue Keen, our secretary and featured a rather interesting, nay off the wall, quiz by Christine Piper. Though it has personally been a trying year that has kept me out of the ground and off the fields for most of it, we did manage to hold our usual summer Saturday at Fordham Hall for the Young Archaeologists Club

There were a few new items to test and amuse them, as usual, they rose to the challenge.

There was also a rare, ideal weather window in October that allowed us to have them down at Fordham for some real, hands on digging. Seventeen of them were enthusiastically towelling away for a Saturday morning.

On the dreaded pylon plans by National Grid front, there is a glimpse of good news, National Grid are planning to put an undersea cable system from Suffolk to Kent and it is being considered whether they can run the south Suffolk and Essex route with it, instead of going overland. This means there is the possibility that we might escape the archaeological carnage that would otherwise occur in our area. Fingers, toes and everything else crossed!

I'm very much looking forward to getting back in and on the ground in the New Year, hope to see you there.

Mike Hamilton-Macy. (Chairman)

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Philip's Retirement

This summer saw an important event in the life of our President, Philip Crummy, his retirement.

Philip has been Director of Colchester Archaeologist Trust since 1971 and as such, has overseen important discoveries that have put Colchester on the archaeological map, both nationally and internationally. These have included the Doctor's Grave in Stanway, the Roman Circus and the Fenwick Treasure, among many others. He was nominated for Current Archaeology's 'Archaeologist of the Year' in 2016.

He has been our President for the last five years; something as members we can be extremely proud of, and long may his presidency continue.



Philip cutting his cake at the Trusts Retirement Party



After Philip's summer talk

He has a wealth of knowledge and experience, and it was in early September of this year that members partook of this in the form of a fascinating series of talks. He spoke about occasions and topics that had sparked a special interest – followed by tea and cake. It would be wonderful if we could repeat that next summer with other projects or excavations that he has found memorable.

We wish Philip our very best wishes on his retirement, and feel sure he will fill his time with even more interesting projects.

The moving of the CAG Library

For the last few months now, myself, Anna Moore and particularly Carole Colbron have been in the process of moving the CAG Library from its position high in the 'rafters' of Roman Circus House to the back of the stage. This we are doing in memory of Bernard Colbron; a past member who was the last person to organise and care for the library in its present format.

Some of you might not be aware that CAG even has a library as it has been tucked away up at the top of the building for many years. There are, however, over 1200 volumes on the shelves, from 'Ancient Archaeological Implements' to 'Young Archaeologist', and they are all available for members to borrow.

Initially, some time had been spent liaising with Philip Crummy on where it might be sited, bearing in mind the amount of space it would take up. But eventually, the cupboards could be ordered (they have since arrived), and once they are safely installed, the books 'stock-taken', cleaned and brought downstairs, members will be able to, once again, use this wonderful facility.

As we have been sorting through each book, it has amazed me what interesting and varied titles we possess – amongst other journals and leaflets, we will also display a copy of each CAG bulletin/ newsletter from 1958 to the present day.

If you have borrowed books in the past and are yet to return them, we would be very grateful if they could be returned (either in the box up in the present library, or get them to one of us however you can).

Once the new library is in place, we are still in need of a person who could 'keep an eye on it', so if you think you might help, please let me know.

Sue Keen

Events

CAG London trip report - 17th November 2023.

One thousand nine hundred and sixty three years later, a small hoard (26) of us followed Boudica's path to the new town of Londinium, though no burning or pillaging took place. First we overran the Mithraeum at the Bloomberg building, having booked all the available tickets for our time slot. On the ground floor, Britain's earliest handwritten date (the 6th day before the ides of January AD57) and the City's earliest financial document is displayed on a wooden writing tablet, along with other stunning finds including many organic remains



The wall of displayed finds

preserved in the waterlogged conditions of the Walbrook valley, the course of which lies under the building. Modern electronic tablets with digital interactive help visitors (especially the short and short-sighted) to explore the wall of finds, a sample of the 1000s of artefacts recovered in the excavations, including over 400 wooden writing tablets and over 200 leather shoes.

Having descended a staircase showing the different levels of London's history to the end of Roman rule cAD 410, we enjoyed an underground exhibition explaining the cult of Mithras, with Joanna Lumley's husky tones reassuring the claustrophobic. Finds include a relief depicting the cult's central icon, Mithras killing a bull, with the name of the temple's possible founder, army veteran Ulpius Silvanus. Everything known about the cult is based on interpretation of archaeological evidence as there are no historical descriptions or eyewitness accounts. We descended deeper to mid 3rd century ground level, 7 metres below modern, to a reconstruction of the ruins of the Temple of Mithras (built c240 AD). A sound and light show helps visitors experience the atmosphere and interpret the remains.

The London Mithraeum is one of about 100 known in the Roman world, is larger than average and estimated to have seated about 30 men. It is also unusual in having a rounded apse at one end, which probably featured a statue of Mithras killing a bull. Thought to be windowless, the torches, lamps, pillars and walls are conjured by the clever light installation, with chanting in Latin evoking the ceremony. A very atmospheric experience.

Waterlogged wooden remains are also visible at the amphitheatre, discovered in 1988 under the Guildhall Art Gallery. Outside, in Guildhall Yard, the location of the central arena is marked out in black stone. We descended through several levels of paintings, a special display showing Shakespeare's first folio and signature and a couple of cases of Roman finds, to meet our guide, archaeologist Dr Andrew Lane, who gave us an illustrated talk and tour of the remains. (See page 1)



Viewing the remains of the Temple

The ruins of one of the entrances gateways is visible, featuring lengths of repaired wooden drains and side rooms (thought to be for animals and gladiators) with wooden thresholds; organic remains have been removed, preserved and replaced in situ. Visitors' imagination is aided by light installations depicting the seating and human figures. Dr Lane proudly told us it is London's longest-lived stadium, first built in wood cAD 70 with a stone replacement in the early 2nd century and finally dismantled in the mid 4th century. Outliving Wembley, so far! He showed us evidence for female gladiators, mentioned by Roman authors; a relief found in Halicarnassus (now in the BM) shows gladiators with an inscription naming them as Amazon and Achillia. Answering a question about the animals involved, he asserted they would have been native animals such as bears, wild boar and bulls, though he was keen to visit the gladiator exhibition at Colchester Castle Museum to check the context of a feline skull find. We encouraged him to visit Colchester for more reasons – London may have a mithraeum, amphitheatre and other impressive Roman remains, but there is no evidence for a circus! Christine may also entice him to give a CAG lecture ...*

Many thanks to Sue Keen for leading the group who travelled by minibus– or should that be chariot.

*stop press! Responding to an email from Christine, Dr Lane reports he may be able to give us a lecture next summer and also offered to lead a tour of Billingsgate Roman House and Baths. A possible future trip.

Lucy Jack

Winter lecture programme 2023 -2024

I hope everyone has been enjoying the lecture programme so far and navigating your way round Eventbrite. A reminder that if you need the link to the talk you can find it via the website:

[Talks & Lectures - Colchester Archaeological Group \(caguk.net\)](https://caguk.net)

The lectures start on Jan 8th with the first four online and the remaining 5 back at Roman Circus House.

If you are joining the meeting via the Eventbrite link I can recommend logging on early from personal experiences it always seems to take longer than you think.

We have a packed Spring season and this year we have 9 talks. We start the season with a talk on the Cosmati pavement in Westminster Abbey. (Jan 8th) The great pavement in front of the High Altar of Westminster Abbey is a unique and remarkable object. The complexity and subtlety of the design and workmanship can be seen nowhere else on this scale. The pavement took centre stage at the recent coronation of King Charles III.

We then move closer to home with a talk about the excavations at Weeley Barracks. (Jan 15th) In the early years of the 19th Century, military camps sprang up along the south coast of England to guard against the invasion of the French. Once the Napoleonic wars ended, most were dismantled leaving little trace of this turbulent period. Nick Cox from Oxford Archaeology will give us a talk on what they have found.

