

Local and Essex History – August 2021

THE VILLAGE OF COGGLESHALL

I visited Coggleshall, somewhere I had heard of yet never visited, on a grey Monday in August and was delighted to discover just what a lovely place it is, with so many “old” houses dating from the 13th to 16th centuries.

There is evidence of a settlement here dating from the late Stone Age and Roman coins dating from between 31BC and 395AD have been found. There is also evidence of a Roman Villa close to a ford of the River Blackwater. However, the modern history of Coggleshall starts in the reign of King Steven and Queen Matilda. In 1140 they founded a large Savigniac Monastery on the banks of the river.

The monastery estate was extensive, the monks built a kiln, Tile Kiln (now known as Tilkley) which remained active until 1845. They produced the earliest post Roman bricks in Britain. The monks farmed sheep which produced high quality wool and Coggleshall had prosperous woollen cloth trade in the 15th-18th centuries.

The church of St Peter de Vincuna, started by the monks, was dedicated by the Bishop of London in 1197. Obviously, extended and rebuilt it stands in a prominent position but sadly was closed when I visited. The monastery eventually was amalgamated with the Cistercian monks. The remains of the monastery are in private hands but can be seen from the footpath of the Essex Way. There is also a small chapel of St Nicholas, with an exterior of rough flint and early brick with examples of 900-year-old bricks surrounding the windows.



St Nicholas Chapel 12th Century

I began my visit at the 12th century Grange Barn beside the river close to the Abbey site. This was built by the monks soon after the Abbey was established and the extended later. It is believed to have been used for storage as it is huge. With its massive timber frame and king post roof, it is one of the finest and largest examples of timber-frame construction in Europe.

The barn has been restored and is now in the care of the National Trust. There are guides and interesting information, including an example of wattle and daub used in the construction of the barn.



Exterior View of Barn



Interior View of Barn



Sample Wattle & Daub

Nearby is the Stephen's Bridge, named after the King who founded Coggleshall Abbey. The bridge arches contain some of the oldest post-roman bricks from 12th century. It was built when the monks diverted the river to provide a head of water to drive the abbey water mill.



Stephen's Bridge

From here I set off to find the famous Paycocke House, built in 16th century, which stands on top of the Roman Road that runs from Colchester to St Albans.

The Paycockes were involved in the wool trade, bringing prosperity to the town. It was restored and passed to the National Trust in 1924. Sadly, it was only open to booked tours (not what the website said) and was fully booked.



Paycocke House

I headed towards Market Hill, where in 1256, the right to hold a market was granted by Henry III.



Towards Market Hill

I followed the walking trail from here passing the White Hart Inn (has been an inn on the Site since 1675) and on to Spooners, the oldest house to have been dated (1353-1386). It was owned by William Spooner in 1675 and has kept its name ever since.



Spooners

There are so many historic houses that I am leaving most of the rest for you to discover yourselves, including Coggleshall House, The Manse, The Long Wall Jetty House, Weathervane Cottages, Woodlands, and the Black Horse Inn which was the Headquarters of the Coggleshall Gang, which terrorised the town's inhabitants in the 1860's.

However, I cannot leave out the 15th Century Woolpack Inn.



The Woolpack Inn



St Peter de Vicuna Church

And lastly, the Through Inn, parts of which date from 1397, with further construction in 1575.



The Through Inn

There is much more history to discover including, Thomas Hawke, a protestant burnt as a heretic in 1555, The Clock tower heightened in 1887 with a new clock to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, The Doubleday Garden named after a prominent Quaker family, The Friends Meeting House erected in 1878 and 15th century Hutleys, home of the family responsible for the town's first bus service. Much more still to discover!

I hope you have enjoyed reading about Coggleshall and will now want to visit for yourselves.

