



Welcome to the June edition of the ERO e-bulletin. In this edition:

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News

Searchroom closure on 21 June

The Searchroom will be closed on 21 June for essential repair work to one of our external windows. We apologise for any inconvenience that this may cause. Seax and Essex Ancestors will be unaffected, and we will re-open as normal on Friday 22 June.

New display: Celebrating our achievements

While we don't like to blow our own trumpet too much, as our current display in Reception shows the quality of our service has been recognised by a number of organisations recently:

- The National Archives recognises the ERO as a four-star archive service – the highest rating they award.
- We were runners-up in the Best Record Office in the Country vote conducted by Your Family History magazine – thank you to everyone who voted for us!
- Essex Ancestors, our subscription service for viewing digital images of parish registers, was 3rd in national awards for entrepreneurship in local authority services, and 2nd in the Innovation and Service Improvement category of the Celebrating Your Achievements Awards 2012 organised by the Adults, Health and Community Wellbeing Directorate of the Council.
- Our Heritage Outreach team were highly commended in the same awards in 2011 for their 'Illuminated!' art project, working with children who are carers, and the Archivists team was placed third in the council-wide You Make the Difference Awards in 2010.

Stories from the stores: The Robinson Collection

Archivist Allyson Lewis has been working on the Robinson collection – 112 boxes of photographs, postcards, prints and slides of places in Essex and all over the country put together by Geoffrey A. Robinson. With such a large amount of material, where does an archivist start?



Click [here](#) to read more

Stories from the stores: religious conflict and escaped slaves in Colchester

The records of Stockwell Congregational Chapel in Colchester (D/NC 42) have recently been catalogued, bringing to light some fascinating stories.

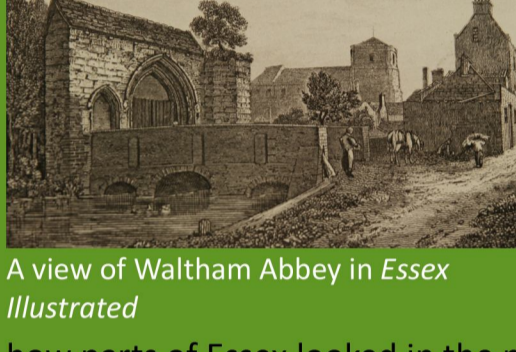
The origins of the chapel can be traced back to 1662, just after the restoration of Charles II. The first building was in St Helen's Lane, but in the early 19th century the minister, Revd. Joseph Herrick, had a dispute with the Unitarian section of the congregation, some of whom went so far as to pull down the roof of the building in 1813 to prevent its use as a chapel. Herrick and his supporters bought a site opposite, and built a second chapel. When this building was enlarged in 1836 it became known as Stockwell Chapel, as a new front had been built on East Stockwell Street.

The church book (D/NC 42/1/1) also brings to light a visit to the chapel in September 1840 by Moses Roper, 'an escaped American slave', who spoke for two hours to an audience of around 1,500 people. It is recorded that this was:

'certainly the greatest number that ever got into Stockwell Chapel. [Roper] exhibited the whips, chains etc. We sold 101 of his books, at 2s. each ... May good arise to the sacred cause of religious and civil freedom'.

The chapel closed in 1966, was sold and subsequently converted to offices.

Don't judge a book by its cover: *Essex Illustrated*



A view of Waltham Abbey in Essex

Illustrated

We have recently conserved and catalogued on Seax a book entitled *Essex Illustrated in a series of nearly one hundred views*, a collection of small engraved plates of churches, houses, castles, panoramas of towns like Colchester and Harwich, and other topographical features in Essex, published in 1834.

While the prints provide us with a window onto how parts of Essex looked in the past – including now demolished buildings and countryside vistas which were long ago built up – they present a romanticised view of the county.

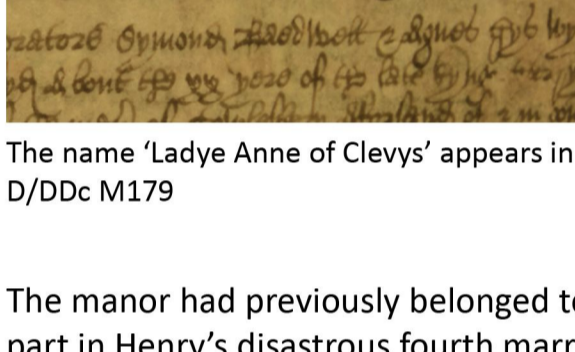
The volume was in a very poor state, and has recently undergone extensive conservation work to make it robust enough to be used by researchers.

Click [here](#) to read more



Royal Connections: the manor of Hockley Hall

When Henry VIII ended his short-lived marriage to the German princess Anne of Cleves in 1540, she was granted houses and land in England as part of the separation. A discovery has lately come to light at ERO which tells part of the story, buried in manorial documents.



The name 'Lady Anne of Cleves' appears in D/DDc M179

D/DDc M179 is a court roll for the manor of Tollesbury, recording proceedings from 1547-1550, and 1611-1612. Detailed checking of the roll has recently revealed, however, that the existing catalogue entry did not include other manors which also appear on the roll. One of these is the manor of 'Hokeley Hall', or Hockley Hall, which was one of the estates granted to Anne after her marriage to Henry was annulled, and her name appears on the court roll.

