

# Chelmsford & District NT Supporter Group



No 92  
Spring 2021

## Newsletter

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### Chairman's Message

Hello and welcome to the News Letter. We are all affected by operating in lock-down and mask wearing, and having talks by Zoom because of Covid-19 in these unusual times, and therefore, missing all our usual activities. I'm sure we all welcome the good news that Alan Arnot is continuing as Treasurer, and Laurie Boyall as Accounts Examiner, for the present. Thanks to David Simmonds for his monitoring and reporting of SHOAL (Support and Help On Line), and other members' comments and input.

The committee have agreed to move the AGM to September subject to Government advice at the time.

Monthly meetings by Zoom have been of high quality, and we have been able to substitute 'non Zoom' speakers for 'Zoom speakers', mostly free of charge. We have also emailed NT members who are not Chelmsford & District NT Supporter Group (C&D NT SG) members, and others for future recruitment and/or awareness.

Thanks to Paul Chaplin for funding and arranging the Zooming. We plan to continue with monthly zoom meetings until April, because of the current restrictions. Thanks also to Jackie and Alan Arnot for their very good reports of the meetings.

We will consult with the Cramphorn Centre staff about our Autumn meetings as soon as we can, and the possibility of streaming our talks to members on the internet as some of them may still not want to attend in person.

Emailing/MailChimping members about meetings, newsletters and other matters has been very successful, and has saved much time, work and cost. We plan to use this procedure for the autumn meetings

Jackie Arnot was interviewed in July (1hr 12min in) on Rotary Round-up, which is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday morning of the month, on Chelmsford Community Radio, plus myself in November (19min in). If you missed this you can listen to it on this link.

<https://www.rotary-ribi.org/districts/page.php?PgID=560787&DistrictNo=1240>

I would like to thank all committee members for their input and Keith Otter for maintaining our website. I wish you all good health and look forward to the outings, the September Caernarfon holiday and meeting each other again. Keep well.

Chris

## Editors Comments

This is a much larger Newsletter than usual mainly because the meeting reports are in more detail particularly for those members not able to Zoom. First of all, I would recommend listening to Jackie and Chris on the above link.

Congratulations to member Val Chiswell on her 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday charity parachute jump, and to Pam Swaby on receiving her BEM medal in the New Year Honours. We have also included an article about Pam Swaby BEM for her community work in Chelmsford as I thought readers would find it most interesting.

I am sorry the NL is later than usual but I have been waiting for confirmation of the outing dates which has been slow due to Covid19. As usual in the Spring Newsletter there is the outing information and booking form on the last page.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of the Newsletter either on the screen or printing it out first. If you do print it out please feel free to give it to a friend, relative or neighbour for them to read.

Paul

## A Note from our President David Simmonds

In our Autumn Newsletter, I wrote a piece *Do you like asking Questions?* to encourage participation in the Trust's national members' broadcast last November.

The Trust plans to hold an AGM this year on Saturday 30 October 2021, although, of course, its format will depend on any Covid-19 restrictions in force at the time. The Trust's AGM provides an opportunity for members, like you, to hear from and question the Trust's senior staff and trustees. Resolutions put forward by 50+ members are debated and voted upon, although charity law means that they are not binding on the trustees.

There will also be an election for members of Council, which appoints and advises the Trustees. Further information is on the Trust's website (at <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/annual-general-meeting>) and I would be happy to talk to anyone about the meeting.

## From Pam Swaby member of Chelmsford & District NT Supporter Group and Chelmsford Civic Society was awarded a British Empire Medal in 2021

When we moved to Chelmsford in 2008, Malcolm Noble, Chairman of Chelmsford Civic Society, was launching a new initiative entitled 'Changing Chelmsford' stimulating community action to celebrate and grow the culture, character and creativity of Chelmsford. At this meeting, workshops took place and as a result the consensus was for a much-needed community space in Chelmsford and also an annual Chelmsford Festival. Leonie Ramondt willingly stepped up to the plate. I was tasked with organizing the first Purely Essex Food Festival, a River Festival on the River Can and Springfield Basin and a mock Magistrates trial in

Essex Council Chamber which was repeated the following year. As there is so much industrial history in Chelmsford, I challenged someone to take on the role of a walking history guide. Alan Pamphilon, who picked up the gauntlet and ran with it and is now responsible as well for Heritage Open Days and blue plaques.

In 2015, we campaigned to save the World's First Wireless Factory with crowdfunding but sadly the developer did not give us sufficient time to raise the money for crowdfunding. However, we ran a Marconi exhibition there for 3 months including talks by Prof D George of Manchester Uni, Dr Elizabeth Bruton Science Museum and Tim Maltin Titanic Expert – on that occasion we were donated a full –size replica of the Titanic Radio Room which now resides at Oaklands Museum. We were strongly advised to submit an application to Heritage Lottery Fund but once again the timescale was not conducive. As a result of my requesting in 2016 that the British Science Festival add Chelmsford to the nomination list in 2020 – we were delighted to succeed – however Covid intervened and it will not now be until 2021. Hence Marc De'ath of Chelmsford City Council (CCC) set up monthly 'Ignite' Meetings to start the ball rolling- with the launching in Jan 2020 - the Chinese New Year.