I have been trying to line up a talk on Must Farm for some time so I am really glad to finally booked one (Jan 22nd). The site is part of a Bronze Age site near Peterborough and has been described as the British Pompeii due to the exceptional preservation.

This is followed by a talk on Chariots and Chariot Burials of Britain, (Jan 29th) given by Professor Melanie Giles. Melanie is Professor of European Prehistory at Manchester University.

We start February with a talk from local historian Charlie Haylock. (Feb 5th) His informative talk on the history of spoken English promises to be an entertaining evening. Alongside numerous TV and Radio appearances Charlie was also the dialect coach for the cast of The Dig.

Mike Hamilton-Macy will follow this with a talk on Thrift Farm. (Feb 12th) Mike has been exploring the area around Fordham and will give us an update on his discoveries. As I write this the weather is wet and cold meaning all digging on site has ceased. To keep us occupied we have been measuring and weighing the copious amounts of Ceramic Building Material we have collected over the years. This led to a number of conversations about how tegulae were made and why there were so many different types? Our next talk will shed some light on this. Han Lee from MOLA will be talking to us about Roman Building Material. (Feb 19th) Get your questions ready.

When we started the dig at Fordham little did we know how much we would find and the complexity of the site. Matt Loughton from CAT has been examining the pottery finds from phase 1 & 2 which amount to nearly 25,000. Matt's talk (Feb 26th) will give us further insight into the complexity of the site, how long it was active and where the pottery has come from.

We round the season off with a talk about Silchester from Professor Mike Fulford. (Mar 4th) Mike is a British archaeologist and academic, specialising in the British Iron Age, Roman Britain and landscape archaeology. He has been Professor of Archaeology at Reading University since 1993. Silchester is the modern name of Roman Calleva Atrebatum and the location of the University of Reading's Silchester Bathhouse Project, Iron Age Environs Project and Nero at Silchester excavations.

I hope you enjoy the Spring season of lectures and look forward to seeing either online or in person.

Christine Piper

Fordham excavations - update

Jonathan Oldham

Work at the north end of the previous Phase 2 open area was focussed on Trench 7 during the summer, with a brief foray into Trench 5. Trench 4 is yet to be investigated and Trench 6 has been abandoned, as it appears to be just natural gravel. Work in Trench 5 to find a northward continuation of the north-south aligned east ditch was without success.

Mike has done a lot of work in Trench 7, an inverted L shape with areas C and B to the west and area A east of B, during the summer. Since early September he has had other commitments, so no further work has been done. Area C and the southern part of A have been trowelled level revealing dark grey patches within yellow orange clay. An elongated dark patch appears to be slightly curved, and has been shown to terminate close to the west edge of the trench. Other dark patches are roughly circular, and half sections reveal them to be very shallow (possibly the bases of more recent post holes), and the sections have been drawn. There is an indication that some of the apparent post holes form a shallow arc from east to west. One deep posthole lies just south of the aforementioned terminus. The line of a baulk has been marked out across the western half of areas C and B to enable interpretation of the relationships between layers of gravel which apparently overlie the orange clay. A scatter of prehistoric pot sherds has been found.

Alan and Paul have gravitated to Trench T and are progressing downward, now that the water level in the south cut is dropping and does not present a major hazard. A lot of CBM, pot and bone has been found, including four bone hair pins, and (notably) a stamped amphora handle of Spanish origin. Recently, they have come down to a thick black layer rich in charcoal above a grey 'clay' (wood ash?), which does not appear to have much in the way of finds present, and the base of the feature is beginning to appear. The uncleaned side wall of the terminus is being drawn to show the various layers of material, including several reddened patches indicative of burning.



Part of the Amphora handle with the stamp of the Melissi family. Used to transport Olive Oil from Spain.

The surface of Trench 2 was cleaned in early summer with the perseverance of the digging team, who had to do a lot of weeding in order to find the soil surface. The cleaning highlighted three bands of soil running down the slope from west to east. A pale grey northern band containing few pieces of CBM and pot, a middle band of orange clay mottled with grey and few finds, and a southern darker grey band (beside the fence) with quite a lot of pot sherds and CBM. During the cleaning, a line of stones (aligned NNE-SSW) was found crossing the trench 55m west of the east boundary fence. Some tile fragments were associated with this linear feature, and most were peg tile, which suggests that the feature is a medieval field drain. A trench has been outlined across the three bands of soil to investigate them, starting with excavating the middle orange layer, which contains some pot sherds, CBM fragments, a nail, and some large lumps of brown clay, so it may be a ditch fill. On Saturday, 14 October, Barbara Butler brought 17 YAC members with parents and four helpers to the site. They spent an hour trowelling in the central section of Trench 2 (Areas 8A to 10A) in the dark grey band close to the fence, and made a reasonable job of it.

In Trench 1, no further work has been done in Exploratory Slots (ES) 1, 2 and 3. ES4 has been extended further west to bring the soil level down to that of the initial Exploratory Slot. Two concentrations of chunky iron nails have been found at this lower level, as well as a variety of pot sherds. During the early summer, the other area of work has been the east end of ES6 at the NE part of Trench 1 (Areas 1A, 2A), where there are signs of the top of the Roman ditch that crosses the site west to the courtyard of the building. A lot of pot sherds and some nails have been found in this area, plus a scatter of charcoal. Strings have been set out to mark a 5m grid with baulks over the east half of the trench before any further trowelling was done. The surfaces of the areas within the baulks have been trowelled clean during the summer, and work is still continuing.

Areas 1B & 2B (to the south) produced little in the way of finds, and trowelling soon revealed a thick orange clay layer.

Further south the soil is a dark clay loam. Area 1C, beside the east fence, has produced relatively little CBM, though a large number of iron nails and some fragments of both window and vessel glass. There were three notable finds, a fragment of pottery sieve or strainer, a tiny (7.5mm x 3mm) oblong, light blue bead, and an iron key (heavily corroded) with a copper alloy handle of three loops (confirmed by Mark). In the next 5m square to the south (Area 1D), a young newcomer discovered a 3rd century copper alloy breast brooch whilst practising using a pinpoint metal detector! A few more nails have been found in Areas 2C & 2D. There are many smaller flint stones in these areas, which may represent a disrupted cobbled surface.

At the NW corner of Trench 1, a trench (T8) was dug south-north when the topsoil was removed in 2022. The Roman ditch mentioned earlier crosses the southern part of Trench 8, and the plough soil has been trowelled clear to reveal the course of the ditch. To enable full depth cross sections perpendicular to the line of the ditch to be dug, small extensions have been dug out of the sides of the trench, and the same has been done at the north edge of Area 2A. It is most interesting in Trench 8 that the west end of the Roman ditch has very little in the way of finds above it, whereas the east end has a lot of pot sherds and some CBM. Recently, sections have been dug out to show the ditch profile, and work is ongoing. At the west side of T8 many stones have either fallen or been dumped into the ditch fill, so it has been difficult to find the ditch sides, and there have been few finds. A large part of an animal pelvis (very fragile bone) has been recovered from above the middle part of the ditch. The east side of T8 has been less stony with more orange clay present, and more finds (mainly pot sherds).

Tim Dennis came to the site on several occasions to bring TS recording of features and Small Finds up to date, most recently on Tuesday, 3 October.

Nine new diggers have attended over the summer, including three sixth form students and two fairly recent graduate archaeology students. Several adults are continuing to come. Abbie brought along five work colleagues one day, as a volunteering work experience session.

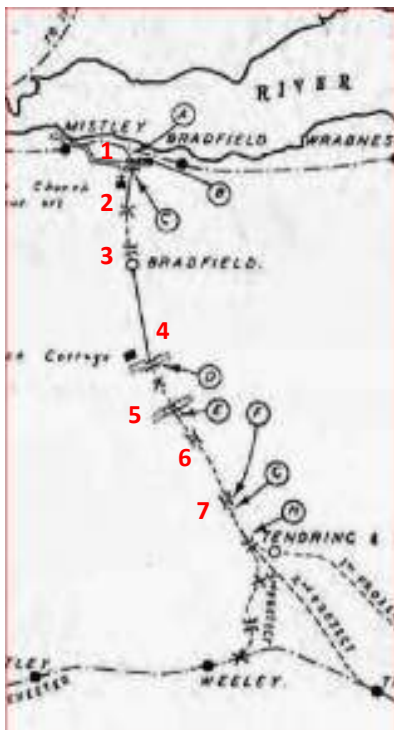
Future work will be to continue the excavations in Trench 7, dig a trench across Trench 2 to investigate the relationships (including stratigraphy) of the different coloured soil bands, and to continue excavating the large geophysics anomaly in Trench 1.