MARION COLEMAN

STOCK VILLAGE VISIT



The village of Stock Harvard, is one of the highest points in Essex (318 feet above sea level). The village High Street (now the B1007 road) was probably a track in pre-Roman times running through the great forest which covered most of Essex. Epping Forest and a small part of Hainault Forest are almost the only survivors today of the early forest. In Roman times this road became a vital link between the River Thames and the Roman towns of Caesaromagus (Chelmsford) and Camulodunum (Colchester). Traces of

The first written evidence of the existence of a church in Stock is in 1232, and it appears that a church, consisting of a nave and a chancel, was erected here in the early Norman period. In December 1940 a land-mine fell in the Churchyard, causing immense damage to the Church, blowing off the nave roof, destroying all the stained glass and damaging the stone tracery. The foundations of the tower were unsettled the bells becoming unhinged and their mediaeval mechanism smashed. For six months the building was open to the weather throughout the winter. An immense task of restoration was begun bringing about a complete transformation of the building since its last major restoration in 1848.



During the 1950s a large reservoir was created on the north-east side of the parish, cutting off parts of the parishes of West Hanningfield, South Hanningfield and Downham from their natural communities. Extensive building on the Stock side of the reservoir meant that a large part of the village lay outside the ecclesiastical parish. This anomaly was ended in 1978 when boundary changes were made.

The village is mentioned as providing rebels for the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, and records also tell of looting by many of the insurgents. The ill-armed peasants, however, were no match for the soldiers of Richard II who had been sent out from London to quell the riots, and many of them were slain in a battle in Norsey woods, on the Stock side of Billericay.

For centuries agriculture was the main occupation but, in the 17th, and 18th centuries "Stock Bricks" became widely known and a thriving brick, tile and pot-making industry flourished alongside the making of Potash. In 1971 when mains drainage was first installed, pottery from the 15th-17th centuries was unearthed and during the renovation of the Almshouses four large clay pots were discovered. In 1889 a new Congregational chapel was built in the High Street (now known as Christ Church, a free independent church) and was



For many centuries the population remained around 600 but in the last 35 years has increased to around 2,000. Within living memory, the village was virtually self-supporting. Records from just before the First World War list the shops and craftsmen working in the village at that time. On my visit most of the shops appear to have been turned into residential dwellings, leaving just two village grocery shops, a hairdresser, florist, four pubs and a cafe. In 1948 Greenwoods was opened by the Queen Mother as the country home of the West Ham Central Mission - it is now a hotel and spa.



The Hoop and Grapes (originally three 15th century weavers' cottages)



The Village Pump - used before mains water was installed in 1936

We took the historic walk along the High Street (available from the Heritage Centre) which was a good way to learn more about the buildings and their history. However, the High Street is the busy and noisy B1007 which spoilt my expected peaceful exploration of an Essex village! Stock is an interesting and historical village, once off the main road, with its own village hall, cricket club, bowls club and common - the pubs are quite inviting too!

With thanks and acknowledgement to "A short History of Stock" by Jeremy Bunting

MAVIS REGAN

LITTLE WALTHAM

Little Waltham is signposted from the A130 after Brookfield. It contains a house which was built in the 15th century and many of the farms and cottages are from the 16th and 17th centuries. The church has a nave from Norman times and the spacious timber porch is of Tudor origin.



Buildings in Little Waltham



Data Source: Text from Village Walks in Essex by Ann and Norman Skinner

RINA MUNRO

GOSFIELD

Gosfield is on the A1017 after Braintree. Gosfield Hall, which is now a wedding venue, stands in grounds rich in cedars and shrubberies. Enclosed in the parklands is a lake of 50 acres, now given over to water sports and swimming.

Queen Elizabeth 1st slept here in the Hall as the guest of Lord Rich, who at the time owned a great part of the county.

The village post office and store are next to the green and staffed by residents of the village, who work two hour shifts from 7 a.m.

Gosfield church dates from 1435, and its foundations are much older than the Hall. The monumental brass of Sir Thomas Rolfe is one of the best in the county.

The graveyard has a tomb containing the body of a servant at the Hall and the perimeter wall displays plaques dedicated to members of the Courtauld family who lived at the Hall.



