

**A MISCELLANY OF STORIES,
EXTRACTS AND SNIPPETS OF
INFORMATION FROM THE PAGES
OF THE ESSEX FAMILY HISTORIAN,
PUBLISHED BETWEEN 1974 AND
2020.**

**THE TITLE REFLECTS THE HOPE
THAT THESE WILL, LIKE THE
DINOSAUR, AGAIN BECOME OF
INTEREST.**

**THE COVER WAS DRAWN BY
MISS OLIVIA MAYERS
OF
THE ROYAL HOSPITAL SCHOOL,
HOLBROOK, SUFFOLK**

A Pharmer's Daughter?

Eileen Summers

May 1987

Don't believe all you read, or for that matter all you are told!

My first recollection of seeing my birth certificate was in my first year at Grammar School and finding to my surprise that my father's occupation was given as "Farmer". To my knowledge he had always worked in Tottenham as a Surgical Instrument Maker. My mother explained that due to pressure of work my father had asked his brother to register the birth for him. My uncle had apparently given his own occupation by mistake. For his efforts in the line of duty my uncle was given the task of godfather. I accepted this at face value - it sounded typical of my uncle who only called occasionally; once bringing me a dog who had fits and, who having drunk my father's best whisky, would tell my mother that I'd be lucky if I reached twenty with my delicate constitution.

When my parents died in 1961 I once again came upon the birth certificate and filed it away with other papers. Several years later I became bitten with the Family History 'bug' and contacted many of my far-flung relatives, including my godfather. He had gone into semi-retirement in Devon after several disastrous attempts at pig-farming. At my first request for information, he is reputed to have taken to his bed for two weeks with the dire threat that I must be stopped as I would not like what I would find... It sounded promising so I continued my searches to find that our family skeletons were in no way different from other people.

Five years ago, hoping that he would have forgotten my previous enquiries, I visited him in Devon. I took support in the form of my husband and two cousins. He managed to upset the cousins within minutes - he hadn't lost his touch with age. He looked like a living reincarnation of my father, and hoping that I would not be told something I really did not fancy, I broached the subject of the birth certificate.

To my surprise he laughed and told me that the original story had been concocted to protect my father from my mother's indignation. It seems that when my father went to register my birth at Edmonton Registry, he found that he had been to school with the Registrar. Before filling in the forms they retired to the local pub to wet the baby's head. Several pints later and decidedly worse for wear they attempted to fill in the form. When asked for his occupation my father could only manage "Pharmaceutical and the Registrar could only manage "Farmer"!

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Ruggles-Brise Family

June 2008

Chelmsford Chronicle January 1784.

On Friday last died, at Spains-Hall, near Bocking, Mrs **Walford**, wife of W.Walford esq., by whose death the estate of Spains-Hall, worth £700 per ann, devolves to **Ruggles** Esq. of Clare, in Suffolk.

Anton Diffring

September 2007



Anton Diffring

In a quiet churchyard close by Earls Colne lies the memorial to nearly everybody's ideal portrayal of a Nazi officer, Anton **Diffring**. Except that he was born in Germany but grew up in Canada. His remains now lay in the area where his family lived. Our contributor Martin **Roberts** found out from various people that "during visits to his sister, he could often be seen walking around the village." Also, a young girl worked in the late 1950s and early 1960s for the Earls Colne newsagent. "Anton always bought his cigarettes from there." She remembered how impressed she was to see such a "striking man."

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Marvellous

All Saints and St Peter Maldon – baptisms - Marvellous, son of John Fellows **Froud** and Frances his wife. Sept 15th 1805

Big Families

By Ann Church

December 2010

Most of us have heard the phrase "Be careful what you say, they're all related", and I thought of it when I came across the following. It certainly must have applied in 1847 Wivenhoe. Some of our members are surely descended from Ann and the wonderfully named Abraham **Ham**. (I remember his name from MI recording at Wivenhoe). Dame Mary **Honeyball** in the seventeenth century outdid them with sheer numbers but her 367 descendants were scattered throughout the country.

Essex Standard 10th December 1847
Deaths: died December 4th at Wivenhoe at the advanced age of 93 Mrs Ann Ham, widow of the late Abraham Ham fisherman. The deceased was a native of Coggeshall in this county; her maiden name was **Lawrence**. She has resided about 70 years in Wivenhoe and was the oldest female resident in the place. Has left 7 children, 56 grandchildren and 40 great-grandchildren, all living in Wivenhoe and its neighbourhood, and witnessed the marriage of the 4th generation of her family.

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Bodkin Vs. Sword

August 1999

At Chelmsford on 10th September 1841, **McCleane**, the "Flying Tailor" challenged **Windebank**, a Recruiting Sergeant stationed in the town, to a race of 150 yards along New London Road. The tailor won by half a yard.

My Ancestors Were Freemasons

August 2000 -- Pat Lewis

Freemasons were the first organised group to be banned in Germany during WWII and, so that members could recognise each other, a badge in the form of a forget-me-not was worn behind their lapels. In the 1930s, they freely took part in public life but then Freemasonry went to ground. In England it took a low profile. Information about Freemasons can be found in record offices, bookshops and libraries. We were shown a slide of 15th century masons at work. Being masons they would be working in stone and wore aprons with a bib made of leather. The Freemasons' Lodge stored their tools and in those days it was also a place where they would drink their beer. In 1813, the United Grand Lodge was founded which was the governing body in England and Wales.

What is or was a Freemason? In popular conception he was thought to be a white Anglican, Conservative and middle class, but a Freemason can come from any social class. He must follow an occupation and can be any colour or religion as long as he recognises a "supreme being." He must declare any criminal deed he has done and must not discuss religion or politics. Freemasonry is not a dangerous Secret Society. Pat went on to say that the return of quarter sessions of Angel Lodge provides names, place and town of meeting. There are annual certificates of Lodges which provide members' abode and occupation which is signed by the Master and has the seal of the Lodge. If you know where your Freemason ancestor lived and worked, find the Grand Lodge

in that town and you may find some records.

The practice of issuing certificates dates back to the 18th century. Clearance certificates were given by Lodges to members who were moving away and wanted to join a new lodge. The certificate showed he was a regular Freemason and had left with a good character and was a fully paid up member. Different certificates are used for various orders and events other than Craft Masonry. The museum at Freemasons Hall has examples of all types of certificates. The United Grand Lodge states that a Grand Lodge certificate must not be framed or displayed at home or at work by the Freemason concerned.

We saw slides depicting different jewels and medals connected with the Freemasons. The emblems represented jobs that they did. A person can only be Grand Master for two years in succession. Every Lodge is under a Grand Lodge and has a number which is not altered. There has been a Masonic Year Book every year since 1908 with a list of lodges both at home and abroad. Some of these books can be found in libraries. There are women Freemasons and we saw a slide of one. Pictures of the Freemasons Museum at Freemasons Hall, Great Queen Street were shown and we saw jewels made by French prisoners of war who were shown hospitality by English Lodges. There is a memorial shrine and roll of honour to those who died in both World Wars. These were built from contributions from Lodges. There is a

reference library in the Hall. If you wish to go, get in touch with the librarian.

In the 18th century, funerals were attended by members in full regalia. Many gravestones have representations of jewels on them along with signs and symbols. We saw slides of the regalia worn by the Masons. Before 1815, the aprons worn were made of white lamb skins. In 1815 there was a standard pattern agreed upon which was a pale blue apron denoting a member belonging to a Craft Lodge. A Worshipful Master has metal squares hanging from the collar. Don't be confused by the regalia worn by Buffaloes and other friendly societies because they wear aprons too. German speaking Lodges wore top hats. There are Royal Masonic Charities which are of interest to family historians. The Royal Masonic Institution for Girls and also for Boys, The Masonic Trust for Boys and Girls, The Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution and The Royal Masonic Hospital. Finally, Pat showed us a picture of her husband Clayton, taken in his full regalia as Grand Chaplain of Suffolk in the year 1984.

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Masons

June 2009

By the early 1880s these five lodges had been joined by at least nineteen others although the North Essex Lodge of Bocking closed in 1861. The Guef Lodge meeting at the Town Hall in Leyton, the Priory met at the Middleton Hotel in Southend, the Rosslyn whose members met at The Saracens Head, Dunmow, St Andrew's at the Cambridge Hotel in Shoeburyness, St Peter's who had their own Masonic Hall in Maldon,

St John's who used the Kings Arms in Grays, Trinity who met at the Golden Lion, Rayleigh and the Arnold who met at the Portabello Hotel, Walton-on-the-Naze. To these must be added the Bagshaw meeting at Buckhurst Hill, the Beaconsfield which met at the Chequers, Walthamstow, Chigwell meeting at the Royal Forest Hotel in Chingford, the Joshua Nunn meeting at the George Hotel, Halstead, the Walden met at the Rose and Crown, Saffron Walden, the Epping meeting at the Oak Hotel, Epping, Hope and Verity using the White Hart Hotel, Brentwood, the Royal Victorian meeting at the Tilbury Hotel, Tilbury, St Osyth's Priory meeting at the Royal Hotel at Clacton, the Leyspring met at the Red Lion Tavern in Leytonstone and finally the Star in the East which met at Harwich. Note that there are lodges in most of the major towns in Essex but there was to be little change in the number of lodges up to the beginning of the 20th century.

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Fatal Duel

2009

Lieutenant Jonathan **Layton** had no difficulty killing: in fact he had killed a captain in his own regiment (95th Foot). When the battalion was about to depart on foreign service in 1808, he had argued violently with Captain Brodie **Grant**, a wealthy officer just 21 years old. Layton's company had marched to Harwich the next day to embark, but Grant caught them up. They argued until, pistols being produced, they fought a duel in a nearby field. Grant was killed and Layton went on trial at Chelmsford assizes for manslaughter. He was eventually acquitted through lack of evidence.

Tracking Back

June 2008 - Reverend **Francis P. Reid**

(Something Comparatively Light, Conceived In A Railway Carriage)

This is not meant to be taken too seriously, but is offered partly as light-entertainment. It has however more than a grain of truth and may lead us to see slightly better the brotherhood (or at least cousinship) of man - It was an idea that came while sitting in a train. First I will ask a question: How many of your ancestors fought in the war against France in 1340? Yes, that is the question! Have a guess before you read on. (If you are not English, then take an event in your own country around that time).

Now, you would agree that you have two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents and so on. Another question now: At the Fire of London in 1666 how many people were in the country from who you can claim descent? Just think and have a guess. Now for the answers! If we make the very generous allowance of 30 years for a generation, then in the year 1666, only 300 years ago, you would have had one thousand and twenty four great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-grandparents (9 generations). Go back to 1340 and you would have had 4,194,304 (four million, one hundred and ninety four thousand, three hundred and four great-grandparents (19 generations). But the population of the country was only 4 millions! So! You are descended from everyone that was then alive (including presumably all those who were not married, the King and Queen and the Archbishop of Canterbury. It is even feasible that all your ancestors, including the ladies, fought on both sides in the Wars of the Roses. Now, coming back to the railway carriage! Exactly the same can be said of the person sitting next to me. He or she also had 4,194,304 ancestors in 1340. Some of them must coincide. At the most distant, possibly then he or she is a twentieth cousin. Most likely it is a closer relationship by far than that. Especially when we meet someone with the same name! Oh! We have arrived at my station.

Dangerous Speed Of Fish Vans

May 2001

July 1831 - In the night of Sunday last, as James **Cook**, fisherman and landlord of the Cock and Billet (present day Crooked Billet?) at Leigh, (late of the White Horse, at Widford), was driving his fish machine to London, his horse took fright at a cow that was lying in the road and started off at a rapid rate. On reaching the bridge between Shenfield and Hutton the machine overturned; Cook fell on his head, with the van and one of the

passengers named **Wood** upon him. Nearly an hour elapsed before Cook could be extricated from his situation, he was found with his neck dislocated and quite dead. Wood received considerable injury; his forehead and face being much cut. The deceased has left a widow and five children. There were several other persons in the machine who escaped unhurt.

Aircraft Carriers

November 1990 – Jannette Scarborough

Think of how proud you would be to find in St Lawrence, Bradfield, the following citation of your ancestor:

In memory of Squadron Commander Edwin Harris **Dunning** DSC RN of HMS Furious: he was born 17 July 1892 being the second son of Sir Edwin Harris Dunning Kt of Jacques Hall in Bradfield. While bombing enemy territory on 20 June 1916, Squadron Commander Dunning was wounded in a fight with German seaplanes, but was awarded the DSC for gallantry on this and other occasions: he was killed on 7 August 1917.

The Admiralty wish you to know what great service he performed for the Navy. It was in fact a demonstration of landing an aeroplane on the deck of a Man-of-War whilst the latter was underway. This had never been done before; and the data obtained

was of the utmost value. It will make aeroplanes indispensable to a fleet and possibly revolutionise Naval Warfare. The risk taken by Squadron Commander Dunning needed much courage. He had already made two successful landings but expressed a wish to land again, himself, before pilots did so; and in this last run he was killed. My Lords desire to place on record their sense of the loss to the Naval Service of this gallant officer. His Captain wrote: "I shall never cease to admire and regret him. He was so keen and full of enthusiasm and such an excellent and capable fellow in every way. Both officers and men serving under him deeply feel the loss of so fine an Officer and Gentleman."



Landing on H.M.S. Furious

Aviation History – a first for Essex

December 2010

Eric Probert

Walthamstow Marshes was the scene of the first powered flight, in Britain, of an all-British aeroplane, when on 13th July 1909, A. V. **Roe** made a flight of 100 feet in a 9 horse power triplane. He had established workshops in an arch of the Chingford railway viaduct across the marshes.

Earliest Fatalities

December 2012

On 29th/30th April 1940 a Heinkel bomber crashed at Clacton on Sea killing Frederick and Dorothy **Gill** of Upper Victoria Road. This made them the first civilian fatalities in the United Kingdom of the 2nd World War.

DOUBLE DISASTERS - Two aircraft crash in same spot. The East Essex Gazette of 4th September 1943 reported that a British Wellington bomber had crashed at Clacton, on the exact location that a German bomber crashed in 1940. The Pilot received a broken arm and leg. Gunner **Hawkes**, Gunner **Boot** and Sergeant **Marshall** helped to save the crew. Gunner **Milbourne** received burns in rescuing the observer.

