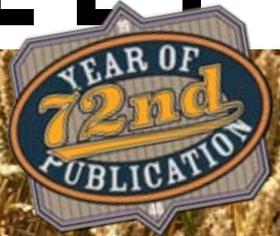


WEA

ESSEX FEDERATION NEWS SHEET



- Lockdown: How we managed
 - Power and the Chocolate Biscuit
 - Middle Age Women
 - Charles I: what did he have to lose?
 - Herbs and Herbalists
 - Reader photographs
- ... and more

Autumn 2020

CONTENTS:

Chairman's Letter _____ 3

Billericay Branch:

- *Lowdown on lockdown* _____ 5
- *Appreciating the Romantics* _____ 9
- *Conflict in the Old West* _____ 11

Mersea Branch:

- *Middle Age Women* _____ 13

Tiptree & Tollesbury Branch:

- *Economic History* _____ 17

Writtle Branch:

- *Revolution & Civil War* _____ 20
- *Herbs & Herbalists* _____ 23

Kelvedon & Feering Branch:

- *Economic History* _____ 24

Saxon Churches in Essex: _____ 27

Readers' Pictures: _____ 31

Obituary: _____ 34

WEA Eastern Region Essex Federation

Autumn 2020

*Federation Chair:
Joan Black*

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

*EF News Sheet Editor:
Andrew Aitken*

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

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

*The WEA Eastern Regional
Office is moving. The new
address will be published in
the next edition..*

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

*The WEA is a charity registered
in England and Wales
(No. 1112775) and in Scotland
(No. SCO39329)*

When Brian Gillion wrote the introduction to the Spring EF News, we had a great programme of events planned for 2020. We could not have foreseen what was to happen within a few days of the Newsletter being issued. As we passed into the awful lockdown, many newsletters did not get to Essex students as we had no way of distributing them....

Day schools, summer schools and the walks were rapidly cancelled. My Branch just managed to complete our course, albeit socially distanced and then nothing! However, I was very impressed by the way WEA swung into action delivering free, weekly one-hour lectures, over the summer, on a wide range of subjects. I don't think the time was great - 5pm (I signed up for two that I then forgot) but nevertheless the ones I did join on Zoom were excellent and appeared to have an audience from across the country and beyond. This term our courses have gone online via Zoom - which not everyone can access - but I know that on the course I'm currently studying, six people are sharing one laptop - so it is possible.

Our summer schools included the history of Marconi. The tutor was coming to Chelmsford to deliver a two-day school and also to take part in Chelmsford Council's celebration Year of Science. The council quickly switched to Zoom lectures which included talks about local people who have made major contributions to scientific research. The tutor who would have delivered the Summer School on Troy, will now deliver a Day School in November, on Zoom.

I know we were very disappointed to have to cancel the walks programme but I will tentatively book dates for next year in the sincere hope that we will be through this awful period in our lives and starting to return to normality.

Several long-serving members of the Federation Committee have resigned - Brian Gillion, David Stubbs, Peter Norfolk and Pat Dale. We must thank them for all their support. Their contribution over many years has been invaluable. We do desperately need to replace them, so if there is anyone in your Branch who might be encouraged to join us, they would be given a warm welcome.

I do hope that everyone has survived this pandemic unscathed and that you remain safe. I also hope that we can get back our face-to-face courses soon.. WEA forms not only part of our cultural education but contributes to everyone's health and wellbeing by bringing people together in Branches and keeping our brains active, so it is greatly missed.

Joan Black
Chair-elect

LOCKDOWN LOWDOWN

Lockdown and WEA Billericay Branch

The lockdown from Covid 19 came so suddenly, I don't think it gave us much time to think about how it will affect us. I learned a lot about myself that I didn't know I was capable of. When times are 'normal' I go out a lot, but somehow, I manage to feel quite content. I keep some structure in my days, making sure I do a session of yoga a day, go for a walk, a lot of reading, making cakes (not every day, because I live alone and might eat them all) keep in contact with friends and potter in the garden. I really feel lucky that I have a nice home and a garden which I think I've taken for granted up to now. The thing I miss the most are the classes with WEA; apart from learning something new every class, I miss all the other students, many of whom I have become good friends with and I feel like we're a kind of family.

Chris

A Day in the Life of ...

Last week I decided to break out of Lockdown and take a walk in my local area. I decided that a walk from my house near South Green to Great Burstead would give me the exercise I desperately needed. I set off on a sunny Sunday morning with a bunch of roses (Mum and Dad loved roses), and headed for the cemetery. It was a beautiful day, the birds were singing (not coughing), not a sight or sound of motor cars. I could even hear the bees buzzing. I sat on the bench in the cemetery and looked over past the A127 and the Langdon Hills. The air was so clear I could see for miles. I spied a footpath sign in the corner and followed it to find a path through the centre of a rapeseed field. I could see for miles across to Wickford. Must try it some time. Walking back through Great Burstead I looked at the church and remembered its history. Bishop Odo, who was the Viking half brother of William the Conqueror, was a frequent visitor to this church. On the walk home through



Bishop Odo gets star billing on the Bayeux Tapestry. Not wholly surprising - he's thought to have commissioned it.

Mill Meadows the air was filled with the scent of the wild dog-roses. A lovely morning that I'll remember for some time.

