

WEA

- Colchester:
A History
 - A Walk in
Halstead
 - Film &
Nostalgia
- and much more

ESSEX FEDERATION
NEWS SHEET

Autumn 2019





**WEA Eastern Region
Essex Federation**

CONTENTS:

Chairman's Letter _____ 3

Writtle Branch:

- *Islam* _____ 4
- *The Jazz Century* _____ 6
- *A History of Ideas* _____ 8

Billericay Branch:

- *Film & Nostalgia* _____ 12
- *The East End Strikes Back* _____ 14
- *The Brontë Family* _____ 17

Mersea Branch:

- *A History of Colchester Pt 2* _____ 18

Tiptree & Tollesbury Branch:

- *Merger Announcement* _____ 20
- *Imperial China* _____ 21

Colchester Branch:

- *'The Earth is All Before Us'* _____ 23

Walks:

- *Tollesbury* _____ 26
- *Harwich* _____ 28
- *Halstead* _____ 32

Reader Experience:

- *Supporting in Classes* _____ 34
- *Reminiscences - Joan McClure* _____ 35

The Essex Education Team _____ 41

Obituaries: _____ 42

*Federation Chairman:
Brian Gillion*

*Federation Secretary:
Lesley Naish
essex.federation@gmail.com*

*EF News Sheet Editor:
Andrew Aitken*

*Send copy for Spring 2020 to:
ronmarks.wea@gmail.com*

*Essex Federation Website: www.
wea-essex.org.uk*

*WEA Eastern Regional Office:
2nd Floor, 27/28 Bridge Street,
Cambridge, CB2 1UJ*

*Tel: 01223 417320
Email: eastern@wea.org.uk
Web: wea.org.uk/eastern*

The News Sheet is mainly a record of completed courses, partly to give readers an idea of what they might like.

We also welcome essays from members on subjects they think will be of interest to others.

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to the Autumn 2019 edition of EF NEWS

I hope that you have had a good summer and have joined an Autumn course from the interesting eclectic choices that branches across Essex have on offer.

Throughout late spring and summer the WEA has had to make some difficult decisions to deal with changes to our funding. These decisions could have an adverse effect on some branches with some affected more than others. One Day and Summer Schools may also be impacted. At the time of writing (late August 2019) the full effect is not known but it should be clearer by the time you receive this newsletter.

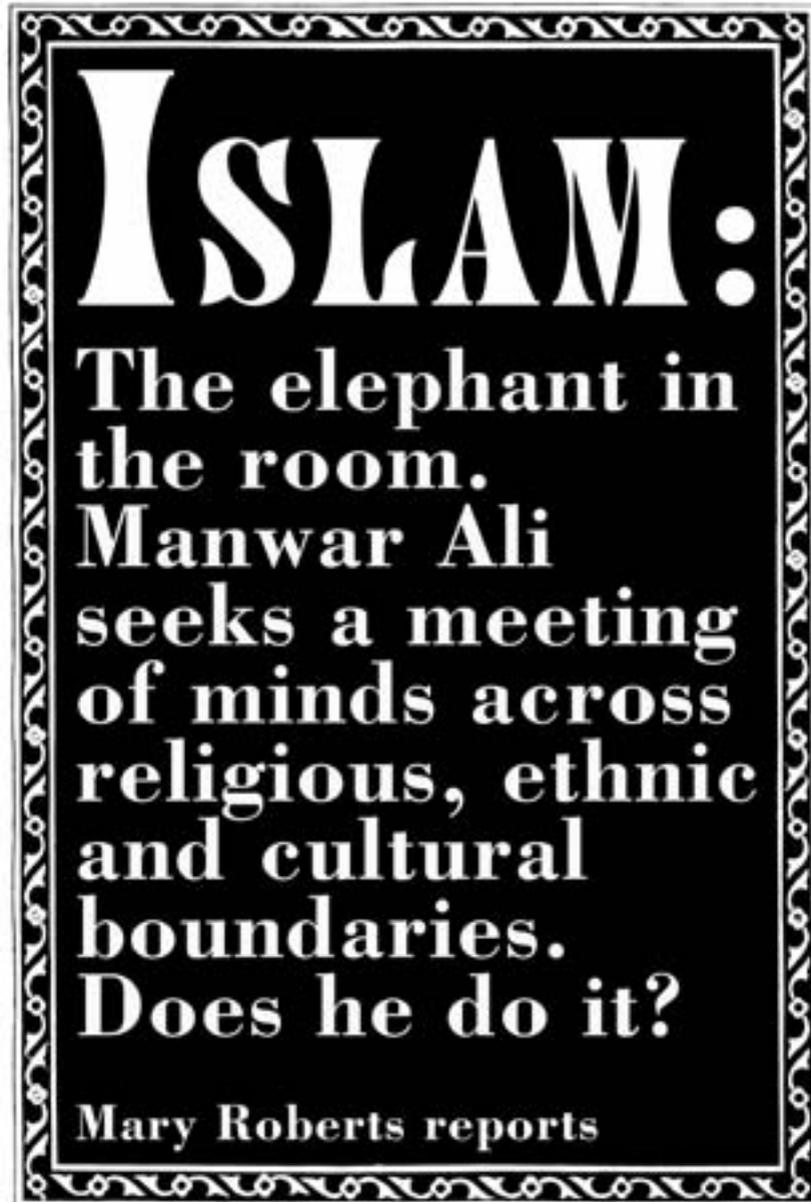
Your Federation committee and its representatives on National and Regional committees have worked very hard during this period to mitigate the effect of these decisions. We will continue to work hard to ensure that learning is delivered locally to all who want it irrespective of means and ability. It should not be forgotten that this was one of the founding principles of the Association when it was set up 116 years ago.

Brian Gillion

January 2019: 8 Week Course

ISLAM

Tutor: Manwar Ali



There have already been two glowing reports on this course from the Tiptree branch in Autumn 2016 and Billericay in the Autumn 2018 News Sheet. We were delighted when Manwar Ali agreed to talk in Writtle, which is not an ethnically diverse village. It was also great that this class attracted new students.

Manwar founded 'JIMAS' in Ipswich, which is a Muslim Educational Charity. Their aim is to create greater understanding about Islam amongst Muslims and people of other faiths, or none. Courtesy of this charity, he generously supplied us with an excellent booklet summarising the subject matter of the course, an English translation of the Qur'an, an English biography of The Prophet Muhammad and an Introduction to Islam. These replaced a booklist.

Manwar's great skill is in not just 'delivering a course on Islam'. Factual information is valuable, but to approach real understanding you need the openness in the tutor to achieve personal communication; this then carries the student through and beyond the dry 'information'. Manwar quickly created this sense of personal engagement with him as he was willing to answer any questions posed by the class, however sensitive. Not surprisingly, some of our debates were initiated by newspaper articles and we then had a genuine debate. We learnt about the differences in the practice of Islam in different cultures, like the variety there is worldwide in the sects of Christianity. He shared his own reasons for his drive to promote interfaith understanding, both at our level and by working with government agencies. His insights are underpinned by hard-won personal honesty.

The WEA is fortunate to have a tutor whose depth of knowledge and personal scholarship have led him to a vocation to facilitate understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims. The class was united in our praise for this excellent course and we confirm everything said by Tiptree and Billericay.

Mary Roberts

The Jazz Century - From Cakewalk To Culture: 10 week course
Tutor: Graham Platts

CAN A CENTURY OF **JAZZ** FIT INTO TEN NEAT BUNDLES?

William P. Gottlieb/Ira and Leonore S. Gershwitz
Fund Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress



Two of the towering geniuses of jazz; Coleman Hawkins and Miles Davis, Three Deuces, New York, c. July 1947.

John Howden finds out.

For me jazz has always been something to enjoy, something to play, and I play a mean CD player, and dance music. As a student in central London I ran Friday lunchtime sessions, which meant that all the big names in the early 1960s would come and play at the Regent Street Poly before going on to play at the 100 Club in Oxford Street, Ronnie Scott's in Soho and jazz clubs in the home counties. Later, working for BBC Local Radio I produced a weekly jazz programme. But even then it was still no more than great just to listen. I had never considered jazz as an academic subject.