Gosfield Hall



Gosfield Church



Gosfield Graveyard

Data Source: Taken from Village Walks in Essex by Ann and Norman Skinner

RINA MUNRO

LOUISA PERINA COURTAULD

Louisa Perina Courtauld (nee Ogier, 1729-1807) was the youngest daughter of Huguenots from Sigournay in France. Her father was a silk weaver. Louisa and her family moved to London when she was young, the city in which she spent most of her career.

At the age of 20 she married Samuel Courtauld, son of Augustin Courtauld, a metal smith of Huguenot extraction. With him she had eight children, although only four survived and their son, George, apprenticed in 1761 to a silk throwster, began the link to the textile company, Courtauld's.

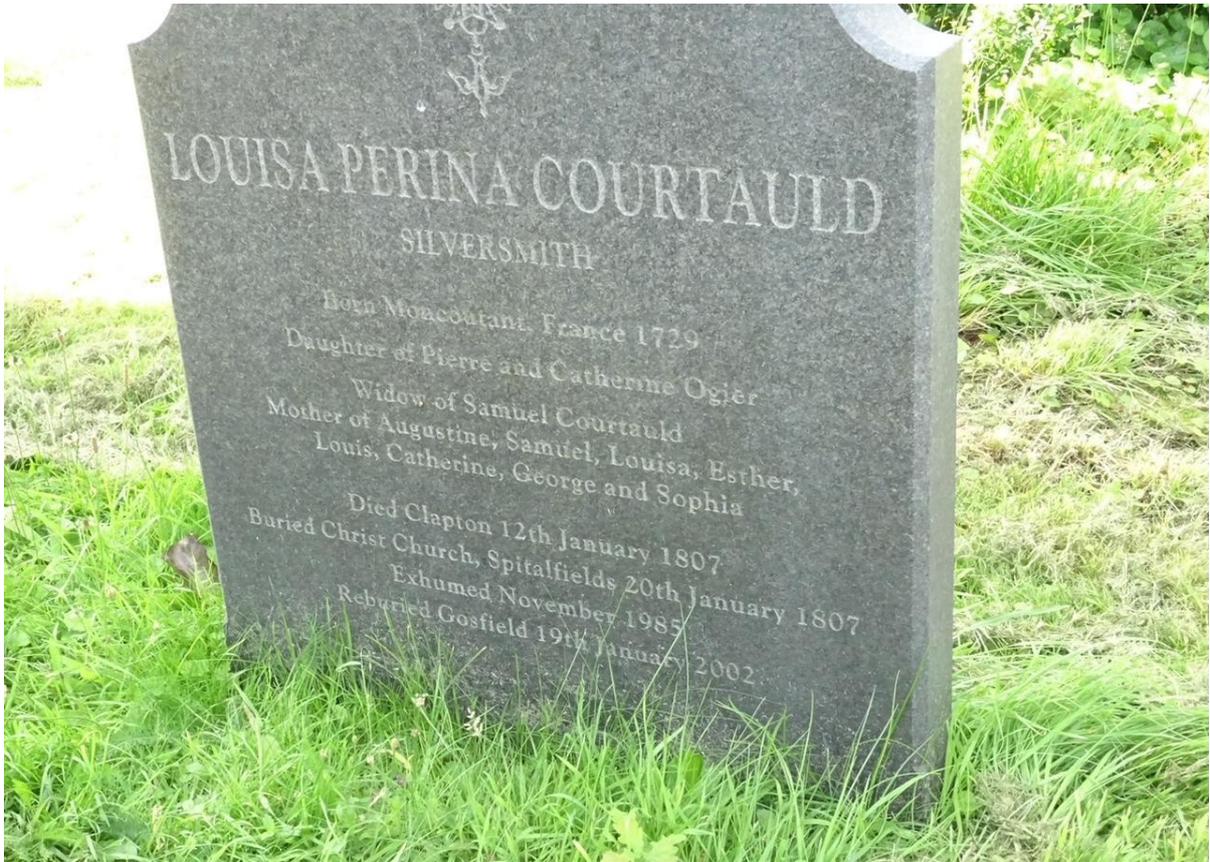
They ran a successful business until Samuel Courtauld's death in 1765. Her own hallmark was registered with the Goldsmith's Company around 1766. After her husband died, she inherited the business and continued to run it herself until 1769. Some years later she took on George Cowles as a business partner.