2020 was the Centenary of Marconi's first radio broadcast by Dame Nellie Melba at the New St factory and we unveiled the first blue plaque in the City Centre with support of Michael Hurst of CCC on 15 June 2020. A play was created by Tim Wander, author and historian, and sadly took place without an audience. The hope is to repeat it again next June – 12 months later.

Finally, I came across this quote from Michelle Obama 'if you want to have a say in your community, if you truly want the power to control your destiny – you have to get involved – **where you live!**'

**My new wish list** – Shire Hall - ongoing discussions with East of England NT director and others - for science and heritage centre, punts on the river, rickshaws for taking elderly in the park, outdoor musical instruments in parks, Birth of British Broadcasting 2022, 2025 City of Culture.

## Reports on Evening Lectures to date

### Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2020

#### Tudor Education

A Zoom talk by Tony Tuckwell,

*Report by Jackie & Al Arnot*

It was a brilliant Zoom. Tony started by taking us back to early mediaeval times. The pre-reformation Catholic Church dominated society and people's thinking. This included a firm belief in purgatory, a sort of intermediate stage between hell and heaven. The length of time souls spent there was determined by the prayers and Masses of the living. Frightening depictions were shown in church paintings and murals. The Black Death of 1348 killed a third of the population of Europe and brought about a re-think amongst the survivors. One

outcome was the establishment of chantries. Although linked to cathedrals and the larger churches, their growth was undertaken not by the clergy but by families and communities who were looking for a better future for their children. In 1379 a chantry started a school in which children were taught Latin grammar – hence the future name of Grammar Schools. By 1535, Essex alone had 64 chantries, of which 16 included schools. Henry VIII is well-known, of course, for the Dissolution of the Monasteries, when, to put it mildly, there was a redistribution of wealth. The Mildmay family of Chelmsford were one of its many beneficiaries.

The Protestant Reformation was well underway by now and was re-enforced by the child-king, Edward VI after Henry VIII died in 1547. Belief in Purgatory, together with the practices that went with it, faded away and although most people had few regrets about the disappearance of the monasteries, they were concerned about the future of chantries, which, as well as providing education, also supported hospitals, care of the sick and elderly and other social concerns. Commissioners were appointed early in Edward VI's reign to check on them. Their records for Essex make reference to Chelmsford (KEGS), Colchester, Saffron Walden, Waltham Abbey and Dedham.

By today's standards, the Grammar Schools were small and catered for boys only (sorry girls!). They had two classes, both being of mixed ages, and were taught in one room. The younger ones were taught by somebody called the Usher, the older ones by the Master. The curriculum was very narrow, with Latin the dominant subject. Finance was always a problem (what's new?!) and even by 1551 there was little left in the King's Treasury to pay the teachers. As time went on schools relied increasingly on local endowments. In Chelmsford, familiar historical dynasties like the Knightly's, the Mildmays, the Petres and the Tyrells became associated with the support of KEGS. Local corporations also played a part since KEGS received little income from endowments. To supplement their finances, some grammar schools had started to take in boarders.

Not surprisingly, Tony concentrated on the somewhat chequered history of KEGS. The premises it occupied in 1627 suffered a roof collapse; from 1853 to 1856 the school closed altogether; a pupil called Thomas Marshall died as a result of beatings from a sadistic Usher. But by the latter half of the C19 the KEGS that we know today gradually established itself. Demand from the growing middle classes led to a widening of the curriculum, taking in subjects like Science and Geography. Prime Minister W.E.Gladstone had brought in the Endowed School Act in 1869 which made certain subjects compulsory. In 1891 the school moved to its present site in Broomfield Road, having survived a variety of premises, including one now occupied by County Hall. Scholarships were introduced after WWI. Many of its pupils now go on to study at Oxford or Cambridge.

Questions:

Supporter Group members had joined the Zoom talk and Chairman, Chris Bellamy, was able to invite questions afterwards. Among the topics covered by Tony in his replies were the following....

- The original Chantry building of 1379 has never been discovered
- England has never been occupied during a war and therefore has not had to comply with an educational system imposed by a foreign power

### **Conclusion**

Our first-ever talk by Zoom was a resounding success and bodes well for future talks during the seemingly never-ending restrictions of Covid-19

**Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020, 7.30 pm**

**A talk on Flint**

A Zoom talk by Ros Mercer, Secretary of Essex Rocks and Minerals Society.

*Summary report by Al and Jackie Arnot*

*There were 46 screens of us eagerly awaiting at the start of the evening.*

I came to our second Zoom talk knowing nothing about flint other than it was used as tools by Stone Age Man, as a child running on Hastings beach once the barbed wire had been cleared away and that we had flint in the South Porch of Chelmsford Cathedral, (Jackie) so I knew that at least there would be something for me to learn tonight and I certainly wasn't mistaken! Ros gave us a very engaging lecture.