Joan

Life in Lockdown

It happened so suddenly! One week we all were all at WEA, going about our usual activities, if nervously, and the next

we were in lockdown. At first my main preoccupation was how to get food - and loo roll! In the end I gave up on trying to get online slots and braved Waitrose once a week. I remember going there the first week after lockdown, seeing a friend and hardly daring to speak to each other! Those early days were very strange. There has been much sadness but also much kindness and compassion.

We hope to move house so whilst I should have had plenty of time for clearing out, I have found my days filled with zoom yoga, walking, cooking, doing courses and Facetiming to my sister and my daughter. Bobby, the cockapoo puppy I used to look after, has also Facetimed me and sent videos! There was lots of fun with the new way of life - the fact every zoom call starts with 'can you see/hear me' - who would have known that this is how we would now be spending our time! It was walking and sitting in the garden though that really kept me grounded with a renewed appreciation of nature which many seem to have felt. How lucky I am to have a garden!

Then the news came that we could meet someone outdoors! A few meetings with my daughter or a friend in the park with our own chairs and a flask - shouting at each other across what seems like a very big space - felt quite emotional and wonderful! Bobby, of course, was having none of the social distancing idea!

I have been grateful for technology during this time but look forward to seeing everyone in person. I will continue to use zoom but will, when the time is right, be first in the queue for the Reading Rooms - see you all there!!

With very best wishes.

Jane

Questions and Answers in Lockdown?

It's interesting how quickly you can get used to a new normality - it all seemed a bit surreal at the beginning - as though I was in a film. I was hardly going out, a little scared of what was happening! If somebody had told me at the beginning of the year that I would only be going out to go to the supermarket and then be queuing two metres apart to get inside, I'd have thought they were crazy. Lockdown makes you think with so many questions and not just the ones you might expect.

You start to question why there are so many cars normally parked in our road, so few people around and then why do people (including my husband) commute anyway. Do we need to make all those journeys and what are people doing now or need to really do? We thought we only had pigeons in our garden? However, I noticed more and different birds singing beautifully.

What have we done in the last 5 years since we moved? We've spent more time in the garden and tidied parts of the garage in the last 4 months than in the last 5 years!! I've so appreciated how lucky we are to have a garden, feeling sad for our children who live in a flat. They couldn't visit for a long time and the only time I saw my brother was when I accidentally bumped into him in Waitrose (well not literally - 2 metres apart of course!)

Why did I try to cut my hair? I am still asking myself that question! I tried without huge success - I'm sure I heard my husband mention Billy Bunter before he realised that probably wasn't what I wanted to hear.

You start to question what you really need in life.

Questions and more questions! Our children suggested using Zoom to have a family quiz and now we use it regularly for all sorts of things. Not as good as face to face but better than not being able to have any contact at all. In fact, we've 'seen' our daughter who lives in Dublin more than usual.

Days were punctuated by watching the daily press conferences. So impressed by the top scientists!

As a former Maths and Statistics teacher, I initially kept ranting to my husband about how the data was being presented but it did improve as time went on - much to his delight!

Days were also punctuated by - What do you want for lunch/ dinner? Who knew what unusual combinations of food you could come up with for meals just to avoid visiting the supermarket? Going out for a walk became so important and left me wondering why I have never walked over nearby fields before? Who knew that there was a plaque identifying the site of a 1916 Zeppelin crash at the side of a road close to me?

So, what will be the new normal? Now that is the question?

Margaret

Diversity and the Dark Chocolate Biscuit!

A challenge that faces most WEA Branches is how to attract new students, bring new tutors to their area and find new subjects or topics that might entice those who may not normally think of WEA.

Billericay WEA believes it has found the answer in Lockdown!

The great news too is that this is an option for every Branch to consider and it is relatively cheap.

At first the Committee felt it was coincidence and then course after course sampled with a range of students and tutors, we have now had it confirmed in Lockdown. A number of the Committee had to take refreshments home as we were required to clear our cupboard in the accommodation venue. One admitted eating those that had been opened all to herself. However, another commented that the unopened packets had not only been opened but all were eaten. It was the Dark Chocolate Digestive Biscuit again!! And guess who had eaten them? See below*!

We can now categorically say 'Diversity is linked to the Dark Chocolate Digestive Biscuit' -and it seems that it has to be a well-known and favourite brand.

We have noticed that tutors will come slightly further along the A12 if refreshments are mentioned (best to say



*Not to be underestimated:
the power of the chocolate
biscuit*

chocolate) and then they will come back once they have sampled such a treat. This seems to apply in a causal relationship to the gender of the tutor alongside comments such as 'my wife/partner does not normally buy these' or 'these are so good that I think I will just have one more' or 'we do not have these at home'. This pattern applies equally to our students such that we are now asked if or where they are at the break!

So, once we meet up face to face again the Committee needs to replenish those affordable resources and reach out to all those as 'We Educate Adults'.

Denise

*Well, the truth is ... [Censored to avoid legal repercussions! Ed.]

Appreciating the Romantics in Lockdown and a new Vocabulary

At one point in my life Zoom meant a lollipop and to be more precise an ice cream lollipop! (Well, to be even more precise and as reminded by someone on the Committee, it was a lollipop in different colours in the shape of a rocket!)