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December 2005

From the Daily Telegraph May 2004
On 7th May, to Pooee (née Gubbins) and Spencer a beautiful Daughter Ruby Rhapsody Panda a sister for Mimi Magenta Poodle (HLF)

Bigamy By A Woman

March 2009

Clara Barker (24) appeared at court for bigamy, having married James **Huntingdon**, on 8th March 1908 at West Ham Parish church according to the evidence of Detective **Cox**. She complained that both Huntingdon and George **Barker**, who she had married in 1904 and was still alive and now in Northumberland had treated her badly, she was "ill-used and forced to lead an improper life." Remanded to the Central Criminal Court.

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Not A Bigamist

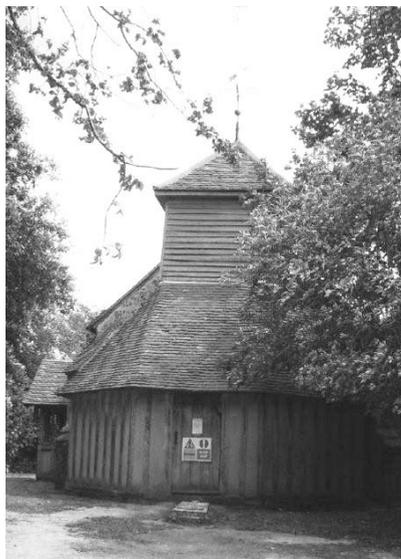
March 2009

2nd November 1909 -
At Stratford Magistrates Court Thomas Henry **Spiller** (45) was charged with bigamy, having married Harriet **Hope** at Christ Church, Stratford on 27th June 1908. Rosetta **Dunston**, an inmate of the West Ham union said that he had previously married her daughter Elizabeth **Warren** in 1892. Spiller said that he believed Warren dead and had not seen her for 7½ years. Detective Sergeant **Norris** and Sergeant **Buxton** said that he had given himself up when he met his first wife recently and was a hard working man. The Chairman said that because it was over 7 years since he last saw his wife and believed her dead, he had not committed bigamy, but he was still married to his first wife. He was discharged.

Coffee And Camelids

December 2009 -

The exquisite paintings of L. Burleigh **Bruhl** have awakened an interest in some of the more isolated villages of the county. An early ending to a visit to Maldon gave us the opportunity of ignoring the usual route back to Rettendon and taking the lesser known route by the A1018. A sign indicated that there was a tea room to be found off to the left and, as our friends the inveterate walkers Ian and Brenda **Pigney** had indicated, whilst passing by Mundon we found Vicarage Lane. This got quite narrow and then we found ourselves travelling between fields inhabited by, what we first thought were llamas, but which turned out to be alpacas. At the end of the road was an unusual church, not exactly ruined, but not in a good state. It was surrounded by thickets, and in them were old graves (ESFH have apparently recorded them). The "Little Guide to Essex" said that it is mainly of 14th century structure, though the chancel modern brick work. Arthur Mee says that one of the oldest bells in the county had been rung there over 6 centuries. A peep through the trees and across a large pond showed me that the tea rooms were in fact Mundon Hall, a Victorian moated-farmhouse apparently built on the site of a former monastery. The view, though slightly overgrown, was that which Bruhl had recorded a century before. We stopped for coffee and cakes, the farm is now called Springstep. The lady at the next table said, of the church "They spent £30,000 a few years back, trying to restore it, but the ground was moving and they had to give up". Next to the house was a hanger sized building which contained hundreds of beautiful(?) goats. This is a working farm and the



The 14th Century St. Mary Church at Mundon

monster barn was apparently built by German Prisoners during World War 2. This is a special place, whether you are rambling or driving.

In 1850 the Post Office Directory reported:

"Mundon is a parish and small village near a creek of the Blackwater Estuary, 3 miles south-south-east of Maldon. It is in the Hundred of Dengie, the southern division of the county, the Union of Maldon and the bishopric of Rochester. The living is a vicarage value £100, with 10 acres of glebe, in the gift of the Duchy of Lancaster. The Rev. Henry Tufnell **Young** is the incumbent. St. Mary's, the parish church, standing east of the village, near the hall, the residence of Richard **Solly** esq., is partly of stone with a chancel of brick. At the west

end is a heavy hexagonal abutment surmounted by a square belfry of wood. The population in 1841 was 309; 2 children from this parish have a privilege of scholarship in Doctor **Plume's** Free School at Maldon.

Gentry - William **Hart** esq. Limbourn Park, Richard **Solly** esq. the Hall.

Traders James **Bridge**, Baker, shoemaker and shopkeeper. **Blakeley** and **Wood** farmers, John **Burchell** farmer, Henry **Cooper** wheelwright and smith, William **Dawson** farmer, John **Deeks** "White Horse", and bricklayer, Golden **Fairhead**, farmer Jeremiah **Holloway**, farmer, Joseph **Jarvis** farmer, Stephen **Overall**, farmer, Joseph **Snow** farmer, William **Snow** farmer and Thomas and Richard **Solly** jnr. farmers.

Post Office - John **Deeks** postmaster.

Carriers to Maldon – from Bradwell near the Sea every Tue, from Burnham and Tillingham every Mon, Thur and Sat, from Steeple every Wed.

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A New Church In Elizabeth's Reign

December 2008

Woodham Walter resident Ann **Maxwell** uncovered a rather surprising secret. The church of St Michael the Archangel in the village of Woodham Walter near Maldon was built in 1563-4, and is thought to be the oldest purpose-built Church of England place of worship in the world. It started with a letter to The Times when a reader asked where the first 'Church of England' was built? After making some enquiries Ann found that

the village church in Woodham Walter appeared to be the first consecrated after the Elizabethan settlement one of only six churches built in the country in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, and the only one in Essex. She wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace. The Lambeth Palace Librarian Anna **James** replied and in her conclusion said, 'I believe that your church would be reasonably justified in making a qualified claim such as - this church is believed to be the first consecrated after the Elizabethan Settlement, and as such has a claim towards being the oldest purpose-built Church of England place of worship.

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Gipsy Weddings At Southend

March 2010

Essex County Chronicle 17th April 1903

For about four months Mr and Mrs **Boswell**, of Blackpool, have been conducting a mission among their fellow gipsies in the Southend and District encampment. It is stated that some thirty gipsies have been converted, and on Wednesday morning Mr and Mrs Boswell and fellow workers were the witnesses of the marriage ceremony of three couples who were united in matrimony. The service took place at Avenue Baptist Church, the Rev J. **McCleery** officiating. There was a good attendance, and as the married couples left the church they were pelted with confetti. In the afternoon a tea was held at the Mission Hall, Southchurch.

Time Capsule

January 1980

Reading old magazines is one way of travelling through time. Here is something an elderly lady wrote in 1880 for "Girls Own Paper" about her life as a girl in pre-Victorian England.

When I was a girl we wore our frocks off our shoulders and our arms bare. How odd it would seem to the Beatrices, Mauds, Ethels, and Louises of the present time, to adopt this style -in ordinary, you know, in the house, and all day long. "Keep your shoulder in your frock!" was the constant admonition; those unfortunate shoulders had such a habit of pushing off the top of the dress - low on one side, while the other would be unduly covered. More often than not the culpable shoulders would receive the chastisement. Our mothers believed in corporal punishment in those days, and no doubt the bare backs of the saucy young culprits were tempting.

The Mauds and the Ethels were not in vogue when I was a girl. Betty, Jane, Maria, Amelia, Harriet, Caroline, were the customary names bestowed at birth. Charlotte and Rose were favourites, Eliza by no means despised. Indeed, I should not be surprised if revolutions were to be effected in this direction ere long. We have really a surfeit of Victorias, Alices, and Ethels, I have had more than one servant named Blanche.

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Tiptree Fair Knockout

May 2001

August 5th 1831 - On Wednesday of last week, a pugilistic set-to between Jacob **Harrington** and Charles **Kendle** lasted one hour and thirty five minutes.

Epitaphs

August 2000

From 'A Collection of Epitaphs and Monumental Inscriptions on the Most Illustrious Persons of All Ages and Countries' by Silvester **Tissington**, published 1857. No check has been made as to whether they still exist or the details are correct.

1. In Halstead churchyard is an iron tomb on which the only inscription is the emphatic word "Silence"
2. At Chigwell:- 'This disease you ne'er heard tell on, I died of eating too much Melon. 'Be careful, then, all ye that feed, - ~ I Suffered because I was too greedy.'
3. In Prittlewell churchyard:
'On Robert **Dodd**, Glazier, who died from the mortification of a wound, occasioned by accidentally falling amongst broken glass'.
4. In Lincoln Cathedral:- 'Here lieth the body of Michael **Honeywood**, D.D. who was grandchild, one of the 367 persons that Mary, the wife of Richard Honeywood, Esq., did see before she died, lawfully descended from her, that is, 16 of her own body, 114 grandchildren, 228 of the third generation and 9 of the fourth'. Apparently this Mary was The Lady Mary Honeywood who died at Markshall in Essex in 1620 aged 92 and in the 44th year of her widowhood.

Essex To Gretna Green

January 1978 - - Arthur J. Coxhead

Decimus **Sewell**, the tenth child of John Sewell of Little Maplestead Hall was born in 1799. He became a solicitor in Halstead and in 1834 he fell in love with eighteen year old Karen Amelia **May**, eldest daughter of Edward May who, however, would not agree to their marriage. The young lovers decided to run away and get married over the blacksmith's anvil at Gretna Green. Realising the difficulty of keeping secret any arrangements he might make in a small community like Halstead, Decimus decided it would be safer not to arrange transport in the immediate vicinity, so, on the day before the plight was to be made, he hired post horses in Chelmsford. He gave instructions that the horses were to be sent to stables at Gosfield to await his coming in the night. His clerk would be waiting in a quiet lane, just outside Halstead near the May residence.

That evening Mr. May was entertaining friends, all had dined and wined well. Eventually they retired to bed, a girl friend sharing Karen's room. This girl fell into a deep sleep. Thus she did not hear the signal given by Decimus and did not know that Karen had got up and dressed quickly before going downstairs to the library and out through its window. Joining her lover, the gig made its way to Gosfield. Here they transferred to a post-chaise and galloped off to Haverhill and the north.

In the morning all was confusion when Mr. May found his daughter gone. He hurried to Halstead for information, rushing hatless from house to house, seeking news of the young couple

and vowing vengeance on them for disobeying his wishes. By the time he discovered or guessed where they had gone, the runaways had a start of seventeen hours. This enabled them to reach Gretna Green first and get married.

It was reported that, when the irate parent reached Gretna and discovered where they were staying, he burst into their room and ordered Karen to return home with him. She refused, explained that she was now married and refused to leave her husband. May had to return home alone. The report has it that he boasted that he had "knocked out one of the young lawyer's eyes and blinded the other." It would seem that rage and frustration over-ruled his regard for truth, for when the newly-weds arrived in Halstead a few days later Decimus's eyes were both in good order.

Did the couple live happily ever after? Yes! For a few years! In 1835 a son, Percy, was born and in 1844 a daughter Constance, but alas Karen died that same year. Decimus, grief stricken, found that he could not settle down to his work and so he disposed of his business. For years he moved about the country, seldom stopping for long in any place. Eventually aged over 60, he married a lady from Reading. There were two children of this marriage, a son and a daughter and many years later that son became father-in-law to Mr Arthur J. Coxhead the author of this fine story.

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The Roxwell Light Infantry 1803-8

November 1982

Britain was rarely prepared for war. Throughout the centuries a hastily prepared army has hurried off leaving the job of guarding our shores, when that was considered prudent, on the shoulders of ordinary citizens. This was felt to be necessary after the French Revolution as the fear was that the French might invade. An act was passed authorising the raising of volunteer Corps. Towns and parishes formed their own units which were subject to military discipline but were organised on an independent basis with their own rules and regulations. These units were particularly strong in Essex and one of them, the Loyal Roxwell Volunteer Light Infantry was raised on September 8th 1803 under the command of Captain George **Cheveley**. Each non-commissioned officer, drummer and private received fourteen shillings for the purchase of necessaries. Regulations stated they were to be dressed in red with yellow facings, gold lace and blue breeches. They met twice weekly at Oxney Green but in 1804 they were billeted in Chipping Ongar for two weeks. For these 15 days the sergeants were paid 1s 6d per day, corporals 1s 3d and drummers and privates 1s 0d. They also received 1s 3d in lieu of beer. The names of all ranks can be seen in Historian Number 26, pages 9 and 10 (A lieutenant, an ensign, 2 sergeants, 3 corporals, 2 drummers and 63 privates). The article was written by a descendant of Ensign Samuel **Straight**.

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Irish Murderers In Warley

In an idle moment whilst cleaning out old files, I came across an incident that I reported on some years ago. It was from a torn corner of a page from an old Illustrated London News: "On Sunday, two privates of the...Gravesend from the ship R. Seppings....charged with the murder of a policeman.....in their regiment. Their names are....."

I tied this up with a story in the Chelmsford Chronicle for May 1850. "Patrick **O'Rourke** a former Irish Constable joined the army of the East India Company at their Depot, Warley Barracks, Brentwood in Essex, in March 1850. He there saw two privates named Michael **Hurley** and James **Morrice** whose description he had read in a 'Hue and Cry', as being among those in a mob who killed with a pike Constable James Owens at Waterford earlier in the year. All I can find is that they were arrested and remanded in custody". I was able to add "James **Owens**; Sub-Constable, Irish Constabulary; No. 10559, appointed 19/5/1847 to Co. Waterford, aged 21 on appointment born in Cavan; Injured on duty 16/09/1849 died 18/09/1849, father awarded 100 guineas compensation; Died from injuries received on the night of 16 September, as he returned from a patrol during an attack by rebels on the Barracks at Cappoquin, Co. Waterford, when he was attacked by a large mob receiving 17 pike wounds. He was attacked by about 50 persons about 10pm on the 16th, he crawled to the barracks about 1am; reported to have died about 1.30am on 18th.