The familiar quartz material we know simply as 'flint' came about as a result of particular circumstances which began 100 to 65 million years ago during the Upper Cretaceous period of the earth's history. Most of the low-lying parts of Europe were covered by the 'Chalk Sea'. The climate was warm and there was no polar ice. The sea water was teeming with a collage of plants and animals, such as shellfish, scallops and sea urchins. Sponges were particularly numerous. Chalk (Calcium Carbonate) makes the sea water alkaline and causes the sponges to dissolve. The sponges and other marine plankton had absorbed silica (silicon dioxide, SiO<sub>2</sub>) which were then dissolved in the alkaline waters and drawn into the chalk sea bed. During this process, further chemical reactions occurred as a result of hydrogen sulphide bubbling up from deeper in the sea bed which combined with the oxygen to form acid. In this environment silica came out of solution and subsequently hardened into flint. Over time, the outside acquired a whitish cortex layer, 5mm or more in thickness.

The processes described by Ros were illustrated by pictures and photos. We saw layers of flint in the white chalk cliffs along the south coast including Beachy Head, together with images from electron microscope studies showing the variety of internal structures. The shape of flint can vary between the neat, rounded pebbles found on the sea shore of my home town Hastings (J) formed by sea erosion over millions of years – to the irregularly-shaped pieces that can be found in fields and gardens. Sometimes the flint piece contains strange lines that can be mistaken for fossils. These 'Liesegang rings', named after the German chemist R.E.Liesegang (1869-1947), are caused by iron and other minerals diffusing through the flint. Sometimes the flint contains quartz crystals or layers of the mineral chalcedony. Fossils are quite common, particularly bivalves or sea urchins but rarer finds, such as shark's teeth, can occur. Fossils of marine creatures such as sea urchins that have been involved in the formation of flint are sometimes "Caught in the Act"!

Flint as building material: Because we have no sandstone or other building materials in our area our ancestors used what they had and East Anglia is rich in buildings which include flint in their structure. However, the uneven shape makes it unsuitable for corners. Hence, St Mary's church, Broomfield, has a rounded tower; St Andrew's, Willingale, has brick corners. Gradually they discovered that they could make patterns and 'Knapped' flint could be used decoratively, as with Dedham church and our Cathedral. Bridewell at Norwich cleverly used 'nippled' flint.

Flint in aggregate: The gravel pits of Essex, being part of the ancient Thames river bed, are rich in flint and aggregate is extracted on a large scale. Examples include the Bulls Lodge quarry at Boreham and Highwood quarry at Dunmow. It is now Chelmsford's major industry.

At the end of Ros's fascinating presentation, Chris invited questions, of which there were three:

- 1 *In reply to a query about flint as an implement*, Ros explained that a large piece, free of holes, would be needed. Stone Age man used reindeer antlers to knap the flint into cutting and scraping tools. They were cleverly able to strike a pebble and knew by the "ring" whether or not it would make a good tool. Once a large pointed tool had been made the smaller chipped off pieces could be used as scrapers for hides or paring knives as they were razor sharp.
- 2 *If sand is also a form of silica, why is it so different from flint?* Ros explained that sand is a consequence of erosion whereas flint originates from complex chemical processes. Ancient man discovered that flint could be heated in fire and then carefully dropped into water to heat it, possibly to make nettle tea. The flint was turned red by the heat.
- 3 *Is flint transported in glaciers?* Ros explained that although flint is transported, information of the route taken by a glacier was more likely told by other rocks. For example, rocks have been found in Essex that originated in Snowdonia. In a nutshell - "Flint itself does not tell us an awful lot!"

To conclude, Ros showed us samples of flint from her extensive collection, including some with sponges, scampi and sea urchins, as well as magnificent specimens of banded flint and red flint. We saw examples of beautifully polished flint and a Hagstone, which is often used as a talisman. Finally, we were shown her 'pièce de résistance', a large highly irregularly-shaped specimen that would be the envy of any geologist!

There was so much to learn from the work that Ros and her husband Ian do and she directed us to EMRS.org to find out more.

## **Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

### **Brunel and his Great Ships**

A Zoom talk by Richard Pusey TD, FRCS

#### *Report by Jackie & Al Arnot*

After being welcomed by Chairman, Chris Bellamy, Richard started by outlining Brunel's family background and his unusual Christian names. 'Isambard' (from the German 'Eisenbart', meaning 'iron beard') came from his French civil engineer father Marc Isambard Brunel, while 'Kingdom' was from his governess mother, Sophia Kingdom. He was born in April 1806 in Portsmouth and had a happy and fruitful upbringing in spite of his father's financial shortcomings. Most of his serious training took place in France, from which he returned in 1822. His father, Marc, had been working in New York supplying blocks to the expanding British navy. He returned to Portsmouth to continue in similar work but his greatest achievement came with the construction of the Thames Tunnel between Rotherhithe and Wapping, starting in 1825. In spite of the many dangers and difficulties it still exists today as part of the underground system. A museum at Rotherhithe displays some of the original artefacts.