Enter Graham Platts and his WEA course 'The Jazz Century'.

Not only did we listen to some great music, but we were treated to a masterly dissection of the music and its finest players as we cantered through 100 years of the genre. Graham Platts wove a rich tapestry of erudition that made us realise that jazz has every right to be examined and assessed. The playlist each week often contained 16 tracks, many of them played in full. I found myself wallowing once again in the tenor sax mastery of Coleman Hawkins and being introduced to bands and players of which I had never heard, like the Anachronic Jazz Band.

The thesis of the course was to lead us from the earliest beginnings with ragtime and the cakewalk in the dance halls to the sophisticated jazz music today filling the biggest concert venues of the world. The course was based on the growth of jazz in the USA and almost all the musical examples were American bands or artistes, King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton, Duke Ellington, Miles Davis and Oscar Peterson being just a cross section of those mentioned. The European Jazz scene was alluded to but not featured and I felt that this diminished the scope of the course. I know that time was against us and that a century of jazz fitted neatly into 10 sessions each one dealing with a decade. However, perhaps one less USA track and one track from Europe to illustrate how the music was being played elsewhere would have made the course even better. This writer found the weeks dealing with fusion and free jazz challenging and I shall probably stick to mainstream and big band jazz!

That said, it is a thoroughly enjoyable course with plenty for both jazz fans and those who are outside the jazz fold to enjoy. Of interest: the handouts that included a playlist from that week, an article from a variety of sources, a book list and other reading material were a superb back up to a scholarly and deeply researched set of lectures. Add to this a look each week at the technology developments, the move from shellac to vinyl, from gramophone to CD player, and from single horn recording to multi mic sessions, in the decade in question and the richness of the subject grows deeper and deeper. A course well worth signing up for and I, for one, cannot wait for more of the same.

John Howden

March 2019

A History of Ideas: 10 week course
Tutor: Edward De Maunsell

A History of Ideas. Now where did that idea come from?

Audrey McDowell and Joan Finch can help.



Galileo Galilei showed that the Earth rotated round the Sun. The Church didn't think so, and disagreed in its own special way.

Our Wednesday evening class had the intriguing title of 'A History of Ideas'. Full of curiosity and anticipation we wondered what sort of ideas and whose ideas would we be exploring?

Our leader in this adventure was Ed de Maunsell, whose enthusiasm and lively style of presentation quickly had us hooked, as we looked at ten ideas from history that shaped the world.

We started with the Renaissance, which was largely based in Florence in the 14C-16C. This was a progression from Medieval times, a re-birth mainly concerned with religious art combined with human intellectual development encompassing architecture, sculpture, paintings, humanism and literature. It was based on classical Roman and Greek models and aimed for perfection by introducing science to art in the form of proportion, perspective and geometry, elements which were not as precise in medieval art. Famous names from this period who helped progress these ideas include Vasari, who was the first art historian, and the artists Titian and Botticelli. Still life painting was introduced, Greek and Roman sculptures were copied but incorporating realism, architecture became more geometric with perfect circles and squares, and Dante wrote 'The Divine Comedy'.

Leading on from the Renaissance came the Reformation which was a breaking away from the Catholic church with Martin Luther being one of the key protagonists. There were church reforms, paganism was banned, and conflicts resulted due to the formation of various reformed churches. Much of this religious upheaval took place in Germany with the English Reformation being political as well as religious.

The Enlightenment followed from the late 17C until the French Revolution. These ideas were the 'light bulb moments'. It was all about thinking and the humanist approach, ignoring religion. This was the Age of Reason, the emergence of the secular non-religious views. An era of transition. Scientific method and reasoned logic were used to connect argument with reasoned thought. There was a quest for truth, for individuals to have the courage to use their own minds and to ask questions and not to be dominated by the church and its doctrines. The secularisation of

the human mind. Deductive thinking and reasoning transferring to inductive observation, experimentation and experience. Trying to quantify all knowledge. Key figures being Descartes, Spinoza, Galileo and Newton.

Industrialisation started in the late 18C and is really an on-going process. There was progress through innovation and efficiency



Thomas Brassey, sadly now forgotten, was a major contractor for railways, roads, bridges, docks and tunnels in the UK, Europe and throughout the world.

using new methods. Trade and manufacturing were introduced regionally and rapidly developed into a move from cottage industries to mass production. Vital ingredients for this to succeed were a transport system, be it rail or water, and natural resources to move goods about.

Economies developed both domestically and globally. The evolution of agrarian work to manufacturing has in recent years changed again in the West to more service-related industries as manufacturing has moved to the East.

Next we looked at various ideologies, including

Liberalism (freedom/minimal

government), Socialism (common ownership-absolute equality of people), Nationalism (both cultural and political) and Conservatism (an orthodox, traditional reaction to the previous ideologies listed.) These constitute visionary progress and a change in the status quo.

Feminism: what is it? There are many interpretations which we explored. The main aim is to advance the social role of women and to have them be treated on an equal basis to men; the key to this being education. Women were treated as equal in ancient times, the late Bronze Age and in Egypt, Sparta and Phoenicia. Like industrialisation, this is an on-going process.

Darwinism explores the evolution of man. We looked at the tree of life and the concepts of the survival of the fittest and why opposites attract. Biochemistry will advance Darwinism and has already with the discovery of DNA, Genome Project, Gene Therapy and the use of Eugenics: Darwinism being one piece of our overall evolution.

Environmentalism is a controversial idea which has become politicised. It came about in the 1960s and 1970s and is an urban middle-class reaction to modernity, a reaction to industrialisation, materialism and urbanisation. In its simplest forms it is a desire to get back to nature, to conserve the natural world and to stop the degradation of our environment. A humanistic approach to conservation.

Post Modernism is a reaction against modernism which started with art and was followed by words. Artists produced works which were controversial and defied convention. It is a phenomenon of the post-War 1960s onwards, describing progressive thinking.

Artists such as Marcel

Duchamp, Jackson Pollock and Andy Warhol are Post Modernists. Writers including Michel Foucault and Umberto Eco wrote descriptive critiques of contemporary society.

Finally we looked at Islam, being a set of ideas on religion and how to run a society, and also the source of much scientific knowledge. e.g. Mathematics, Algebra and Chemistry which influenced the Humanist and Scientific revolution. Leonardo Da Vinci and Michelangelo both were influenced by Islam, as Islamist knowledge moved west via trade routes.