The site has become too difficult to work on at the end of November so our attention is concentrated on recording the CBM from Phase 2 off-site. Good progress is being made.

Jonathan Oldham

Landscape Group Field Trip

The Mistley Thorpe and Walton Railway. Part Two



Site of Bridges

1. Mistley to Harwich Road
2. Windmill Road
3. Steam Mill Road
4. A120
5. Stone Green Road
6. Wolves Hall Road
7. Lodge Lane



Milestone on the B1352 Bridge

Following the article in the last Newsletter on the history of the Mistley, Thorpe and Walton Railway the Landscape group set out to physically check on what evidence of the project can be seen on the ground. There was to be seven bridges crossing the line, so it was decided to inspect each bridge site and to record our finding. Maps and preparatory work being done first.

On a fine sunny day, we started in the north at the B1352 bridge which now carries the main Manningtree to Harwich road. Most people who have travelled over it would not notice it is a bridge (1). The original walls are still there but may have been built up. The arches under the bridge have been filled in over the years and are covered in undergrowth. There is a plaque on the bridge and an interesting milestone.



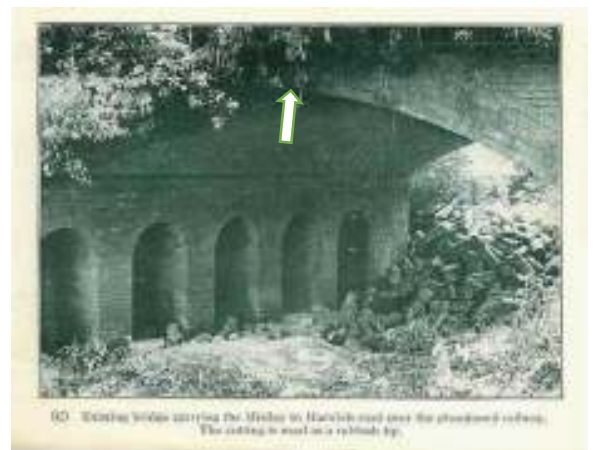
1. The Bridge on the B1352 Manningtree to Harwich Road



1900 map



Looking down from the North wall. Note the top of brick arch



1946 picture taken from Peacock's booklet



The Essex Way Footpath high-lighted and the site of St Mary's Church circled

Screenshot from Google Earth



Looking North



2. Windmill Lane, Bradfield
Site of Road Bridge over Cutting

Moving south we reached the Essex way footpath which crosses the proposed line. There would have been a cutting here but that has been levelled. Traces of the cutting can be seen further back towards the first bridge. This is also near site of the original St Marys Church, now demolished and in private hands. This is believed to be the resting place of the Witchfinder General, Matthew Hopkins. Further research was then done on the history of Mistley churches by John Moore and was delivered at the AGM.

The next bridge site is in Windmill Road, Bradfield, a road bridge built over a rail cutting (2). No evidence was found and is now a private garden.

The next stop was the site at Steam Mill Road, Bradfield, this was the site of a rail bridge built over the road (3), but there was also nothing to be seen on the ground.

We moved on to the A120 to investigate the site of a bridge over the road at Arch Cottages (4). Here too all remnants had disappeared. We know from photos that part of the bridge was still visible in 1946.



3. Steam Mill Road, Bradfield
Site of Bridge over Road



4. Crossing the A120
Site of Road Bridge over the Rail Route



1946 picture



The Gap

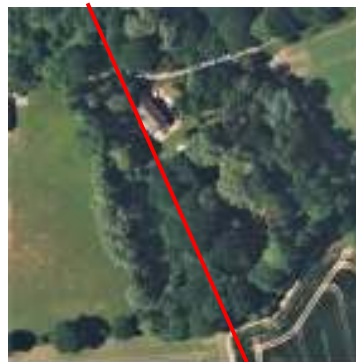


Exploring the embankments

5. Stone Green Road: Road over line



6. Wolves Hall Road



1946 photo

4 miles 5.25 fur. (7.5km) from junction

End of the Line

7. Lodge Lane
Site of a Rail Bridge over Road



Detail from 1899 map showing
extent of construction in Tendring



Tendring: Possible site of Station?
5 miles 2 fur. (8.4km) from junction



Still going south, we came the bridge site on Stone Green Road (5). Here there is evidence of the embankments built up to carry the road over the line. This is covered in trees and undergrowth but we were able to scramble up and inspect it. The area where the bridge would be is now just a gap and footpath.

The next site is on Wolves Hall Road, site of a road bridge over the railway (6). Again, there is nothing left to be seen on the ground.

We had better luck with the last bridge site at Lodge Lane, the rail-line had been built over the road (7). We were invited into the garden of "Tanzara" where they have a section of the original embankment that is in their garden which we were able to walk along and photograph. There is said to be some remaining brickwork on the

opposite side of the road, but this is overgrown and in a private garden. From the garden of “Tanzara” there is a footpath south which followed the course of the line most of the way to Tendring where work was abandoned.

The results of this field Trip were put into a Presentation and given at the AGM.

Alan Chaplin

A Winter Solstice Tale of Freston Causewayed Enclosure

Geoff Lunn

As I write, we are just days away from this year’s Winter Solstice. The shortest day and the longest night of the year, on December 21st, when the sun rises and sets at its most southerly extent, and appears to rise and set in the same place for several days (hence *sol* – *stice* meaning “sun- stopped”), before starting its journey once again northwards until 6 months later the same thing happens at the Summer Solstice on 21st June. At this time of the year, the sun is at its lowest point in the southern sky, rising by roughly 47 degrees to its highest point at the summer solstice, and giving rise to our seasons along the way.

Freston Causewayed Enclosure lies on the Shotley Peninsula, a modest wedge of land sandwiched between the rivers Stour and Orwell and strewn with intricate cropmarks (visible on Google Earth Pro) dating back to Neolithic times and possibly even earlier. The causewayed enclosure was discovered from aerial photographs in 1969, and consists of two concentric dark crop marks made by ancient buried ditches, which are interrupted by frequent gaps or “causeways” across the ditches. Although little known outside archaeological circles, Freston is one of the largest causewayed enclosures in the UK, and until recently, little was known about its history. That all started to change when Prof. Tristan Carter and the Freston Archaeological Research Mission (FARM) began limited exploratory excavations in 2019, aided by members of the local community, including one or two members of CAG (such as myself), and the Suffolk Archaeological Field Group (SAFG).



Fig.1. Freston Causewayed Enclosure showing cropmarks in red.

Image copyright FARM

When a colleague at SAFG asked me if I could identify any alignments associated with Freston (she having realised that I was becoming ever so slightly obsessed with angular alignments in archaeology!), I decided to take a look. I very quickly realised that I knew little or nothing about so called “Astroarchaeology” (the study of how our ancestors interacted with the heavens), and even less about Neolithic sites in our area.

Many of you will no doubt be aware of the alignments of Neolithic monuments such as Stonehenge, where the summer solstice sun rises behind the heel stone when viewed from the centre of the monument. Scholars have gradually come to realise that various phases of Stonehenge appear to have been constructed symmetrically about an axis formed by the line drawn between summer solstice sunrise and winter solstice sunset (which are always diametrically opposite each other due to the way the earth spins around its tilted axis), and indeed, recent wisdom is leaning towards Stonehenge having been constructed to mark the winter solstice rather than the summer one. There are various other significant monuments in Britain which are aligned in this way, including Durrington Walls, Woodhenge, Maeshowe in Scotland and Newgrange in Ireland.

