

Local and Essex History Group
October/November Challenge 2022

Miscellaneous

- 1 At the beheading of which saint did a spring of pure water allegedly gush forth at the spot where she fell?
- 2 What substance links Elsenham and Tiptree?
- 3 If King Henry VIII was said to have "gone to Jericho", where was he most likely to be found?
- 4 How did seven hundred men manage to fit inside Edward Bright's waistcoat?
- 5 What connects Humpty Dumpty with the church of St Mary-at-the-Walls in Colchester?
- 6 What is the name of the supposedly magical pool that was "rediscovered" near Runwell in the early 1980s?
- 7 Outside the churches of both St Thomas at Bradwell-juxta-Mare and St Peter at Paglesham, stands a "jossing" block, a small raised platform reached by a short flight of steps. What was it for?
- 8 J.R.Smith wrote a book about Essex called "The Speckled Monster". What subject did it cover?
- 9 With which two towns is Basildon twinned?
- 10 What is a "Hertfordshire spike"?

Benfleet u3a

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1) Saint Winefride and her Holy Well at Holywell

She was the daughter of Wenho & Tyfid and her father was Lord Tegeingl. She also had a brother Olwin, according to legend the family were distant descendants of Vorhgern, a warlord of the 5th century Britain.

Winefride lost her head due to a prince called Caradoc who wished to marry her, but she declined because she had dedicated her life to the church.

So, Caradoc was very angry & followed her, he drew his sword and cut off her head which rolled down the slope. Where it finally stopped a spring of water appeared to bubble out of the ground and this became known as Saint Winefride Well at Holywell.

Pilgrims visit the well and it is known as Welsh Lourdes. There is an unbroken record of pilgrimage over 1300 years. Saint Winefride is open most days of the year, for people to bathe, daily services & mass on Sunday.

Source Data: www.ztevetevans.wordpress.com

2) Elsenham & Tiptree both make Jam

Elsenham Jam had a slogan, "The Most Expensive Jam in the World", and it was produced on the Elsenham Estate owned by Sir Walter Gilbey. Elsenham Jam is no longer produced in Elsenham as the company moved to Wales.

Tiptree Jam received its first Royal Warrant from George V in 1911. Tiptree product was also supplied to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. You can find Tiptree's products in over 70 countries, on luxury cruise liners, in five-star Hotels and airlines.

Source Data: Elsenham www.wikipedia.com - Tiptree www.tiptree.com

3) In 1519 King Henry VIII visited Jericho Priory in Blackmore

He had to hush up an embarrassing problem, because his mistress Elizabeth Blout became pregnant and she gave birth to a son called Henry Fitzroy, (French for "Fits du roi"), meaning son of the King. Henry Fitzroy died at a young age. So, Blackmore never gave England Henry IX. The priory closed in 1525. Today Jericho is a private 18th century mansion next to the churchyard.

Source Data: www.romfordrecorder.co.uk and www.dailymail.co.uk

4) Edward Bright's Waistcoat

Edward Bright 1721 – 1750 was a grocer in Maldon Essex. He was known as the Fat Man of Maldon, weighing in at 47.5 stone, and his waistcoat was over 6 foot wide.

Edward Bright died on 12th November 1750, aged 29, and is buried in a special coffin in All Saints Church, Maldon.

On December 1st 1750, in the Black Bull Inn in Maldon, Edward Codd placed a wager against Mr Hance that 7 hundred men could be contained inside the waistcoat. Edward Codd won the wager because he brought in 7 men from the Dengie Hundred, who were buttoned into the waistcoat with ease, (hence 7 hundred men were in the waistcoat).

A replica of the waistcoat and a sculpture of the wager can be viewed in the Maldon Museum in the Promenade Park.

Source Data: www.wikipedia.com & www.maldon.nub.news.com

5) Humpty Dumpty was a huge cannon

The cannon was placed on the wall next to St Marys Church at the Walls in Colchester. A Parliamentary cannon shot damaged the wall beneath Humpty Dumpty. This made the cannon tumble to the ground, re the nursery rhyme.

Source Data: www.nationalchurchestrust.org

6) Rediscovery of a magical pool near Runwell

A remarkable spring of water was found on Poplars Farm in 1980 and became known as Our Lady's Well, Runwell, Wickford, but also known as running well to the locals.

The spring water is always running and has never been known to fail.

Source Data: www.insearchofholywellsandhealingsprings.com

7) The Jossing Block

Outside St Thomas's at Bradwell – juxta – Mare and St Peter's at Pagelsham is a jossing block which was used by parishioners attending services on horses to dismount and mount.

You may also see nearby iron rings used to tether their horses.

Source Data: www.nationalchurchestrust.org

8) The Speckled Monster Book

The speckled monster subject was about stunting and small pox 1670 – 1970 in England.