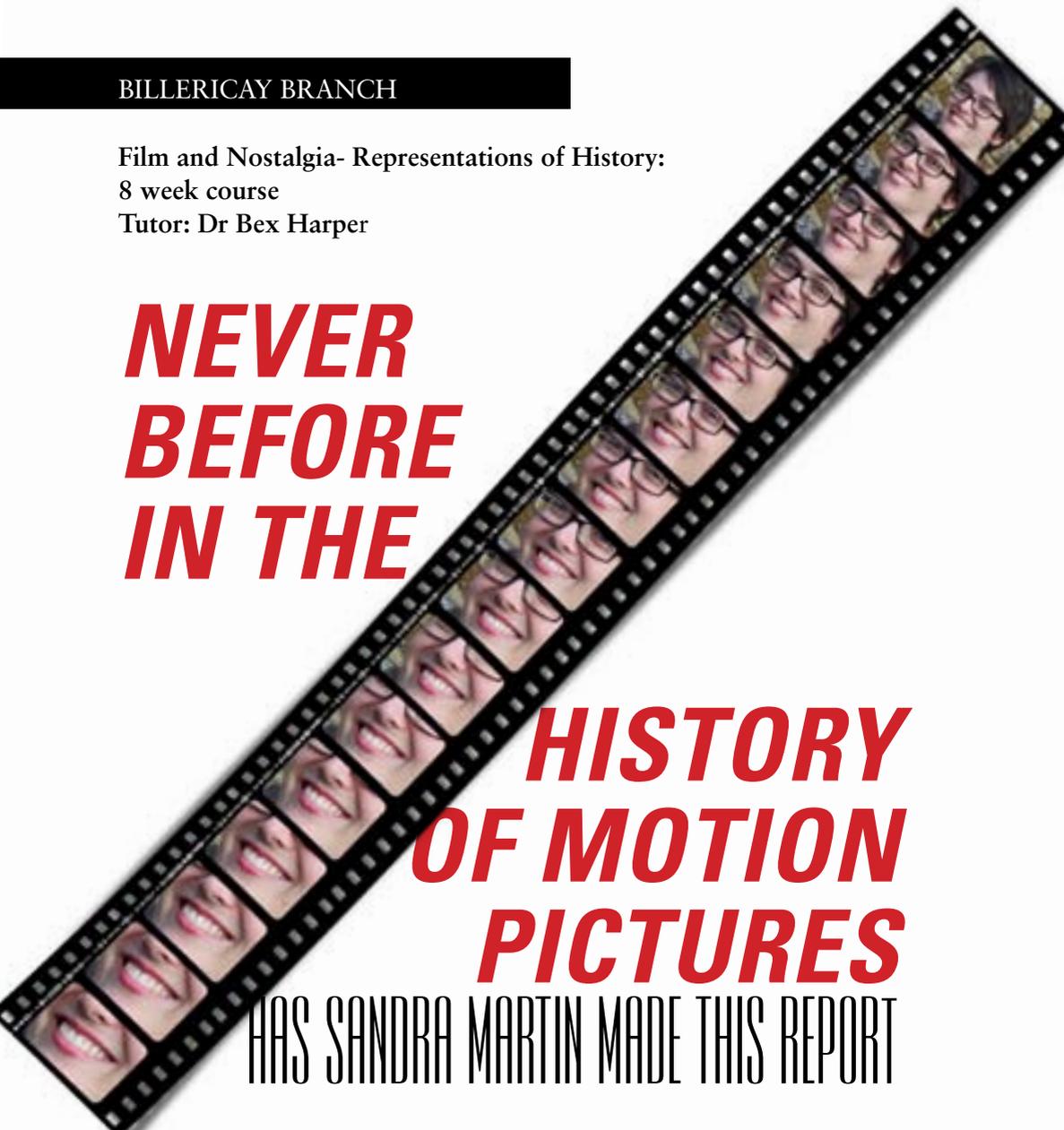
This course has given much food for thought. Our synopsis has barely scratched the surface. Thank you Ed, for bringing these topics to life for us and making us want to find out more.

Audrey McDowell/Joan Finch



Andy Warhol. He mercilessly analysed commercial design but only after having been an important practitioner. His Palizzio shoes ads will reward the time spent in the search.

Film and Nostalgia- Representations of History:
8 week course
Tutor: Dr Bex Harper



NEVER BEFORE IN THE HISTORY OF MOTION PICTURES HAS SANDRA MARTIN MADE THIS REPORT

Scene:

A cast of around 30 men and women from their mid to late twenties and! Seated, facing a screen, wide-eyed in anticipation. Unsure what the next eight weeks will involve. A plethora of bodice-ripping tear-jerkers? A potted history of the world courtesy of the film industry? Think what the film *Troy* did for our knowledge of the

magnificent Greek civilisation – hmm?!

Enter stage left:

Our Director/Producer Bex whose in-depth enlightenment of how film techniques are used to portray events, emotions, relationships and environments ensured that we will probably never view a film in quite the same way.

Bex helped us to really see the importance of things that we may not have noticed in our viewing. For example, so many different camera angles used as devices to show so much more than the things in shot, such as the power/vulnerability of characters, historical setting, and of course emotions.

She chose four films for scrutiny, the first being *Howard's End*, which we soon realised was so much more than a beautifully filmed rural idyll and which some might call a stereotypical nostalgic film? Secondly, and about as different from *Howard's End* as you could choose, was the brilliant *Goodbye Lenin*, a film set in the last years of the GDR, when history was being made, but focusing on the life of one family. Bex's guidance through this film showed us how a film can show nostalgia and heritage in such a very powerful way that the viewers can identify with the characters even though the events were far removed from their own lives. It was a film that was a great discovery for most of us and during the four weeks we studied it, I for one couldn't wait for the next session.

After a session viewing clips from, and discussing *The Help* – a film set in the south of the US around the time of the Civil Rights movement – we moved on to our final film, *The King's Speech*, set in the years leading up to WW2 and centred on the future King's struggles to master a speech impediment which could hinder his role as sovereign.

Our sessions were so much more than us, as the audience, viewing while the Director Bex led – we broke off into small groups for discussion and then regrouped to share our views after each clip. This technique enabled us to pursue in depth what nostalgia and heritage in film meant, not only to us, but in the portrayal of life events in film.

A thoroughly enjoyable and enlightening course.

Sandra Martin

The East End Strikes Back
8 Week Course
Tutor: Ted Woodgate



This article is a mixture of my overall experience of WEA courses and a review of Ted's latest - again fantastic - course. As Treasurer of Billericay Branch, I have attended a lot of courses, particularly in the pre-online enrolment days when I needed to be at the first sessions to collect all the money. The plus of doing this was a realisation that even if the course title hadn't particularly appealed to me, if the tutor was good then it didn't matter. In fact, I enjoyed some of these courses even more, as I felt strangely empowered because I now had knowledge of a topic that I hadn't before. For example, I wasn't especially interested in Art but after attending John Parker's *Ten of the Best*, I learnt so much and now don't feel such of an ignoramus when famous artists are mentioned and I understand some of the reasons behind certain paintings.

Anyway, back to Ted; I think I've now attended all of his courses - I realised at the first one that his varied style of looking at the

subject matter kept my interest. I learnt so many little 'extras' - for example, people living in villages would choose somebody to be the equivalent of the local policeman before the national police force came into existence. This is probably obvious if you think about it, but I hadn't and WEA tutors have often made me think about things that I wouldn't have done otherwise. One particular course given by Ted was 'Turbulent Half Century' which filled in so much about recent history and I still can't believe that I had got to be over 60 and was so ignorant about what had gone on in our country just before I was born.

After retiring, I've certainly been able to expand my horizons and started researching my family history. I love it as I can combine finding out about my ancestors, the times they lived in, what they did etc. and the challenge of 'solving a problem'. This is where the course *The East End Strikes Back* comes into its own!

I didn't have any ancestors from the East End, but some of the participants did and could add lots of little extras which Ted always encouraged. As usual, he managed their contributions perfectly so they enhanced the course for us. He encouraged further research between the classes and it was amazing what people came back with each week, which shows how much everybody was inspired.

As the title implies, we covered a lot of strikes and the reasons why - it was frightening what dangerous conditions people were working under in the late 1800s and how many unfair practices there were. We were shown some extracts from Barbara Windsor's *Who Do You Think You Are?* episode, which gave us some wonderful insights into life in the East End at the time. One member, on learning more about the Bryant and May Matchstick workers' strike, was inspired to do some more research and discovered that one of his ancestors had taken part and shared some of the information he found in strike registers with us.

One week, Ted was talking about the gas works and said that one particular strike leader had come to London from Saltley gas works in Birmingham. My Dad went to school in Saltley and I remembered that, when researching my family history, I'd seen on the censuses that my Great Granddad and Great Great Granddad had been gas workers but I hadn't really realised what this meant. Ted explained

more about what life working in a gas factory was like, bringing to life what my ancestors had done.

I certainly hadn't expected to come to a course about the East End and find out something about my own ancestors in Birmingham and was quite excited to investigate this further. I nearly didn't mention it, as I didn't think anybody else in the class would be interested but, in the end, I did and was amazed at how others appeared to be genuinely pleased about and interested in my discovery.