It is perhaps not surprising that our ancient ancestors would have been acutely aware of the importance of marking the solstices, and in particular the winter solstice, as these events were inextricably linked to the passing of the seasons, and winter marked the start of yet another growing season, without which life would



Fig. 2. The Freston – Hengrave Alignment.

have ended. Once the sun had reached its winter solstice point, marked by these monumental constructions, and begun its journey north towards summer once again, this would surely have been cause for celebration amongst a people who were completely reliant on the sun for their very existence.

Having looked for possible celestial alignments at Freston, and also its angular relationship to other prehistoric monuments that I knew of, I was not really getting anywhere, until a colleague at SAFG, John Rainer, mentioned Hengrave. Hengrave? Where's Hengrave? And what exactly is Hengrave? Just to the northwest of Fornham All

Saints, which is also to the northwest of Bury St. Edmunds, one finds Hengrave Hall, in the grounds of which lies yet another causewayed enclosure of a similar size and layout to Freston, and this one has a cursus!

I immediately checked the bearing between the two sites and found that Freston appeared to be roughly southeast of Hengrave, at about 44 degrees south of east to be precise. Knowing that ancient civilisations knew how to simply construct angles of 45 degrees to the cardinal points (N, S, E, W) of the compass, I became interested. My next step was to project this line further to the northwest, and having found a handy online map of prominent Neolithic sites, I found three more Neolithic sites along the alignment; West Stow, Hurst Fen and Peacocks Farm at Shippea Hill. I had not encountered any of these before (except West Stow of course which it turns out is not just a Saxon site, but has occupation dating back to the Neolithic), but my trusty online map



Fig 3. The Hengrave Causewayed Enclosure and Cursus

informed me that these are all notable Neolithic sites. The sites are not in an exact line, but are pretty close to a straight line, and when I drew an average bearing between them all, I found it to be approximately 133 degrees relative to True North. Not very exciting then, or is it? My next step was to look at the bearing of the winter solstice sunrise, which proved to be quite difficult to track down.

The bearing of the solstice sunrise and sunset varies as one moves north or south from the equator, and once you get beyond about 66 degrees latitude, the sun doesn't set at all in the summer, and you are in the "Land of the Midnight Sun". Assuming that the earth is perfectly spherical (which it isn't, but it is close enough for all practical purposes), the maths required to work out the solstice angles is actually not difficult, and it turns out that at the latitude of Freston (~52 degrees), the winter solstice bearing is 40.4 degrees south of east, or 130.4 degrees relative to True North. So, pretty close to my measured bearing of 133 degrees for the alignment of our Neolithic sites.

Life is of course never quite that simple when it comes to celestial mechanics and the study of astroarchaeology. The earth's tilt, currently about 23.44 degrees, varies slowly over time, rather like a giant spinning top wobbling very slowly as it spins, such that the tilt angle in Neolithic times was more like 24 degrees, and this affects the solstice sunrise angles. Another effect, and slightly more difficult to quantify, is what is known as the "apparent"

sunrise (and sunset), which is caused by refraction of the sun's rays through the earth's atmosphere, making the sun appear to rise slightly earlier and set slightly later than the maths would have us believe. So, would the clever people of the Neolithic have been aware of this, and did they measure the sunrise at the point where the top edge of the sun just appeared over the horizon (as we do now), or did they wait for the whole sun to come up?

Taking all of this into account, I estimated that the winter solstice sunrise angle as observed in the neolithic would have been somewhere between 130 and 133 degrees, so not too far from the observed angle of our alignment of 133 degrees.

This could all of course just be a coincidence. If so, quite a big coincidence, but a coincidence nevertheless. However, there is one final part to the puzzle. You will remember that I mentioned earlier that Hengrave has a cursus. This is not an ordinary cursus however in that it is made up of a small number of straight sections which are all at slightly different angles to each other, and also slightly different widths. The second section (heading southwards) is reckoned to lead toward Bury St. Edmunds Abbey, but with the benefit of Google Earth Pro I can see that this is not quite accurate by a couple of degrees or so. The next section however, perhaps you have guessed already, leads directly towards the Freston Causewayed Enclosure, and the winter solstice sunrise, on a bearing of 133.65 degrees. Could this also be a coincidence? I wonder...

All of the above observations have been made in the last few days and I have not yet had a chance to discuss them with anyone involved with the Freston project. It may all turn out to be of little consequence, and may already be known, but I decided to share it all with you anyway – something to think about during these long winter evenings perhaps? All this, and barely a Roman road in sight!

Geoff Lunn

Copford Church and it's "Daneskin"

Alan Chaplin

Local legend has it that the pieces of ancient material found on a Copford Church door is the skin of a Viking/Dane who was flailed alive for stealing silver from the church and his skin nailed to the door to warn others. This was according to my late mother a native of Copford. This story also turns up in a number of local churches.

In 1708 some fragments of what was thought to be "parchment" were found under the hinges of a door. In Dorothy Harrison book "Copford in History" published in 1951, it refers to that after examination the sample of "parchment" was identified as human skin and when the 'parchment' was analysed in the early 20th century it was found to be the skin of a fair-haired male.

However, after the CAG lecture (16th Oct) by Carolyn Wingfield on Saffron Waldon Museum, it was mentioned that there had been an investigation into Hadstock church, near Cambridge with a similar story of a daneskin door covering and had come up with an interesting result.

Extract from New Scientist magazine, 21st April 2022 by Joshua Howgego

Ruairidh Macleod at the University of Cambridge and his colleagues analysed skin fragments from three of the four known churches: St. Botolph's Hadstock, near Cambridge; St Michael & All Angels Church in Copford, near Colchester; and Westminster Abbey in London. Daneskin is also attached to a door in Worcester Cathedral, but Macleod doesn't yet have permission to test this sample.

The team analysed five daneskin samples from the three churches' doors, which were either taken from the doors directly or were held in a museum. Collagen, a key skin protein, was analysed via ZooMS, a technique that identifies animal species according to their collagen.

The results, presented at the 2022 UK Archaeological Sciences Conference in Aberdeen, reveal that none of the skins came from a Viking. Two of the churches' daneskins were actually cowhide, while the Copford skin came from a horse or donkey, which have very similar collagen fingerprints to each other.

This supports an hypothesis that these skins were put on church doors to make them more attractive, according to Jane Geddes from the University of Aberdeen.

A medieval author known as Theophilus Presbyter, thought to have been a monk born around 1070, wrote the book On Divers Arts, which gives instructions on how to build churches. It states that wooden doors should be covered with animal hide, before being smoothed and whitened, to show off the doors' intricate ironwork.

"Church doors had an immense symbolic meaning – these were the gateways to paradise," says Dr. Geddes. "The skins mean the ironwork would have been sitting on smooth leather; it would have looked like a casket or treasure chest."

It should be noted that Copford Hall was once the property of the Bishop of London and that his chapel (the church) would have been furnished to the highest quality to reflect his position. The church is said to have been built around 1125 AD.

From which door was the skin taken?

To the south is the main door to the church. It's construction is impressive but this is easily missed when going into the building. It was possibly made about 1877*. The ironwork hinges are extremely good (Arts and Crafts/gothic revival style?).



South door, (Main entrance) outside, inside and close-up of it's ironwork

The churches north/west door was originally the south door* it was moved when a new south door was installed. It however retains parts of its original iron work and said to be the door from which the Daneskin was taken.



North/West Door outside and inside views

There is an other door which is blocked off in the north east corner. The Priests' or Bishops' door leading to the chancel. This is the door nearest the Hall.

*The Priests Door North/East corner
outside and inside*

Note roman tiles/brick used in the wall



References

Copford in History: A. Dorothy Harrison, M.A. (1951)

<https://www.foxearth.org.uk/DanesSkin.html>

New Scientist magazine, 21st April 2022 article by Joshua Howgego

*The Parish Church of Copford, 4pp leaflet, 3rd edition 1949

Also mentioned

Ruairidh ('Rory') Macleod is a graduate student in the Department of Archaeology at Cambridge.