The tunnel was completed in Marc's lifetime but young Isabard had no further involvement with the tunnel after its completion. Instead, he used the abandoned site at Rotherhithe for his experiments with gas power. These turned out an utter failure. His main break-through

came in 1833 with his appointment as chief engineer to the Great Western Railway, which ran from London to Bristol with a later extension to Exeter. As well as being the designer of Paddington Station, Brunel's growing fame and status led inevitably to his involvement in bridge construction, many of which survive to this day. Richard showed pictures of the most famous, such as the Hungerford Bridge, the Maidenhead Railway Bridge – which, at the time, the largest brick arch bridge span – the Royal Albert Bridge over the River Tamar, and, of course, the iconic Bristol Suspension Bridge.

But Brunel's vision extended even wider, seeing his railway as the stepping point to further destinations. This led to his other great exploit: Transatlantic Shipping. Pioneering work had been achieved in 1819 with the *SS Savannah*, the first steam-assisted sailing ship to cross the Atlantic. In 1835, work started on the *SS Great Western*, financed by the newly-formed Great Western Steamship Company.

It was a wooden paddle steamer, built in Bristol at a cost of £35,000, although the engines were made in Lambeth. It was launched in 1837 and had its maiden voyage in 1838, crossing the Atlantic to New York with just seven passengers! However it went on to become a successful boat commercially. Its life included two Essex connections. During a fire in the Thames just off Leigh-on-Sea, Brunel fell down a ladder and broke his leg. Three crew members managed to row him ashore for treatment at Canvey Island. The ship was also involved in the drainage of Tollesbury marshes. It was finally scrapped at Millbank in 1856.

In spite of its success, *SS Great Western* illustrated the shortcomings of paddles as a means of propulsion. They were fine in rivers and on lakes, but the rough waters of ocean travel frequently lifted the paddles out of the water, causing major damage to the engines. Screws were clearly the way forward and were installed in the next of Brunel's great ships, the iron-hulled *SS Great Britain*, built in Bristol in 1843. Its launch in 1844 was attended by Prince Albert. After a year of successful Atlantic crossings, it went aground at Dumdrum Bay, County Down. It was salvaged without too much damage but its short glory days were over and it was used to transport emigrants to Australia. It saw War Service in the Crimea at Balaclava Harbour in 1856 as a coal transporter and wool store. It ended its days in the Falkland Islands. Some of its metal salvage was used to repair the damage on *HMS Exeter* after the Battle of the River Plate in 1939. After much publicity and fund-raising it was towed back in 1970 to the Avon Gorge in Bristol where a major restoration was undertaken. It is now a popular and much-visited museum.

In 1852, Brunel turned to the third and last of his great ships, the *Great Eastern*, which was larger by far than its predecessors, earning the nickname *Leviathan*. The Isle of Dogs was chosen for its construction because it had the famous London Ironworks, which had successfully built other famous vessels, such as *HMS Warrior*. It was built as a double-skinned iron ship in the John Scott Russell shipyard. During the construction, a workman fell down between the two iron skins, never to be seen again. In fact, shipyard work was highly dangerous, with many major accidents and injuries. The works had an 'ambulance' which was basically a wooden wheelbarrow. The Poplar Hospital was opened in 1855, specifically to treat injuries sustained in the shipyards. Although much of the original site has gone, such as the huge gates of Millwall Dock, there is an ambiance that persists till today. West Ham Football Club has for its logo two crossed hammers of the type used on the shipyard while part of the original plate is on display at Canning Town tube station. Because of its huge size, the *Great Eastern* had to be constructed 'sideways on'. Part of the original launching ramp can be seen in the Thames at low tide.

The *Great Eastern* was completed in 1857; 3000 tickets were sold for its launch in November

of that year. After two trial trips it had its maiden voyage from Southampton to New York on 17<sup>th</sup> June 1860. The ship was the same size as a modern cruise ship but in spite of this (or because of?) it was not a success as a passenger ship. The intended long-haul to Australia was abandoned because of the shallowness of the Suez Canal. It was used to good effect in the laying of the first transatlantic telephone cable but it ended its days being used for entertainment and advertising. It was finally beached and broken up off Birkenhead in 1888. One of its flagpoles is on display at Liverpool FC.

In the meantime, Brunel, a heavy smoker, had suffered a stroke in September 1859 and died ten days later at the age of 53. He was buried, like his father, in Kensal Green Cemetery. In 2019, an anniversary ceremony at the cemetery was attended by a piper and Brunel's great-great-granddaughter. His son, Henry Marc, went on to be a successful engineer and worked with Sir John Wolfe Barry on the construction of Tower Bridge.

Question time afterwards: three questions were put to Richard

1 *Did Brunel have any failures?*

Yes, particularly with his 'vacuum railway' which was a financial disaster.

2 *Were there any formal Engineers' qualifications at the time?*

Yes, in a way, but the academic universities e.g Oxford and Cambridge, did not have engineering faculties, unlike France. Brunel received most of his early training in Paris.

3 *Did the family name 'Kingdom' continue among Brunel's successors?*

Yes, to a limited extent. His elder son continued the name 'Isambard'.