In 1777 her son, Samuel Courtauld II, replaced Cowles in that capacity and they registered a new joint hallmark. This arrangement lasted three years. When it ended the two closed the business and it was sold to John Henderson. Samuel moved to America, while Louisa returned to Essex.

In 1854 Samuel Courtauld II bought Gosfield Hall, a country house dating back to 1545. He devoted a great deal of time, effort and money to bring the house and its large estate to a standard suitable as the country seat of a gentleman of means. The house is now a Grade 1 listed building.

Samuel adopted Louisa Ruth Lowe (nee Harris) after her mother died of puerperal fever some eleven days after her birth. When he died in 1881, she inherited Gosfield Hall and much of his fortune.

Louisa Perina Courtauld was originally buried in the vault of Christ Church, Spitalfields. However, following extensive archaeological excavation of the Spitalfields church crypt in the 1980's, prior to the church's restoration, her body was removed and examined. Her remains were reburied in Gosfield Church in 2002.



Data Source: Taken from Wikipedia

RINA MUNRO

WIVENHOE

Wivenhoe, until recently, has always lived by the river; fishing, boat building and smuggling. Boat building and its attendant trades of carpentry, sail and rope making, was a thriving industry. One famous shipbuilder, Philip Sainty, combined his talent for shipbuilding with an equal talent for smuggling - he used his knowledge of building fast yachts for the well-to-do to build fast get-away boats for smugglers.

The Ropery was situated at The Cross and prospered until the First World War. The large yachts which were crewed and skippered by Wivenhoe men, were laid up in the river for the winter, then re-commissioned, painted and provisioned in the spring. They, or their owners, did not survive the war so, its trade diminished, the Ropery closed.

Fishing for sprats, shrimps and oysters provided a living for residents, also for the crews of the large yachts who were paid off when their ship was laid up in the river for winter and had to sustain themselves and their families until spring when, hopefully, they were re-employed. There was a fish canning business on the quay until recently.

The buildings in the High Street are interesting and date back 300 years. Much of the church was re-built after the 1884 earthquake that caused damage in many parts of Essex.

One notable building, in East Street, is the Garrison House, the best example of pargetting in Europe. It derives its name from the Roundhead troops stationed there during the Siege of Colchester, 1648. It is now being restored.

Taken from Village Walks in Essex by Ann and Norman Skinner, and The Essex Village Book, published by The Federation of Essex Women's Institutes.

Wivenhoe Chapel Museum is housed in the middle of a graveyard and has limited opening hours but is well worth a visit. When we visited, the gentleman from the local history society was only too happy to show us around and point out various items of interest, including an antique chair and the mechanics of a church clock, demonstrating how it worked.



The Garrison House



Antique Chair



Church Clock Mechanism

RINA MUNRO

DANBURY

To get to Danbury, take the A130, the A12, then the A414. Although quite built up now, it still retains a certain amount of its old village charm.

Danbury Church is a Grade 1 listed building and is well worth a visit inside as the pews are all decorated with carved animals.

To the north of the village is the Admiral McHardy Way, which commemorates John McHardy who, in Clowes' History of the British Navy is referred to as being 'the terror equally of pirates and of slavers in the West Indies'.

After leaving the navy as an Admiral, McHardy became the first and longest-serving Chief Constable of the Essex Police from 1840-1881.



Pew Carving



Street Scene



Grade 1 Listed Church

RINA MUNRO

ESSEX VILLAGES

ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY NEWSPAPER Published by the Benfleet u3a

Est. 1869

Tuesday, April 22, 1884

Price 6d

The Great Essex Earthquake

The earth moves for everyone

At precisely 9:18 on this bright Tuesday morning, April 22, 1884, the biggest English earthquake for 400 years hit Essex.