Jane Geddes is a British art historian and academic, specialising in Scottish architecture, British Medieval manuscripts, Pictish sculpture and Medieval decorative ironwork. Emeritus Professor of Art History, University of Aberdeen.

Excavation of a demolished church at Mayland – a work in progress

Sue Spiers, Leader Burnham u3a Archaeological Group

Our site is on the north side of a hill in the Dengie Peninsula, on the south side of the river Blackwater, we look down on Mayland Creek which runs inland towards us from the Blackwater and is navigable to the old Pigeon Dock, about a mile and a half from our site. Not far to the north east is the remains of Stansgate Abbey, and a few miles away to the east is the Saxon church of St. Peter's on the Wall.

The old church of St. Barnabas was demolished in 1878, the replacement church having been built in 1866 274m south of the original one. The demolished church materials were sold to fund railings around the old churchyard.

The site is a Church/Hall complex with Mayland Hall just a few metres away. Mayland and Althorne came within the ownership of Southminster (a few miles away) and the powerful Bishops of London. Kevin Bruce thought it was almost certainly a chapel for Mayland Hall and only later a parish church. Our first find, found on the surface was a carved consecration cross which would once have formed part of the door jamb for the south porch. Test pit 1



1. Consecration Cross on the surface and 2. Consecration Cross after removal

We began by clearing the site in spring 2022. The walls are mostly robbed out containing demolition rubble, but a find of great beauty was discovered very early in the dig from just outside the church in trench 3 – a 14th century line impressed floor tile made in the Stour Valley. Nearly all of our finds have been in the septaria rubble backfill of the later brick structure, or in the demolition rubble around the church.



3, Line impressed floor tile

Our finds officer made contact with the leading floor tile expert, Paul Drury and he was very interested in our finds (now 3 tea chests full) of medieval floor tiles, he has visited our site twice and added several of our tiles to his corpus on floor tiles. Several were revealed to never having been found south of the Blackwater before.

The first built foundation structures we found were two porches on the south side, an earlier larger stone one and a smaller later brick one within it. From then on we were able to work out the shape of the church, not from the walls, they were almost entirely robbed out for materials, but from features around the walls, the brick porch initially, then brick rain gutters laid immediately outside the walls. You can see from the drone image that at the west end of the church the older stone wall with its angle buttresses is outside the later brick robbed out walls, 7A and 7.



4. Numbered trenches on drone image October 2023

As well as floor tiles we began to find other things, a Nuremburg Jetton dating to the 16th century, copper alloy book clasps, a trade token, lots of pottery fragments, painted glass, and beautiful limestone window tracery dating from the later brick rebuild. Also a fragment of carved stone, and alabaster.



Photo. 5. Painted glass and 6. Carved stone

An interesting feature to emerge in trench 3B at the south east corner of the church was a septaria wall which when it was excavated further this year undercut the later brick rebuild, the septaria seemed to run diagonally across towards the eastern end of the church, almost curving!

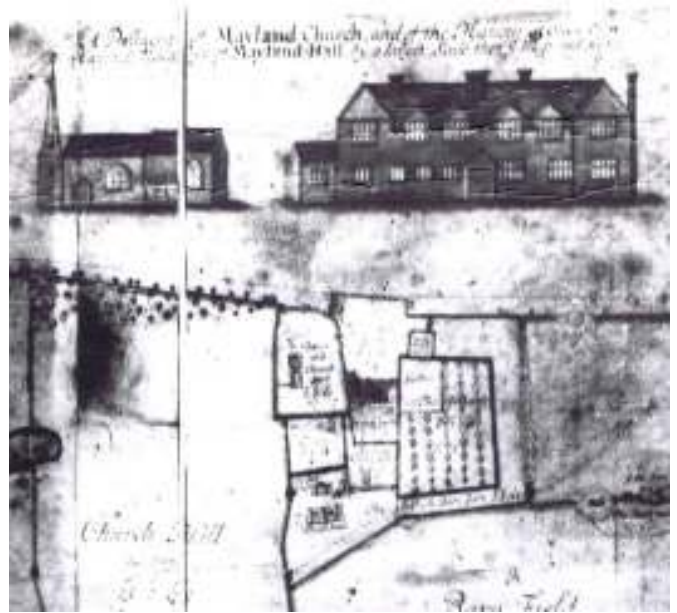
We'd like to think it's an older apse but we haven't got enough information. A trench dug on the opposite northern side of the church showed everything had been robbed out. Next year we hope to explore the eastern, chancel end of the church after a couple of (not in situ) grave markers have been lifted.

By the time we packed up in 2022 we had opened up 9 trenches. It is a complicated site with many phases of rebuilding and we are starting to discover why they ended up demolishing it. In one trench – 8 and 8B, we uncovered three brick buttresses less than a metre apart from each other. The sloping site and the heavy clay soil caused endless problems. The earliest chapel *may* have been built in timber and subsequently rebuilt in stone in the early 13th century then rebuilt in brick in the late 17th /early 18th century, on the same footprint. Our



7. Septaria feature

8. 1696 drawing of the church



earliest drawing of the church is from 1696 which shows what we think is the brick church with a wooden bell tower at the west end. It shows the large windows we have found remains of. We also have many ferramenta rods which were the iron support bars for the windows.

In 2023 we enlarged old trenches, back filled a few which had been recorded and opened up new trenches, now numbering 13. An extended trench in the north west corner 9A and 9B showed several phases of building more and larger buttresses.



9. Above flooded trench 9



10. Group drone image

2024 will be our final year. We hope to open up a large trench in the nave, where we can expect to find stratified contexts, and continue searching for the elusive wooden bell tower at the west end.

We're hoping for better weather in 2024, our trenches were flooded at the beginning and end of our season!

Sue Spiers

Leader Burnham u3a Archaeological Group

The Early History of All Saints Church Fordham

By J. Nicholas Balbi, & Jenny Kay

In 2016 I came to Fordham for the first time. I was attracted to the excavation of what at that time we called the Roman Villa. On that first visit, Jenny Kay showed me the church from which I took a number of photos: We talked about its possible Saxon origins, although the visit was almost touristy. Over the years, I went back to doing various other things that All Saints Church always had something to do with. I took measurements with my tandem; I photographed it and filmed it with my drone, and researched everything I could about it. In 2019, determined to find out more about the origin or rather the early history of Fordham, I learned of the famous antecedent, that every web page or brochure in which the Fordham Church appears is mentioned: The donation



Fordham Church today

that William the Conqueror made to the Abbey de Bec in 1087. This would date the church one year after the making of the Domesday Book. With a certificate, in the same 2019 I went to France, to the Abbey itself, where I made friends with Friar Frere Raphael, with whom I still correspond. The Friar is passionate about the history of medieval churches and he told me that he did not believe there were records of what happened to the donation, since they, along with the abbey, were burned during the French Revolution of 1789. Later civil riots and royal depositions caused the Abbey to be burned several more times, until its last military use, in the Great War of 1914. From 1920 the abbey returned to the hands of the Benedictine Order, and it remains so until the present day. Many of the files, especially in the form of letters, were recovered and that is where my search was directed, guided by the friar and the French National Library. Although my first search in Paris was unsuccessful, I made friends with some people that I agreed to visit in 2020. But the Pandemic happened. Not only did the search end, but I was informed of the deaths of some of the people I met. But 2023 is the year that I set out to return to my old projects. Back in Colchester, I went back to the texts: With my renewed permission in the British National Library, look for coincidences in old books and of course, in the Treasury of the Library, the Domesday Book: There are actually two, the so-called Great and the Little, which is the one that contains the census in our area. Actually the names of great and Little respond to the size of the bound books, although the Little is not really that small, you can see it in the photo. Mentions of both Fordham in Essex and Bec's Abbey are many. Keep in mind that there is also a Fordham in Norwich and another in Cambridge (although this one should not worry us because it belongs to the big book area). Fordham in Essex has the following citations: (Transcriptions):

Domesday Book Folio 38r Reference E 31/1/2/986

Essex

Hundred of Lexden

In Fordham Ælfric held freely 25 acres. Now William (holds them) by the same exchange. Then as now (there was) half a plough (and) 1½ acres of meadow. It was then worth 10s. ; now 6s. 8d. This land is of the soke of the king.