I then regarded Zoom as the way vehicles moved on the roads, generally the noise of motorbikes. However having moved to Essex I grew to regard it as the ongoing sound of the M25.

I now realise it is a new word in the vocabulary since March 2020 – all of us use, have used or are expected to use Zoom. I even find myself saying 'I am just Zooming' or 'I am having a Zoom meeting' or 'I need to Zoom' or 'I will Zoom you next week'!

Then the next step for Zoom is learning and teaching! 'Appreciating the Romantics' with the tutor: Ron Marks using both Zoom and Canvas!!! I never thought I would be doing this nor that it could be set up and running in such a short period from the decision to execution!

It's AMAZING and it's FANTASTIC the way that the WEA has embraced the technology and all its staff worked so hard to launch the course and this initiative on Zoom in such a short period of time.

I take my hat off to them – as do so many others.

Just look at the selection of student feedback after the first session (and we were not all looking forward to it or tech savvy!).

Ron, as always, is at his very best when reading the poetry - he has a real love for his subject - Sue

Brilliant thank you -A very good session-And Zoom worked well - C.

Thank you very much for hosting this delightful course. Thank you so much for an enjoyable and interesting lecture - D.

Many Thanks! Really enjoyed the class, made me realise how little I know and how well informed some other people are. I've never studied poetry, so am really looking forward to gaining at least some knowledge over the next few weeks. I can only imagine what has been going on behind the scenes and would like to thank both you and the team for all your hard work - L.

I thoroughly enjoyed Ron's session today. So engaging. Many thanks to him and to you. Looking forward to next week - A.

We know and have been assured we will not Zoom forever and that face to face is what we want. However, it is food for thought when you realise through using this technology and thinking of all those to date (e.g. all those 180,000 unpaid Carers in Essex that look after someone and often 24/7) who have not had the chance to join a WEA class could and can Zoom in and be part of the WEA! Thank You WEA and especially Eastern Region!! - Denise

P.S. Billericay WEA Branch is now searching for a Zoom Officer!

Summer Course 2020
Settlers – Conflict and Survival in the American West
Tutor: Lucy Rawlinson

WAY OUT WEST

Billericay welcomed a new tutor, Lucy, and new students to the Branch as well as the WEA for this 8-week course. Indeed, it clearly was so new and different that it proved to be extremely popular such that it was FULL!

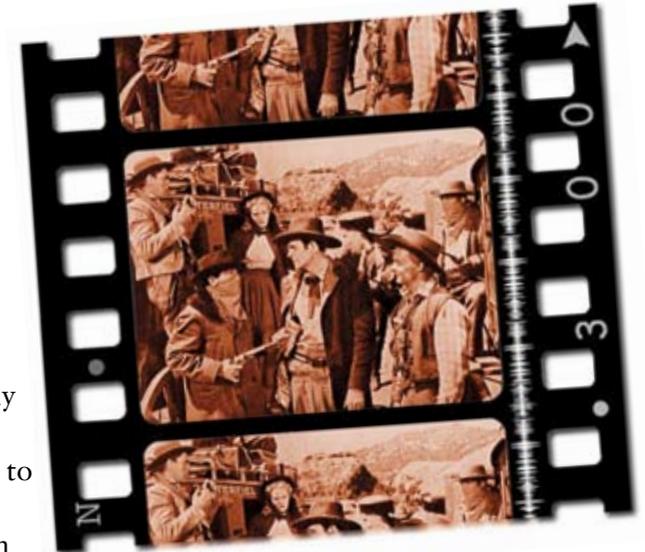
People joined the course for all sorts of reasons with a number having worked out there, some with family connections and/or family history etc and others knowing absolutely next to nothing.

‘My family travelled in the 1880s so a little later ... *Now all those western movies make sense.*’ but lots for me to enjoy and inspire me to search out. We never stop learning.’

All of the feedback commended how well researched and prepared Lucy was, ever ready with a handout and maps plus recommended reading, websites and snippets of information that so often cannot easily be found in books. Lucy also seemed to find the most amazing and unusual photographs that brought the topic to life. The refreshment break was always full of chatter with Lucy being bombarded with more questions.

‘An enthusiastic and talented tutor whose passion shone through every week’. ‘The great tutor, Lucy. It’s been a great class.’

‘Fascinating to see how those American characteristics were formed over such a relatively short time yet have endured. Now all those westerns make sense!’



As elsewhere, we had to contend with CoVid 19. Lucy managed to deliver weeks 7 and 8 in one session and those

who could not attend were sent handouts. Those present enjoyed an intensive 2 hours and laughingly referred to themselves as Trail Blazers while seriously admiring the real 'Trail Blazers'.

'I take my hat off to those pioneers. 'Westward Ho' to achieve their destiny. A wonderful course'.

The volunteers who helped make the classes happen were also commended for their health and safety activities e.g. antiseptic wipes, a separate waste bin, individually wrapped biscuits etc.

'The committee disinfected work surfaces, wiped tables and chairs, washed cups and crockery again to give confidence to attend right to the end'.

We know though that the cooperative and community spirit of the WEA and learning together is more than the course and is welcomed and much needed by so many. This shone through on this course with students forming new friendships and travel companions after a class.

'But for the WEA we would never have met. We both enjoyed the friendly supportive atmosphere.'