Source Data: www.academic.oup.com

9) Two Towns Twinned with Basildon

Basildon was twinned with two towns, one is Heiligenhaus in Germany and Meaux in France. Every year Basildon send a group of people to Stadtfest music & beer festival, to promote Basildon and local English goods and companies. Meaux invites Basildon to send a stand to their Christmas Fayre to promote our goods. Meaux is famous for Brie Cheese and Mustard.

Source Date: www.echo-news.co.uk

10) The Hertfordshire Spike

The Hertfordshire Spike, of Fleche, is a short spire rising from a church tower, surrounded by a parapet. The spike is constructed of a timber framework covered in lead, copper or tiles. You can see these spires at St Marys in Ware, St James Stanstead Abbots and St Marys Hertingfordbury.

The folklore says that locals looked to build churches in Hertfordshire, but the Devil claimed ownership of the land. There was a compromise reached and the churches were built. The Devil believed he could enter the church through the tower and leave by the north door, (the Devil's Door). However, the cunning architects topped the tower with spikes so the Devil would be impaled if he attempted entry.

Source Data: www.ourhertfordandware.org.uk

DENISE PHIPPS

1) St. Winifred

St. Winifred – a seventh century woman, was the daughter of a Chieftain of Teyeingi. Her suitor, Caradog was enraged when she decided to become a nun. He chased to Holywell where he beheaded her. A pure spring is said to have gushed at the spot she fell. There is now a shrine at the site which is known as the “Lourdes of Wales”.

Source Date: www.wikipedia.org

2) The substance that links Elsenham and Tiptree is jam.

Elsenham jam was produced in North West Essex on the estate of Sir Walter Gilbey and marketed as the most expensive jam in the world. The factory has now moved to Wales.

Tiptree jam was first made in 1885 on the Tiptree estate. It received the Royal Warrant from George V in 1911.

Source Date: www.wikipedia.org & www.tiptree.com

3) Jericho Priory, at Blackmore, Essex.

If King Henry VIII was said to have “gone to Jericho” he was supposedly at his Country Retreat Jericho Priory, at Blackmore, Essex. It was said to be his “House of Pleasure” where he could be with his courtesans. Also said to be the birth place of Henry Fitzroy, his illegitimate son.

Source Date: www.blackmorehistory.blogspot.com

4) Edward Bright’s Waistcoat

Edward Bright was known as the “Fat man of Maldon”. He died aged 28/29 years, weighing 47.5 stones. On December 1st 1750 in the Black Bull Inn a wager was made that 7 men could fit inside his waistcoat. This number was sometimes stated as 700. The bet was lost. The following year a second wager was decided at the Kings Head pub for a ham, chickens and gallons of wine, when 9 men fitted the waistcoat.

Source Date: www.wikipedia.org

5) Humpty Dumpty

The church of St. Mary-at-the Walls in Colchester is a Victorian building, however it's tower dates to the 15th century. During the Civil War, Parliament besieged the town. The attack lasted twelve weeks. During the siege, a one-eyed gunner named Thompson, hauled a "saker" (a small cannon) to the top of the tower. This allowed him to directly fire onto the Parliamentary troops. The troops in turn directed their fire onto the tower, eventually hitting Thompson and sent the gunner and cannon falling to the ground. This event is said to be the origin of the nursery rhyme "Humpty Dumpty".

Source Date: www.britainexpress.com

6) Runwell's Magical Pool

There are various names for the supposedly magical pool that was rediscovered near Runwell in the early 1980's. These are – The Running Well, Our Lady's Well, Holy Well or Sacred Spring.

Source Date: www.themegalithicportal.co.uk

7) A Jossing Block

A jossing block at the churches of St. Thomas at Bradwell and St. Peter at Paglesham, was as small mounting block to assist riders to mount their horses.

Source Date: www.britishlistedbuilding.co.uk

8) The Speckled Monster

The Speckled Monster referred to by J.R. Smith in his book is the disease Smallpox, particularly in the Essex area.

Source Date: www.cambridge.org

9) Basildon's Twinned Towns

The two towns twinned with Basildon are – Helligenhau in Germany and Ville de Meaux in France.

Source Date: www.basildon.gov.uk

10) A Hertfordshire Spike

A Hertfordshire Spike is a type of spire or fleche found on church towers surrounded by a parapet.

Source Date: www.wikipedia.org

LEE KING

1) At the beheading of which saint did a spring of pure water allegedly gush forth at the spot where she fell?

Osgyth (or Osyth) (died c.700 AD) was an English saint. Born in Quarrendon, Buckinghamshire (at that time part of Mercia), she was the daughter of Frithwald, a sub-king of Mercia in Surrey and Wilburga, the daughter of the pagan King Penda of Mercia. Her ambition was to become an abbess, but her dynasty was too important.

