

Essex Record Office e-bulletin

May 2012

Welcome to the new-look May edition of the ERO e-bulletin.
In this edition:

- Essex Record Office blog
- New display cases in the Searchroom
- Document of the month
- Conservation project: conserving the Takeley deeds
- Work experience in the ERO conservation studios
- Lord Petre's steward's papers
- Library project update
- Heritage education and outreach
- Forthcoming events

News

Essex Record Office blog

The ERO is excited to have launched its new blog! The blog can be found at www.essexrecordofficeblog.co.uk, and will be updated with news and highlights from our extensive collection.

New display cases in the Searchroom

Two new display cases have been installed in the Searchroom which will allow the display of documents in this area for the first time. Thanks to the quality of the cases and the carefully controlled temperature and humidity levels in the Searchroom, more delicate documents – including parchment – can be exhibited without fear of damaging them. The temporary displays will include highlights from our collections, and the work of the Record Office.

Document of the month: 'leger' book of St John's Abbey

Our first ever 'document of the month' is currently on display in one of the new cases in the Searchroom. D/DJ 1/2 is a medieval 'leger' book from St John's Abbey in Colchester, dating from c.1315-c.1530, and has been chosen to complement our larger display of recently conserved deeds and a cartulary, also from the Abbey.

The leger book was used to keep notes detailing the Abbey's lands and possessions, legal cases and other useful information. The book includes references to individuals who held land from the Abbey, such as John Bolebeke of Fowelleswode in the manor of Takeley, who in 1325 leased some land from the Abbey for six years. He received an amalgamation of furniture and implements along with the lease, including carts, wheelbarrows, ploughs, spades, shovels and forks, chairs, cloth and towels, pots, plates and saucers, a pestle and mortar, a crucifix in the chapel and a chest in the lord's chamber with a double lock, and a bag containing the court rolls.



I/Mp 90/4/1/11

St. John's Abbey Gate, Colchester, J. Parish. Extracted from Parish's Portfolio of Antiquities

Conservation project: conserving the Takeley deeds



A seal half-way through the cleaning process

Conservation is a vital part of our work at ERO. Our conservators work to protect and conserve documents, to ensure their survival for years to come.

One recent project has conserved a collection of 42 early medieval deeds relating to the manor of Colchester Hall in Takeley (D/DRu T1/1-42). These deeds are special for many reasons; they all date to before 1250, many have intact seals, and notes made in Arabic numerals on the back of the deeds are an early example of the use of this numbering system in England.

The newly conserved deeds are currently on display in our new cases in the Searchroom, so you can come and see them for yourself.

Click [here](#) to read more...

Work Experience in the Conservation Studio at ERO

Jillan Gregory, currently studying on the Masters programme in Paper Conservation at Camberwell College, has been writing about her work in the ERO Conservation Studio, doing everything from cleaning seals, to repairing photographs and lining large maps on our map wall.



Click [here](#) to read more...

Cataloguing project: Lord Petre's Steward's papers

One of our archivists has been cataloguing a batch of correspondence and cognate papers belonging to Lord Petre's Steward (D/DP M1629).

They are in effect manorial documents, which might lead you to think that they date from the eighteenth century, or even the Middle Ages, but they do in fact date mostly from the first half of the twentieth century. In them one can witness the last vestiges of the manorial system that had lasted for hundreds of years finally pass into history.

Most of the documents are correspondence concerning financial compensation for landowners following the abolition of copyhold land tenure in 1926, which was intended to get rid of the anachronistic traces of the feudal system which still survived.

In most cases the actual 'compensation agreements' survive, which often describe individual properties in some detail, including cottages, farms, and pubs, such as The Plough at Great Burstead (bundle D/DP M1629/14/3) or The Windmill, South Hanningfield (bundle D/DP M1629/12/12). Some of the bundles even include particulars of house sales, and small maps and plans.

One particularly interesting group of papers (bundles D/DP M1629/15/2-17) deals with Mill Green Common in the manor of Ingatestone. We can read about the clearing of a gypsy encampment; permission being granted to establish a golf links, erect telegraph poles across the green or to lay drainage pipes; restrictions placed on the lighting of fires; and disputes between the Lord of the Manor and local residents.

As a result, the papers will be of use to those researching local history, house history and family history in places such as Writtle, Great Burstead, Billericay and Stock in the 1920s and 1930s.

Library Cataloguing Project update

The volunteers from the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies (NADFAS) and Friends of Historic Essex (FHE) have been working on the Library Cataloguing Project since February 2011. By November, they had completed Phase 2 of the project ahead of schedule, cataloguing all 3358 library books in the Searchroom. Then they started phase 3 of the project, to catalogue all the books kept in the repositories, and are well on target for completion by January 2013, having catalogued about 1200 books so far which mostly comprise the library's antiquarian collection. They have now started on the ex-Colchester collection, with the ex-Southend collection still to do. The value of their achievement is further magnified when one considers that, based on a calculation of hours worked between April 2011 and April 2012, the ERO must have benefited from about 750 hours of work by done by the volunteers.



Heritage Education and Outreach

From the summer, please be aware that you will only be able to receive digital versions of our *On the Record* newsletter.

With summer fast approaching, now would be an ideal time to book our Seaside Holidays session. Using Victorian photographs of a family holiday, we can contrast the experience of today with those of Victorian children, who made use of the newly developed railway! Alternatively, you can try our Local History Detectives, Tudors in Essex, Victorian Children in Essex, Essex in World War Two, or our brand new Diamond Jubilee sessions!

If you would be interested in receiving the newsletter, 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.

Discover: Parish Registers (1538-present)

Parish registers contain information of great value to the family historian, but they may seem daunting if you have not used them before. This session will explain what you might expect to discover in parish registers and how to get the best from them.

Thursday 10 May, 2.30pm – 4.30pm

Tickets £10

Southend-on-Sea: Stepping Out

From fishing village to Georgian resort to Edwardian London's playground. Join this walk and discover more of Southend-on-Sea's fascinating history.

Friday 18 May, 2.00pm - 3.30pm

Tickets £5.00

Searchroom Tour

This forty-five minute tour will show you how to get the very best from the Record Office's Searchroom – it's ideal if you are just starting your research or perhaps want to go beyond using microfiche and microfilm. We will also offer some tips on how to use our online catalogue, Seax.

Wednesday 23 May, 10.30am – 11.15am

Free

'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 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

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.

If you no longer wish to receive the ERO e-bulletin, please reply with 'Unsubscribe e-bulletin' in the subject line.



Follow the Essex Record Office blog



Like the Essex Record Office on Facebook



Follow us on Twitter