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Thomas Coram's Foundling Museum

September 2008

A recent visit to the heart of London, with time to spare, brought the Editor to a small but worthwhile museum. It lies at the northern end of Coram's Fields, named for the founder and within a couple of hundred yards of Russell Square Underground Station, or Euston Road in the other direction (you might also have the time and opportunity to wonder at Saint Pancras Station). The Foundling Museum not only showcases the Foundling Hospital art collection and the Gerald Coke **Handel** Collection but most importantly tells the story of the 27,000 children who passed through the Hospital between 1739 and 1954. Briefly, the building contains memories of benefactors such as George Frederick **Handel** and William **Hogarth**. Thus, one benefit is to visit its stunning art collection. The time trail passes a board

containing the often made up names of the 1300 children admitted between 1739 and 1751. Many were illegitimate and had to be given names and we immediately spotted the name of one prominent member of this society. It shall remain a secret between her and us. While some important documentation dealing with the children's lives is on display at the Foundling Museum most is contained in the Foundling Hospital Archives. These are held by London Metropolitan Archives at 40 Northampton Road, London EC1R 0HB. Interesting research that you can do at home is to access, upon the internet, The Internet Library of Early Journals in which you will discover the full text of The Gentleman's Magazine from 1730-1750 and by use of the index over the years, the whole story will be revealed to you.



Corams Fields in the West End of London

A Tall Tale, Or, That'll Teach Em!

March 2009

Grave robbing had its own inherent dangers. At about 4am on the morning of the Saturday nearest 25th January 1817 a party of men scaled the wall of St. Martin's burying ground, situated in a field at the back of Camden Town. Their purpose, as it was supposed, was to steal the body of a grenadier, nearly 7 feet tall, who had died in the poor house of the parish and been buried there.

The sexton, had, more ingeniously than lawfully, put together a number of gun barrels, so as to form them into a magazine, that they might all be discharged together. After burying the bodies of the paupers he made it a practice to direct the muzzle of this formidable engine towards the mound of earth, which was the general receptacle for the dead parochial poor, and having fixed a string around the trigger, he fastened it round a large piece of wood which he buried in the grave about a foot below the surface, so that should anyone attempt to dig, they must necessarily remove the wood, the string would pull the trigger and a volley of bullets would immediately sweep that corner of the burying ground.

On the morning in question, at about half past four, he heard a tremendous report, and concluding it was his new piece of ordnance, he went out as soon as possible. At the guarded spot, he found some spades, shovels, pick-axes and other resurrection paraphernalia. Among other things there was a man's hat, through one side of which a bullet had obviously passed; but from there being no mark upon the other side of

it, it is concluded the bullet had lodged in the head of the owner, and killed him, and that he had been carried off by his associates. 28th September 1909 - An improper life.

☆ ☆ ☆

'Twas Christmas Eve In The Workhouse

March 2009

24th December 1909 - Stratford Magistrates were told of near riots in the West Ham workhouse. Richard **Hartley** (32) John **Arnold** (21) Charles **Wallace** (22) and Charles **Matthews** (32) all of whom were labourers, and had failed to perform their allotted tasks, Hartley and Arnold in breaking stones, and Wallace and Matthews in picking oakum. Hartley and Wallace were Rogues and Vagabonds and received 3 months hard labour, Arnold and Matthews 21 day's hard labour. In the women's section the labour mistress Miss **Durrant** could not keep Maud **Stammers** (22) and Eleonor **Jupp** (23) (both domestic Servants) in order, after 2/3 months of great trouble with them. On 21st September Stammers had been reported as leading another boisterous day in the workhouse!

She called Assistant Matron Janet **Griffiths** to assist her and the latter was struck in the face by Jupp. Stammers was using terrible language. She was sentenced to 6 weeks hard labour and Jupp to 3 months hard labour.

The Fortunes Of Fred

March 2008 - Reginald D. Mann, (ESFH 4344)

Fred **Mann** was my father, a man who defied all the odds to live a full life. How this was achieved he, least of all, was blissfully unaware. He began life an unwanted child on 14th April 1890, born to a single mother and was promptly put into the care of a "wet-nurse." Within a year or two he had been passed on to Guardians to bring him up as one of their own, this was his first stroke of good fortune. His new parents were a hard working middle class couple in West London, away from the present purlieu of his birthplace in Paddington!

He grew up and began work as a machine-hand, at a firm in Silvertown on the Isle of Dogs, where they produced tin-foil for the canning industry, among other things. As War approached in 1914 a vacant site next to the works where Fred was employed was requisitioned to produce chemicals to be used in the making of munitions for the war effort.

Before long Fred received his "call-up" papers in September 1915 and was soon marching off to serve his King and Country. This was where his lucky charm protected him from misfortune. A few months later, in January 1916, Silvertown was rocked by a massive explosion, caused by gunpowder igniting in the chemical works.

The "Silvertown Explosion" was so tremendous that it was felt and heard as far away as Sandringham, where King George V was disturbed by the eruption. 'There was much loss of life including workers at Fred's old firm. But it was his good fortune to be out of harm's way; out of the frying-pan perhaps but soon under

fire serving in the trenches in France with the Middlesex Regiment.

Luck was certainly not on his side however, when he was detailed to join a raiding party on a night patrol into enemy lines. Fred was acting as stretcher-bearer in case of casualties and, ironically and by ill-luck, was struck by a machine-gun bullet which shattered his right leg. At the Casualty Station the leg could not be saved and it was amputated above the knee. Effectively Fred's war was over. In the event, that bullet could be said to have saved Fred's life.

In September/October 1917 the Battle of Cambrai took place. Fred's former battalion of the Middlesex Regiment (whose nickname was "The Diehards") was sent up to the front line, where they suffered heavy casualties. For Fred, back home recuperating after his "Blighty" wound, his lucky charm served him again, for many of his old comrades never came back.

After the War Fred was taken back into his old job at a newly built factory and, although an invalid with only one good leg, continued working there until his retirement with 49 years' service. In the meantime he had a happy marriage and fathered five children.

By the time of WW2 he was still in the thick of it, dodging the Blitz in the East London Docks, travelling hazardously every day from his home in Dagenham to Silvertown. It was during one such raid that Fred's luck was almost cashed in, when a stick of bombs straddled the houses in the street, but missed by a few

yards demolishing the house where he was sleeping. Typically he reported into work as usual.

Fortune had not yet quite finished with him however. Not long after Fred and Clara celebrated their Golden Wedding, they were walking home with some friends when Fred had a narrow escape from a speeding motor-cycle. Because of his incapacity he was following behind Clara when crossing the road and so was lucky to miss the accident that left Clara in hospital with a broken leg. Fate, and fortune, were never far away from Fred to the last.

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Primitive Surgery

March 2009

Mary **Thompson** of South Benfleet, whose death was occasioned by a piece of gristle sticking in her throat. She lived fourteen days after the accident, in the most miserable condition, not being able to swallow anything whatever, every attempt to remove the gristle, particularly by a piece of whalebone repeatedly applied having proved fruitless. Annual Register 1776 Page 194-5

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Life Imprisonment For A Penny Stamp

August 1999

At the Central Criminal Court on 10th December 1841, a Post Office Messenger William Henry **Mence**, stood convicted of stealing a penny stamp from a letter. He was transported for life

Mother in Law Trouble

March 2009

8th July 1909 - John Walter **Mahoney** (23) of Granleigh Road, Leyton appeared in court in the uniform of the East Anglian Territorials, charged with bigamously marrying Rosetta **Parker** whilst his wife Grace was still living. Detective Sergeant **Marshall** of West Ham Police reported that the second marriage took place in Epping Registry Office on 10th October 1908. Mahoney said that his mother in law had abused him and told him to marry someone other than her daughter Grace, saying "She only wants Bill **Lacey** when he comes home from India."

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The 999 System

September 2009

The number was chosen because it was easy to remember and call boxes could be adapted to make calls using it. Before that emergency calls were made to the operator, who would then recommend calling Scotland Yard at Whitehall 1212. In November 1935 there was a fire in Wimpole Street in London, which resulted in 5 fatalities after the switchboard jammed. This prompted the now used emergency system, first used on 8th July 1939 at 4.20am when a 24 year old burglar called Duffy was arrested after a call from Mrs Beard of Hampstead.

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Slavery And Pirates

September 2009 – Lesley Ruse

From the Woodham Ferrer Parish Registers

During last year's Flower Festival at St. Mary's, Woodham Ferrers, I was looking through Parish Registers, when two interesting entries caught my eye: 'For redemption of the slaves in Turkey January 10 1670. William Herrington payd Mr **Morris** 20s / 8d' Gathered to the Algerine slaves redemption one pound and a penny paid by Thomas **Kenney** to Mr Morris 4 March 1680'

It seems that there are only a few other Essex Parishes where such information is recorded. A famous incident took place in June 1631 at the small harbour village of Baltimore in County Cork when the Barbary pirates, from Algiers, stormed ashore and captured almost all the villagers, taking them to a life of slavery in North Africa. It is thought that only two of these villagers returned to Ireland, the others might well have become galley slaves, chained to the oars of the pirate ships, worked as labourers in North Africa, or even sent to the Sultan's palace to be part of the harem. The rich were apparently allowed to redeem themselves. Even at this time slaves made useful hostages. Perhaps well over a million Europeans were seized by Arab slave traders, raids taking place as far north as Iceland. Between 1672 and 1682, 353 British ships were captured, with raids well up the Thames estuary.

Religious orders such as the Redemptionists, Lazarists and Capuchin friars worked hard to raise money for the redemption of captives. In many countries large legacies were left for this

very purpose. The Church organised fund raising among congregations and collection boxes were inscribed ' For the Recovery of the Poor Slaves.' These pirates operated from the 15th to the early 19th century. By 1800 the United States was apparently paying a fifth of its federal revenue in bribes to the Barbary coast and eventually Thomas **Jefferson** decided that the cost of a war would be cheaper than constant tribute paying. He committed the US Navy and Marine Corps to this purpose. How was the matter settled? The French colonised Algeria! It seems strange that events over the past year, involving Somali pirates, highlight this lawless age of piracy, even linking back to our own Parish Registers.

Local people had been taken captive.

In 1645 Mary **Steele** of Maldon made petition of Robert Earl of Warwick Lord High Admiral of England, for renewal of letters of licence to collect for her husband held captive in Algiers: 'who then was, and still remaineth, a poor miserable captive in Algiers in the dominion of the Turks.' (Q/SBa 2/61)

One wonders if the ransom was paid so that he could return to her.

There is a copy of the will of William **Steale** of Maldon, merchant, made in 1667 but no wife is mentioned to link him with Mary.

(D/ABW 66/371)

An idea of how much ransom needed to be paid is given in the papers of the **Abdy** family, London merchants. In the will of Nicholas Abdy (1642), it states that he left £120 for the redemption of English captives from the Turks. (D/Day F4). In the receipt book for legacies of Roger Abdy (1642-1658) there are two receipts from redeemed captives:

'The 23 of July 1658 of the worthy Robert Abdy Esquire, one of the executors of the last will and testament of Robert Abdy merchant deceased the sum of ten pounds, being part of a greater legacy by him bequested towards the redemption of Englishmen taken captive by Turkish man of war. I received towards my ransome from Tunis. Thomas **Highway**' - He received ten pounds. Likewise Thomas **Williams**, ransomed from Tripoly, dated 29 November 1658. (D/DAYA1)

We learn about famous people of this time in history lessons, but here are ordinary men who lived in our local communities. It paints a rather different picture about life at that time than we might have realised. Other references and lists of people who contributed occur in the parish records of: Frating, Wanstead, Great Bromley, Canewdon and Braintree – St. Michael the Archangel. We can learn about the standing of these members of the parishes and the strength of feeling at the time.

In 1583 a petition for charity was made for the ransom of 26 captives taken by the Turks being recorded in the parish of Great Bromley. Whether these were local people is not recorded. The names of sixty one persons who contributed, and the sums they contributed, early in November 1670, show amongst others:

Nathaniel **Hudson** 1s 6d, Mary his wife 1s, Mary his daughter 4d, Mary **Salmon**

his maid 1s 0d, John **Wood** his man 6d, Stephen **Wenlock** 1s 0d, Mary his wife 8d, John his son 4d, Richard **Pease** 10d, Henry **Barrington** 6d, Hannah his wife 3d, Widow **Barrington** 4d, Jo **Palmer** 2d, William **Green** 2d.

In Wanstead twenty contributors are named, some of these people were of high standing and appear to have been more affluent:

Sir Josiah **Childs** Baronet £1, Sir Francis **Willughby** Baronet 10s, Mr Nicholas Moad 10s, Mrs Elizabeth **Moad** 5s, Sir Arthur **Ingram** Knight 5s, Mr Henry Barrington Curate 10s, (DP 292/1/1).

In Frating the Rector, Thomas **Baythorne**, gave two shillings and six pence, Thomas **Baker** six pence, Isaac **Barrmason** six pence, Thomas **Augur** three pence, George **Gilbert** two pence

(D/P 349/1/1).

The Canewdon list gives names with place of residence and some occupations. (D/P 219/1/1).

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Slavery Unlawful

September 2008

Chelmsford Chronicle 22nd June 1772

"A slave called **Somerset**, brought to England was, because of his ill state, turned adrift by his master. By the charity of Mr Graville **Sharp** he was restored to health, when his master again claimed him. A suit was the consequence, which established, by the Court of Kings Bench, in favour of Somerset that slavery could not exist in Great Britain."

A Traction Engine Runs Down A Steep Hill

June 2010

Yesterday afternoon (30th April 1903) great commotion was caused in Head Street, Halstead, by a traction engine owned by the Reverend J.H. **Beridge** of Gosfield Place, getting beyond the control of the driver and attendants and running down the hill, a steep hill at a appalling pace. The onlookers shuddered to think what must be the consequences. One of the men jumped off. The driver, Joe **Smith**, who returned some time ago from the South African War, stuck to his post. Smith endeavoured to steer the engine out of harm's way, but the unruly monster would not act as desired, and dashed into Saint Andrew's Churchyard wall. That was not unfortunate in the circumstances, for here the earth rises several feet above the level of the road, supported by a substantial brick wall, and it was therefore utterly impossible for the "loco" to make much headway. Had it continued to career a little down the street and then have gone into any of the buildings, it is impossible to say what the result would have been. The engine, which is stated to have been 12hp nominal, weighing 11 tons 13 cwt, was much damaged by the contact with the wall. One wheel and axle were torn off, and the engine ploughed into the earth, the lower portion of it being more or less buried. Smith was thrown back with great force. He was taken into the residence of Dr **Wright**, who was of the opinion that there were no bones broken. Crowds quickly gathered on the spot and discussed the unique disaster.