All of the Student Learning Forms - those dreaded SLRs - said that 'Another WEA Course' - was their next step so just like the Settlers, all of us in and part of the WEA must look forward and remember what our students tell us.

'In these times, I've heard the lifting of spirits does us good, and aids health, keeping us stronger to face all. Thank You WEA!'

Denise Fielding and Student Feedback Week 7



Probably not what the original trail blazers had in mind.

MERSEA BRANCH

Society and Culture in Medieval East Anglia

Tutor: Kate Jewell

7 Weeks of a planned 8-Week course

Middle Age Women - Formidable even when they were shut away

It was a full house for Kate Jewell's course.

First, we had to define our terms: what was understood by 'Medieval' or 'East Anglia'? Kate suggested that the change from one period to another was triggered by a life-changing event such as the departure from Britain of the Romans or the dissolution of the monasteries. She proposed to focus on the period from the fourteenth century to the early sixteenth. It was easier to decide what was covered by East Anglia. Clearly, Norfolk and Suffolk but also North Essex and those Fenlands which include the Isle of Ely.

We started with the role of women, looking at the will of one Alice de Bryene and noting her concern for her soul and where she should be buried. Her bequests gave us an insight into what was important to her – feather mattress, her rosary and



A fine brass of Alice de Bryene can be found in All Saints Church, Acton, Suffolk. As well as de Bryene's brass, you can see that of Robert de Bures - the third oldest in England. The Jennans family tomb is also worth a look. Their long (1798-1905) inheritance dispute partly inspired the Jarndyce v Jarndyce case featured in Dickens' Bleak House.

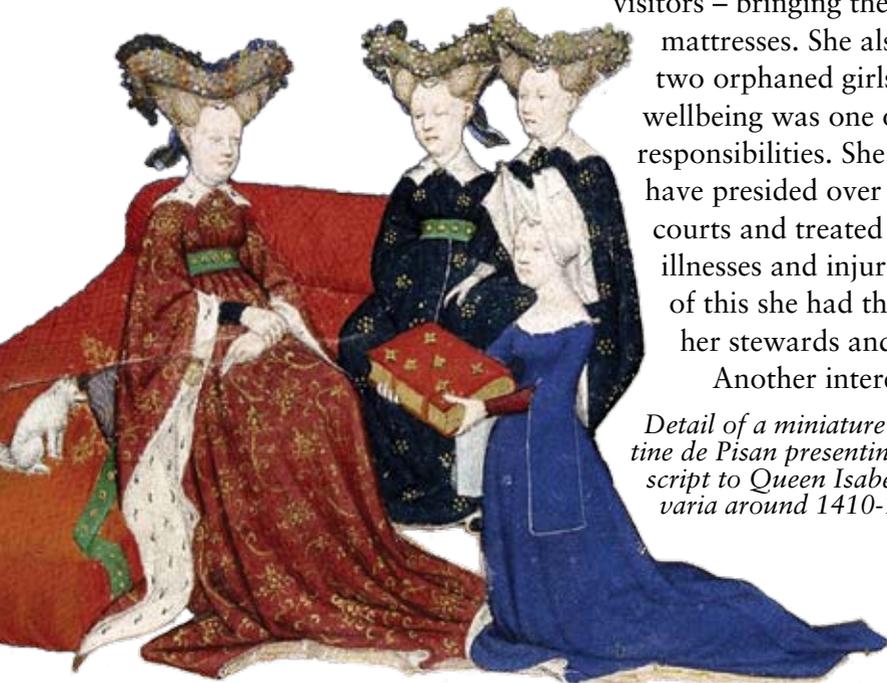
wedding ring, her girdles, beads and silver spoons. In many ways, the wills of women are more interesting than those of men as we learn about their personal and household possessions. We saw how Alice provided for her servants, instructing her daughter to continue to employ one young woman until such time as she married. Alice is especially interesting as the property which she inherited from her first husband was gifted by her second husband to a local guild and became the Guild Hall in Lavenham, which we have all visited. As a widow she was entitled to make a will. Had her husband been alive, all her property would have been his.

Alice was a wealthy and strong woman who lived during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Widowed by the time she was 26, she ran her estates successfully. It is clear that some women were very powerful at this time – especially as their menfolk were often away at court or involved in wars. As Lord of the Manor, Alice was responsible for all members of her household and for all those who lived and worked on her manor, both in matters of health and well-being but also where their spiritual practices were concerned. Hers would have been a very busy household with many

visitors – bringing their own mattresses. She also had two orphaned girls whose wellbeing was one of her responsibilities. She would have presided over manorial courts and treated minor illnesses and injuries. In all of this she had the help of her stewards and bailiffs.

Another interesting

Detail of a miniature with Christine de Pisan presenting her manuscript to Queen Isabeau of Bavaria around 1410-1414



woman was Christine de Pisan. From an Italian family, she grew up in Paris and married a Frenchman. Widowed in her twenties and with three young children, she began to write romances to earn money. She also wrote a handbook for ladies outlining all the things they needed to know – husbandry, finance, legal matters etc. It made one respect the medieval lady.