Its epicentre was about 4 miles southeast of Colchester around Wivenhoe, Peldon and Salcott-cum-Virley.

It only lasted for 10 seconds but substantial damage was done locally. The church at Salcott-cum-Virley was destroyed (but it wasn't in great condition anyway).

The famous Peldon Rose Inn roof was in tatters and the West Quay at Wivenhoe was destroyed.

Church spires and parapets across the county fell or were severely damaged.

The quake was felt throughout England and also reached Calais in France and Ostend in Belgium. In London, The Palace of Westminster was severely shaken (not stirred) but fortunately did not sustain significant damage.



Ruins of St. Mary's Church, Virley



Peldon Rose, immediately after earthquake

Salcott-cum-Virley

To say that Salcott-cum-Virley is a sleepy village is the biggest understatement this year. It has no shops, no Post Office and no pub (The Sun, closed in 1933). It's a no through road so any traffic is a novelty. However, it has a tranquillity, which many in the more bustling parts of Essex will envy.

Salcott is named in the Domesday Book. The name Salcott is derived from salt production and the full name means Salcott and or with Virley. The Virley addition comes in the middle ages from landowner Robert de Verli.

In the church ruins, which still remain after the earthquake, you can just see evidence of the type of building that it was with buttresses and supports. The 'new' St. Mary's Church is on the right.



The village is more new than old although it has generally been done in a sympathetic style. Left photo has the defunct Sun Pub on its right side. The name 'The Sun' is still on the brickwork. The building in the right photo was originally the schoolhouse built in 1869 later becoming the Village Hall.



Do you believe it?

A local landowner was building a Great Hall, 16th century, but every night when he laid down his tool and materials they had disappeared in the morning [local regarded him as dim as they had probably just sunk into the marshy ground].

He decided to catch the thief. He lay in wait but was confronted by the Devil who threw a piece of wood saying the hall can be built here and I will claim your soul. The Hall was successfully built but fearing the Devil the landowner arranged for his body to be interned in the church. When this happened, locals found large claw marks in the masonry. When the church was destroyed there was no evidence of the body!

So, did the Devil get his soul?

Peldon and the Peldon Rose Inn

Peldon is another small village – larger and more active than Salcott. It is in the Domesday book.



The Peldon Rose Inn is an ancient inn believed to have been built in 1380 and registered as an inn in 1454. It is not far from the The Strood [causeway to Mersea Island]. The pond at the front of the property thought to have been used to hide smugglers booty.

The 1884 earthquake severely damaged the roof but you can see from the photos below this was repaired. The Inn is currently well maintained, very attractive and looks just like the 1884 photos – but better repaired and maintained. The notable difference over the intervening 137 years is the mode of transport.

Horse and cart, early cars and now modern cars.

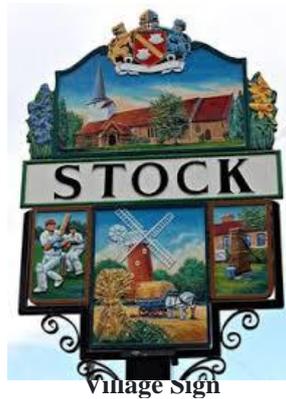


We recommend a visit, Inn and surrounds are lovely. Food/ beer are very good too.

Lyn and Alan Aldridge

REFS: thecolchesterarchaeologist.co.uk pubwiki.co.uk Wikipedia.org
merseamuseum.org.uk The Maldon Earthquake and other stories by Robert JS Long AND, the photos hanging in the Peldon Rose.

STOCK HARVARD



The village High Street was originally a track running through the Great Forest, which covered most of Essex. The Romans realised the importance of forest tracks, and greatly developed them for military use. Our particular road became a vital link between the River Thames and the Roman Towns of Caesaromagus (Chelmsford) and Camulodunum (Colchester).

In the 17th and 18th centuries Highwaymen abounded through the said forest, it is said Dick Turpin was active in the area, and was reported to live at one time between Stock and Wickford.