Maplestead

December 2010

The Church of Little Maplestead is dedicated to St. John of Jerusalem, the patron saint of the Hospitalers, to whom it owes its creation. In 1186, the whole parish was given to this chivalrous order by Juliana, daughter and heir of Robert **Dornelli**, and wife of William Fitz **Audelin**, steward to Henry 11. Here therefore a Commandery was erected. The church, still remaining, carries us back to the times at which the knights flourished. In size this church is inferior to the other three, but it is even more remarkable in other respects, for the whole, with the exception of the porch, is of the original design and execution; and the chancel, with its semi-circular apse, still more closely resembles in its appearance the Church of the Martyrium. Of the Commandery, once a part of the same Christian establishment, not a vestige remains. Leisure Hour 1861.

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ACHTUNG!

November 2001

A speaker at the October meeting at Southend reported a brief dip into the love-life of the writer D.H. **Lawrence**, which revealed more than one might realise. In 1911 Lawrence eloped, with the wife of a Nottingham professor. Three years later they were married. His conquest, Freida **Weekley**, was a German aristocrat whose brother was Manfred **Von Richtofen**, better known to us as The Red Baron.

Boys In Sail Training

On the Training Ship Exmouth at Grays was William Sutherland **Bomehill**, Captain Superintendent, Mary his wife and Emily **Raise**, their daughter and Ellen Emily **Wray** their servant. John Henry Hall was the chief officer with three assistant school masters, three pensioner instructors and seven other staff including a night watchman, a lamp trimmer and a tailor. There were 557 boys aged between 13 and 15 who, without exception, were all called paupers, with "scholars" under the occupation heading. Birth places were all London, Middlesex, Kent and Surrey with large numbers from the same place.

There was also a shore base called Sherfield House Infirmary in Grays. This had an Officer in Charge called Thos. Troubridge **Norriss** and his son and four daughters also lived there with a cook and a nurse. There were 20 boys aged between 13 and 17 called ship's boys. Their birth places were the same as the others. Could all these boys have been paupers?

DISASTROUS SHIP FIRE 1875

H.M.S. Goliath was a training ship lent by the Royal Navy to the Forest Gate School Board in 1870. Moored off Grays in Essex it held some 450 orphan boys, mostly from the East End of London and was used for training in Naval Service. On December 22nd 1875 a fire accidentally broke out in the lamp room and the ship was completely destroyed. One officer and 19 boys are believed to have died



in the disaster. Such was the conduct of the boys that the Maharajah of **Burdwan** wrote to The Times expressing his desire to award a medal, through the Lord Mayor of London, to those boys who had particularly distinguished themselves. The medals were presented at the Mansion House in a private ceremony by the Lord Mayor. The 36mm 1875 medal had a blue ribbon and was mainly of silver, but some bronze specimens are known. The obverse has a veiled image of Queen Victoria wearing a coronet and the Order of The Star of India.

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A Surprise Visit To The Times Library

March 2009

One of the pleasures of attending a national event, such as “Who Do You Think You Are? Live” at Olympia, is idly filling in competition forms. Supposing that you then received notification that you had won a prize, and then through a family illness, being unable to attend the prize-winning event. All of which happened to a society member, who then, all thanks to her, passed on the prize to be enjoyed by one of the Historian’s editorial staff.

It was a visit to the News International Archive and Record Office, at Wapping. Eight lucky winners met over coffee and pastries and then were introduced to Eamon **Dyas**, archivist for “The Times” by which name the company is more easily recognisable. A short talk in his library was followed by a visit to the cool (air and moisture controlled) shelves of archive material. Eamon was particularly interesting on the subject of paper. His earliest editions were printed on paper with heavy rag content, and their creamy colour has weathered the centuries well. After the Napoleonic Wars wood was introduced into the paper-making process and these papers deteriorate much quicker. He also described the economics of indexing books, relating to the perceived sales of a forthcoming book.

“The Times” was, for the first three years of its existence, an advertising medium, known as “The Daily Universal Register” but on 1st January 1788 gained its present title. On 21st February 1821 “The New Observer” was launched, the title changed to “Independent” rather than “New”. Next year it became “The

Sunday Times.” It has, reputedly, the finest archive on any newspaper. We saw letters from **Dickens**, from **Churchill**, posted after the Battle of Omdurman, the files of Kim **Philby** and Neville **Haigh**, the “Acid Bath Murderer” and many other fascinating documents. **Russell**’s original drawings and notebooks from the Crimean War could be carefully handled, and the reports he subsequently sent were instrumental in bringing down the Lord **Aberdeen** government. We were in the presence of history. So, thanks Susie, for the opportunity to visit to an interesting place that few are privileged to visit.

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Barking Character

June 2010

8th June 1909 – At Stratford Magistrates Court a Barking woman was charged with insulting behaviour and pleaded that “she would not have been taken had there not been a fight over an argument.”

The chairman Varco **Williams** said “I cannot understand why it is that Barking people are so excitable. They cannot ask each other a civil question unless one of them wants to start punching.” She was discharged with a caution. The Chairman then dealt with another case and said “This is another side of the character of a Barking woman” as Mrs **Lockwood** pleaded for leniency on behalf of her husband who had struck her “when he was in a bad temper”. Lockwood was bound over to keep the peace towards his wife.

Family Myths

March 2008 - Beverlie Drewitt

Everyone has family myths that get passed down over the generations and my family is no exception. I've found that usually there's a grain of truth in the story as can be seen by these examples.

My mother always claimed that her great grandfather, James **Tooley**, lived to be nearly 100 years old. I found that he was christened on 11th August 1833 at Rettendon and died at Southend Hospital on 20th December 1932 so she was right. Incidentally, didn't a lot of these ancestors reach ripe old ages?

We're always told that life expectancy was short pre-20th century but quite a few of mine reached respectable old ages into their seventies and eighties and they were all, nearly to a man, agricultural labourers. When I was a child my grandmother told me that two of her brothers had drowned. One was drowned crossing over to Foulness on the Broomway. The doctor, coming the other way, had warned him that the tide was coming in and offered to take him back to Great Wakering but he refused because his wife was waiting for him.

A few years back I found a distant relative through Genes Reunited and, to my surprise, he told me it was true. Emmanuel **Holmes** (known as Mooch to his family for some unknown reason) had drowned in 1916 off Foulness and he had the Inquest Report to prove it.

I have to admit that I have not traced any details of the second brother who my grandmother claimed drowned in a barge off Sheerness but perhaps one day I will. On my father's side, an elderly relative told me of a family story that one

of the **Baker** family had been a sailor on the Victory at Trafalgar. I took this with a large pinch of salt as, if everyone who was supposed to have been on board, they'd have been standing six deep on each other's shoulders on the decks and it would have sunk long before reaching Trafalgar! However, one day I noticed that the National Archives now has a Trafalgar Ancestors database so tapped in my great-great grandfather's name, Joseph Baker. To my surprise up came an entry for Joseph Baker from Ealing aged 26 years (which matches my family details), not on the Victory but the Revenge. Another myth vindicated!

So it obviously does pay dividends to listen to all those elderly relatives' stories as they may be true.

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Death Sentence For An 11 Year Old

June 2009

Gentleman's Magazine – March 1801

Henry Hunsdon a boy of 11 who stole banknotes out of letters at the post office at Chelmsford was on Friday convicted and received sentence of death. Baron Hotham in a most humane manner informed him that he had great reason to believe he would receive Royal mercy. The little convict fainted away and was supported in the jailer's arms whilst sentence was passed upon him.

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The Aftermath – or What happened to the Coggeshall Gang after their Trial ?

September 2008 - Muriel Gibb

I was interested to read the story of the Coggeshall Gang, for some years ago I discovered a distant family connection to the gang. William **Springate** was married to Rhoda **Cheek**, aunt of my great-grandmother. I researched both the crimes and the aftermath, following the stories of the transported men and their wives and families in Coggeshall. At the end of the trial at the Lent Assize at Chelmsford, in March 1849, three members of the Gang, Samuel **Crow**, William 'Crusty' **Ellis** and William **Tansley**, were sentenced to transportation for life; James **Everett**, William **French** and William Springate were sentenced to seven years transportation, while William **Wade**, who had turned Queen's Evidence, had his sentence reduced from fifteen years to seven. John Crow, a lad of fifteen or sixteen, was sentenced to three months hard labour for assisting Samuel Crow to evade capture.

So how did these men and their families fare? To go back a few years – in October 1803 – William **French** senior married Elizabeth **Towers**. The birth of William French the Younger followed around 1809, with William **Senior** dying in 1820. Meanwhile Samuel Crow Senior had married Susannah French in 1809, resulting in the birth of seven daughters. In 1822 Susannah died and the following year Samuel Crow and Elizabeth French were married, the birth of Samuel Crow the Younger occurring in 1823, thus William French and Samuel Crow were half brothers. All the trial documents

list John Crow as Samuel's brother, but somehow I doubt this as by 1834, when John was born, Elizabeth Crow would have been in her mid fifties. However, one of Samuel's daughters did die at the age of nineteen in 1834 – so was she, in fact, John's mother?

The effects of the trial – William French, age thirty-four, Publican, of the Black Horse Inn in Coggeshall – (the building is still there, now a private house), five feet eleven inches in height, with dark brown hair, hazel eyes, long visage, fresh complexion, first spent some four months in prison at Chelmsford, then nine months at Preston (Lancashire), before arriving at Portland Prison in May 1850. He departed for Western Australia in March 1851, aboard 'The Pyrenees'.

The Medical and Surgical Journal for the voyage, held at The National Archives, records that there were some 296 prisoners on board, their health was good, the behaviour was highly satisfactory and that 'a great number exhibited cheerfulness, scarcely to be expected in their condition.'

On arrival in Freemantle, French was given his Ticket of Leave (which enabled him to find his own job) on the 28th June, 1851, and his Conditional Pardon in June 1853. By the 1861 Census he would seem to be back in Coggeshall with his wife Sarah, who died in 1869. In the 1871 Census he is living as a lodger with his mother and John Crow, but by 1881 French is living with his brother, also a

widower. He died in Coggeshall and was buried on 1st January, 1885.

Samuel Crow the Younger, a groom, was not so fortunate. He married Elizabeth **Cowell** in 1845 and they had three children – Maria Eliza, 1846; Alfred, in 1847; with the baptism of Harriett recorded in the parish Church (when the father was reported deceased). Along with William French, Samuel had been taken from Chelmsford Prison to the Preston House of Correction where he died of consumption in March 1850 at the early age of twenty-seven. The Quarterly Lists of Paupers Relieved, for Witham in March 1849, record that the destitute Elizabeth Crow and her two children were conveyed to the Union House (Workhouse) at a cost of 2/7d, so presumably the third child, Harriett, was born there. In the 1851 Census, Elizabeth and her children are back living in Coggeshall, but in the house of her brother-in-law, when she is described as a servant.

John Crow, the third member of the same family, was sentenced to three months hard labour in Springfield Prison, for assisting Samuel Crow to evade capture. The 1861 Census shows John back in Coggeshall with Elizabeth Crow and working as a shoemaker, whilst in the March of that year John married Eliza Fenn at the Witham Register Office. In 1871, John is still with Elizabeth Crow, then aged ninety-three, when he is described as a Grandson.

William Tansley, aged forty-nine, was a gardener or Stone Cutter? five feet five inches in height, with grey eyes, oval visage and a sallow complexion. He was married to Lucy **Wade**, sister of William Wade and had five children. Tansley had already been in trouble

and before the 1838 Lent Assizes with two others, accused of attempted fraud of £1, but had been found Not Guilty. A member of the Coggeshall Gang, he had been found guilty in March 1849 and sentenced to Transportation for Life. With William French and Samuel Crow he had been held at Chelmsford for four months, Preston for nine months, arriving at Portland in May 1850. He was then transported on board the 'Cornwall' for Gibraltar, in February 1851, when his health and behaviour are both recorded as good. Here, he was presumably involved in public works – building harbour fortifications, etc. Then in June 1857 he was returned to England, before being sent to Western Australia in September of that year, reaching Perth on board the 'Nile' in January 1858. His Ticket of Leave was granted in March 1858 and his Conditional Pardon in 1864. His employment record is held at the Battye Library in Perth, between 1858 and 1864, he seems to have been in trouble for getting drunk on a couple of occasions. He died in Perth in August 1869 at the age of fifty, and Lucy and the children - Well! They were for a long time during 1849/1850 destitute in the Witham Union House, with her youngest child being born there. After this there were constant outpayments to Lucy because of sickness and she died in November 1876 aged sixty-one. She described herself as married in 1861 and as a widow in 1871, there must have been some sort of communication between William and Lucy despite the great distance between them.

William Wade, aged twenty-eight, was a gardener, five feet seven inches in height, fair complexion, hair, whiskers and eyebrows light brown, oval visage with a small mole near the centre of

his forehead and grey eyes. Before that he had been in trouble, for stealing gingerbread and barley sugar in 1837. Due to lack of evidence, the Jury had acquitted him (had someone eaten the evidence?). In 1845 he was guilty of stealing fourteen bushels of potatoes and served twelve months in Chelmsford Prison. Following the reduction of his sentence from fifteen to seven years, he was held aboard the hulk 'York' at Gosport, June/September 1850 and was transferred to the 'Rodney' for the ninety-seven day voyage to Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) arriving at Hobart Town that November. He was granted his Ticket of Leave, but it was revoked on at least two occasions for drunkenness. He received his Conditional Pardon in 1859 and it is known that he was employed by James **Baynton** at Browns River some ten miles south of Hobart. But is he the William Wade who died in March 1869 at Spring Bay, Tasmania? – it has not been possible to prove it one way or another.