Domesday Book Folio 41r Reference E 31/1/2/994

Essex

Richard

Holding 64 acres, and Leofric, holding 30 acres in the same town, and they could not withdraw from the soke of Wihtgar. Under them, (there were) then as now 2 bordars and 1 plough. (There is) woodland for 12 pigs. (There are) 9 acres of meadow. Then as now (there was) 1 mill. It is worth 20s. In Fordham Wulfmaer held 40 acres under Wihtgar.

Domesday Book Folio 89v Reference E 31/1/2/1050

Essex

Hundred of Lexden

Geoffrey holds Fordham of Hugh, which Esbion held a manor and as 2 hides. (There were) then 10 villans; now 7. (There were) then 5 bordars; now 11. (There were) then 5 slaves; now 4. Then as now (there were) 3 ploughs in demesne. The men (had) then 5 ploughs; now 3. (There is) woodland for 100 pigs. (There are) 12 acres of meadow. Then as now (there was) 1 mill. (There were) then 12 horses, 8 head of cattle, 80 sheep, 25 goats, 10 pigs, 10 hives of bees. (There are) now 2 horses, 8 head of cattle, 80 sheep, 25 goats, 10 pigs, 6 hives of bees. (There are) now 2 horses, 8 head of cattle, 80 sheep, 25 goats, 10 pigs, 6 hives of bees. And 3 free men hold 13 acres. Then as now (there was) half a plough. Then as now it was worth £7. And Roger de Poitou took 10 acres from thjis manor, as the Hundred testifies.

Domesday Book Folio 102v Reference E 31/1/2/1069

Essex

In Colne, Wulfric held freely 5 acres. Now R(ichard holds them) as (he holds) the others. It is worth 2s. In Fordham Tofa-Hildr held 3 acres. Now R(ichard holds them) as (he holds) the others, and it is worth 7d. In (West) Bergholt Goding held 6 acres. Now R(ichard holds them). (There was) then half a plough. (There are) now 2 oxen. (There is) 1 acre of meadow. It was then worth 32d. $\frac{1}{2}$ now 5s. $\frac{1}{2}$

Domesday Book Folio 213r Reference E 31/1/2/1338

Norfolk

St AETHELTHRYTH

In Fordham (there are) 3 bordars, 12 acres. It is worth 2s.

Comments: On St Aethelthryth and Downham (Market)

Domesday Book Folio 251v Reference E 31/1/2/1375

Norfolk

In Fordham (there are) 24 acres. And it is worth 2s. 8d. In the same (vill there is) a free man, 24 acres. It is worth 3s.

Domesday Book Folio 251r Reference E 31/1/2/1775

Norfolk

...The whole of Shouldham (All Saints and St Margaret) is 1 league in length and half (a league) in breadth. And it renders 12d. of the 20s. of the king's geld. In Fordham 3 free men hold 30 acres (and) 1 bordar. (They have) been value above.

Domesday Book Folio 274r Reference E 31/1/2/2004

Hermer de Ferrers

In Fordham (there are) 3 free men, 24 acres, in commendation only. (There has) always (been) half a plough. It is worth 2s. His predecessor had no interest in there except for the commendation.

Miscellaneous: Henry de Ferrers (died by 1100), magnate and administrator, was a Norman who after the 1066 Norman conquest was awarded extensive lands in England. One of the commissioners in charge of the Domesday survey.

Domesday Book Folio 275v Reference E 31/1/2/2042

Norfolk

In Fordham (there are) 3 free men in commendation and St Ben (edict of Ramsey has) the soke at 25 acres. And (there is) 1 free man at 5 acres. St Edmund held the commendation of the same man TRE. Reginald hold this. It is worth 5s..

Miscellaneous:

5s. por 5 schelling (chelins)

Soke: a right of local jurisdiction. a district under a particular jurisdiction; a minor administrative district.

Domesday Book Folio 276r Reference E 31/1/2/2051

Reginald Fitzivo

In Fordham the Abbot of Ely holds of St.Æ(thelthryth) 30 acres, which a free man held (There Have) always (been) 3 bordars and half a plough. It is worth 4s. In this does not have any interest except for the commendation.

Miscellaneous: Æthelthryth (or Æðelpryð or Æpelðrype; c. 636 – 23 June 679 AD) was an East Anglian princess, a Fenland and Northumbrian queen and Abbess of Ely. She is an Anglo-Saxon saint, and is also known as Etheldreda or Audrey, especially in religious contexts. Her father was King Anna of East Anglia, and her siblings were Wendreda and Seaxburh of Ely, both of whom eventually retired from secular life and founded abbeys.

English Feudal barony Enciclopedia (Balleux Tapisry)

Continuing with the investigations, I returned to the familiar: The famous paragraph that mentions the donation of the Church in 1087. At this point I understood that everyone who copied it got it from a book, which I was able to consult in the Essex Municipal Library, and which is both in Colchester and in the Norwich Library, of which I am also a member. However, I wanted to find the source of the reference and there again Jenny Kay, with whom we will write a complete article on this subject, pointed me to a possible source: Book X of the Victoria Collection. There I went. A copy of the Victoria History of the Country exists in the Colchester Library and in Volume 10, as Jenny pointed out to me, I found the elusive reference. I found a copy in the Colchester Library and was able to look at it. In book X there are references to the town of Fordham from page 205 to 218; I made copies and copied in word only the references to the 11th century. The citations of these references (especially those of the census) take us to book I of the same collection. The paragraphs with their corresponding citations are as follows:

Fletcher A.J. (Collection edited by) The Victoria History of the Counties of England; Cooper, Janet (Volume edited by) Queen Victoria (Dedication) A History of the County of Essex Volume X; published for Institute of Historical Research by Oxford University Press, Huddersfield, England, 2001, ISBN 0-19-722795-3, pages 205 to 218. Medieval references are at:

Page 207: "A total of 23 free and unfree tenants and servi recorded in 1066 increased to 25 in 1086" (Ref V.C.H Essex, i.552.)

Page 210: "Fordham, which had been held by Esbern in 1066, was held of Hugh de Gurnai in 1086 by Geoffrey as a manor and 2 hides. A 25-a. freehold estate, which had belonged to Alvrice in 1066, was held by William de Warenne in 1086" (Ref V.C.H Essex, i.476, 552. The manor of Little Fordham was in Aldham)

Page 211: "The value of Fordham manor remained £7 between 1066 and 1086, an small freehold estate showed a slight decline from 10s. to 6s. 8d. The parish was once covered by much woodland and heath which was gradually cleared for cultivation. In 1086 there was woodland for 100 swine" (Ref V.C.H. Essex i. 476, 552 *ibid.* 481, 573 relate to Aldham)

Page 212: "In 1086 there was a total of 13½ a. of meadow Between 1066 and 1086 the number of ploughs on the demesne remained 3 but those belonging to the men fell from 4 to 3, perhaps indicating a slight decrease in arable farming."

Page 215: "CHURCH: William I gave Fordham church to Bec abbey in Normandy in 1087 (C. Hart, *Early Chart*, Essex, 42) but the advowson descended with the manor from 1325 or earlier, the lord or his nominee presenting, except in 1391, 1451, 1454, 1486, 1492 and 1533, when the king presented. After the ownership of the manor was divided in 1543 the patronage alternated between the lords of Fordham Hall and Great Fordham manors, except that the Bishop of London presented by lapse in 1561, a did Queen Elizabeth in 1597" (Ref Newcourt, *Repertorium*, ii. 269-70; E.R.O., T/A 547/1, above, this par., Manors.)