We looked at the lives of women in convents such as those at Flixton and Hedingham and saw the variety of tasks undertaken. We also learned about the lives of Beguines. There were many Beguinages in Europe but only in England, in East Anglia. Unlike nuns, Beguines lived and worked in the community. They believed God is loving, not vengeful and that they could talk directly to God - a dangerous belief then. We learned about Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe. Julian, an anchorite, lived for some thirty years in a cell. She, too, held dangerous views such as conceiving of God as a loving mother. Her book *Revelations of Divine Love* is the first written in English by a woman.

Margery Kempe was extraordinary by any standards. Even today, she would be considered odd. She had many children, cared for an ailing husband and ran a variety of businesses – mostly unsuccessful.



In the Low Countries between the 13th and 16th Centuries, many women joined Beguinages. Semi-monastic communities, they imposed vows of chastity and obedience but not poverty - a Beguine was responsible for supporting herself financially. Thus, the poor were largely excluded and members kept control of their wealth - impossible for a married woman or a nun. They were popular with widows who wanted no more of marriage but did want a degree of support and security in reasonably congenial company.

She claimed to have visions, often indulging in public displays of religious ecstasy. She travelled widely, even going on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. She was arrested several times and was ostracised by more than one group of fellow travellers. It is amazing that she was tolerated and survived for so long. Like Julian she held some



A depiction of Edmund's martyrdom from about 1250. Note the executioner whetting his axe. This was a popular subject for illustration in the early-Middle Ages, when Edmund was the patron saint of England. He was sacked by Richard I who may have come across the more glamorous (a dragon-slayer, after all) St George during one of his armed 'hearts and minds' trips to the Middle East

opinions which would have been potentially dangerous at that time. Unlike Julian, she did not have the security of living in a church.

We then turned to tales of men, beginning with St Edmund about whom little is known apart from legends. The story is that he was killed while resisting Danish attacks and was beheaded to hinder his entry into heaven. However, head and body were reunited, his head having been protected

by a wolf. Miracles ascribed to St Edmund caused Edward the Confessor to grant to the Abbot of Bury 'The liberty of St Edmund' and thus freedom from royal rule.

We saw that the Abbey, and town prospered through markets. Stall-holders were charged to enter the town. It was interesting to hear about the variety of services available at a market and to learn about competition with Ely.

At this point, coronavirus struck and there were no more lectures. Kate kindly provided reading suggestions to cover what we were missing – more about men, towns and trading - but we were bitterly disappointed as everybody had enjoyed the first seven sessions.

Kate's enthusiasm was infectious and her knowledge of the subject boundless.

Hilary McMullen

Doing a
WEA course
at home: is
that the new
economy or
history.
Or both?

March seems a long way away now, but that month saw the unfolding of a unique crisis: Covid 19. As a branch we were enjoying learning about Economic History with Andy Beharrell. We had 2 weeks to go and it suddenly became apparent that we were unable to finish the course face to face, so the committee decided to try and finish using Zoom. We used the free Zoom service which restricted us to 40 mins. So, we booked 2 sessions with a virtual coffee break in the middle. 12 out of the

20 participants were willing to give it a go. It was a strange but enjoyable experience for us. We did do a practice run beforehand to iron out any issues. Several problems became apparent. For example, desktop computers generally do not have cameras and microphones so the students could not fully engage with the session.



By Hans Holbein the Younger, scenes of jollity in the border decoration of a book dated 1523.

And to show little's changed, the well dressed man on the right seems not to approve all this fun. He may have a point: other images on the page indicate that wine's involved.

Laptops, tablets, and smartphones were generally better. Once connected to Zoom we learnt to chat, turn the mic on and off, as well as the video. All useful techniques when interacting online using Zoom. Time restrictions meant we got cut off occasionally, but everyone who attended seemed pleased to finish the course which took us from prehistory to modern times. Have we learnt anything from the History of Economics? Maybe you should do a course to find out!!

Later Kate Jewell was supposed to deliver 'Medieval festivities and entertainments in East Anglia' as a day school in May. Not wanting to miss out we asked if Kate would deliver the course online. Happily, she agreed. This time local students were joined by other students from all over the UK, many of whom had known Kate through other online medieval courses. On the first evening 28 students accessed the course. This time we accessed Zoom through the WEA's Canvas system. What is Canvas you may ask? The answer is a virtual learning environment, so are you now any the wiser? Alternatively how about, an online learning support tool which enables you to access course materials, videos, quizzes, and discussion forums in addition to accessing Zoom? Is that any clearer? The first evening went well and even Kate's cat joined in. We discovered on this course that there were strong links with the

religious calendar and the many festivals and celebrations. We learnt a lot about medieval jollity from the stained-glass windows in churches, other illustrations (for example - the Mappa Mundi) and other documents such as the Luttrell Psalter. Mythical creatures were often an integral part of these events.

Later in July we look forward to another course developed by Andy Beharrell called 'Money, Power, Yachting (and Tollesbury)'. Local students hopefully will like the connection with Tollesbury.

On a personal note, I also signed up for a course in May 'Russian for beginners'.

This was perhaps something I would not have contemplated normally, but in lockdown I was up for a challenge.....

I thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience and the ability to access material on Canvas which no doubt

enhanced the course and expanded its scope. Cartoons, songs, films, news links and many other materials were made available to support the course and added value to the regular Zoom sessions.

To conclude, I am perhaps more technically able and have the suitable hardware. Although we welcome these new developments, It would be useful for the WEA to be aware that not everyone has these skills or equipment. Face to face should always be a necessary component of the WEA offering.

