

Local and Essex History – January 2022

FAMOUS ESSEX RESIDENTS

Which title has been held by (amongst others) Geoffrey de Mandeville, Humphrey de Bohun and Robert Devereaux?

Earl of Essex

During the reign of King Stephen, in 12th century, Geoffrey de Mandeville held the position of 1st Earl of Essex, from 1139 until his death in 1144.

Humphrey (IV) de Bohun, born 1208 and died 1275, held the positions of 2nd Earl of Hereford & 1st Earl of Essex.

Robert Devereux, born 1567 and died 1601, held the position of 2nd Earl of Essex. He was a favourite of Queen Elizabeth the first, until he was found guilty of high treason, having been involved in trying to raise the populace of London in revolt. He was executed in the Tower of London in 1601.

The explorer, Captain Cook, was married in which Essex Church?

St. Margaret's Church, Barking

Captain Cook married Elizabeth Batts, on the 21st December 1762.

Which famous Victorian designer and socialist, a founder of the Kelmscott Press, was born in Walthamstow (then part of the administrative Essex) in 1834?

William Morris

He was born on 24th March 1834 in Walthamstow. He died October 1896 in Hammersmith aged 62. He was married to Jane and had two daughters, May & Jane Alice. He was associated with the British Arts and Crafts Movement and a major contributor to the revival of traditional British Textile Arts and methods of production.

Name the Missionary student who saw service in Ongar and Stanford Rivers before finding everlasting fame in Africa?

Doctor David Livingstone

In 1838, at the age of 25, he moved from Glasgow to Essex. He trained for 15 months at the London Missionary Society, Stanley Place. He then became an Explorer, discovering the source of the Nile, the Victoria Falls and finally treating patients in Africa.

Which Dedham painter famously forged Old Masters?

Thomas Patrick Keating

Thomas Keating was born 1st March 1917 and died on 12th February 1984 at the age of 67. During his lifetime he reputedly faked some 2000 paintings involving 100 artists.

Where will you find a Georgian Memorial to Sir Josiah Child, merchant banker and Head of the East India Company?

St. Mary's The Virgin Church, Wanstead

Purfleet was home to which famous brewer?

Samuel Whitbread

He was born in 1720 and died at the age of 76 in 1796. At the age of 16 he became an apprentice brewer, under John Wightman. In 1749 he established his own brewery, which during the 1780's became the largest brewery in the world.

Despite building the largest brewery in the world, he also found time to become a Member of Parliament for Bedford, between 1768 & 1774.

Three years after Samuel's death the brewery became Whitbread & Co. Ltd. Now known as Whitbread PLC, it is a multinational company, which includes, among others, Premier Inn, Beefeater, Table Table & Brewers Fayre, in its portfolio.

Who were Joas Croppenburg and Cornelius Vermuyden?

Possibly the saviours of Canvey Island

In the early to mid-1600's Joa Croppenburg, a wealthy Dutch Haberdasher, from Cheapside in London, and Cornelius Vermuyden, a Dutch Engineer, were commissioned for the project to reclaim Canvey Island from encroachment by the sea. 300 Dutch workmen came from Holland to work on the project, and this explains why there was a Dutch community in this part of Essex.

Who was Ellen Willmott?

Horticulturist

Ellen was born in 1858 and died aged 76 in 1934. She was a gardener, plants woman and in 1897, recipient of the 1st Victoria Medal of Honour awarded to a British Horticulturist living in the UK. When her father died, she inherited Warley Place, Brentwood, which is now a nature reserve overseen by the Essex Wildlife Trust.

Martha Blewitt had nine (successive) husbands. In which Essex village is she commemorated?

Baythorne End

There is a plaque in the ancient church of Birdbrook, commemorating Martha's death and confirming that she had nine consecutive husbands. The plaque also confirms that her last husband outlived her and shows he went on to marry seven wives in total.

The Swan Inn at Baythorne End was once Martha's home but is now a private house. You have to ask what she put in the beer!

Who do you know that was born in the Bishop's Palace, Danbury during the war? (A puzzler! You will not find the answer on the Internet!)

I am not sure of the 'nee' surname, but feel the married name could possibly be Marion Coleman.