This brings me to something else about Billericay WEA - the people who attend the courses. Although it obviously varies with topic, there is a hardcore of people who try to do most courses and many tutors have commented on how much they've enjoyed teaching their course in Billericay as they have felt a camaraderie among the group where people are making interesting comments



Social reformer Annie Besant and a group of match girls. Besant's name is always linked with the strike, but the determination of the predominantly teenage women should also be celebrated.

or asking pertinent questions without taking over. Not everybody makes comments and they are under no pressure to do so at all. You could tell from looking around the room on this course just how enthralled people were and I take my hat off (an old fashioned phrase but quite relevant to this course as we learnt from some of the photographs of 'The Bryant and May Matchstick Girls' how important hats were even though they didn't have much money and they would share them around) to Ted at how he manages to keep coming up with such superb courses.

I keenly await the next one!

Margaret Kirk – Course Member and Treasurer

The Brontë Family of Haworth - A New Look!

One Day Course:

Tutor: Margaret Mills

It was a warm, bright summer day, so there was no hardship in rising early to drive 50 miles to Billericay WEA for a day on the Brontë family. I was looking forward to it immensely given my long held love of their books studied at school and read ever since.

I have enjoyed several day courses at this branch, the bright welcome to everyone, the comfortable environment and mostly, the stimulation and learning which deepens and alters one.

I had been to Haworth, the home of the Brontës, many years ago so brought those faded memories with me. However, Margaret reignited and illuminated the Brontës lives so effectively. Aspects of the books, their plot, narrative and characterisation, became clearer and deeper.

The class was well attended and attentive and asked questions which elicited greater insights into how the family life and background of these extraordinary women informed their literary legacy.

I think I could have answered my O-Level Literature essays better now!

Anne Worsley - Course Member

Billericay WEA Branch Comment- We had to cancel this FULL course owing to the snow in March 2018 and received so many requests to run it that we did! In fact, we had to repeat it again and again such that we recognised 100 enrolments by awarding Eleanor a little notebook to make her jottings as per the Brontës!



Charlotte Brontë probably by George Richmond, a rare professional portrait of a Brontë sister. Photographs purporting to be of the Brontës emerge from time to time.

A History of Colchester Part 2

8 Week Course

Tutor: Patrick Denney



© Robin Webster

'Jumbo', a Victorian water tower is now disused. Plans to adapt or demolish it always meet with opposition.

IS THE UK'S OLDEST RECORDED TOWN ALSO ITS MOST INTERESTING?

Hilary McMullen might have the answer

This was a very popular and instructive course, ranging from the Great Plague (in which Colchester was badly affected, having some 50% of its population die compared to about 25% in London) to the twentieth century.

We learned about the town's Georgian architecture. It was really interesting to realise how much we could tell about a house from just looking at window and door cases. Were the window cases flush with the brickwork or set back? Could we see the sash boxes or were they hidden behind the brickwork? The answers allowed us to date the building as being from an earlier or later period.

Who would have guessed how much could be deduced about the profession of the person for whom the house was built – simply by looking at the door case? The Ionic door case of Grey Friars reflects the importance of Rev John Halls, who had it built. Other people, such as clothiers, might have had more modest door cases.

We considered other interesting features of these buildings – parapets, cornices, friezes and much more. Many of Colchester's houses had sizeable gardens with terraces where ladies could walk

and summer-houses where they could sit. Often there was a folly at the end of the garden and some of these still survive. Although this was about Colchester's houses, we learned how to look at a building and could apply this knowledge anywhere.

We were lucky in that Alan, a member of the class and a blue badge guide, volunteered to lead three separate walks through the town. Everybody who took up his offer enjoyed the experience.

We had a session looking at The Hythe, which was the richest parish in Colchester in 1741. While there was great wealth there was also great poverty. The Hythe was a centre for industry with a distillery, brickworks, coal yards, granaries and boat building amongst other activities. Barges just about struggled upstream to Marriages flour mill.

Colchester has undoubtedly had its fair share of ups and downs. Having been a great centre for the production of cloth and, latterly, of superior Bay cloth, it began to lose ground in the early eighteenth century. However, it was good at adapting and other trades filled the gap. The military barracks brought many advantages to the town.

In the late nineteenth century Colchester was the largest centre in Britain of the Rag Trade. Huge numbers of people were employed in tailoring. The Hyam family, who immigrated in the late eighteenth century, moved from being pawnbrokers to having tailoring outlets throughout the country.

Finally, we looked at the twentieth century, starting with a picture of the proclamation of the death of Queen Victoria, at a time when most traffic was still horse drawn and an obelisk stood in the middle of the high street.

Over the years, Patrick had interviewed and filmed many old Colcestrians and we heard some of their accounts of life in factories and on farms. One man who had grown up in The Hythe remembered taking a wheelbarrow to collect coal from a coalyard. There were interviews with people who remembered the bombing of Old Heath Laundry and Severalls Hospital. Some remembered the arrival of evacuees while others recalled being evacuated.

It is not possible in a short report to do justice to what was a fascinating and informative course.

Hilary McMullen

Merger of Tiptree and Tollesbury WEA branches

TIPTREE + TOLLESBURY

Sea meets (high) tea.

WEA proudly announce the merger of Tiptree and Tollesbury WEA. This is a great opportunity to combine the strengths of both Tiptree and Tollesbury branches. Tollesbury has been running since 1949 and Tiptree has run for 46 years. This is a unique opportunity to combine forces to bring a more comprehensive programme of learning opportunities in a wide variety of subjects. Our courses include subject areas such as History, Economics and Philosophy. In 2019 Graham Platts came to this area twice to give us a diverse range of subjects, for example. In Tiptree he gave a workshop on Language, Lore and Legend – The Story of English and then came to Tollesbury in spring to give us a day school on the life of Chaucer. Here's what a recruit has got to say who recently attended one of our day schools. "I have recently retired and have attended two WEA day courses which were both very interesting and informative. I will definitely be booking more courses as they are a great way of keeping your mind active."

We look forward to Tollesbury residents dipping their toe into Tiptree workshops and likewise for Tiptree residents to come to Tollesbury. Although Tiptree can boast a much larger population, Tollesbury has its own charm and character exemplified by the guided walk we had in June with Keith Lovell. Of course, recruits from outside these areas are always welcome as well.

Anne Mossman

Imperial China

Tutors: David and Anne Prynne

Day School: 11th May 2019

CHINA

A PAST AS RIVETING AS ITS FUTURE?

What a wonderful double act provided by David Prynne and his wife Ann. David has devoted a lot of his life to researching China's history, and his accumulated knowledge made it a treat to listen to him.

David initially embarked on the geography of China, the scale of which is immense. With Ann working the laptop, colourful detailed maps of China were shown, together with some of the beautiful landscapes that are present in this vast area. Once we had grasped some details of the climate, topography and economy, we then moved to China's History.

The prehistoric era is perhaps the most fascinating. China's mysterious distant past was described as well as the groups living there and their remarkable culture. Silk and jade workings (more valuable than gold) were already established in Neolithic times.

There were many dynasties in China, each leaving their mark: the Han and Tang dynasties among many others. The sophistication and development of these early cultures is quite breath-taking. Later came the lengthier involvement of the Mongols with the Ming Dynasty and then the Xin Dynasty in the nineteenth century.

An unscheduled power cut temporarily halted our video and audio in its tracks, but David was undeterred, and his immense knowledge led us seamlessly through.

Inevitably (and sadly) time ran out after learning all too briefly about the language, traditions and modern society. Thankfully we had lots of handouts making our knowledge more permanent!

The workshop was hugely enjoyed by our audience. We would welcome a further rendition the Prynns of China's amazing History.

Anne Mossman

One Day School June 2019

'The Earth is all before us'

Tutor: Caroline Phillips

Introduction

The quotation from Wordsworth's *The Prelude* led us to a discussion of the disconnection from Nature that seems to have overtaken many people and caused the loss of well-being. How have we got there and what is there that is restorative? There is now (but not new) the idea of 'forest therapy', known about to poets and people close to a Nature which is not always beneficent and passive.