William had married Mary **Howell** in October 1846, and a William had been born the following year. After William's trial in the summer of 1848, Mary and little William were destitute in the workhouse and on several occasions thereafter. Seven-year-old William died in December 1853 in the presence of his aunt, Lucy Tansley, and Mary; it is possible that she also died, as, after a payment of £2.7.9d for sickness early in 1854, she seems to disappear from the records.

William 'Crusty' Ellis, son of Charles Ellis, was a carpenter, aged twenty-eight in 1849, five feet in height, brown hair, grey eyes, round visage, fresh complexion, stout build. Sentence – Transportation for Life. Like others, he was held at Chelmsford for four months, Preston for

nine months, arriving at Portland in May 1850 and removed to the hulk 'Defence' at Gosport the following month. His journey to Australia began on board the 'William Jardine' in April 1852, arriving at Perth during August, but did not receive his Ticket of Leave until May 1854. It is known that he was working for himself in Perth during 1855/1857.

Back in Coggeshall in October 1846, William had married Emma **Carter**, Lace Worker, at the Independent Dissenters Meeting House and she was recorded in the 1851 Census living with her eleven-year-old sister, then as receiving 6/10d out relief for sickness from the Witham Union. In 1852 she disappeared from Coggeshall records. In May 1860, a William **Ellis**, son of Charles Ellis, Joiner, married Elizabeth **Rowland** at the Wesleyan Chapel, Perth. Two daughters, Emma and Elizabeth followed. The probable death of William Ellis was in April 1865.

James Everett, age thirty-four, described as a Fisherman, five feet four inches in height, light brown hair, blue eyes, round visage, fair complexion, stout, married Rebecca **Seabrook** in December 1838, they had three children. Sentence, seven years transportation. With gang members, James was transferred from Chelmsford to Preston then to Portland, finally sailing for Australia on board the 'Pyrenees' in March 1851, with his Ticket of Leave granted in June 1851 and his Conditional Pardon in April 1853. From here James proceeded, by fair means or foul, to make his fortune, as by June 1854, he bought a town lot at Toodyay where he opened an inn. He later branched out into store keeping, growing hay, vegetables and fruit trees, as well as butchery and purchasing further town lots. In 1861 he was commended for the

care he gave during a tragic measles epidemic at Toodyay. In 1861 he was in trouble for trading in sly grog and was fined £200.

In August 1864 James was joined by his son, George and they worked together for a number of years until George married. In 1871 James won a seat on the first Toodyay Road Board and in 1879 was elected to the committee of management of the Toodyay Common. By the 1880s, James was growing old and although now too heavy to ride a horse he went around in a horse and trap. Then in 1886 he put all his properties up for sale at £1,500, before sailing for home in July 1886.

Meanwhile in Coggeshall his wife, Rebecca, a dressmaker, regularly appears at home in census returns, with her children, George, Sarah and Esther and later some grandchildren. In the 1891 Census, James, aged seventy-five and Rebecca, aged seventy-six, are back together again, they died just ten days apart in April 1893, with James **Everett**, gentleman, leaving effects worth £2,435 in his will and five grandchildren in Australia.

One, James Seabrook Everett, was wounded during the Great War and repatriated to Western Australia as a Lieutenant. (See "The Brand on his Coat" Biographies of some Western Australian Convicts, by Rica **Erickson**, Univ. of Western Australian Press, 1983)

William Springate, age thirty-two, was a weaver, five feet three inches in height, dark brown hair, blue eyes, sallow complexion, slight build. He was married to Rhoda Cheek in 1842, with two living children. Sentence, seven years transportation. William had been in trouble with the law on three previous occasions:

1836 when, with his twin brother, George, he had been accused of stealing six pigeons, but acquitted. Then in 1837 he was charged with stealing a piece of beef and again acquitted. Later that year he was charged with stealing seven tame rabbits of the price of 7/0d and seven fowls of the price of 10/6d – this time he was found guilty and sentenced to six months hard labour.

In March 1848, William Springate, his wife and two children, are recorded as being conveyed to the Witham Union House as he was out of work. He stayed for forty-one days, Rhoda and the children sixty-seven days. Was this then the reason why he was involved with the Coggeshall Gang burglary on the 25th May? After the trial in March 1849 he spent four months at Chelmsford, nine months at Preston, finally arriving at Portland in May 1850 and departing with William French and James Everett to Western Australia on board the 'Pyrenees' in March 1851. He was granted his Ticket of Leave on arrival and his Conditional Pardon in 1853, which allowed him to travel around Australia, but not to return to England until his sentence was completed. By 1857 he was back home in Coggeshall renting a better cottage for his family. For the 1861 Census he is recorded as being on a journey to Australia, then in 1863 he arrived in Brisbane with William Henry, his thirteen-year-old son, as immigrants.

It is known that William spent time working in the gold fields and that he owned and farmed land at Talgai Reef in Queensland in 1868. Rhoda died in Coggeshall during 1865, with their youngest daughter, Eliza, joining him in Queensland. She died of severe burns in 1868. For some unknown reason William then returned to Coggeshall, dying there in 1873, aged only fifty-four years.

Conclusion: For the men sentenced to transportation it must have appeared very harsh. But they were given many opportunities they would not otherwise have received, free food and clothing, instruction in reading and writing, training in building skills, permission to find their own employment away from the limited choice of a small town and the chance to make good in a new developing country.

For the wives however, a very different story, the stigma of the Workhouse for food, shelter and possibly to give birth, followed by years of struggle to raise their families alone without the support of their husbands. There was no possibility of remarriage, as seven years had to elapse before this was allowed. No less than fifteen children were left fatherless, three being born after the trial, two in the Workhouse – what price the legacy of The Coggeshall Gang?

The evidence for this story is to be found in many different places, firstly in the parish records and Census returns for Coggeshall, in the Quarterly lists for the Witham Union House, in the Essex Record Office, in the National Archives at Kew (usually in the ASSI files for the appropriate dates).

My thanks to family members and friends in Australia for access to Registration Certificates and to the Convict Records held in the Battye Library in Perth and Tasmania. The calendar reproduced is Copyright 2008 The National Archive.

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Wrong And Wright

November 2002

According to Soldiers Document at Kew (WO 97-4543), Wrong George **Clifford**,

Gunner Royal Artillery, enlisted 22nd July 1895 at Rotherhithe when he was 20 years old. He had served in the Militia. On 3rd April 1899, stationed at Shoeburyness Artillery garrison, he married Emma Ada **Cundy**, a spinster. Until then his next of kin had been his father Wright Clifford, 3, The Lawn, Northfleet in Kent. In the 1881 census Wright and Isabella lived in Maidstone, their children Wrong George (7) and John Wright (3). Wrong Clifford served until 22nd November 1902

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Colchester To The Cape

September 1980

An unexpected tale is told about military life in the town. In 1856 foreign veterans of the Crimean War, unwanted by their own countries, encamped in the town, were offered settlement in the Cape Colony on a semi-military basis, with family men preferred, then many volunteers rushed to the altar. One hundred and fifty or so couples were married in the Camp Church within a fortnight. Off they went to South Africa and then, Whoops! The church had no licence to perform marriages, No records could be traced. Did a register go to the Cape? Sympathy is offered to any family tree losing a branch in this irregular fashion.

☆ ☆ ☆

Twins

June 2010

Kelvedon Parish Records 1696 April 20th baptised John and William sons of John and Elizabeth **Ellis**. Being twins but John born a day before the other.

What Is In a Name ?

December 2008

On 18th May 1913 at Forest Gate a son was born to Thomas **Schmincke**. Thomas was soon to serve with the British Navy during the Great War. The family then moved to Southend on Sea and young Reginald Frederick Schmincke was to become a pupil at Westcliff High School for Boys. When he left school in 1928 he became a clerk in London. Early in 1936 he wrote to the newly appointed Chief Constable George **Crockford**, of the then independent Southend on Sea Constabulary, asking for an appointment as a policeman "either in uniform or plain clothes". Throughout the spring of 1936 letters went back and forth between Reginald's home in Bournemouth Park Road and the Alexandra Street HQ from which we can now suspect that the police thought that he had a problem. That is it! The name Schmincke! One letter respectfully pointed out that Reginald was "British born of British parents." By June the matter had been resolved. Reginald changed his name to **Smith**, his mother's maiden name, and everyone on the surface appeared happy.

However, viewed from our more advanced (?) liberal society viewpoint, was the Chief Constable allowing prejudice to influence him? Or, did the wise old owl peer into the future and see problems for an officer with the name Schmincke which would give him additional burdens in his policing duties. A significant proportion of the population, with recent memories of the Great War, had loved ones who were either killed or injured. I think the Guv'nor was right. So, I think, might Reg. have done, or rather Inspector Reg. Smith, with whom I served when I



Thomas Schmincke as an army cadet at an East London School

transferred to the Southend Constabulary in 1962. He retired in 1966 and his family still live locally. His father Thomas was the son of August Schmincke, who was born in Bohemia circa 1854 and described himself in the 1901 census as "naturalised British." Bohemia was then a separate kingdom within the Austrian Habsburg Empire. After the Great War it formed the north western part of the new republic of Czechoslovakia. Much of the population of the former Bohemia was peopled by Germans. August settled in London and the surname was not uncommon in later censuses. Perhaps he came here in his youth when the new German Empire was being integrated circa 1870. Another incidence of a man changing his Germanic sounding name occurs in the registers of the Old Boys of Hamlet Court Road School detailed

elsewhere within this HISTORIAN. Private **Waterford** of the Grenadier Guards died during the Great War. His real name was Alf Spiegl of Whitegate Road, Southend, where his parents lived during and after the war under that name. Perhaps it was just organisations that required the change.

Coincidence

How is this for co-incidence? In the spring of 2010 I was working on the Federation of Family History Societies' stall at Olympia with a lady from Cheshire, who was telling me of her interest in the Anglo-German Society, whose stand was nearby. She told me her enquiry was in the name Schmincke. "Reg. Smith used to be called that" I opined. Then one day recently I was minding my own business in Leigh on Sea when I received a call from an ESFH member and author who said "Do you remember Inspector Reg. Smith? A relative is in my office asking about him." Strange, I nonchalantly replied "His daughter was, a few moments back, drinking coffee and gracing my living room sofa!" The Editor.

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Tommy Atkins

by Mick Loxdale

June 2009

We Wondered What Happened To Him!

I came across the following burial in Maldon St Mary registers (SEAX ERO reference D/P 132/1/4): - "26th February 1794 Thomas **Atkins** buried - A private soldier in His Majesty's 54th Regiment of Foot". Not the original "Tommy" Atkins according to Imperial War Museum web site, but the man still protects Maldon to this day.

Sir William Withy Gull

November 2001

Surgeon to the Duke of Clarence and a suspect for "Jack the Ripper" is remembered in Essex by a plaque on his home at Walton on the Naze and is buried at Thorpe. He was featured as the killer in a recent film where Michael **Caine** played Fred **Abeline**, the Metropolitan Police Detective in the case. **Gull** is shown in the 1851 census aged 34 with his wife and family. Born at Colchester.

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Zeppelin

August 2000 - Anne Vince

"The speaker related a story about a Zeppelin which was brought down by fighters in Essex in 1916 at Little Wigborough, a few yards from a pair of farm cottages. A woman in one of the cottages was so shocked that it brought on premature labour and she gave birth to a daughter whom she named 'Zeppelin'. According to the speaker, this lady opened an exhibition in Essex a couple of years ago. Something to do with an anniversary."

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A Titian In Hill Hall

December 2009

Gentleman's Magazine 1817 page 335

A volume of Mrs **Ogbourne's** History of Essex is published. The previous volumes date from 1804. It contains a fine portrait of Sir Thomas **Smith** from an original painted by Titian in Hill Hall.

Countess Of Huntingdon's Connexion Chapel Fordham, - An Obsession

December 1989 - Pat Lewis

A number of my forebears came from Fordham, near Colchester, c.1800, and during my researches, like many other family historians, I became sidetracked and very interested in the history of All Saints Church, Fordham (but that is another story) and also in the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion Chapel in Plummers Lane, Fordham. From various sources I realised that my Fordham ancestors were literate and I wondered where they had been to school. There was a Dame school in the village and in the early days the Connexion had run a day school. I decided to pursue this line of enquiry and found out where and when but, up to now, have been unable to find any school records. I still don't know the answer but, no matter I was hooked.

The chapel, a Grade-2 listed building, stands at the end of a short tree-lined drive and is cement-rendered over weather hoarding, (it has sash windows, a tiled roof and a gabled porch. Inside there was a herringbone floor of thin bricks, a gallery and some painted box pews. It was redundant when I first saw it in 1981 but the interior was still intact. The pews, collection boxes, hat pegs, tablets on the walls and hymn numbers from the last service were displayed. There was a superb collection of large leather-bound Bibles stacked on the pew seats. I looked around, took a few photographs, but far too few, and left, not realising that the entire contents were to be removed before I saw the chapel again. The Society decided to record the M.I.s and, when I went along to help, I was astonished at the difference.

The whole contents had been removed, including two tablets from the walls. I had a photograph of the tablet to the Revd. J. **Harris**, a minister who died in 1845, but unfortunately had no record of the other, a 1914-18 war memorial. After several years I have found and photographed both of them. The interior fittings of the chapel, the painted wood, now stripped, form the interior fittings of the Oliver Twist public house, Golden Noble Hill, Colchester. The Revd. J. Harris has been reinterred from inside the chapel to the graveyard. The first owners of the redundant chapel, now a dwelling house, marked his grave with a wooden cross. The graveyard still belongs to the Connexion, the last burial being in 1978.

In the first register of the chapel, dated 1790-1804 (PRO RG 4/799, available at ERO), places mentioned include Aldham, West Bergholt, Mount Bures Chapel Wakes Colne, Fordham, Little Horkesley, Langham, Stanway and Wormingford. People were prepared to walk considerable distances to the services.

In the 18th century the chapel had connections with Charles **Onley**, Rector of Fordham and Squire of Stisted Hall, Essex, and Thomas **Twining**, of the famous tea family, who was his curate at All Saints, Fordham. In the 19th and 20th centuries the chapel finances suffered during the various agricultural depressions and there is a connection with Joseph Arch and the Agricultural Trade Union. There was a small chapel associated with the Connexion in Ford Street, Aldham, but, as yet, no records have been discovered. (1989)

Dick Turpin

February and August 1995 - June Page, H.F. Shipp and Peter Downham

In 1892 was noted: Wanstead Old Church Yard- June 22nd 1892

*"Here lieth interred the body of Mr Thomas **Turpin** of Ye Parish Chappel who departed this life the 29th day of April Anno Domi 1719 in the 57th year of his age. Father of the Notorious Dick Turpin the Highway Man. He was actually born in Stisted!"*

Has this stone survived?