Page 217: The church of All Saints, Church Road, the invocation recorded in 1516, stands on high ground overlooking the Colne Valley. It comprises a chancel, nave with north and south aisles, south porch and west tower. The nave and chancel are built primarily of rubble, with small amounts of bricks and flint mixed in, but the aisles and clerestory have regular, alternating bands of flint and brick. The nave is probably 11th or early 12th century, but the church was largely rebuilt in the earlier 14th century. In the text on page 215, the reference indicates the text by Cyril Roy Hart, of which there is also a copy in the Colchester Library. The book has two editions, one of them from 1957 that does not mention the question of the Church, and a more complete version from 1971, the full citation would be: "Cyril Hart M.A., M.B., F.R.HistS.; *The Early Charters of Essex*, Leicester University Press, Hertfordshire, 1971, ISBN 0-7185-2000-9, page 8 and 42".

I quote the page 8 because it is the Code of Symbols, when the category of the mention is: " * Charter available only in later copy or copies, authenticity not in doubt. This classification includes otherwise reliable charters which lack short portions of the original text, such as names in the witness list, and boundary clauses". The reference of the letter on page 42 is as follows:

"100.C.1087*Confirmation by King William (I) of gifts to the Abbey of Bec. Lands in divers counties, including in Essex the church of Fordham with the land of the church and the whole tithe and one villan (*unum villanum*). . . . Fordham, Adleight and Liston represented the total fee in Essex of Hugh de Gurnai at the time of DB (VCHess I, p.552a and b)". "There is a confirmation of his grant by Hugh, son of Girard de Gurnai and nephew of Hugh de Gurnai, dated 1113, in *Regesta* ii, pp. 326-7".

There are also mentions of these medieval churches in Volume 1 of the same historical encyclopaedia. This has different authors in different volumes, but the encyclopaedia is called that because, as indicated in the same text, Queen Victoria read it, approved the work and the name, and for this reason it was dedicated to her. I have been trying to trace Cyril Hart reference, *The Early Charters of Essex* by Cyril Hart, 1971, Leicester University Press. It appears that there are two earlier versions in 1953, Part 1 Saxon Essex and part 2, Norman. According to the Essex County Library there are copies available to borrow. There may be copies in the Colchester Library. If we can find these we may be able to trace the source that Cyril Hart used.

In addition, from all the research on the Church, many interesting things emerge, such as the mention, in the Domesday Book of "Tofa Hildr", possibly the oldest landowner women in Britain, and she was from Essex.

The surname may also derive from a Scandinavian female personal name of an unusual type, "Tofa Hildr", "Hildr the daughter of Tofi". In Norse mythology, Hildr (Old Norse "battle") is a valkyrie. Hildr is attested in the Prose Edda as Högni's daughter and Hedin's wife in the *Hjaðningavíg*.

Well, we continue looking up some references to Anglo Saxon Churches in Essex and visited Trinity in Colchester, with some Saxon and Norman elements in its architecture. I still have to see the oldest one I found, which is Saint Peter's in Bradwell-on-sea, I think that this year I won't have time to go see it. I hope you've enjoyed our Historical investigation so far.

Nicholas Balbi

A BRONZE ECCLESIASTICAL SEAL (Seal matrix)

From The C.A.G. Dig at Marks Hall

Francis Nicholls

This remarkably well-preserved seal matrix was excavated by the CAG team on the site of a hitherto unrecorded medieval hall, to the rear of the site of the main Marks Hall mansion near Coggeshall in 2013. The word 'matrix' refers to the device used to impress a unique mark or cypher into wax (the seal).

During the Medieval period, the use of seals on documents, letters and packages became widespread. An impressed wax seal ensured that a letter arrived unopened and unread.

A person of sufficient rank often owned an individual seal matrix, engraved with a design, cut in intaglio (the reverse of what will appear on the impressed seal). Early 11th century examples were usually made of ivory or jet stone

Later on, in the 12th century, these artefacts were made in bronze alloy and it is fairly certain that the Marks Hall find is from this period.

They were usually circular or 'vesica' shaped (oval with pointed ends) and were sometimes made with loop holes on the reverse side, so that they could be suspended from a chain.

The owners were religious dignitaries, members of borough institutions or merchants and they became symbols of importance and status.

Examination of the CAG seal matrix points to it being ecclesiastical.

Because of its size, it probably belonged to someone from the lower ranks of the church, being approx 33mm high (1.3 inches) .whereas a Bishop's seal was over 3 inches high! This matrix appears to show a figure holding a baby and if this correct, it is obviously the Virgin Mary holding the baby Jesus. It has a loop hole on the reverse, so it was almost certainly kept around the neck of the owner. Just why this seal matrix was lost at the site will remain a mystery.

A major problem is trying to decipher what the seal reads along each edge. An inscription can be a combination of Latin and medieval French, often with spelling errors.

It may be better to leave things to more expert sources to take up this particular challenge!

Francis Nicholls

With thanks to the publishers of 'Medieval Artefacts' by Nigel Mills for permission to use extracts from his book.



What is Roman Cement and has it anything to do with the Romans?

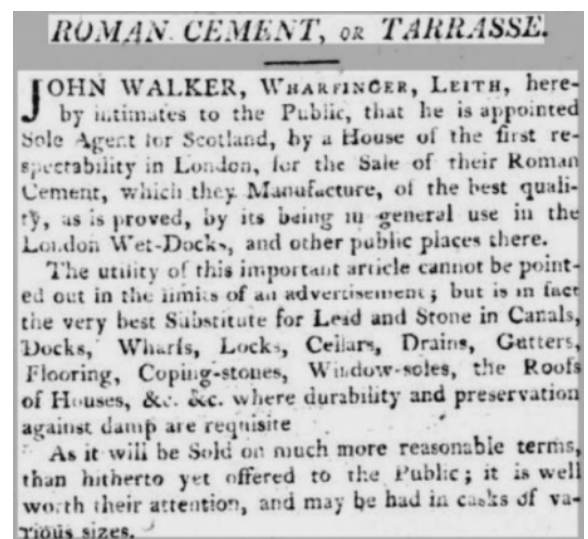
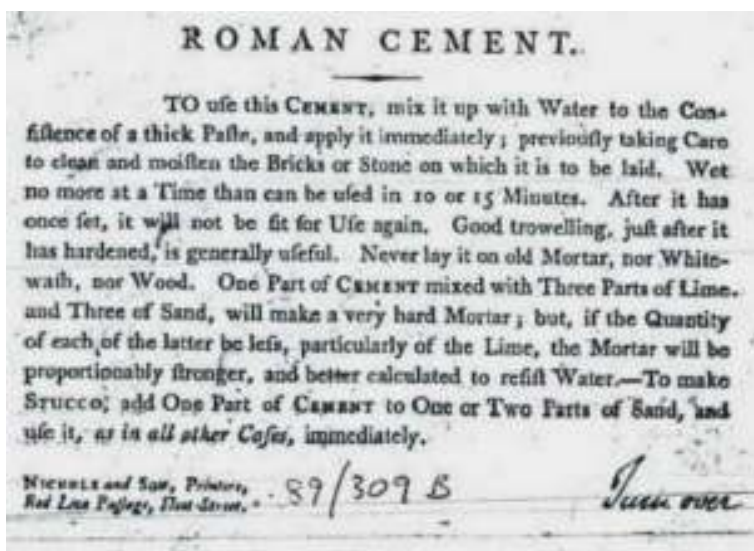
Alan Chaplin

Roman Cement was patented by Reverent Doctor James Parker in 1796, a cement manufactured from Septaria. Not to be confused with Roman concrete. It has nothing to do with the Romans although they were familiar with Septaria as a building material. So as far as we know Dr. Parker may have been a good salesman.

The main ingredient of his Roman Cement are septaria nodules. Septarian nodules consist of at least two minerals in every case. Often the larger portion is some sort of mudstone, while the interior will consist of calcite. These he originally picked up from the beach and threw into his fire and after examined the results. From this he developed the process of heating up septaria nodules to 1,000°C in a kiln and then breaking them up and milling into a powder to use as base material.