DENISE PHIPPS

FAMOUS ESSEX RESIDENTS

- a) Earl of Essex
- b) St. Margaret's Barking
- c) William Morris (worth a visit)
- d) David Livingstone
- e) Tom Keating
- f) Wanstead
- g) Ridley's
- h) Dutch Engineers who drained Canvey Island
- I) Horticulturist (lived in Warley Place Essex and worth a visit,)
- j) Bird took
- k) Me (Frances Drewer born, 24th November 1942.)

FRANCES DREWER

FAMOUS ESSEX RESIDENTS

All three held the position of Earl of Essex

Robert Devereaux inherited his title from his father when he was aged 9yrs. He was a favourite of Queen Elizabeth the 1st. Politically ambitious, he also became a General in the army. Led an abortive coup d'etat against Elizabeth and was executed.

Geoffrey de Mandeville was prominent during the reign of King Stephen. He found a Benedictine Priory (WaldenAbbey). After Stephen's defeat at Lincoln, he supported Stephen's rival, Empress Matilda. He died attacking Burwell castle from an arrow wound. Denied burial at the Abbey, his coffin was wrapped in lead. Eventually buried within Temple Church in London.

Humphrey de Bohun was a witness to the reissue of the Magna Carta. Took part in various military campaigns and headed several diplomatic and peace missions. He was godfather to the future Edward 1st. From 1239 -1241 he was Sheriff of Kent, Constable of Dover and Warden of the Cinque Ports.

Captain Cook married Elizabeth Batts at St. Margarets Church in Barking.

She was 20yrs and he was 14yrs her senior. They had 6 children, 3 of whom died in infancy. The two eldest went to sea. Nathaniel was lost, aged 16 yrs, when his ship went down in a hurricane. James, a Commander, drowned whilst trying to board his sloop in a storm. Hugh the youngest, died aged 17yrs whilst a student at Cambridge. Elizabeth Cook lived to be 93 yrs and is buried with her sons James and Hugh.

William Morris famous as a textile designer, also a poet, artist, novelist, social activist and founder of the Kelmscott Press. Best known for the Arts and Crafts movement. His designs still reproduced today.

David Livingstone begun work in the cotton mills aged 10yrs, with school lessons in the evening. Went to Glasgow to study medicine and theology and decided to become a Missionary Doctor.

Tom Keating was an art restorer. He claimed to have faked over 2000 paintings by 100 different artists. Profit from his forgeries are said to amount to 10 million dollars.

Sir Josiah Child memorial is to be found at St, Mary the Virgin with Christ Parish Church - Overton Drive - Wanstead.

Samuel Whitbread born 1720 - 1796. Became a Member of Parliament. Established his brewery in 1742. His two sons joined the brewery after their education.

Joas Croppenburg engaged Cornelius Vermuyden to drain and reclaim the land on Canvey Island.

Ellen Willmott was a famous horticulturist who owned Warley Place, nr. Brentwood. Paid for plant hunting expeditions in return for plants and seeds. Awarded the Victorian Medal of Honour in 1897.

Martha Blewitt lived at the Swan Inn in Birdbrook. She reportedly had nine husbands, the ninth one outliving her.

The person born in Bishop's Palace Danbury is Marion Coleman.

LEE KING

FAMOUS ESSEX RESIDENTS

Question 1 - Which title has been held by (amongst others) Geoffrey de Mandeville, Humphrey de Bohun and Robert Devereaux?

They were all Earls of Essex, a title first created in the 12th Century by King Stephen of England.

Geoffrey de Mandeville was the first Earl of Essex

Humphrey de Bohun became Earl of Hereford and Earl of Essex, and Constable of England (later called Lord High Constable) in 1298.

Robert Devereux (1567-1601) was famous for his relationship with Queen Elizabeth I. She put up with his rashness but he was a good soldier, fighting in Portugal, France and Spain. In 1599 Elizabeth sent him to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant but the campaign against the rebels was unsuccessful. After an unfavourable truce, he deserted his post and returned to England to vindicate himself privately to the queen. She responded by depriving him of his offices and he was confined to house arrest. He was executed at the Tower of London after being found guilty of treason for a failed attempt to raise Londoners in revolt against Elizabeth. He was the last person to be beheaded in the Tower.