In the next issue

"I was most interested to see the note concerning the inscription on a gravestone for a Thomas Turpin buried in Wanstead, Essex in 1719. This refers to Thomas as the father of the highwayman Dick Turpin. It claims that Thomas Turpin buried in the grave at Wanstead was the father of Dick Turpin. This is unlikely to be true as it is now well established that Dick Turpin's father was a John Turpin from Hempstead, Essex. Furthermore this John Turpin was still alive when his son, the highwayman, was hung in York in 1739. However, Thomas was a common given name in Dick Turpin's family as he had an older brother named Thomas and his Turpin grandfather was probably a Thomas as well. If the Thomas buried at Wanstead was related to the highwayman, then the most likely explanation is that he was a brother of Dick Turpin's father and so an uncle to the highwayman".

In HISTORIAN number 77 appeared another article :

DID MY ANCESTOR RIDE WITH DICK TURPIN? by Peter Downham

At my wedding many years ago an uncle of mine insisted, to my bride, that I was descended from Abraham **Downham**, who rode with Dick Turpin. I have never been allowed to forget this, and my son at last persuaded me to see if there is any truth in the story. I have followed my Downhams back to the time of Turpin, but to establish a link between the families, I needed to know about the Turpins, their whereabouts and associates. Information on Dick Turpin comes from Derek Barlow's 'Dick Turpin and the Gregory Gang', now unfortunately out of print, and Peter Newark's 'The Crimson Book of Highwaymen'. Parish records have provided information on other Turpins living at that time, but it is open to conjecture whether they are part of Dick Turpin's family.

According to Barlow, Richard Turpin was baptised at Hempstead NW Essex on the 21st September 1705, although some references list him as born in 1706. His father John was a publican and butcher, who was landlord of the Bell Inn. This is known today as the Rose and Crown and enjoys its notoriety. Indeed there is a sign attached to the fireplace warning 'It is the landlord's great desire that no-one stands before the fire'. His mother was Elizabeth, and he had brothers Thomas, John, and Christopher, and sisters Maria, and Dorothy. Maria married Cesar **Hasler** at Hempstead on the 24th August 1725. Details of Dick's marriage have never been found, but his bride was

thought to have been Elizabeth (Betty) **Millington**. Nowhere is there mention of any children. He is believed to have been apprenticed as a butcher to his father at Hempstead,

In July 1733 a gang of four men, including an Abraham **Downham**, were caught in Waltham Forest stealing deer belonging to the King. The Waltham Forest Gang, later known as the Gregory Gang, were believed to have been selling the venison they stole to Dick Turpin, a butcher at nearby Buckhurst Hill at this time. The four were subsequently convicted and spent one year in Chelmsford Gaol for their trouble. The six Keepers who captured them and a second group of five claimed a reward of £200, a very large sum of money in 1734- I have a copy of their submission to H M Treasury.

When the supply of venison dried up Turpin gave up his butcher's shop, later becoming a major player in the Gregory Gang. Their speciality was to raid remote houses, often threatening and sometimes committing violence against the occupants to find out the whereabouts of their valuables. Holding victims over a fire was said to have been one of Turpin's favourite ploys to extract information, whilst Samuel GREGORY was reported to have raped a servant during one raid. Eventually a reward of £50 was offered for the arrest of any member of the gang, who were said to have committed offences not just in Essex but also in Middlesex, Surrey and Kent. Three of the gang were taken in Westminster but Turpin escaped. John **Wheeler** turned King's evidence resulting in the conviction and execution of Samuel **Gregory** and the other gang member.

This apparently put an end to the Gregory Gang, Turpin and Thomas **Rowden**, a pewterer and convicted counterfeiter, turning to highway robbery. Many of their claimed exploits were reported in newspapers and journals in 1735. Apparently by 1737 Turpin had parted company with Rowden and may have taken up with Tom KING, another highway robber, who Turpin was supposed to have accidentally shot and killed during a robbery. A reward of £200 was offered in May 1737 for the arrest of Turpin after he murdered a keeper of Epping Forest who tried to arrest him.

By the middle of 1737 he headed north, apparently alone, firstly to Lincolnshire, then to Welton near Beverley in Yorkshire. He traded as a horse dealer using the name John **Palmer**, a surname from his mother's family. One day in 1738 he shot a 'tame fowl' belonging to his landlord, and when admonished by Francis HALL, threatened to shoot him as well. Hall reported the incident to Turpin's landlord and, when he could not provide sureties for his good behaviour to magistrates, was committed to Beverley House of Correction for 'Disturbing the Peace'. After further enquiries he was accused of horse stealing and transferred to York Castle, where he was tried, convicted and sentenced to death. He was incarcerated in the condemned cell in the Debtor's Prison, now preserved as part of the Castle Museum. Whilst in prison he wrote to his brother-in-law at Hempstead who refused to pay the postage and accept the letter. James **Smith**, Turpin's former schoolmaster at Hempstead, recognized the handwriting and had the letter taken to a magistrate who opened it. Smith subsequently travelled to York where he identified Palmer as Turpin. In 1739

Turpin was hung at the York Tyburn, on the Knavesmire.

To return to the Downham family I found the baptism of Abraham Downham at Debden on the 28th March 1722, parents Abraham and Lydia, but I cannot find their marriage. There were no Downhams in Debden prior to 1722 so they must have moved in around this time. If anyone knows where they came from I shall be eternally grateful. John, baptised there on the 1st May 1748, was the second son of Abraham junior, and is my 4x great-grandfather, making Abraham and Lydia my 6x great-grandparents. John lived in the Parish of Saffron Walden, as did many subsequent generations. His son Richard owned a cottage at Bears Hall, on the Saffron Walden side of the Debden/Saffron Walden Parish boundary. However I have yet to find direct evidence to connect Abraham husband of Lydia with the Abraham convicted at Chelmsford, although the dates are compatible, but I have come across circumstantial evidence of interest.

On the 1st October 1734 John Turpin married Jane **Clark** at Debden. Six of their children were baptised there, but neither John nor his immediate ancestors came from this Parish. Of particular interest is an 8 year gap in the baptisms of their children between 1737 and 1745, and a John Turpin was Innkeeper at Buckhurst Hill in 1738/9. Was this Dick Turpin's brother John, and was he the John Turpin that married at Debden, being introduced by Dick to Buckhurst Hill and returning after Dick's hanging in 1739? Barlow reports that Dick Turpin, Herbert **Haines**, Samuel **Gregory**, and Thomas Rowden, visited Debden. Haines and Gregory stayed at a local inn where, using considerable

violence, they escaped arrest. Turpin and Rowden did not stay at the inn and their movements are not known. Were they visiting Turpin's brother John, or their ex-accomplice Abraham Downham? From the earlier information it would appear that the visit occurred in late 1734 or the first half of 1735.

On the 25th March 1725, at nearby Thaxted, Thomas Turpin married Martha **Jud**. Their eldest son Thomas was baptised soon after on the 15th May 1726, followed by John on the 22nd August 1727. Dick Turpin is supposed to have stayed in a fine old house near the Guild Hall at Thaxted. Was he visiting his brother Thomas?

I still have many questions to answer to establish a connection between the two families, but my research continues and, perhaps, one day I shall find the link that incontrovertibly connects them. Whilst there may well be a link it seems unlikely that Abraham Downham actually rode with Dick Turpin.

To come to the article by Mrs June Page that encouraged me to put pen to paper my information does not support the inscription copied by her ancestor in Wanstead Old Churchyard, although it may be significant that Wanstead is close to Buckhurst Hill. It is strange, too, that it talks of the 'Notorious Dick Turpin the Highway Man' on a tombstone inscribed 1719, probably fourteen years before Turpin commenced his 'career', let alone achieved notoriety. This suggests that the tombstone must have been erected many years after the death of Thomas Turpin, and indeed may have been wrongly inscribed, either with the Christian name or more likely the attribution.

One historical figure well covered.

A Death Sentence Committed

March 2010

Gentleman's Magazine March 1801

John **Taylor** alias Bartholomew **Browne** was convicted of passing a forged note upon the Bank of Crickett and Co. of Colchester. Baron **Hotham** was about to put on the black cap for the death sentence when a barrister turned the banknote over and saw that it bore the signature "Bartw Browne". This made the indictment for his conviction incorrect and he was discharged. The authorities were about to re-charge him in the latter name when his friends paid the amount of the note into court and he was released. Chelmsford Chronicle 1801-2.

☆ ☆ ☆

All Saints Cranham

by Ann Wigmore

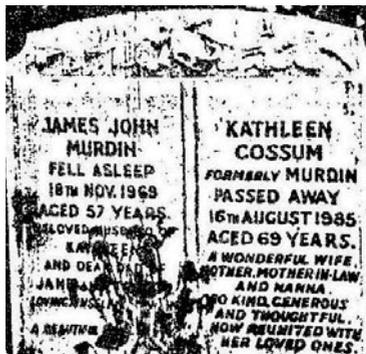
September 2008

This church, near Upminster, was an early building, re-built in 1873-4. It is the final resting place of General James Edward **Oglethorpe** (1696-1785) and his wife Elizabeth (née **Wright** died 1787). Oglethorpe, having won the Battle of Bloody Marsh (1742) against the Spanish is credited with the founding of the American state of Georgia, where there is a university bearing his name. The couple reputedly lay buried beneath the chancel, in which there is a large memorial plaque to James on the south wall.

Monumental Predictions

by Julian Ware-Lane

Autumn 1985



The Wording is Incorrect

If one looks at the photograph below, taken at St. Laurence and All Saints, Eastwood, one can see a perfect example of how sometimes, what is inscribed is less than accurate. This picture was taken in early May - some 3 months before the death of Kathleen **Cossum**, as shown. (The Editor received this photograph in July). At present there are two of us recording the inscriptions at this church and at the remnant of the graveyard at Shopland, near Shopland Hall (Shopland Church was demolished in 1957). I became interested in monumental inscriptions last year and as the nearest group was in Pitsea decided to set up a Southend M.I. group.

Some further explanation might be needed. I have done a bit of research and she was married to James **Murdin** and then married George Cossum in 1978. Her death is registered in the JUNE quarter 1985 in Havering and the index gives her date of birth as August 19 1915. Whoever arranged the wording of the stone did not get their facts right and had it inscribed very soon after her death! (HF)

The Military Camp On Danbury Common 1780-1815

by Christine Jemmeson

November 1999

I am currently doing some local history research with particular reference to Danbury. Danbury Common now belongs to the National Trust, but it has a fascinating history, unenclosed manorial common land, used by villagers, smugglers, and commandeered for military training until as recent a date as the 1960's. During the periods of anxiety about and preparation for the French Revolutionary Wars and the Napoleonic Wars, large military training camps were established at Warley, Tiptree Heath and Danbury Common. It is often difficult to track the movements of the various military units, but evidence in Parish Registers is helpful where the incumbent is conscientious and records the military background of those seeking hatch, match or despatch. It is often forgotten that the men brought their wives and children with them, or else married local girls. I have found that some Militia men also brought their girl-friends from home to be married in Danbury.

Between 1780 and 1815, the period I am currently studying, the Danbury Rectors usually record the military background in the registers, though visiting ministers and curates are not always so reliable. Nevertheless, the following list is fairly comprehensive:

MILITARY UNITS ON DANBURY COMMON 1780-1815

Militia		Foot Regiments	
Bedfordshire	1782	1st	1814
Cambridgeshire	1794, 1803/4, 1806,1810	10th	1809
Cornwall	1809, 1810	11th	1809, 1810
West Essex	1780, 1803	17th	1812
Herefordshire	1806	27th	1809
Hertfordshire	1781, 1798	28th	1807
East Kent	1780, 1782,1795	35th	1808
Lancashire	1803	43rd	1812
West Norfolk	1794	48th	1812, 1814
West Suffolk	1782	49th	1811, 1814
Surrey	1804, 1805	77th	1813
Wiltshire	1795	80th	1811/2/3/4
North Yorkshire	1781	83rd	1811/2
Others		Foot Regiments	
Royals	1809	87th	1808/9
Royal Artillery	1781/2, 1804/5/6	88th	1808/9
Royal Marines	1813	91st	1813
Royal Lancs. Volunteers	1781	103rd	1811

I have made transcriptions of the baptisms and burials of soldiers' children, and also the marriages and burials of soldiers and their wives, and found that in some years the numbers of soldiers and their families encamped on the Common far exceeded the total population of civilian Danbury. For example, the Chelmsford Chronicle of 9th June, 1780, reports that the troops to be encamped at Danbury Common were as follows:

		Officers	Men
June 8	1st West Essex	10	653
June 19	3rd South Hampshire	8	522
June 13	1st or Royal Foot, 2nd Battalion	10	740
June 22	36th East Kent	6	439

Plus two companies of artillery.

The newspaper reports later that the South Hampshire were to have been on the Common on Wednesday, but "just before they got to Danbury an express reached them, with orders to march to London to help to quell(sic) the riots". (These were the 'Gordon Riots' aimed against relaxation of the rules against Roman Catholics). Nevertheless, in the summer of 1780 there were, even without the South Hampshire Militia, over 1,800 troops encamped on Danbury Common, plus 26 Officers. Since the population of the whole of Danbury parish was, in 1801, only 768, this huge influx of militia must have had a tremendous impact on the village.

Danbury Common was used as a military training ground intermittently until 1814, when the Parish Registers record the last baptisms and burials for a while. Nevertheless the Common provided training ground at other times in the earlier nineteenth century, and again during the First and Second World Wars, although between 1850-1900 the open grass-covered area known as the 'Camp Ground', now the main car-park for Danbury Common visitors, was used as the village cricket-pitch. In the 1851 Census, John **Jaggs** operates as a brewhouse-keeper near the Common. His establishment in Penny Royal Road was re-named The Cricketers, and this name has persisted to today.