## **Wednesday 9th December 2020**

### **The Roman Circus of Colchester**

A Zoom talk given by Lesley Wood

*Report by Jackie & Al Arnot*

This talk was a replacement of what was originally planned, which was considered to be unsuitable for a Zoom presentation.

Lesley, a retired Civil Servant, had put together her talk following a visit to the site in Colchester in October. She started by reminding us that Colchester, then known to the Romans as *Camulodunum*, was the capital of Roman Britain. It was very much a mini-version of Rome itself, with temples, basilicas and baths. The Temple of Claudius was later incorporated into the mediaeval castle. The circus site was discovered as recently as 2005 and was reckoned to be the largest outside Rome. Its location is some distance away from the main part of the town, lying near the present Circular Road North. It was a long arena, with a 450m track and a central division called a *Spina*. Unfortunately one end is buried under the Flagstaff House complex, but the other end is laid in open ground, enabling extensive excavation work to be carried out. The nearby Visitors' Centre presents talks and has scale models of the city. Reproductions of the entry gates, the starting area and the seating tiers have been added. Roman VIPs enjoyed views of the circus from a raised balcony above the entrance.

A racing event would begin with a procession from the temple, preceded by the important citizens. The racing teams, called *factiones*, would enter at the gates, wearing appropriate 'team' colours of white, red, blue or green. The chariots would be drawn by teams of two or four horses, mostly imported from North Africa or Spain. They would have needed 5 years of training and would work up to about 20 years before being retired.

The charioteers would be well padded to protect themselves from multiple accidents and would carry a knife to cut themselves free in an emergency. They raced round the track seven times in races that were often frenzied and brutal. Crashes, either random or deliberate, were frequent. Cheating was endemic since huge sums of money were involved through betting. The prize money was often considerable. A somewhat jerky clip from the chariot race in *Ben Hur* was played as a reminder of how brutal the races could be.

The Circus site is not the only one in Colchester to benefit from recent excavations. Extensive 'digs' have taken place in front of the old Colchester Hospital with some valuable finds such as pottery ovens, coins and graves. Lesley rounded off her fascinating talk by showing a slide of a painting of the Emperor Claudius (AD 43) by Peter Froste. She encouraged us to go to the visitors' centre and see for ourselves before the centre closes over the Christmas and New Year period.

In question time afterwards, Lesley was asked the following:

- 1 *How often did the races take place?*  
Certainly, once a month at least but possibly more frequently Chariot teams would travel around to other venues.
- 2 One member commented on the models in the visitors' centre, noticing that many houses had a curved roof. This had come as a surprise to archaeologists
- 3 *How did people get to the circus?*  
Usually on foot, with a few on horseback depending on distance. It is unsure what the sanitary arrangements were!
- 4 *Did the chariot teams move around to other venues?*  
The charioteers and their support teams yes; the horses were usually stabled locally.
- 5 *Was there an entry fee?*  
Probably not. Money was raised by betting and gambling.

Before close down, Chairman Chris Bellamy thanked Lesley for a fascinating talk.

### **Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021, 7.30 pm**

### **How Essex helped supply the forces of Edward III at the beginning of the 100 years War**

A Zoom talk by Neil Wiffen

*Summary report by Al and Jackie Arnot*

Our Speaker:

Neil Wiffen is a historian with special interest in local history. Since 2000 he has worked at the Essex Records Office and is a former Honorary Editor of the *Essex Journal*.

Neil began by explaining the background to the Hundred Years War, 1337-1453. (the term 'Hundred Years War', which actually lasted 116 years, was invented during the 19<sup>th</sup> century). When William the Conqueror claimed the English throne in 1066, thereby becoming King of England, he was still known in France as the Duke of Normandy and was obliged to pay homage to The King of France, which he was unwilling to do. Subsequent English Kings found themselves in a similar dilemma, resulting in deteriorating relationships between France and England with lots of posturing and power struggles. England's other traditional enemy, Scotland, formed a loose alliance with France which meant that English Kings had two enemies to grapple with. Many skirmishes took place, including raids by the French on southern ports,

the defence against which was proving costly. Further intrigue was festering through the growing power of the Low Countries, particularly with the wool trade. The King of France was particularly resentful that Edward III (1327-77) was harbouring Robert de Artois, whom the French regarded as a traitor. Matters came to a head in 1337 when King Philip VI confiscated the province of Aquitaine which Edward had inherited through the marriage of Henry II to Eleanor of Aquitaine. The historian Jonathan Sumption regards this as the spark which ignited the Hundred Years War.