Disconnection

'Disconnection from nature is surely at the root of some ill-health in today's society.' Rebecca Willans.

This has been developed over many years in the US by Richard Louv. He describes the human cost of alienation from nature as Nature Deficit Disorder (NDD). He argues that we must be in natural landscapes regularly to be fully well. Have we undue attachment to technology? A recent children's dictionary includes 'blog' and 'broadband' but omits 'acorn' and 'adder.'

Literature is peppered with references to 'striding through the countryside' as a means of easing melancholy, inspiring creative thought and hastening recovery. But those were times of much less disconnection from the countryside. Most people lived in small towns and were in reach, and sometimes in sight, of countryside and woods. What can poets and writers do to help us?

Reconnection

Most of us have felt an underlying affinity for nature. If we go back as far as we can to the cave art of Lascaux and even further to Chauvet we see, in the flickering torchlight, animals that seem to move and predators whose eyes follow you. The art has a numinous quality showing immersion in Nature. Coming forward to recent, violent times, there were two TV programmes, *The Gardeners of*

Kabul and *The Gardeners of Baghdad* which showed a few brave gardeners defying danger.

Poets and writers point to what we are losing and how we can regain it. They have always sensed the atmosphere in woods and forests. Trees have a different time scale to us!

The class was introduced to Forest Therapy, a healing practice which involves spending time in woods as an antidote to the jarring sounds, sights and smells of the city. The idea in Japan is of 'shinrin-yoku', 'forest medicine' or 'forest bathing.' It means taking in the forest atmosphere and is a sort of 'wild yoga!'

However, Nature should not be taken for granted. Frost's *Building Wall* has Nature gently subversive and mischievous, beginning:

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it
And spills the upper boulders in the sun.

He wonders why a wall is needed. Will his apple trees get across and eat the cones under his neighbour's pines? He keeps getting the answer 'Good fences make good neighbours.' And still:

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down. I could say "Elves" to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself....

Frost was a friend and mentor to Edward Thomas, who when stationed in WW1 in Essex, got relief from the war and depression by walking in the countryside, delighting in the place names.

A forest can be where safety, escape and danger mingle between the trees as Caroline retold the tales of Hans and Gretel and the witch's hot end and the story of Snow White. Both were the Grimms' versions. And Nature cannot be treated as passive.

The Wild Remedy

An example from life is in a book Caroline suggested, *The Wild Remedy* by Emma Mitchell. The writer has suffered from clinical depression for many years. Depression does not care who you are or how you live. Taking a walk among plants and trees hauls her out of her depression and drives away despondency - 'a neural sigh of relief' - even if it is for a short time. In Winter it is the sign of

oncoming Spring with the promise of sunlight and growth; in Spring and Summer it is the sounds of wildlife and the scent of flowers and trees; in Autumn it is the feast of red and gold of the leaves. Walking in green space has a positive effect on stress, anxiety and the heart. (It is one of the bravest and most beautiful books I have read for some time. R.H.)

Walden

In Mary Oliver's *Going to Walden* Thoreau's Walden woods are a metaphor for forest therapy, even if the term had yet to come.

How dull we grow from hurrying here and there!

And:

Going to Walden is not so easy a thing
As a green visit. It is the slow and difficult
Trick of living, and finding where you are.

Perhaps she had in mind Thoreau's comparing the pursuit of happiness to trying to catch a butterfly: 'The more you chase it, the more it will elude you. But if you turn your attention to other things, it will come and sit softly on your shoulder.'

Conclusion

Caroline guided us through the poetry and prose of Nature with a constellation of poets from the Romantic to the Modern. Some old friends, some new. It was a well thought out and constructed day of study with much to think about and follow up.

So, in Wordsworth's words in "The Prelude" :-

The earth was all before me. With a heart
Joyous, nor scared at its own liberty,
I look about; and should the chosen guide
Be nothing better than a wandering cloud,
I cannot miss my way.

Postscript

Word of the day: "heartwood" - the dense, durable interior of a tree trunk, often more richly coloured than the surrounding 'sapwood', metaphorically, the deep-set aspects of a person, their inner core.

Ray Hedley

WALKS

Tollesbury Guided Walk

June 19th

Leader: Keith Lovell

What could have been a dismal day was lit up by a delightful and most entertaining talk by Keith Lovell (ex-vicar of Tollesbury).

The walk started in the church seated in the pews, a nice relaxed start! A big funeral was due, and we had to make a hasty retreat but not without much banter with the church wardens. The church had many stories and its character reflected the importance of the fishing and agricultural community. The stained glass on the left-hand side was commissioned in the 1960s and known as the 'Seafarers Window'. It displays various classes of boat including a 'stackie' – a Thames Barge which used



The guide considers his next move.
Photo: Joan Black

to take hay to London and bring manure back. Towards the north the stained glass is Victorian and created by Kempe, a renowned craftsman of his era. He also worked with his cousin Walter E. Tower. Their work is readily identified by a small wheatsheaf (and a tower in later works).

The 18th century font is notable. It was donated by a person

who was liberal with his words. The bowl is inscribed on seven of its eight sides: 'Good people all I pray take Care. That in ye Church you doe not Sware as this man Did'. Next, we had to hurry as funeral guests started to arrive and we made our way to the hard.

On the way to the hard, in the south east corner of the square, by the church wall, stands the village Lock-up. This 17th century wooden building was where drunks were held until they were sober. At one time there were 6 pubs in Tollesbury. One remains.

En route we passed Closes (Genesta and Valkyrie) that reflect Tollesbury's links with the Americas Cup. Crewing J-Class yachts was an important source of employment for local sailors

King's Walk recalls King George VI's inspection of the light railway, whose route stretched from Kelvedon to Tollesbury pier (now derelict on Tollesbury Wick marshes). The line is now known as the 'Crab and Winkle Line' giving a clue as to its former use.

Several of the surrounding fields are owned by Wilkins, of jam fame, and the Little Scarlet Strawberry was grown here at one time as well as numerous other fruits.



St Mary's Tollesbury. The tower has its origins in the 11th Century. Throughout the church, additions have been made in every century up to the 20th.

films and TV shows in recent years.

The tide was coming in fast. Many a car has been caught out here! Time to retreat back up the hill taking time to reflect on images of this intriguing 'Plough and Sail' village.

Thanks.

Anne Mossman

Harwich Guided Walk

July 10th

Leaders: Andy and Bernie

Many members said, before our walk, "I've lived in Essex for xx years but I've never been to Harwich!". The reason is clear: unless you're boarding a ship, it isn't on the way to anywhere. After the walk we agreed that it's worth a visit in its own right.

We were amazed to be greeted by the Town Crier – in full costume with bell – who unrolled a scroll and read out a speech of welcome from the Mayor and citizens

We formed two groups, and ours started in the Visitor Centre in a room devoted to the voyage of the Mayflower in 1620. The Mayflower voyage was not the first attempt to colonise the New World. Previously Captain Christopher Newport had led three ships in 1607. Better known, though, is the Mayflower voyage of Captain Christopher Jones of Harwich. We saw a plaque containing the names of all who sailed on the Mayflower, who sought freedom from religious persecution.

Back outside we walked to Ha'penny Pier to get a view over the harbour area formed by the confluence of the rivers Orwell and Stour. Two preserved buildings on the pier - the old Ticket Office and Waiting Room - form a visitor centre from which, every Saturday at 2pm, the Harwich Society leads a walk. Opposite is Felixstowe with its array of cranes unloading vast container ships.