Stock Tower Mill, dated around 1804, stands proud in the village - A 5 storey Grade II listed building with six bladed fantail, and four patent sails. Now restored, complete with several floors of machinery, and open for viewing.

One of the three churches in the village is All Saints. Strikingly situated with its oak shingled spire above a white clapboard belfry. Inside the church there is a brass to "Richard Twedye Esquir" who founded the Almshouses for "four poore knights".

During renovation of these houses four large clay pots were discovered made in red bodied ware, with bright orange glaze. For centuries the inhabitants of Stock were largely occupied with agriculture, but in the 17th and 18th centuries "Stock Bricks" became widely known and a thriving brick tile and pot making industry flourished, along with the making of potash.

Two notable residents of the village were the poet William Cowper (1731-1800), in his "Tithing Times at Stock", described the place as it looked in the late eighteenth century, and Admiral Sir Vernon Harry Haggard (1874 - 1960). On his death his coffin was drawn to the church on a gun carriage, escorted by 50 naval officers and men. Over his grave three volleys were fired and the Royal Marines sounded the Last Post and Reveille.

The village green is still used for cricket, and the trees all about give extra charm to Stock. They stand along the bend down the hill, past the All-Saints Church, making a green tunnel which you pass into as you leave the village.

EDWINA LAY

GREAT BARDFIELD VISIT

Location: 9 miles northwest of Braintree, 12 miles southeast of Saffron Walden and 2 miles southwest of Finchingfield.

Population: 1227 (2011 Census)

Households: 536 (2011 Census)

Great Bardfield is a large village built on the side of a hill. Architecture is certainly mixed, with the oldest building date we noticed being 1600. The architecture through the ages seems to have been sympathetically handled and despite the differences in age everything seems to fit in, unlike modern town planning.



One building technique commonly used until the 1940's was known as lath and plaster. While this was very common for internal walls and ceilings, it was rarely used for external walls. During the visit one property in Great Bardfield was undergoing renovation and clearly had external lath and plaster external walls.



Lath & Plaster External Walls

There are two pubs in the main part of the village. The Bell Inn, which currently opens 5 - 11pm. Luckily, as the visit was in the middle of the day, the second pub, The Vine Bar & Grill is open 12 - 10pm and serves a fairly comprehensive lunch menu, at a not too outrageous cost.

Great Bardfield is also one of a number of Essex villages which still have a lock-up, or cage, as they are sometimes known. These were used to lock up people who committed minor misdemeanors, such as being drunk and disorderly.

A number of the cages still in existence are of a single cell design. However, the one at Great Bardfield is a double cell building, each cell having its own doorway. In reality each cell has two doors one behind the other, a few inches apart. Each door having an opening to allow air into the cell, however, the openings were offset, to stop friends of the prisoner passing forbidden substances, such as alcohol to the prisoner via a hose.

On one of the outer entrance doors, the nails holding the door together have been placed in a pattern which can be interpreted as 1816. As such 1816 has been taken as the year the cage was first used. Records appear to show it was last used in 1925.



Great Bardfield's Lock-up



Date Picked Out by White Line Added to Picture

During the middle years of the 20th Century Great Bardfield was made nationally and internationally famous by a number of influentially famous artists who took up residency in the village. They held 'open house' exhibitions in their own homes, attracting thousands of visitors to the village during the mid to late 1950's.



During the early 60's most of the artists moved away. However, one artist, Edward Bawden, lived in Brick House from 1930-1970. Brick House still stands on the main street in the village.

Great Bardfield is also famous for a rare flower, which only grows where Essex, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire meet and is known as Oxlip. It was originally thought that the flower was a cowslip-primrose hybrid. However, in 1842 a study conducted by Henry Doubleday and Charles Darwin concluded that it was in fact not a hybrid, but a unique plant in its own right.



The Great Bardfield Oxlip as it was called locally.

In my opinion Great Bardfield is most certainly worth a visit.

Data Source: Flower picture from Wikipedia

IAN PHIPPS