#### Preparation for the War.

Neil quoted the famous remark of Napoleon - "An army marches on its stomach". This was no less true for Edward III who made extensive preparations for his invading army and navy. The National Archives Office at Kew has parchment documents relating to this preparation and we were shown small excerpts from their records. Neil was able to translate the Latin texts as well as explaining the - now obsolete - measures used at the time. The most common of these was the 'Quarter', equivalent to 217.7 kg, and also the 'Stone' which was then made up of 13lbs instead of the modern 14lbs. The mechanics of the supply began with the County Sheriffs, which in the case of Essex was John de Coggeshale, and the 'Receiver of Victuals', a man called Willian Dunstaple. They in turn had an army of representatives, mainly from local merchants. The monasteries provided another source of supplies. The goods were usually paid for but at rates often below their market price. Their acquisition was therefore "neither romantic nor fair". Neil showed slides detailing the items that were purchased, with their quantities and sources, such as wheat, barley, beans, malt, fish (usually dried and salted), ham and cheese. Eastern Essex, which was nearer the coast, was particularly renowned for its sheeps' cheese. Hardware included spades, shovels, axes, kettles and tripods. Separate negotiations had to be made for the 'hardware' of war, such as horses, carts, catapults and longbows. The last-named had actually been successfully used for the first time against the Scottish army at the Battle of Halidon Hill near Berwick-on-Tweed in July 1333. The archers themselves came mainly from Ireland.

Once collected, the supplies were sent first to Colchester for storage and then forwarded to Ipswich, where they were recorded by William Dunstaple. Ipswich at the head of the Orwell estuary provided shelter for the town which enhanced its importance. Harwich had also increased in size and status as a result of the war preparations. Supplies from these ports could then be shipped to Calais but this had to cease in 1347 when the French re-captured the town. Nevertheless, the English army continued to be supplied throughout the entire war in spite of problems and unpredictability, particularly with food being affected by bad harvests and crop failures.

#### Conclusion:

Essex was heavily involved in the war effort, as was the case in the two World Wars.

Various factors contributed to its success:

- a sophisticated infrastructure through an efficient network of local officials and links
- networks of supplies were well administered, even leading on occasions to a surplus
- well-developed methods of food production, particularly of malt and cheese
- a well-informed local population through news announcements from the churches.

The populace genuinely feared an enemy invasion and even established equivalents of a Home Guard and 'Dig for Victory' movements.

Question time:

Two questions were put to Neil

- 1 *Edward's mother, Isabella, was French so how did the enmity develop between the two nations?*

It was really a matter of inheritance rather than family ties. Edward didn't actually claim the throne of France until 1340.

2 *The amount of food seemed small for a large army; how long did it last?*

Actually, not very long! However other English counties and regions were taking turns to send supplies. Neil recommended the book "The Crecy Campaign" for further reading. *(sorry I didn't catch the author's name)*

Afterwards, Neil was thanked for his fascinating talk. Notices were given out about future talk and events at the Essex Records Office.

## **Still to Come**

Notices will be given via e-mail beforehand.

### **10<sup>th</sup> March**

A zoom talk by Christian Hance on 'A talk on Wildlife and Climate Change'

### **14<sup>th</sup> April**

Copped Hall - Its History and its Renovation and Restoration Speaker Linda Stewart of the Copped Hall Trust

### **C&D NT SG AGM 2021** **8<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> September**

The AGM will be postponed until September due to Covid19 restrictions. The proposed date is Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> September. Again, due to Covid19 restrictions means that we are unable to book the Cramphorn Theatre at the time of writing.

**Please regard this notice as giving the official notification of the AGM**

### **OCTOBER MEETING 2021** **Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2021** **Please put the date in your diary now!**

**We have invited Hilary McGrady the National Trust Director General to speak to us at the October meeting**

**We look forward to her presentation and meeting her in person in the break.**

## Keeping up a Reputation

### *Perhaps sometimes you wouldn't want to?!*

Lord Ravenscraig was delighted to receive an email from his friend, Professor Denison, asking if he could book the Great Hall at Ravenscraig Castle. The two men had met at university and, though their career paths had diverged, with Lord Ravenscraig going into the legal profession and Professor Denison taking up medicine, they had remained firm friends.

Professor Denison had become a leading expert in cardiac surgery and was planning to give a lecture on the latest developments in heart valve replacement surgery and believed Ravenscraig Castle would be an ideal venue.

"It will be a great honour, all the most eminent men and women in the field of heart surgery will be in the audience" his Lordship enthused to Morag, his head of Hospitality Services.

"We must get every detail right. There should be a welcome drink, with canapes, for members of the audience as they arrive. After his lecture there will be a reception, with drinks and a buffet, where people can meet the Professor and ask him questions".

"I saw him interviewed on television a few weeks ago" said Morag. "He has certainly had a very impressive career and looks a most distinguished gentleman".

"He certainly is, but he is also very absent-minded", chuckled Lord Ravenscraig.

"Oh, come Sir, I don't think that can be quite true. No-one gets to be a leading specialist in heart surgery through being absent-minded" said Morag.

"In his profession, no, but in his private life, yes. He's been known to come to work wearing odd shoes, and once he attended a grand dinner with a pencil stuck behind his ear".

Morag smiled disbelievingly and hurried off to start checking her files for a top-of-the-range caterer who she would book to provide the refreshments.

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A respectful hush fell over the Great Hall as Professor Denison took his place on the platform. Introduction over, he moved to a table in front of a large screen.

"Today I want to tell you about the latest advances in heart valve replacement surgery" he told his audience.