In its heyday in the 16th and 17th century, Harwich harbour could accommodate the whole of the English Fleet. It took shelter here in 1588 after seeing off the Spanish Armada, and later Harwich was a base for fighting the Dutch. This ceased when William



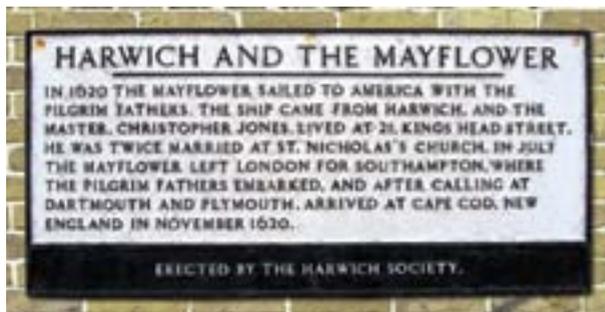
Pepys' drive and administrative ability were responsible for the rebuilding of the Navy, but he was destined to become more famous as a diarist.

of Orange became joint sovereign of England with his wife Mary. Before then, in the 'general' election of 1679 (there were 32 voters), Harwich returned two members to Parliament. One was Samuel Pepys, Chief Clerk to the Navy Board who had already set up a naval shipyard in the town. The 'Navyard' was our next stop. There



is little to see except for a list of every ship built there between 1660 and 1828.

Heading inland we stopped at the Electric Palace. Dating from 1913, it is one of the earliest cinemas in the UK. We heard how it was due to be demolished in the 1970s, but was saved at the last minute by an injunction which gave time for it to be granted protected status. The building's current restoration is



prolonged by the discovery of asbestos, so all we saw was scaffolding and plastic sheeting. Come back next summer.

On to the Treadmill Crane. Installed in the Navyard in 1667 it was moved in 1932 to its present site. It consists of two giant side-by-side treadmills linked by an axle. One or two men would get into each mill to get it rotating. A hooked chain



In claiming a Mayflower connection, Harwich is part of a crowded (and often overlapping) field. (From top: Billericay, Harwich . Southwark (l), Plymouth (r)

attached to the axle was guided along a jib and over a pulley. The chain would be hooked to whatever required lifting. Heavier loads brought danger: the men might lose control and be thrown around as the wheels went into reverse. Apparently one other example exists - in Gdansk in Poland.

We continued past the lighthouse which marks the end of the Essex Way, and returned towards the Quay. Throughout the walk our guide pointed out houses and pubs, many listed, recounting anecdotes and amusing stories associated with them. The final stop was the house, built around 1580, where Captain Christopher Jones lived. The Harwich Society have rented the property until the end of 2020. It is to become the centre of the 'Mayflower 2020' 400th anniversary celebrations of the 1620 voyage. Our guide, as curator of the exhibition, was able to let us in and show us around. Some of the modern plastering has been stripped to reveal the original lath and plaster. I plan another visit in 12 months to see what they have made of this ambitious project.

Also notable are the Grade I listed Guildhall, the Kindertransport exhibition in the Lower Lighthouse, the Sea Captain's Houses close to the Treadmill Crane and the Pier Hotel and Great Eastern building opposite the Ha'penny pierhead.

That ended the morning walk. Some departed, others had lunch and reconvened at the Redoubt, built to repel feared invasion by Napoleon. By 1969 it was derelict, but the newly-formed Harwich Society took on its restoration. We can now see how the fortress was designed to withstand attack, and there are interesting exhibits on its use in Victorian times and in both world wars. It is also used as a location for events and re-enactments.

I have been on several WEA Essex walks now, and all of them, especially this one, meet the WEA aims for 'Adult Learning Within Reach'. We have an expert and knowledgeable guide who creates a relaxed atmosphere where questions and opinions are welcomed. We learn a lot in an open-air environment (I haven't been on a wet day yet!). We meet people from other Branches, and the cost is modest. Hats off to Joan Black for organising these walks which have proved so popular with WEA members from all over Essex. **Mike Wall with much additional material from Gillian LePage**

as if it hadn't already been proved that Harwich had much to offer...

Nurse Edith Cavell's carriage

Having spent an interesting day walking around Historic Harwich, we decided to visit the carriage that brought Nurse Edith Cavell's body home from Belgium in 1919. She had been executed by the Germans in 1915 for helping about 200 British and Allied soldiers to escape into The Netherlands.



Nurse Edith Cavell: "Patriotism is not enough".



Few railway carriages can have had a more poignant history.

Two months later the carriage was used to repatriate a further body, that of Capt Charles Fryatt (a local man) who, in July 1916, was also shot by the Germans. He had rammed a submarine with his non-military vessel. Tragically, a pardon from the Kaiser arrived 20 minutes after he was executed. Capt Fryatt is buried in the churchyard of All Saints in Dovercourt.

The body of the Unknown Soldier, interred in Westminster Abbey in 1920, was also repatriated in the carriage.

The South Eastern and Chatham Railway passenger luggage van No 132 became known to railwaymen as the Cavell Van. It was an interesting but poignant visit and rounded off a very good day.

Joan Black

Halstead Guided Walk

23rd May 2019

Guide: Malcolm Root, President - Halstead & District Local History Society

We started the afternoon by looking at the exterior of St Andrews Church and viewing the original sketch drawings for the tower, which having been struck by lightning, was replaced during the 19th Century. We were shown the War Memorial opposite and our guide explained the way traffic once passed this structure on both sides.

As we moved down the High Street we were shown the building which once housed the boys grammar school and the original post office. At the bottom of the street we viewed the Dutch-style houses in the Causeway, leading to the original town mill. We then proceeded past the Bull Hotel to the library, once part of the railway station, with its red, white and blue bricks. Crossing into Kings Road we were shown two brick murals on the Lidl building depicting the High Street and station in the Edwardian period.

Our guide then turned off the road and we entered the town park - allotments until 1902 - now a pleasant feature. Opposite we were shown what had been one of the two cinemas in the town and the Temperance Hotel, both buildings now in different use.



St Andrews from Hedingham Rd. A church has been sited here for at least 800 years

Crossing the road, we walked past a building thought to have windows taken from the town workhouse, and some delightful



There's fine countryside around Halstead. No need to confine your walk to the town.



You can't walk far in Halstead without seeing evidence of Courtauld influence. The lower image features the family crest.

gardens, then onto the second cinema building, Halstead Empire, still in use today as a cinema, theatre and entertainment venue. Along from the Empire is the site of the Portway Factory. Portways manufactured the well known Tortoise Stoves, their motto 'Slow but Sure'.

Many schools and MOD buildings had these stoves in the pre and post Second World War years.

Finally our guide talked about Courtaulds and their success with mourning crepe and textiles. The building that is now Halstead Co-operative sits on the site of the Courtauld Factory. Opposite are the three-storey Weavers Cottages, where many of the employees of Portways and Courtaulds resided. The afternoon concluded with a look around the town museum.

An interesting and informative tour of this North Essex town.
Charles Soule

READER EXPERIENCES

Supporting in Classes

Providing our students with the very best opportunity to access learning is at the heart of the WEA's values.

I recently supported two students on an accredited Helping in Schools course in Sawbridgeworth. One student had indicated that they were in need of some focused assistance throughout the session due to the impact her stress and anxiety were having on her learning. Often students' needs may not be limited to practical support but rather require some confidence-enhancing assistance to help them to engage with the learning.

For many students, embarking on a WEA course may be their first step back into learning since school or for many years. This is equally true for courses in branches or within our community programmes. It can be daunting attending any adult learning for the first time. Will it be friendly? Will I fit in? Will I cope with the work? The support I gave in Sawbridgeworth enabled the student to relax and engage in the session, I was able to answer her questions and encourage her to complete the written tasks that were required in this course. At the time I started supporting she was ready to withdraw from the course, she is now expected to complete and achieve the qualification and I did little except encourage and reassure.

In all classes students, particularly new students, may need 'support' to provide them with the confidence to ask questions, to clarify topics covered or generally seek reassurance that they are progressing as expected on the course, or just a warm welcome each week. This friendly face of the WEA is something that Essex branches are known for and makes such a difference.

Catering to all support needs and playing our part in the development and progression of our learners' needs is what the WEA is proud to offer and deliver to our valued students.

I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to support a student, it made such a difference for her and it was a really positive experience for me.

Claire Gellard Education Support Assistant (Essex)

REMINISCENCES

By Joan McClure

in conversation with John Howden, a Wittle Branch member.