Anne Mossman (Sec Tiptree and Tollesbury Branch)



Two early J-Class Yachts, Reliance and Shamrock III in a picture dated 1903, taken during an America's Cup race. Shamrock was owned by Sir Thomas Lip-ton who spent several fortunes in failed attempts to lift the cup.

WRITTLE BRANCH

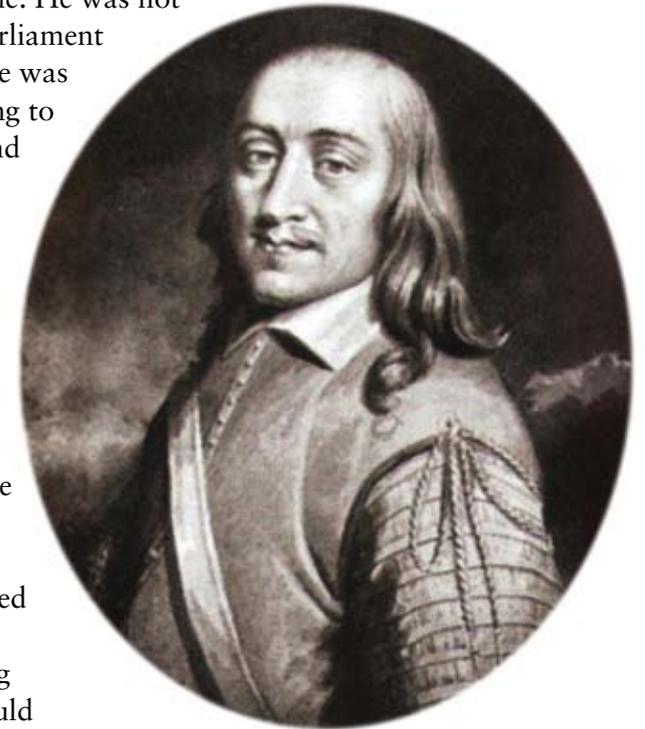
Revolution, Rebellion and Civil War
Tutor: Roger Cooke
10 Week Course

CHARLES I
SAW HOW TO
GET AHEAD.
KEEPING
IT WASN'T
NEARLY SO
EASY.

Charles I by Sir Anthony Van Dyck

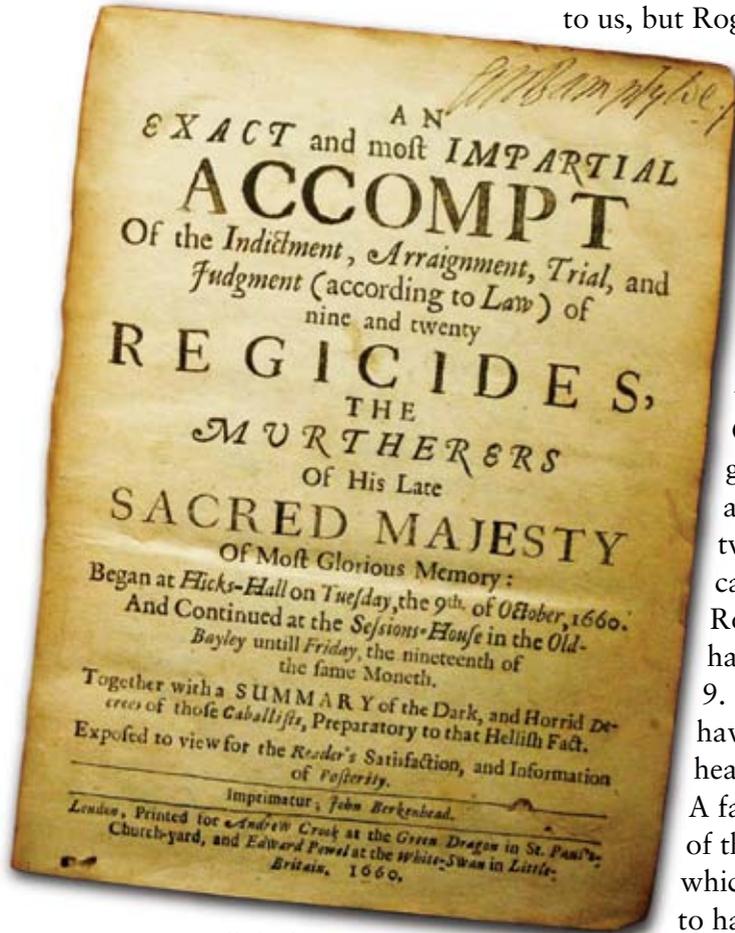
Writtle Branch had enjoyed Roger's lectures for many years, so we were delighted to welcome him back to talk about one of his heroes, Oliver Cromwell. Fortunately for those who did not choose history at school, Roger starts by setting the scene, so we began with the legacy of Elizabeth I's reign. Roger does not tell you what happened, he makes you work out why. We had to get into the mindset of people living four hundred years ago, for whom religion was vital. We looked at the economy, the effect of outbreaks of plague and changes in agriculture.