"In particular I shall concentrate on a new technique which has shown very promising results. I shall demonstrate the procedure on the body of a frog, which I shall dissect in front of you. The process will be filmed and shown on the screen behind me, so you can all follow it".

Professor Denison took a sterile cloth from his briefcase, spread it over the table, then took out, and opened, a case of dissecting instruments. He then unzipped a cool-bag, turned it upside down and shook it over the cloth. A ham sandwich fell out. The Professor looked bewildered.

"That's odd" he mused.

"I was sure I'd eaten my lunch".

*Shirley Deering*

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Visit our web site at <a href="http://WWW.ChelmsfordNTgroup.org.uk">WWW.ChelmsfordNTgroup.org.uk</a> for up to date information on evening lectures and outings.
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## Summer Outings 2021

**Conditions: Please read the following conditions carefully.**

Booking Lists will open on a first-come, first-served basis after the posting of this newsletter.

Please send the following to Paul Chaplin

- a stamped addressed envelope for **each** outing
- Complete and return the form on the last page
- a cheque payable to 'Chelmsford & District National Trust' to cover the **deposit of £5.00 per person for each outing (One cheque for all outings please)**

At the time of going to press we have not been on all the recce's. Prices may change slightly if we spot an opportunity we think you shouldn't miss! Prices quoted are for a senior citizen rate including hire of coach, drivers' tip, entrance fee(s) and at this stage, the deposit. **Coaches leave from outside the Civic Theatre usually at 8:30am.**

To check your place, please e-mail or telephone Paul

Refunds of deposits will normally be made if we are notified of a cancellation in time to decide whether one or two coaches are required, or if we cannot offer you a place. For later cancellations, deposits will be refunded only if we can fill the place. Refunds of pre-paid tickets can only be made if we are able to fill the place. All refunds will be paid **at the end of the season** in order to minimise the number of transactions needed. **Normally £5.00 or less will not be refunded.** Booking slips will be sent out about three to four weeks before the date of the outing, a viable coach-load at a time. Everyone else will be on the Reserve List and will be contacted in turn, either to be offered a place or be informed that there will not be room.

### Remember:

- To put the dates in your diary, especially the time of departure
- To put the details in a safe place
- That the wearing of seat belts is now compulsory in this country
- Some locations have uneven surfaces
- It is better to wear 'sensible' shoes for comfort and to avoid damaging floors
- Don't be afraid to ask about use of lifts and wheelchairs/buggies

We undertake only to make arrangements for the visits – and we cannot take responsibility for any mishap or loss connected with them. If you wish to see the cover provided by the National Trust's insurance policies, please e-mail Paul Chaplin. **Please note: Non NT members are not covered by the Trust's insurance policy and are responsible for their own insurance cover.** All trips will be on luxury coaches, usually with a toilet on board.



**We hope you enjoy this year's selection – almost a repeat of 2020 and the guide prices are similar to last year despite Covid19.**

## **Saturday 22<sup>th</sup> May (date to be confirmed)**

### **Blickling Hall and Estate, Norfolk.**

Today's magnificent Jacobean Stately Home was built over the ruins of the Boleyn family property, which is thought to have been the birthplace of Anne Boleyn. The architect was Robert Lyminge, who also designed Hatfield House. The last private owner, Philip Kerr, 11<sup>th</sup> Marquess of Lothian, passed the Estate to the National Trust in 1940, when it was requisitioned for use by the RAF during WWII. The service men and women were billeted in the grounds in Nissen huts, while the Officers were housed in the Hall itself. The adjacent lake was used to practise dinghy drills. There is a museum on site, built in tribute to the RAF pilots and ground crew. The House and Estate were opened to the public in 1962.

The Hall is a very imposing sight, positioned at the end of a vista between two parallel, very tall, yew hedges. Inside there is a wonderful split staircase with carved balustrades, rising up to a stained-glass window, flanked by pictures and sculptures. The interiors of the many rooms are elegantly and elaborately furnished. Many of the ceilings are lavishly decorated with plaster mouldings, and the walls are hung with pictures and tapestries, with carved wooden panelling in several of the rooms.

The grounds outside feature beautifully laid out gardens, with parterres planted with colourful flowers and topiary. There are terraces from which to view the House and grounds, a very unusual Mausoleum, a walled garden, and the large lake that was mentioned earlier.

Guide price: £20.00

## **Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> June (date confirmed)**

**Boughton House, Kettering**, is famed for its beauty and its collections. There is a medieval core, but its exterior evokes an opulent French chateau, causing it to be termed the English Versailles. The magnificent collections can be explained by the ducal family surname Montagu-Douglas-Scott, which reflects the union of these three great families through their estates and marriages. The contents of the house are a comprehensive collection of furniture, tapestries, porcelain, carpets and many notable paintings. The old servant's hall now houses one of the finest privately held armouries in the country.

The gardens were originally designed to impress the eye, and there were stunning vistas, tree-lined avenues and bold water features. However, for more than 200 years the huge formal gardens were almost lost. Today the avenues of trees have been replanted and a series of waterways, lakes and reflecting pools have been created. There is a walled garden containing herbaceous borders and flower beds, a rose garden and an ancient lily pond.