Septaria was collected from the beach or by off-shore dredging the nodules from the sea-bed. It can be found mainly in the area from the Isle of Sheppey and up as far as Harwich. In Harwich it became a major industry and a number of cement works were built there from 1807.

The properties of Roman Cement are that it is a natural, strong, versatile and breathable cement. It was applied extensively as an external render from the late Georgian period and throughout the 19th century, and its use was far more widespread than generally recognised. Roman cement remained very popular until it was replaced by Portland cement in the 1850's. It is still used today on certain heritage projects.



Contemporary “adverts” found on the Web

References:

<https://rockseeker.com/septarian-nodules/>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_cement
<https://www.cementkilns.co.uk/roman.html>
<https://www.cementkilns.co.uk/cemkilndoc006.html>
<https://www.sandsuckersuk.com/post/the-harwich-story>

Colchester Young Archaeologists' Club

Barbara Butler

The ways in which Colchester's Young Archaeologists' Club benefits from the support of both the Archaeological Group and Trust has been of tremendous value to its volunteers this year. Our dedicated CAT email address has improved our ability to organise the admin and communications with members. We had hoped for more volunteers who would help us to shorten our extensive waiting list, but this has proved difficult so far. It may be that some of our current members will not renew in 2024 to allow us to accommodate more.



Mike Hamilton-Macy explaining how to interpret Google Earth images

In September, club members learned how to interpret Google Earth images and assess magnetometry patterns, tried metal detection, and artefact reconstruction techniques with Mike Hamilton-Macy of CAG at Fordham. In October, Jonathan Oldham of CAG, led an on-site session of excavation, find identification and washing on the CAG Fordham site.

We like to discuss special interests with our members. Popular with many is the Egyptian civilisation, which was studied and appreciated by many other ancient civilisations. In November when we illustrated and constructed obelisks from card, one of our volunteers pointed out that there had been an obelisk in the centre spine of Colchester's chariot racing circus.



Jonathan Oldham explaining the site and giving the YACs instructions for digging on the site.



My mittened hand holding a tegular fragment excavated at Fordham by a YA.

We ended our year at Roman Circus House. Using various maps of the town walls and the model of the Roman city in the Roman Circus Centre, we discussed the various archaeological sites visible in Colchester and we plan some walks for 2024 to discover these. The young people were familiar with some stretches of the Roman wall, as they associated them with car parks. We all took part in one of Jill Hamblin's quizzes, which was not easy, but there were two outright winners.

We were joined by Alex Jones, who devised the game Aquila, from the board game excavated by CAT in the doctor/druid's grave in 1996. Alex kindly brought boxes of counters to replace those which were missing, so that all members who attended were able to learn the game and had a chance to play.

Before we went home, we enjoyed treats from the Roman Circus café, together with some supplied by the club and parents.

Looking back on our eleventh year based at Roman Circus House, we have processed and identified finds there and at Fordham; and we had a beach combing and fossil hunting session, under the guidance of an



A YAC member putting together an obelisk she has decorated



A YAC group at Fordham learning metal detecting techniques.



A group of YACs and parents on the Essex Coast about to embark on beach combing and fossil hunting

expert on the Essex Coast. We are able to display our activities and projects at the Roman Circus Centre on the CAG H-board, which was found a location and arranged into a polygon by CAG member and YAC volunteer Sam Rowley.

For 2024, we look forward to a revisit from a mosaic expert, who will help and advise us how to repair and finish our 'real' mosaics; we will study flints and have a flint napping session led by one of our volunteers, who is also a CAT archaeologist. Other projects to take forward are the palaeontology timeline, which was prepared for and gifted to us. It will be illustrated by YAC and transferred to a more durable material. Fossils have been donated to the club; these will form the basis of an ongoing identification and dating project. The support of CAG and CAT together with donations to Colchester YAC in memory of Mark Davies, make it possible for us to take all these projects forward. Many donations were from CAG members. On behalf of all volunteers, five of whom are also CAG members, I would like to thank Mark's family for their support, kindness, and generosity to Colchester YAC.

Barbara Butler

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General members	Don Goodman

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Membership – membership@caguk.net

Sales – sales@caguk.net

Please use the contact emails above and mark for the attention of specific committee member

Notices

Membership fees. As agreed at the AGM the membership fees from the 1st October are: Single member £15.00. Student member £10.00. Joint members £25.00

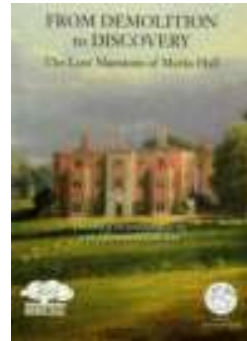
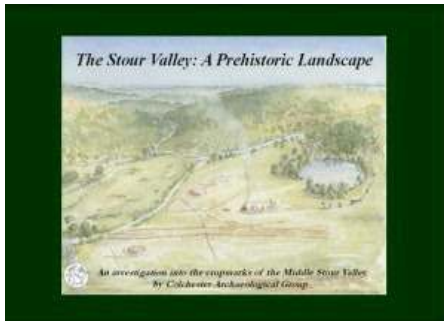
A copy of the 2024/25 Membership renewal form can be found on the CAG website
GDPR act. For a copy of our Data protection policy please contact the Membership secretary
membership@caguk.net

The Editor welcomes articles of interest to members on archaeology and local history for inclusion in the Newsletter. Our next issue is due in July 2024. Please submit your articles or items of interest by the end of June to alanchaplin2@sky.com

Please feel free to share copies of this newsletter with like-minded friends and associates

CAG Publications

contact CAG Sales – sales@caguk.net



The Stour Valley: A Prehistoric Landscape.

A 40 page summary of investigations by CAG into the cropmarks of the Middle Stour Valley (Bures – Wormingford area). This covers evidence of a Neolithic Cursus, a Long Barrow and Bronze Age rings. Each section of the flood plain is covered in detail with maps, aerial images and explanations. £3.00 plus p&p.

The Lost Mansions of Marks Hall – From Demolition to Discovery.

The story of the CAG Archaeological dig at Marks Hall. 26 colour pages. £5.00 plus p&p.

The Lost Tudor Hunting Lodge at Wormingford

The story of the excavation of a Tudor Hunting Lodge on the Essex/Suffolk border. A4, 24 pages, fully illustrated throughout in colour. A4, 24 pages and fully illustrated throughout in colour. ISBN 978-0-9503905-2-9. £2.00. plus p&p. LIMITED STOCK

The Red Hills of Essex

The Survey of Essex Salt making red hills by CAG published in 1990 is still a key reference book for anyone studying this subject. 100 pages, £5.00 plus p&p.

The full set of four publications can be ordered for £10 plus p&p.

On-line publications found on our website: caguk.net/publications

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

The original Report is now divided into five downloadable pdf files from our website:

- (1) Prelims and Contents
- (2) Introduction, History to Appendices Site Grading and Inventory and map of Defence sites,
- (3) Section A: Sites Records SMR 8913-10961
- (4) Section B: Site Records: SMR 10962-20511
- (5) Section C: Site Records SMR 20512-21159

The report of the Middle Bronze Age burials and Anglo-Saxon ditch excavations by the Colchester Archaeological Group in 2003-5 at Teybrook Farm, Great Tey. by Laura Pooley and Howard Brook

Four of the Citizan reports on the Mersea Island Discovery Programme are now available to read or download (PDF):

1. Survey of intertidal remains adjacent to scheduled ancient monument 1013832 Tudor Blockhouse East Mersea, Essex. O.Hutchinson & D.Newman. September 2022
2. The intertidal archaeology of Monkey Beach Mersea Island, Essex Coastal and Intertidal Zone Archaeological Network Report. O.Hutchinson. September 2022
3. A mid-Saxon structure in the intertidal zone at Point Clear, River Colne, Essex O.Hutchinson & D.Newman. September 2022
4. A large mid-Saxon timber structure in the intertidal zone Sea View, Mersea Island, Essex Coastal and Intertidal Zone Archaeological Network Report. O.Hutchinson. September 2022

Also found on our website the annual CAG Bulletins from 1958 to 2016