In 1808 there was a disastrous small-pox epidemic which affected both the village inhabitants and the soldiers and their families. The Parish Register records the burial of 25 of the local inhabitants and 64 of the military families (not all, but most would be from small-pox). The soldiers and their families lived in cramped quarters so inevitably diseases would spread.

The movements of the various Militia regiments in Essex are recorded in the Chelmsford Chronicle, although I found using the microfilms at the ERO frustrating at times, as the few paragraphs relating to Chelmsford news (the Militia movements plus accidents, royal visits etc. are almost always under 'local' news) were frequently the very parts of the microfilm made illegible by mending tape, or shadows on the film! It is worth browsing through the newspapers, however, simply to find such gems as the following:

Chelmsford Chronicle 6 October 1780: Deserted, from the First or Western Regiment of Essex Militia, encamped on Danbury Common, 2nd September, 1780, Thomas **Rogers**, Private Soldier in Captain **Pochin's** company, in the said Regiment, born

in Gissing in the county of Norfolk, aged 20 years, 5 feet 9 inches high, ruddy complexion, dark brown hair tied behind, dark brown eyes and round visage, walks erect and is much reserved in his discourse; when he deserted he wore regimental clothing (sic) which is faced with green, the waistcoat and breeches white cloth, the buttons of which, as likewise those of the coat, have this impression: "1st Regt. Essex". Whoever apprehends the above deserter, and causes him to be lodged in any of his majesty's gaols, shall receive 5 guineas over what is allowed by Government for apprehending: (Names follow including Captain George **Butricke**, Pay-master of Danbury Camp).

Imagine how wonderful it would be to find this physical description if Thomas Rogers was your great-grandfather! I found no evidence that Thomas was ever recaptured or court-martialled so perhaps he was able to resume rural life in Gissing

☆ ☆ ☆

Murder At The Admiral Rous

June 2008

Essex is rich (not the most tasteful word but it conveys the correct message) in murderous incidents which do not easily fall into patterns. I did once research the "Galleywood Murder" of 1899. Cecilia Jane **Crozier**, aged 31, a young woman addicted to drink and regularly beaten by her husband, a public house landlord, was found dead at the foot of the stairs in the "Admiral Rous" public house one morning. These premises were situated beside the famous Galleywood Race Course. Within a few days a post mortem examination had been made and she was buried. Rumours from the village reached the ears of a local police sergeant, David **Scott**. Cecilia was exhumed and a second post mortem examination carried out, after which her husband was charged with manslaughter. Shortly after that he was re-charged with murder and in December 1899 Samuel Crozier was hanged at Springfield Gaol. It is entirely possible that a death certificate could have been issued for Cecilia before her exhumation. Expanding the dates a little, and supposing that a relative many

years later ordered and obtained a death certificate, how would they know the final result? Thanks to the O.P.C.S. we now know what happens today, but was it always so? I suspect that many people reading my piece think, "He is from the police. How is it that he does not know the answer already?" The fact is that police museums and the police service are not necessarily the same thing. I served much of my 41 years police service in Essex and left the Criminal Investigation Department about 35 years ago. The Essex Police Museum is a self-governing charitable trust and does not officially have any more access to current police procedures and investigations than the average member of the public. I do accept that it often rubs shoulders with those who do. Admiral Rous was a well known local racing enthusiast. The public house is now a private house. An interesting sideline to the case appears in the 1881 census, which gives the Crozier's brother's occupation as "Castrator," a title which would have made his marriage certificate quite a tasteful family heirloom.

Essex Summer Assizes

May 2001

July 1831 Robert **Targrass**, Anthony **Copping** and Abraham **Warner** were fully committed for trial from Billericay, for stealing four lambs from Messrs Thos. and Richard **Gullan** at Pitsea. Targrass is a tried character; he had a sentence of death passed on him in 1822, for a similar offence. Note- Targrass was either acquitted or transported as no execution was recorded.

November 2001 - A FOLLOW UP FROM AUSTRALIA - Sue Comrie **Thompson** – New South Wales

Summer Assizes 1831 - Robert Targrass, Anthony Copping, Abraham Warner

I checked convict indexes to "NSW and Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania) yesterday and found no record of Warner, but did find the first two. They were transported to VDL on the 'William Glen Anderson', which left London on 2nd June, 1831 and arrived Hobart on 1st November, 1831. They had been on board the hulk 'York', possibly at Portsmouth, as there is a note to that effect from the Surgeon Superintendent at Spithead. Convict ships usually started from London and picked up convicts from hulks on the way round to Portsmouth, so there is often about a month between first pickup and finally setting sail from England. Their details, taken from the ship's indent, are as follows:

Anthony Copping Height 5'10¼", age 32, Shepherd and Ploughman, reap, sow, milk. Tried Essex 7 March 1831. Life. Native place: nr. Realy (Rayleigh?), Essex. Married, 2 children, Protestant, R&W, Offence; Sheep stealing. Remarks: Good. No other offence.

Robert Targett alias Targrass- Height 5'2¼", age 35, Shepherd, can draw cart &c. Tried Essex, 7 March 1831. Life. Native place: nr. Realy (Rayleigh?) Essex. Married, 5 children. Protestant, Read only. Offence: Sheep stealing. Remarks: Good. Proper name 'Targrass.'" (Former convictions) Sheep stealing 12 months, Leaving his family, three months.

In the 1846 Register of Male Convicts for Van Dieman's Land, Robert Targett had a Ticket of Leave and Anthony Coffin (sic) had a Conditional Pardon. Anthony Coppon (sic) died at Entally, near Launceston, on 7th September, 1844, of Asthma, aged 43. He was a Labourer, (Entally was a large estate - Entally House is now a National Trust property and I have visited it). Robert Targrass died at River Mersey, District of Port Sorell (west of Launceston) on 18th July, 1865, aged 73, of Natural Decline. He was a Labourer. There were a number of other Essex convicts on board the same ship.

☆ ☆ ☆

Fatal Fall

May 2002

North Shoebury Parish Register - John **Dimond** (a reputed good fiddler) drank too freely and fell into a ditch by the roadside, from whence he had scrambled out, but ye weather very cold and he wet, tis beleav'd he perish'd by those means, lay five hours perishing and was found in ye road just expiring. The coroner's jury brought in accidental death. Buried March 11 1764.

Evacuation - Leyton to Stebbing

Mrs Jean Nixon **Skinner**

September 2007

It was early on the morning of Saturday 2nd September 1939, when our mother took us three, Jean 11, Eunice 9, and Terry 6 from our home at Lea Bridge Road, near the Bakers Arms down to our school in Capworth street. We each had a shoulder kitbag and our gas-masks in a cardboard box with long tape strap to hang around your neck. At the school the parents were kept outside the railings, and somehow we had coach or buses to transport us up to Lea Bridge Road station. The last words my Mother said to me were “keep together, don’t let them separate you”.

There were very steep steps down to the station platform and my young brother dropped his kitbag so I had to hurriedly scoop it all back in. It was a hot and humid day in our carriage, no corridors. We had a school-master, named G. Lee **Appleby**, who had been my Music and Art teacher for the past two years.

We had a rhyme:

*G. Lee Appleby, fell down the lavatory,
pulled the chain and he popped up again.*

Poor Mr. Appleby! It was a very long day and journey, because we were constantly pushed into the sidings to let military trains through. We made an emergency stop-off, into a field with crude sheet toilet arrangements, for boys one side and girls the other. A stop at a station, a bucket of water, with Mr Appleby giving us each a drink, then a wipe around face and hands, but I don’t remember eating anything. We are next in (Stebbing) village hall, with lots of women choosing males, or females and how many they could take in. I held onto my brother



A Time of Rationing

and sister and quite firmly and fiercely said “we had got to stay together.” So we were very fortunate in getting allotted to the village butcher, who had a big four bedroom detached house. Somewhere along the way we had each acquired a bag of emergency rations. Our Hostess, a Mrs **Bolden**, was a bit bothered what we ate, as her two daughters had married and left home. We settled on scrambled eggs on toast, and I was amazed to see her break half a dozen eggs.

The Bolden’s were Chapel people, so we were taken next morning and

more surprises when we were escorted into their own pew, with a door on it. The priest, who lived at the Manse, opposite the Bolden's, from the pulpit gave us the news that "We Are At War With Germany." It was not easy for the village or us evacuees to settle down, we had probably doubled the population, although the village had lost a lot of young men, going off to war. The little village school had a problem, for a start, space! We only had half a day, and did a lot of Nature walks and outdoor art. From the start kids, either from the village or evacuees had a mutual dislike of each other; it was a bit like a war of them and us. We were nervous of farm animals, the first we had ever seen, let alone been near to. I did enjoy going to the dairy, behind the butcher's shop for a jug of cream, and also a lovely day in the fields with the whole village out gathering in the harvest. To this day and after having four children of my own, I can only say how brave mine, and all the other Mums were, to wave us off, not knowing where we were going, what would happen to us, and when we would meet again. That must be true Love, or was it Fear?

☆ ☆ ☆

Numeracy

2010

Identification, not only by name, but by number has often been a problem to working policemen. I well remember a West-Country colleague who suffered from the number 40, his name being **Watts** (Not too bright!) another 1001 (Clean round the bend!) and anyone called Mason risked getting the number 3 in front of their name (Free-Mason!) My late friend Bill **Fry** of Rayleigh Traffic had the number 999. Can you imagine

the comments if he did not arrive at an incident almost before it happened? At one time I managed to get Essex Police Personnel Department not to issue controversial numbers, such as 666. Twenty two years after my retirement I wonder if that sensible procedure still obtains?

☆ ☆ ☆

Massacred

March 2010

Jeremy **Beadle's** book "First Last and Only" - reports that the 44th Foot (later to be the 1st Battalion of the Essex Regiment), was massacred on three occasions, uniquely for a British Regiment! The first time was on 21st September 1745 at the Battle of Prestonpans when the Jacobites under "Bonnie Prince Charlie" killed wounded or captured nearly all of L/Colonel Sir John **Halkett's** unit. Just 10 years later the same regiment was massacred by Indian allies of the French in a battle near the Monongahela River in America. This time Colonel Halkett was himself killed. In 1840, during the First Afghan War, General **Sale's** army was forced to retreat from Kabul and in the mountains at Gandamak their third disaster occurred.

☆ ☆ ☆

Lent Assize 1818

Charge of Murder – the Grand jury threw out the bills against three person, named John **Daines**, John **Corbey** and Timothy **Hammond**, committed on a charge of aiding and assisting Samuel **Pratt** and William **Turner**, who had been convicted on a murder, committed about four years since, upon Henry **Trigg**, Parish constable of Berden. Chelmsford Chronicle 12th March 1818.

Silver War Badge

by Martin Roberts

June 2009

A Southend member produced a blackened badge, which defied the efforts of our photographer to snap it. We had staying with us our niece, an accountant with the Civil Service, who said that on audits she had seen such a badge, as being awarded to service personnel in the 2nd World War. It was slightly different to our member's badge, that having cut-outs between the various features, whilst the later model was a disc. These items before us had certainly come from the Great War.

The recipient was Private Reginald Charles St. Clair **Emmerson** of the Army Pay Corps and the thoughts strayed to "how did a pay clerk get wounded? Closer examination revealed that he had previously been Rifleman R.C.S. Emmerson of the Queen's Westminster Rifles. This fine old Territorial Army Unit had been gathered together with Queen Victoria's Rifles, Post Office Rifles, Rough Riders, Rangers, the Artists's Rifles and many other exotic London based units to become The London Regiment. The two battalion "Westminsters" were numbered 16th in that pantheon and were part of a Division who, in 1916, were in the forefront of the Battle of the Somme. If Reginald was there wounded, it might have been possible that he was then fit enough to be transferred into the Pay Corps to continue useful service. My own grandfather went from the Essex Regiment to the Labour Corps in similar fashion. Reg will need to visit the National Archives at Kew to find out more, but he has his grandfather's medal card from Kew, and this mentions the Silver War Badge.

Later enquiries revealed that the badge was solid silver. The award was introduced by Army Order AO316 of 1916, titled "Silver War Badge", which initially stipulated that the award was available to Officers and OR's of the British, Indian, and Overseas Forces. It was not a medal or decoration,



The Silver War Badge

however records of it being awarded to any officer or man (and later women) were included with their service medal records, and details given in the rolls can add significantly to knowledge. There are, by the way, probably more "silly stories" told about the badge than anything else associated with the service medal records - and almost as many variations of what public bar experts will tell you that it is called; "Silver Discharge Badge", the "Wounded Badge" etc., etc., - no end of variations. The writer had even seen it referred to as the "Silver Warrior Badge"

It was for those who served at home or abroad since the 4th August 1914 and who, on account of age or physical infirmity arising from wounds or sickness caused by military service have, in the case of officers, retired or relinquished their commissions, or, in the case of men, have been discharged from the army. These conditions were later expanded, most significantly to include the women's services. By order of the Army Council the Silver War Badge could not be awarded to a soldier or ex-soldier who was an inmate of an Asylum and men certified as suffering "general paralysis of the insane" and requests for such issues from next of kin etc. were turned down with advice that the man should reapply if and when he was discharged.

The rolls for the Silver War Badge, generally record the recipient's date of enlistment and discharge, whether he was discharged as the result of being wounded or through age or "sickness", and often give his age at time of discharge. It was not necessary for an officer or other rank to have had overseas service in order for him to qualify, so home service can be established if no service record survived. The badge was to be worn on the right breast when in civilian dress - it was forbidden to wear it on military uniform. The War Office covering note warned that if lost it would not be replaced, but when badges were handed in at police stations (etc.) they were returned to the War Office, and if the original recipient could still be traced at his / her discharge address then the badge was returned to them. The identity of a recipient could normally be established from the serial number on the rear of the badge and no other information was needed.

It has been suggested that one reason for the award was so that wounded soldiers

who had left the service and no longer wore uniform, would not be exposed to those zealots who were in the habit of hounding the innocent with their "white feathers" of supposed cowardice. The Antiques Road Show recently featured a "white feather" that had been sent to a conscientious objector and saved.