“**W**hen John recorded the conversation earlier in the year I was 2 days short of my 91st birthday. I was born in 1928 in Dorset, at Gwynmouth. It was in Hampshire when I was born but soon after the County lines were moved and I became a Dorset person. I went to school in Dorset but came to live in Essex when I married in 1947. I met my husband a day after the war ended. He and a friend had come to Bournemouth for a holiday and we met at a tea dance, of all things, and it developed from there. I was quite a good dancer, but he wasn't, but he was lovely.

My husband was a farmer. At that time, he had a mixed farm as most farms were. We had some horses, cattle, pigs, chickens, sheep but mostly it was arable. It was a mile outside of Blackmore in the middle of the countryside. It was not our own but a rented farm from Wadham College. Conditions were pretty grubby. There was no electricity when we first married, it was mainly lit by oil lamps.

There was no indoor sanitation. There was no heating indoors and so we had to light fires. Cooking was a problem. I cooked on an oil stove and a big old range which used to eat coal like nobody's business. We used to have a truck load of coal delivered every year, just to heat the range. I could cook but this sort of cooking shattered me. I had no idea what I was doing. My husband put a small generator in an out-house so we did have electric light after a while, which was fine, but there was not enough electricity to power anything. No hoovers or heaters or anything. When my husband was working in the fields, I used candles until he came home and started the generator; it was too powerful for me to start.

We didn't get mains electricity until after my daughter was born. The electricity supply was a little hit and miss; we were at the end of a long line; trees would fall and damage the line or the weather conditions would affect things. My first son was born in late 1949 my daughter in 1952 and my younger son in 1953. We then had a bathroom put in and a loo and a downstairs loo as well – it was absolute luxury. We had to let the range out at about 12 o'clock because it took too much coal but it did heat water for us until the evening. Back in Bournemouth there was gas lighting until electricity came in the late 30's, so compared with my primitive home conditions it was very civilised. I remember, as children, we used to watch the lamplighter put his ladder against the lamp-post and climb up to light the gas globe.

We weren't really comfortably off. My husband's father died not long before we married and we had to pay off death duties and help to make provision for my mother-in-law who insisted on having a house bought for her which we couldn't afford. Most cash went to my sister-in-law who, as her father's daughter, she was entitled to it, so yes we had a bit of a struggle, but we survived – given my current age! We didn't envy others, I was just happy to be living with my husband. I was very young; I had married at 19. You can cope with an awful lot when you are young – it's when you get older you get expectations.

My father didn't know much about farming even though I lived in a village in Dorset and there were farms all around. One of the farmers there had cows and he used to come around with a pony

and churns of milk to sell. In Blackmore we had our own cows to provide milk. We were rationed for meat like everybody else but we had our own chickens and the eggs they produced. I loved being in the country and I loved the animals. When lambing time came it was my job to bottle feed any orphan lambs and bring them up and the calves, when they were taken from their mothers, I fed them milk from a bucket as no one else had time. I used to do it all although I didn't have much to do with the horses as they were very precious. The horses ploughed the land. Just after the war my husband was only allowed one tractor He got a cup for ploughing which I've still got. In fact there were lots of horse shows all around and there are many cups from that time.

I lived at the farm for 44 years. It was a bigish and very old farmhouse. I remember when electricity came we discussed what first we might buy and I said I would love a washing machine but it was not possible. Instead my husband came home with a television set, I could have killed him! However, with children we couldn't get out much and so he thought it was a good idea. I didn't get my washing machine until my second son was born. Later I had a twin-tub with a single top loader and a mangle on top. It was a real treat because before I only had a big old hand mangle and using it was hard work.

As I mentioned, it was a rented farm and another vivid memory I have followed the owners deciding to take out the old range and replace it with a Raeburn assisted by my husband. A huge hole opened up to the sky. Unfortunately, my husband got 'flu and so there I was in the middle of winter with a brand new-born baby and a great hole in the kitchen which remained for six weeks. I was pretty tough in those days, I must have been. By the time the children were getting to adulthood the house had altered a lot because I had knocked walls down and put doors in, it was much different.

Looking back there were a lot of good times and sort of fun – you just accepted things. This was the life we had chosen to live. I chose to marry my husband. Whatever I got I had asked for and I didn't deserve anything else. We just overcame things as we went along. As for friends, the strange thing about the farming community at that

time was that they were nearly all Scottish who, like my husband, had come down from Scotland. Not necessarily their wives but the farmers were. We were a bit exceptional, most of them were better off than we were and their farms were less primitive than ours but we caught up with them so it didn't matter. Representatives from the Wadham College used to visit once or twice a year and once a year in July at the time of the royal show we stayed in the college, and that was pretty primitive at the time as well. It was just after the war and everything was at that time, nothing had progressed very much. We ate at night and had dinners in the main refectory and that was very interesting.



Howletts Hall as it would have been when Joan McClure first knew it.

My children we extremely happy kids, I never saw much of them when they were home because they were always out and I never let them go anywhere without taking a dog with them, we always had dogs, so wherever they went in the hundred acres woods or around the farm they had the dog and were happy, they were just always out. There were men in the fields then – you don't see that so much these days on farms but then there was always someone about. I think we had about five or six staff in cottages around the farm and they looked after their own maintenance. I used to do the pay-as-you-earn forms because my husband wasn't keen on that side of things. I lived in Thomas Hardy country before I was married. When I went to college my mentor insisted I did Thomas Hardy because I was familiar with the country and it was bit like that on the farm.

The farmers all seemed to observe the old Scottish customs. My father-in-law always used to insist upon first footing; he had black hair so he was the dark man who brought over the threshold the fruit and whisky to ensure the house got through the new year. They used to do a lot of Scottish country dancing. Not long after I married, I used to come to Writtle to the Scottish dancing classes. That's how strong the influence was although it's not like that now. It was at the Institute of Agriculture, then it was taken over by the war ag during the war and then it came back to being a college. They used to have a Founder's Day ball every July and it was marvellous. There was always an orchestra from London, Joe Loss or Ted Heath or someone like that. The whole of the bottom floor was open to you and there was always Scottish dancing and a piper on the lawn. As I go by now I think of it and all the Scottish farmers and their families. It was always an Agricultural College. My husband wanted to go there when he was 18 but he couldn't because they closed it because of the war but later my oldest son went there and my grandchildren have been there to learn farming. My oldest son is still at the farm although he's retired now being 70 this year. All my children are retired – it seems ridiculous doesn't it!

We always went to church in Blackmore and I went to the WI, the Flower Club and The Mother's Union. After my husband died I was forced into looking after the flowers in the church which included those for all the weddings as they weren't allowed to get florists in to do them. My little group had to do them all and at Christmas and Easter. There was the farm and the children but I was quite active in the village. I worked in the Church Office once a week and used to play tennis a couple of times a week as well. I was sort of mediocre as a player. I loved everything about the village and that sort of life. I would never have left it if I hadn't had to. After my husband died I lived on my own in the house for four years. My son was then running the farm and he had family. I shouldn't say so but my daughter-in-law didn't want me around at all. They later divorced but she wanted to take my place in the village because I was involved in everything. So for a while I went to live in Sutton Coldfield with my daughter. She later decided to come back to Writtle and we found a house we liked, surrounded by fields, just a

little bit isolated. I supposed I stayed a country girl.

The one thing I would have done differently was that I had the chance to go to Cambridge and in those days your parents had absolute control over you and my mother wouldn't let me go which is really why I got married. I had a brother who was ten years younger who I had to take everywhere I went and a sister eighteen years younger. When Mum had the baby she just passed her over to me and that's when I should have been going to university. That is a regret because I would have liked a further education. I did go to college later on. After my children had grown up I went to the teaching college in Brentwood but then I had to leave that – my husband had a nervous breakdown. I never became a teacher after all. What I really wanted to do, but it sounds silly, was to be a Research Chemist that was what I would have done. I've not regretted being married and having my children. I love my life but I've always had that nagging feeling in the back of my mind I could have done more. I was quite bright, not now, but I was then. Chemistry and Physics were a particular love of mine. I suppose in essence I was a scientist. Today, given having my time over again, I would probably not be allowed not to be. I try and keep up with things but it's all altered so much since then, tremendously, although I still read a lot.