With the accession of James I we learnt about the nature of monarchy and how he believed he was appointed by God, but to be the father of his people. He was not prepared to allow his Parliament a say in foreign policy, he was short of money and trying to govern two kingdoms and some of his clergy were pushing Protestantism in a more ritualistic direction. When Charles I inherited, he favoured this change and married a Catholic princess. Unlike his father, he wanted a more aggressive foreign policy and he was much less willing to compromise. He dismissed Parliament. Roger explained that generating rebellion in England would be unlikely, it was the most peaceful, law abiding, centrally governed country in Europe. Despite this we followed the steps to war. Having lost control of London, Charles left.



Thomas Rainsborough was a senior figure in the Parliamentary forces - on land and sea. At the Putney Debates (an attempt to reconcile the many factions) he spoke for the Levellers on the revolutionary notion of 'One man, one vote'. Women would have to wait.

Historians have recently revised the view that Civil War was 'inevitable' and now believe that each side expected the threat of war to cause the other to back down. We saw examples of the uniform and the weapons deployed and a summary of the combatants on each side and their tactics. By week six we were learning how the leaders justified the execution of a King. In 1649, the suggestions for a new constitution looked quite acceptable to us, but Roger insisted that



Cromwell died in 1658 and, after a short bout of factional in-fighting, in 1660, the monarchy was restored under Charles II. Kings, it seems, were more fun. As this title page shows, the new regime wasted no time in bringing the 'regicides' to trial.

at the time they were revolutionary. We had a brief look at the many splinter groups within the Protestants.

The next two sessions were on the manner of Oliver Cromwell's government. Such a pity that the last two sessions were cancelled, though Roger forwarded the handout for week 9. We regretted not having a chance to hear a summing up. A fascinating account of the first revolution, which left us hoping to have an encore with The Revolution of 1688 once the Covid Crisis is over. Thank you, Roger, for a most enlightening course.
Mary Roberts

Andrew Sankey Herbs, Herbalists and Physick Gardens 7 Week Course

We were delighted to welcome Andrew back after last year's very popular lectures on Plant Hunters. This time we explored the uses of herbs, including culinary and medicinal uses but also their use in dyeing, reducing vermin by strewing herbs on the floor and companion planting to deter pests.

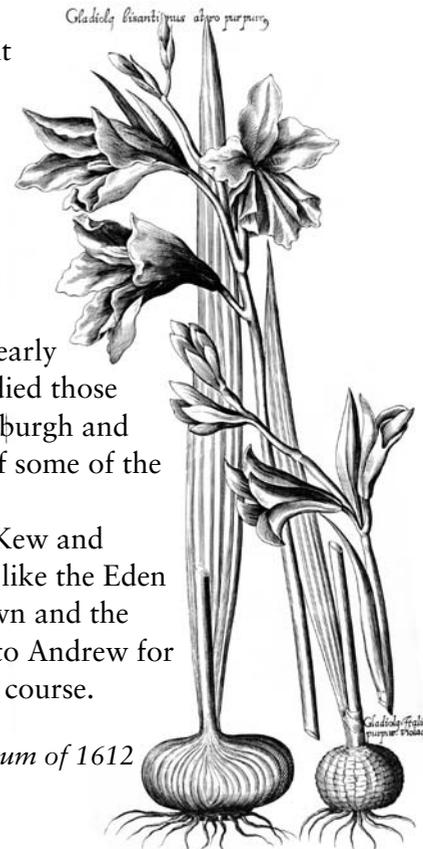
The Romans introduced formal gardens with topiary and herbs like lavender and rosemary. They also brought in manuring and the technique of forcing plants in cold frames. Such a pity they introduced ground elder as a salad herb! Andrew's lectures are beautifully illustrated, so we saw exquisite Medieval Herbals. He also provided us with lists of the new introductions that occurred in each period. The designs of some of the monastic gardens were so intricate, which contrasted with the plants in little peasant plots.

'Emilia in the Rose Garden' illustrated the private gardens of the ladies of the court with their lilies, roses and fountains. The Elizabethans enjoyed plant introductions from Turkey and the Balkans. Courtiers spent fortunes enhancing their gardens to entice Elizabeth to visit them. Plants were used in nosegays, garlands, perfume and love potions. With the advent of the printing press there were more Herbals available. Herb gardens evolved into Physick gardens and we learned about the important early ones in various European cities. Then we studied those developing here in the 1600s at Oxford, Edinburgh and Chelsea. Andrew also documented the lives of some of the famous gardeners in Britain's Great Houses.

We learnt about the centuries of change at Kew and were looking forward to seeing new gardens, like the Eden Project, when we were overtaken by Lockdown and the cancellation of the last two sessions. Thanks to Andrew for another interesting and beautifully illustrated course.

Mary Roberts

Illustration from Sweerts' Florilegium of 1612



Economics: have we learned anything from History?

Tutor: Andrew Beharrell

This course was highly informative, skilfully delivered and well illustrated, at times very amusingly. I certainly enjoyed it and learned a lot, and I am sure that goes for the rest of the class. There was a good level of discussion. When we were able to meet face to face in person, as we now must say in the age of Zoom, attendance was between 18 and 21. Unfortunately after Lockdown the last two sessions had to be delivered online, and not everybody was able to participate, but we were very grateful to Andy for so quickly and efficiently adapting to the new situation.