☆ ☆ ☆

Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons

September 2005

From the Illustrated London News 4th October.1845

In the College there is a case containing a portion of the intestines of Napoleon Bonaparte. But, perhaps, the object of the greatest interest is the preparation known as "The Shaft Case." On 13th June, 1812, Mr. Thomas **Tipple** was impaled, by the shaft of a chaise, near Stratford in Essex. The shaft entered his chest under the left arm, and came out under the right arm, being thrust through by the violence of an unruly horse, as far as the first tug-hook, which also penetrated the chest and wounded the left lung. Two veterinary surgeons Messrs E. and H. **Lawrence**, who were passing at the time, drew out the shaft, and, wonderful to relate, the patient recovered. He was attended by Mr. **Maiden** and Sir William **Blizzard** and survived the injury eleven years. The preparation of the chest, and the shaft itself, are side by side. (ET)

☆ ☆ ☆

James Owens V.C.

June 2010

When studying the casualty returns for the Essex Regiments Crimean War, which started in 1854, it soon became obvious that a large percentage of the Essex men were in fact born in Ireland. It was noted the 44th Foot had been stationed in Ireland for some 20 years, so that mystery was solved.

Later was researched the story of David **Embleton**, alias Frederick **Corbett** VC of the 60th Foot at which time the Curator of the Brentwood Museum drew our attention to another holder of Great Britain's highest award for bravery. James **Owens** is buried in Section E grave 148 of Brentwood's Lorne Road Cemetery and is marked by a cross.

When Queen Victoria, at the conclusion of the Crimean War instituted the Cross as the highest reward for valour in the field, actions of Owens of the 49th Foot (later the Royal Berkshire Regiment) in the Crimea were deemed to make him worthy of that award. He had been born at Killaine near Baillieboro, County Cavan (North-north-west of Dublin) in 1829 and had joined the army. On 30th October 1854 near Sebastopol whilst holding the rank of corporal (sic) he was described as "having personal encounter with the enemy and gave noble assistance to an officer of his regiment.

In Hyde Park on 26th June 1857 he received the Victoria Cross from Queen Victoria. He retired from the army with the rank of sergeant and settled down to a retirement in this county. In 1870 (March quarter) he married Elizabeth **Perin (Perren)** at Colchester, she had a 4 year old daughter and both had



Owens In the Crimea

been born in Taunton. By the 1881 census they were all three living at Rose Cottage, Great Hallingbury, Essex, he a "Sergt Pensioner." In 1901 he was living in Victoria Road, Romford with Edith Perrin aged 31, his daughter born in Taunton and single. That was what the internet initially told us.

Digging deeper

Looking into written records we found much more information. A visit to Kew began the extended story which rapidly began to assemble. WO 94/39 is a delightful handwritten muster role for the Tower of London. Along with the officers there were intriguing yeomanry jobs listed such as Bellringer and Scavenger, together with 40 Yeoman Warders. James Owens was appointed on 9th July 1870 with the initials CR and V+ by his name at number 40. He served there

until 11th June 1878 when he is Yeoman 34 "resigned."

Next to appear was a soldier's document WO97/1543 which was a revelation. It was written in Deesa, a Gujerat town in India on 11th October 1869, the proceedings of a Regimental board under Major Guild of 49th (Princess Charlotte of Wales) (Hertfordshire) Foot. It stated that 2845 Sergeant James Owens served over 8 years abroad, on the Ionian islands, Malta, Crimea (where he was present at the battles of Alma (20th September 1854) Inkerman (5th November 1854) and Capture of Sebastopol (9th September 1855) and in the East Indies for 3 years. His full service was over 21 years. It then stated that his conduct was good, he was in possession of the Victoria Cross, the Crimea Medal with clasps for the three battles, and the Turkish "Khedive's Star. He had been entered in the Regimental Defaulters book twice and tried by Court martial. The second page confirmed that he was 41, 5 feet 8½in tall, with a fresh complexion, grey eyes and dark brown hair. His place of birth was confirmed as Killaine, he was a labourer who joined the 49th Foot in Glasgow on 26th December 1848 when he was 20. His final description when discharged at Colchester had a note that his mother was to be told that he was drawing a pension. His intended place of residence was the Tower of London. Form A44 was dispatched to mother on 18th August 1870. Page 3 detailed his career. He had gone absent for 10 days in April 1849 and was tried by Regimental Court Martial. He was imprisoned for 14 days and put under pay stoppages. He was released on 15th May 1849 and after 5 years got Good Conduct Pay. On 1st April 1857 he was promoted corporal

and after 83 days to sergeant. This was convenient for he held that rank at the investiture 3 days later. He then re-engaged at Monaghan for another 11 years on 3rd February 1859 and on 12th November 1862 was appointed colour-sergeant. In June 1865 an incident led to his "colours" being taken away and the regiment downgrading him to sergeant. From 14th to 23rd July he was under arrest. On 24th he was tried by court martial, convicted of "misapplying Company's money" with his reduction in rank confirmed. He forfeited one Good Conduct pay for 14th July 1865. His discharge was approved for 22nd February 1870 by the office at Horse Guards.

His civilian career and family

In the 1861 census we found a seemingly unrelated entry where, in Taunton, Caroline **Clements** was living with a niece Antonia Perrin born in Gibraltar aged 2. This became clearer in the 1871 census when James Owens was found serving as a Yeoman Warder in the Tower of London with a large family. He, a widower, had married in the Catholic chapel of Saint James at Colchester on 12th January 1870 a widow. One child had the surname Perren the others Owens. It was now clear that he had been previously married? With him in the Tower was his new wife Elizabeth aged 38 born in Bishops Hull, Somerset, and the following children: Antonia Perren a daughter aged 12 born in Gibraltar (in nearby Bath Antonio **Perriano** got married in the March quarter of 1858), Mary aged 11 born in Ireland, Amelia J. aged 9 born in Ashton under Lyne, Edward aged 7 born in Manchester, Thomas H. born in Dublin, Edith 5 born in Taunton and James 4 born in the East Indies. Previously we only knew Edith

as his child. The birth index of army records show the children from Mary to Edith as belonging to families of the 49th Foot. In 1880 Antonia Elizabeth Perren married George Ishmael **Ball** in Islington, London.

Previously we knew of the family from 1871 and 1881 censuses. In the 1891 census James Owen (sic) and his Taunton born wife Elizabeth lived near High Cross, Colliers End, Standon near Puckeridge just across the county boundary in Hertfordshire. They then moved to Milton Road, Brentwood (then part of South Weald) and when she died

in 1900 he moved to Romford to live with his step-daughter Edith. Also in the house was a lodger and two nieces Nora Twisleton aged 15 and her sister Elsie aged 10. In 1883 we found that a John Sanderson **Twisleton** married Amelia J. Owens, again in Islington, but he had died before the turn of the century. James died at Romford aged 73 on 20th August 1901. Edith had married her 20 years old lodger between the census and his death. His Cross and medals were sold in London in 1902 and are now in the regimental museum at Salisbury.

☆ ☆ ☆

Curious Epitaph

June 2004

A correspondent to the Chelmsford Chronicle, 27th of June, 1845, describes the following epitaph from a stone in the vault of Prittlewell churchyard, to the memory of Ann and Dorothy, wives of J. **Freeborn**, who died in 1641 and 1658. The lines were, at that time, nearly obliterated and difficult to read....

“Under one stone two precious gems do lye,
Equell in worth, weigh, lustre, sanctity,
If yet, perhaps one of them might excell,
Which was't who knows; ask him, he knows them well
By long enjoyment. If he thus be press 'd
He'l pause, then answer truly both were best.
Was't in my choice that either of the twayne
Might be returned to me to enjoy again,
Which should I chuse, well since I know not whither
He mourn 'd for the loss of both, but wish for neither.
Yet here's my comfort, herein lies my hope,
The time a coming cabinets shall ope,
Which are lock 'd fast. Then shall I see
My jewels to my joy, my jewels me.”

Child Out Of Control At 7 Years

November 2002

12th January 1909 - Sarah **Powell** (7) a pauper of West Ham Union appeared, being charged with being out of control of the Guardians. She was admitted 12th June 1908 and was said to be depraved, untruthful and indecent in the presence of other children, used obscene language and picked other children's pockets. Asked if attempts had been made to reform her they were told that she does not speak the truth and was constantly picking the pockets of other children. She was ordered to be detained at the Waifs and Strays Society's Industrial School at Shipton, Oxfordshire until she was 16.

☆ ☆ ☆

African Boy Sold In England

December 2008

The Stamford Mercury records, under the date of November 30, 1771, that "at a late sale of a gentleman's effects at Richmond, an African boy was put up and sold for £32" and adds "a shocking instance in a free country!" Is there any authentic record of a later sale of a slave in England? Pishey **Thompson**. Notes and Queries 1858.

☆ ☆ ☆

A Bomb In A Police Station

August 1999

A German bomb exploded in Grays Police Station in 1944 seriously injuring Sergeant Wally **Jordan**. He eventually recovered and completed his service at Epping.

Self Murder

June 2008

October 4th 1783 Inquest on Friday at Ballingdon, Essex on Mr **Hurwood** a millwright who on the day before poisoned himself by taking two ounces of arsenic, after remaining in agony for five hours he died. Self murder, and on Sunday morning early he was buried in the cross roads there with a stake drove through his body near the pound on Ballingdon Hill.

☆ ☆ ☆

South Shoebury

November 2001

November 9th 1671. Henry **Hockett** aged 20, a fisherman from Foulness was driven ashore in this Parish. He tumbled overboard from his own boat about a fortnight since. Was much eaten by the fish and was known by his boat, of accounts found in his pocket, not damaged though he had been lost so long. Buried November 10th, 1761

☆ ☆ ☆

"Somewhere in Essex." (Perhaps!)

December 2008

Here lies the man 'Richard, and Mary his wife:

Their surname was Pritchard, they lived without strife.

And the reason was plain, they abounded in riches:

They had no care or pain, and the wife wore the breeches

Unscrewed

March 2009

19th January 1909 - James **Dooley** (40) appeared at West Ham Magistrates Court charged with assaulting constables **Newland** and **Martin**. He was seen in the Broadway Stratford at 6.30pm, using bad language and assaulting a gentleman. He refused to go home and threw himself on the ground, severely kicking Constable Martin in the left side. After a violent struggle the officers managed to subdue him by unscrewing his wooden leg, which he was using as a weapon. He was said to have 54 previous convictions for insulting behaviour and violence and was sentenced to 4 months hard labour for assaulting Martin and 2 months for assaulting Newland. "Can they run concurrently he asked" (Laughter). By June 22nd Dooley (known for his wooden leg as "Peggy") was out again in public and this time charged with kicking Constable 832 K **Barr**. Another month's hard labour.

☆ ☆ ☆

Convicted By A Mouse

November 2001

Essex Chronicle Summer Assize 1829 – Samuel **Southgate**, alias **Day**, was accused of Burglary at Langham. The Sergeant at Arms (A council official, this was before policemen) went to the Bugle Horn public house at Colchester and among articles seized from Southgate's lodging was a piece of cheese. Mrs **Page**, the burglary victim, identified the cheese from nibble marks made by a mouse in her pantry. He was convicted and a death sentence passed which was to be commuted.

Convicted Priest

March 2009

2nd November 1909 - At Essex Assizes Douglas Phillip Roper **Nunn**, clerk in Holy Orders received 3 years penal servitude for breaking into Clavering Church, Wicken Church and Wendon Church

☆ ☆ ☆

Death Of A Yeoman

March 2009

9th November 1909 - The body of Sergeant Major William **Silwood** D.S.O. of the Essex Yeomanry was found in a ditch in Epping Forest. The circumstances were a mystery. Silwood was previously a Corporal-Major (Sergeant) in the Life Guards. On 21st December it was reported that a subscription of £300 has been raised for Forest Keeper Silwood's widow and 9 children.

☆ ☆ ☆

A 1796 Census

by Linda Brooks

December 2010

I discovered a little gem - an unofficial census for the village of Ardleigh in September 1796. It can be found on D/P 263/1/5, images 15 - 21.

The minister made the census in case the country went to war! Three cheers for a forward-thinking minister!

☆ ☆ ☆

Wife For Sale

September 2008 - Martyn Lockwood

From The Times, March 18th, 1833: -

On Friday last, being market day at Epping, about the middle of the day, a good looking woman, about 30 years of age, was led into the market place with a rope around her neck and waist, by her husband, Thomas **Bruce**, an ostler, the magistrates sitting in petty sessions at the time in the town. In a few minutes the market place was crowded, and the master of the parochial workhouse, undertaking the office of auctioneer, endeavoured to amuse the multitude by his ludicrous imitation of the professional addresses of these often impressive public orators, in offering the woman for sale, and expatiating on her qualifications. She was put up at 1s 6d, and after a bidding which could not be characterised as spirited, knocked down at 2s.6d, to a labourer named James **Bradley**, who immediately paid down the purchase money, and 6d for duty &c., and carried off his purchase to a public house amidst the shouting of the assembled multitude.

Their noise having reached the bench of Justices, an officer was despatched for the husband, who was brought before them in a state of intoxication, having already spent the half-crown in gin. It was proved by the parish officer that he had deserted his wife. He said in his defence that he had been compelled to marry her six years ago by the parish officers, in consequence of her having sworn a child to him; that he had never since lived with her and that she had lived in open adultery with the man Bradley, by whom she had been purchased; and that he had been told that by publicly selling her in the market he could get rid of any charge by the parish for the maintenance of her or her children. The magistrates strongly reprobated his conduct and committed him to prison for having deserted his wife. Our correspondent does not say how they acted towards the parish authority who officiated as auctioneer.

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Some Questions Asked And Answered

November 1974 - from Essex Family Historian No.1

Do you know what **childwite** is? Have you ever used a **smoot**? What was a **beggarbanger**?

ANSWERS- **Childwite** was a fine paid to his lord by the father of an illegitimate child as compensation for cheapening the lord's bond-woman. A **smoot** was a passage between two houses. A **Beggarbanger** was a parish officer responsible for controlling the stay of a stranger in the district. From A book review of "The local Family Historian's Encyclopaedia." by John **Richardson**

*I am so happy
that I think I will renew
my subscription*



*A Happy Christmas to all our readers.
Also, just a polite reminder that you
too can renew your subscriptions .*