We weren't unique in living the way we did; there were plenty of others who had similar experiences. The war held everything up anyway. I remember my husband saying to me farming had changed more in the last twenty years, more than it had in the last two hundred, and it did. After the war it moved forward such a lot. We came into farming just after the bad winter of 1947 when there was so much snow. We were having to dig ourselves out which was virtually unheard of. I remember missing the sea so much, I really did miss it. If we could have found a farm near Bournemouth I may have moved back but it was spreading out so far. It was different when I was a child. I wouldn't have wanted to be in a built-up area. I was completely active in the village until four years ago when I broke my back. I'm upset I can't get about and go out like I used to, but I've lived a lot of life and I can look back on it and enjoy it.”

Joan McClure as transcribed by Peter Prentice.

THE WORK OF THE ESSEX EDUCATION TEAM

The Essex Education team, comprised of Jane Latham and Sally Ridealgh (Education Co-ordinators) and Claire Gellard (Education Support Assistant), works to develop new work for the academic year 2019/2020. With a combination of cultural branches, existing and new partners and supportive venues, we work to provide education for those most in need in Essex, whether through lack of other educational provision or individual disadvantage. Readers familiar with the excellent work of our volunteer branches may not be so familiar with the other work done by the WEA in Essex.

Across East Anglia, the WEA has developed a partnership with Clarion Housing. We work with their excellent team to deliver education to their tenants, to enable them to develop work-related skills. This has proved beneficial to the WEA in providing us with the impetus to work with new communities.

In Basildon and Braintree, we are working with Clarion Housing, Swan Housing and Chelmer Housing to deliver an Introduction to Teaching and Learning in Schools. We will also deliver this course in Leigh-on-Sea in partnership with Family Action and in Chelmsford and Colchester with Job Centre Plus. Students who successfully complete these courses may then progress onto a Level 2 Award in Support Work in Schools and Colleges. One of these courses will be offered with Swan Housing in Basildon from September 2019 with others to follow in Braintree, Chelmsford and Colchester in spring 2020. This course is accredited by CACHE and is a fine way for those interested in working in schools or colleges as support workers to move from volunteering in schools into paid employment. In Chelmsford, we will also offer an Introduction to Study Skills programme. This course is useful for students who are returning to

learning and offers support with referencing, time management and formal writing. In September, we are also planning an introductory course in Basildon to help tenants of Clarion and Swan Housing engage with the digital world for the first time.

The level 2 course represents a big commitment on the part of students, so we will offer a number of short taster courses. We will offer: Recognise Your Potential; Strategies to Support Children with ADHD, Autism and Sensory Differences, and Helping Your Child Manage Stress and Anxiety, all in Basildon. Also available in Westcliff-on-Sea will be Positive Parenting from Birth to 10 Years.

The WEA has worked with the Tabor Centre in Braintree for some years. The centre works with disabled adults and assists them to achieve their maximum potential. Sally Ridealgh has set up an exciting and varied creative and performing arts programme for the coming term. The WEA will be providing courses in music (Songs and Screen Music; Songs and Classical Music); Drama; Discover and Sketch; and the popular Crafts for Christmas.

Finally, good English and Maths skills are essential. We will offer English and Maths Functional Skills qualifications at level 2 in Basildon. We will also be offering ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Entry 2 in Westcliff-on-Sea.

There are too few people trained to work in care in the UK. WEA Education Co-ordinator Jane Latham has been working with the Employment and Training Manager (ETM) for Swan Housing in Basildon to deliver several courses, including the level 1 and level 2 Helping in Schools programmes from WEA's Schools and Parenting Pathway. Swan Housing sees opportunities for their residents to move into the care industry. Jane is working with them to develop an accredited delivery programme which could see their residents gain WEA qualifications to become accredited care workers. Pilot programmes begin later this year. Initially, our aim is for students to complete a 60 level 1 accredited qualification in Preparing to Work in the Adult Social Care Award, with the possibility of interested students progressing to a level 2 Certificate in Preparing to Work in Adult Social Care.

We look forward to updating you as the year progresses.

Tanis Paulin, Area Education Officer.

Tribute to Eric Broad 1920 – 2019

It was with great sadness that the Silver End branch learnt that Eric Broad passed away on 6th June 2019.

Eric was born on 19 September 1920 in Goodmayes, Ilford. He gained a place at Coopers Grammar school, Bow, where he studied until the outbreak of WWII. After a short evacuation he joined the RAF, serving in Egypt, Rhodesia and South Africa. When he was demobbed in 1945 he enrolled on a teacher training course and in 1948 took up his first teaching post in Silver End primary school and Braintree Museum displays a photo of him teaching a class. He met June and they married in 1951 and they had two children.

He was a member of the Braintree Recorded Music Group, a keen gardener, and he loved cricket. In retirement he wrote stories and poems about his life, some of which he published, and a copy of which he gave to me. He wrote a short play, My Husband Works Nights, that was performed by the Silver End WEA to try and attract new students. Although it was not a great success its title caused much amusement!

I first met Eric around 1988 when he and June joined a course in the newly re-established WEA branch. It transpired that he had been secretary of the original WEA branch in the early 1950s and he gave me some memorabilia of his time in the post which I still have. He was an enthusiastic WEA member and would in his gentle manner give advice when appropriate to the young committee, helping them to uphold the foundation and ethos of the WEA. He was always the one to lead a vote of thanks to the committee for organising field trips and other social events.

Failing health prevented him attending courses from 2011, but he still enjoyed receiving his copy of the EF brochure and always asked for updates on what courses were being run and other branch activities.

Sadly June, who continued to attend courses until 2014, passed away shortly before Eric on 11 May 2019.

They were a lovely couple and their legacy will long be appreciated by the branch.

Brian Gillion Secretary Silver End WEA branch.

Tribute to Frederick W. Boot, C Eng. MIEE 1934 – 2019

Members of Tiptree WEA were saddened to hear of the sudden death of Fred on Friday 19th July 2019.

Fred did his National Service in the RAF. He settled in Tiptree with his family after three years teaching with Marconi in Nigeria. He retired in 1998 as Vice Principal of Marconi College in Chelmsford. He had a lifelong interest in wildlife, conservation and teaching. He joined Essex Naturalist Trust in 1967 and became Chairman of Essex Wildlife Trust (as it became) in 1995.

The village would not have had a WEA branch if it had not been for the relentless drive and encouragement of Fred. He was Treasurer for 24 years after the branch was reconstituted in 1973, Secretary for nine years until 2006, then Chairman and recently Honorary President.

Fred was also a well respected tutor within the Eastern Region. His wide range of topics included Coastal Ecology, The Water Story, Wild Flowers of Britain and Woodlands in Trust. His talks were well illustrated with his many photographs. His most recent course in Tiptree was “The Effects of Climate Change on Human Evolution” in September 2012 – rather appropriate! This was the seventeenth course we had enjoyed, usually with an appropriate walk.

He co-wrote the book The Creation of a Village with Aubrey Davenport.

Fred was also Chairman of the Parish Council.

His other great interest was the restoration of Tiptree Heath – the largest remaining lowland heath in Essex. He organised work parties to control encroaching scrub to allow the three heathers to flourish. Later he was instrumental in setting up the charity, The Friends of Tiptree Heath, of which he became Treasurer. In 2016 he produced a book documenting Tiptree Heath – Its History, Natural History and Management.

Every role that he was involved in was meticulously documented so that anyone who took on that work afterwards had clear guidance and a much easier job.

Fred will be greatly missed, but his wonderful legacy has ensured the Tiptree WEA group is flourishing.

Sue More, Chairman, Tiptree WEA.



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