The manor had previously belonged to Thomas Cromwell, who was executed for his part in Henry's disastrous fourth marriage. After Anne died in 1557, the manor was granted by Mary Tudor to Richard Rich.

The discovery was made as part of work on the Manorial Documents Register. ERO archivists are currently making checks on the manorial documents held here as part of the Manorial Documents Register project at the National Archives. The National Archives are in the process of digitising manorial documents, and the Essex manors will eventually appear on the database on their website.

Real Live Giants in Essex: Part 1 – Edward Bright

Giants Marina Mightier and Boreas Zephyr are touring Essex at the moment as part of the *Sparks Will Fly* cultural celebration. But this is not the first time there have been Giants in Essex. Essex Record Office has evidence of two real giants who lived in Essex. Here's the first in a two-part giant special...



I/MB 229/1/39 Seven men inside Edward Bright's waistcoat

Edward Bright was a tallow chandler and grocer who lived in Maldon from 1721 to 1750. He was a giant of a man and weighed 42 stone at his death in November 1750 at the age of just 29. The dimensions of his coffin were 3' 6" across the shoulders, 6' 7" in length and 3' deep. A hole had to be cut in the wall and staircase to let the coffin down into the shop. It was taken on a carriage to the churchyard, moved on rollers to the vault and lowered into the grave using a triangular frame and pulleys. He left a wife pregnant with their sixth child. He was summed up as a 'very honest tradesman, a facetious [witty] companion, comely in his person, affable in his temper, a kind husband, a tender father and valuable friend.' After his death, seven men were pictured inside his waistcoat.

Heritage Education and Outreach

To commemorate the Queen's 60 years on the throne, our Diamond Jubilee session is getting into full-swing. Entire schools are comparing the differences between our celebrations in 2012, and the celebration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, and the feedback has been superb:

Thank you for a super introduction to the Jubilee.

The session is an ideal accompaniment to any school celebrations, and also great for learning about the Royal family. Alternatively, we offer all of our usual sessions - Tudors in Essex, Victorian Children in Essex, Essex at War, Seaside Holidays or our individually tailored Local History session.

If you would be interested in receiving On the Record, our digital newsletter for teachers, or know anybody that would, please contact us on heritage.education@essex.gov.uk, and please put On the Record as the subject matter.

Forthcoming events

Unless otherwise stated, all events must be booked in advance – please telephone **01245 244 620**. You can also now keep up with our upcoming events on the Events page on our blog.

'Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in Essex'

An informal lecture by Jane Allnutt as part of the Essex History Group programme.

The group is open to anyone who has an interest in history.

Tuesday 12 June, 10.30am – 11.30am

Free – drop in. Small charge for refreshments.

Discover: Workhouse Records (from 1834)

Do you have an ancestor who spent time in the workhouse? This session will look at why and how workhouses came into existence, what life was like as an inmate and also consider surviving Essex workhouse records.

Tuesday 12 June, 2.30pm – 4.30pm

Tickets £10

Walk: Chelmsford - Walking with Walker

The Walker map of Chelmsford - made in 1591 - is one of the gems in the Record Office's collections. Using this as a starting point, we will uncover some of the secrets of Chelmsford High Street.

Friday 15 June, 2.00pm – 3.30pm

Tickets £5

Conservation Surgery

Do you have family photographs stashed away in a shoebox in the attic? Or perhaps letters, diaries, war records or newspaper cuttings relating to your ancestors? These documents and pictures help to tell your family's story, and are irreplaceable. Many things, however, can threaten their survival. To find out how best to care for and store your family's documents and photographs, come and speak to a professional archive conservator at one of our free Conservation Surgeries.

Friday 22 June 2012, 10.00am-12.00noon & 1.00pm-4.00pm

At the Saffron Walden Archive Access Point, Saffron Walden Library, King Street, Saffron Walden, CB10 1ES

Thursday 28 June, 10.00am-12.30pm & 1.30pm-4.00pm

At the Essex Record Office, Wharf Road, Chelmsford, CM2 6YT

Family History Sources (1837-present)

Get to grips with the basics of family history in a session for beginners. Discover what civil registration documents and the census can reveal about your ancestors.

We will also look at internet sources.

Thursday 28 June, 10.30am-12.30pm

Tickets £10

Walk: Hadleigh – before the 2012 Olympics

A Norman church, castle ruins and estuary views painted by Constable. Learn about the town chosen as one of the 2012 Olympic venues.

Wednesday 11 July, 2.00pm-3.30pm

Tickets £5

The Hearth Tax in Essex

Hearth Tax returns form a unique record of seventeenth-century householders. This special one-day conference will show you how to use Hearth Tax records to research your family history, house history, and local history.

Organised by the Friends of Historic Essex and the British Academy Hearth Tax Project (Roehampton University).

Saturday 14 July, 10.00am-3.15pm

Tickets £20 including buffet lunch and refreshments

Book in advance on **01621 856 827**, or by emailing c.c.thornton@btinternet.com

Keep up with ERO

We welcome your comments on this e-bulletin and all other aspects of the ERO's service. If you have a comment or a suggestion about how we could improve, please e-mail us at ero.enquiry@essex.gov.uk.

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