Guide Price: £35.00

## **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> July (date to be confirmed)**

**Doddington Hall, Lincolnshire**, designed by Robert Smythson, one of England's foremost Elizabethan architects, was started in 1595 and completed in 1600. It was built for Thomas Tailor, a lawyer, the recorder to the Bishop of Lincoln. It has never been sold, and has passed down through many generations of the family. The result, after 400 years of continuous occupation, is a house full of fascinating collections of furniture, weaponry, paintings, ceramics, textiles, household objects, porcelain, a wealth of amusing stories, and is still a much-loved family home.

The gardens are just as spectacular as the Hall itself. Remaining faithful to the original layout, mellow walls provide the framework for the formal East and West gardens. The East front garden has patterned box hedging and topiary. The West garden is a riot of colour from spring to autumn, the wide borders being filled with botanical surprises, and box-edged parterres. Beyond these there are the lovingly restored Wild gardens, full of scented flowers and shrubs throughout the seasons. The Kitchen garden was restored in 2007 and now provides fruit and vegetables for the restaurant and Farm Shop.

Guide Price: £35.00

### **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> August date to be confirmed)**

#### **A London Tour with a Blue Badge Guide**

The Many Queens of England. This is a day in London in the company of a Blue Badge (BB) guide, the highlight of the day being a tour of Clarence House. The BB guide will meet us for coffee at 10.30am before we set off on a coach tour, hearing stories, and visiting areas connected with seven Queens, and the many mistresses of England. There will then be a stop for lunch in the numerous restaurants and cafes in the St James's area. After a short walk into St James's Park we visit Clarence House, which was the home of The Queen Mother for fifty years. We will be given a guided tour around the five ground floor rooms where The Prince of Wales undertakes official engagements. The arrangement of the rooms and their contents remain much as they were in Queen Elizabeth's time, with outstanding 20<sup>th</sup> century paintings, and superb examples of Faberge, as well as English porcelain and silverware. There will be time for a hot drink before setting off home at 5.15pm. (Walking distance 1100 m (1200 yards))

Guide Price: £54.00

### **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> October (date to be confirmed)**

#### **Journey on the Kent & East Sussex Railway and visit to Bodiam Castle**

Kent and East Sussex Railway was partially reopened as a Heritage Steam Railway in 1974, running between Tenterden and Rolvenden, with a further extension to Bodiam completed in 2000. The preserved railway has had a tempestuous history, with two financial crises and a major dispute between the volunteer group and their elected board of directors/trustees. Most of the permanent way has now been built to modern standards, and rides of 11.5 miles through the Rother Valley in vintage and British Railways coaches, are usually hauled by one of several types of steam locomotives, or a diesel multiple unit in off peak times. Older generations will feel nostalgic on entering the Tenterden station buildings, and also – if time permits – looking around the Railway museum.

Bodiam Castle NT is a 14<sup>th</sup> century moated castle, built in 1385, ostensibly to defend the area against a French invasion during the Hundred Years' War. It was built, not only to protect its inhabitants, but to be an inviting and comfortable home as well. It is a quadrangular design and features chambers on the outer walls as well as towers on each entrance point and corners. The inner courts allowed space for those living and working within the castle and would have included a chapel, household apartments, pantry, the Lord's Hall, buttery and a prison. The castle is a magnificent sight, standing as it does, surrounded by a large moat, although in those days it would have received the contents of 30 different garderobes!! It is now a Grade I listed building, and has been owned by the NT since 1925 when it was donated by Lord Curzon on his deathbed, with the decision taken to open up the ruins to the public.

Guide Price: £32.00

**Supporter Group Holiday – Centred on Caernarfon North West Wales.  
20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

Monday 20 <sup>th</sup>	We visit Erddig (NT) before arriving at our Hotel
Tuesday 21 <sup>th</sup>	We visit Great Orme including the Tramway and Aberconway House (NT) and the Conway suspension bridge (NT)
Wednesday 22 <sup>th</sup>	We visit Bodnant Gardens (NT) and in the afternoon ride on the Llanberis Railway and if time visit the nearby Slate Mine or Dinorwig Power Station
Thursday 23 <sup>th</sup>	We visit Penrhyn Castle (NT) and Plas Newydd (NT)
Friday 24 <sup>th</sup>	Soon after leaving our hotel we visit Chirk Castle (NT) then head for home.

Please see booking form on last page to request an information pack. Each pack will be numbered in order of request and will be issued on a first come basis. We will need a minimum of thirty-five people. **The cost of the holiday is £510.00 per person and single room supplement varies between £104.00 and £147.00.** Insurance through Kings Coaches as a guide will be £36 – see details when you request the information pack.

**Data Protection Act 2018.**

Chelmsford & District NT Supporter Group will hold essential details (name, address, telephone number and e-mail) for newsletter distribution, outings and membership. ***No information is transmitted to any third party.*** If you no longer wish to receive the Newsletter and Outings information please let Colin Jay know by letter or email.

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