Question 2 - The explorer, Captain Cook, was married in which Essex Church?

St Margaret's Church, Barking on 21st December 1762

Question 3 - Which famous Victorian designer and socialist, a founder of the Kelmscott Press, was born in Walthamstow (then part of the administrative Essex) in 1834.

William Morris

Question 4 - Name the Missionary student who saw service in Ongar and Stanford Rivers before finding everlasting fame in Africa.

David Livingstone

Question 5 - Which Dedham painter famously forged Old Masters?

Tom Keating (1917-1984) began as an art restorer, touching up paintings by other artists before becoming an art forger. He claimed to have created over 2,000 paintings in the style of painters such as Van Gogh, Rembrandt, and Renoir. In 1976, Keating gave an interview which was published in The Times in which he confessed to forging. In 1977, Keating and his partner, Jane Kelly, were accused of conspiracy to defraud and to obtaining payments through deception. He lived in Brentwood during the Old Bailey trial, then moved to Dedham, where his painting is still in the village church. The trial ended in 1982 and was declared nolle prosequi by the prosecutor because of Keating's ill health. He became a celebrity and presented the television show Tom Keating on Painters (so must have made a miraculous recovery!). After his death two years later, his works became highly collectable.

Question 6 - Where will you find a Georgian Memorial to Sir Josiah Child, merchant banker and Head of the East India Company?

St Mary's Church, Wanstead



Question 7 - Purfleet was home to which famous brewer?

Whitbreads. Samuel Whitbread bought all the lands of High House in Purfleet in the 1780's and restored the house using the wealth from his brewery business. He also had a very successful quarrying and mining business with ferries over the Thames to Kent and a vast number of wharfs and quays which he used to ship the lime his companies mined from the chalk cliffs of Purfleet.

Question 8 - Who were Joas Croppenburg and Cornelius Vermuyden?

They were Dutch engineers responsible for the sea defences on Canvey Island. Sir Henry Appleton, a principal landowner in the reign of James I, knew Joas Croppenburg, a wealthy citizen of London. On visiting Canvey with Sir Henry, he pointed out the advisability of taking steps to prevent the encroachment of the sea and river. Joas Croppenburg engaged the services of the celebrated Dutch engineer, Cornelius Vermuyden, who possibly knew more than any other individual of that period about reclaiming and draining land.

Question 9 - Who was Ellen Willmott?

Ellen Willmott (1858 - 1934) was a Plant Collector and Garden Creator. In 1875 her father Frederick Willmott purchased the 33-acre Warley Place estate near Brentwood for her 21st birthday and gave her the funds to create an alpine garden. Although she had a large team of gardeners (at one time over 100) she was a very active hands-on gardener and was credited with one of the best private collections of hardy trees and shrubs in the country. She was one of only two women (the other being Gertrude Jekyll) among the first 60 recipients of the RHS Victoria Medal of Honour on its inauguration in 1897. The house was demolished in 1939 and the garden is now leased to the Essex Wildlife Trust.



Question 10 - Martha Blewitt had nine (successive) husbands. In which Essex village is she commemorated?

Birdbrook, which has a station on the Colne Valley railway, 4 miles SE of Haverhill. The church contains a plaque, (see picture on next page), to the memory of Martha Blewitt, who died in 1681, and of Robert Hogan, the husband of seven wives.

MARTHA BLEWIT
of the Swan Inn at Bathorne End
in this Parish.
buried May 7th. 1681:
was the wife of nine Husbands successively.
But the ninth outlived her.
The text to her Funeral Sermon was
"Last of all the Woman died also".
ROBERT HOGAN
Of this Parish
Was the Husband of Seven Wives successively
he married Ann Livermore his seventh Wife
January 1st 1739

Plaque in Birdbrook Church

Question 11 - Who do you know that was born in the Bishop's Palace, Danbury during the war?

One of our U3A members was born in Danbury Palace which was used as a Maternity Hospital during the Second World War. There is a fascinating website (danburyparkbabies.org.uk) which has lots of interesting stories of the hospital and the babies born there. *(NB - I have since learnt of another U3A member who was a Danbury Baby so there could even be more!).*

Unfortunately, I don't think I am able to name them due to our Privacy Policy!



Visit by the Queen around 1945

MAVIS REGAN