Forced by her father into marriage with Sighere, King of Essex, she produced a son. Osgyth persuaded two local bishops to accept her vows as a nun. Then, eventually, perhaps after Sighere's death, she established a convent at Chich, in Essex, where she ruled as first abbess. She was killed by marauding pirates and her death was accounted a martyrdom by some. The site of her martyrdom became transferred to the holy spring at Quarrendon which became associated with the legend in which Osgyth stood up after her execution, picked up her head and walked with it in her hands to the door of a local convent, before collapsing there.

2) What substance links Elsenham and Tiptree?

Jam! The 'Tiptree' story begins around the early 1700s with Trewlands, the farm that was later to become the main site for jam-making owned by the Wilkins family. Walter Gilbey created "The Elsenham Jam Company," but now the products are made elsewhere. The Gilbey family however is mainly famous for gin but that was not distilled in the village.

3) If King Henry VIII was said to have "gone to Jericho", where was he most likely to be found?

Jericho Priory, Blackmore.

This is reported to have been one of Henry VIII's Houses of Pleasure, disguised by the name of Jericho so that the word among his courtiers was that he had gone to Jericho. Local legend has it that Henry's illegitimate son was conceived there. However, it is thought this highly unlikely. Henry's mistress, Elizabeth Blount disappeared from court, when it could be seen that she was pregnant. She was taken in secret by Henry's leading minister, Thomas Wolsey, into the safety of the Essex countryside. There, at the Augustinian priory of Blackmore, also known as 'Jericho', Bessie gave birth to Henry Fitzroy, the king's only acknowledged illegitimate child.

4) How did seven hundred men manage to fit inside Edward Bright's waistcoat?

Edward Bright, known locally as 'The Fat Man of Maldon', was a grocer and candle maker born in Maldon in 1721. He lived in the town until his untimely death aged 28 on November 10, 1750. At just 20 years old, Bright weighed nearly 24 stone. By the time he died, his weight had ballooned to around 42 stone. Contrary to expectations, Bright's weight was not a factor in his death, as it was typhoid that killed him.

Barely one month after his death, a wager was made in the Black Bull pub which has since gone down in local folklore. It was waged that you could fit seven hundred men inside one of Bright's buttoned-up waistcoats. Although this sounds unlikely, it was managed when seven men from the Dengie Hundred (the equivalent to the modern-day council) squeezed quite easily into the garment - hence the seven 'hundred' men.



5) What connects Humpty Dumpty with the church of St Mary-at-the-Walls in Colchester?

Humpty Dumpty was in fact believed to be a large cannon used during the English Civil War in the Siege of Colchester (13 Jun 1648 - 27 Aug 1648). The town had a castle and several churches and was protected by the city wall. Standing immediately adjacent the city wall, was St Mary's Church. A huge cannon, colloquially called Humpty Dumpty, was strategically placed on the wall next to St Mary's Church.

A shot from a Parliamentary cannon damaged the wall beneath Humpty Dumpty which caused the cannon to tumble to the ground. The Royalists, or Cavaliers - 'all the King's men' - attempted to raise Humpty Dumpty on to another part of the wall. However, because the cannon, or Humpty Dumpty, was so heavy 'All the King's horses and all the King's men couldn't put Humpty together again!' This had a drastic consequence for the Royalists as the strategically important town of Colchester fell to the Parliamentarians after a siege lasting eleven weeks.



6) What is the name of the supposedly magical pool that was "rediscovered" near Runwell in the early 1980's?

Our Lady's Well or Running Well.

7) Outside the churches of both St Thomas at Bradwell-juxta-Mare and St Peter at Paglesham, stands a "jossing" block, a small raised platform reached by a short flight of steps. What was it for?

The 'jossing block' was an 18th century horse mounting block, to assist with mounting and dismounting. Apparently 'Josser' was slang for a clergyman.

8) J.R.Smith wrote a book about Essex called "The Speckled Monster". What subject did it cover?

The history of smallpox tracing isolation, immunisation, prevention and eradication over 300 years (1670-1970).

9) With which two towns is Basildon twinned?

Basildon is twinned with Heiligenhaus (Germany) and Ville de Meaux (France).

10) What is a "Hertfordshire spike"?

Hertfordshire Spike', or fleche, is a short spire rising from a church-tower, surrounded by a parapet.

As the name suggests, they are common in Hertfordshire, but are also seen in Essex. Due to a lack of good building stone, spires were often constructed of a timber framework covered with tiles, lead or copper.

According to folklore, when Christians first looked for land to build churches in Hertfordshire, the Devil claimed ownership of all the best locations. After some negotiation both parties agreed that churches could be built but that they would not have steeples. The Devil believed that he would be able to enter the church through the tower and leave it by the north door. However, the architects topped the towers with spikes, so that he would be impaled if he attempted entry.



MAVIS REGAN

Research from various sites - Wikipedia, Historical Essex, Maldon/Rochford/Tiptree/Basildon Town websites.