The first and second sessions helped to explain the importance of Economics, introduced by the salutary: “Q. Why did God create economists? A. To make weather forecasters look good.” Andy gave us the Greek origins of the term followed by a modern definition, and explained the differences between a Simple Economy, such as that of the Neanderthals, and a Complex Economy, starting with the Ancient Greeks and their philosophers. We were then asked: “What is money?” and discussed its different forms, its functions, attributes and history, from barter to coins and paper money, referring to the Roman use of Salt en passant and all the idiomatic phrases coined (sorry!) as a result. We then delved into the Medieval period and the rebirth of trade and commerce. Andy discussed the Dutch Golden Age and, of course, “Tulip Mania” (“in 3 minutes”).

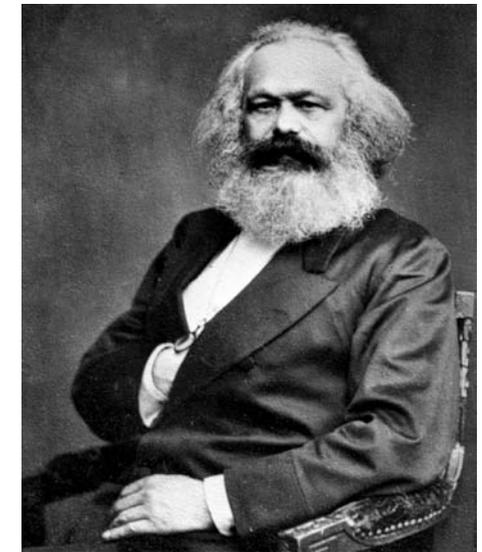
The establishment of the Bank of England followed, including its role in holding the reserves of gold concluding in Session 3, and the roles of central banks around the world. Mercantilism in the Elizabethan era, comparing mercantilist and modern ways of measuring the economy and economic activity. Next came 18th Century France and the theory and practice of taxation and an illustration of the flow of income – “zigzagging around the economy.” Q. “How has the French Revolution affected world economic growth?” A. “Too early to say”!

We then explored the history of banknotes and the techniques used to make them secure and discussed their future, before looking at other modern means of payment such as credit cards, mobile payments and cryptocurrency.

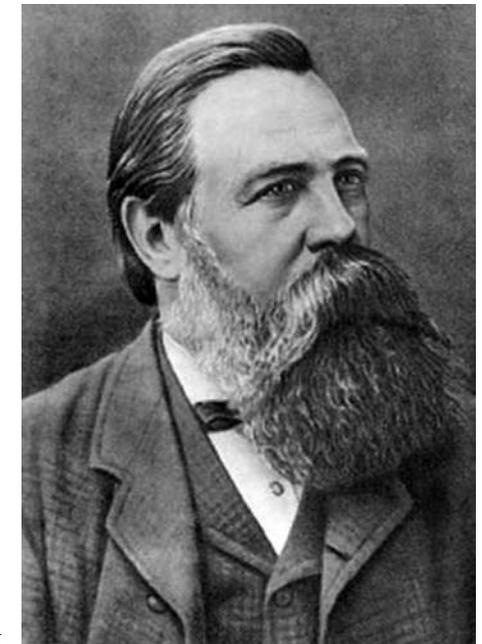
Adam Smith and *The Wealth of Nations* and its abiding influence was our next topic; then the Industrial Revolution, the Corn Laws, the Peterloo Massacre, Peel, David Ricardo and his fictional recreation (perhaps) as Ross Poldark. Free Trade and Protectionism were compared and discussed, and advocates and opponents of Capitalism. The ideas of Malthus, John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham were explored.

By session 5 we had progressed to Utility and Demand, William Jevons and Alfred Marshall, and theories of Demand and Supply. The concept of Conspicuous Consumption was developed by the Norwegian-born Thorstein Veblen and exemplified by Americans such as Cornelius Vanderbilt and Daniel Drew. We looked at the concept of Elasticity and then the economic changes brought about by the First World War.

Were Karl Marx and Frederick Engels heralding the end of Capitalism? We discussed Marxism, the



*Marx (above) and Engels.
More influential than Marks & Spencer?*



birth of Communism and the story of Lenin, the theories of Planned Economies, and Soviet planning, and proceeded to compare planned or command, mixed and market economy theory and practice. Andy used cows to illustrate the essence of different economic systems, culminating in the practices of modern capitalism and the concept of Futures, and how market failure might sometimes be the result. We explored the ideas of Public Goods, Merit Goods, Demerit Goods and positive and negative Externalities.

Subsequent topics included Competition, Hyperinflation (as in the Weimar Republic and modern Zimbabwe and Venezuela), the Great Depression and of course John Maynard Keynes, probably the world's greatest economist. We discussed Recessions and Economic Forecasting before examining the economic changes provoked by the Second World War, rationing, recycling and Keynes's post-war legacy. There followed the concepts of "creative destruction" and the work of the Czech-born Austrian Joseph Schumpeter.

Cold War strategies and game theory cropped up next, and the ideas of Robert Solow, the role of technology in growth, and we explored the concepts of inflation and deflation, measured by the prices of items in your shopping basket in the past and now.

Finally Andy brought us right up to date by analyzing the economic effects and reactions to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ron Marks,
class member.

An economic giant: John Maynard Keynes. His presentation to the Bretton Woods conference was deemed irrefutable, but the US rejected it point by point - unwilling to yield to any challenges to their dominance



CHURCHES in TIME

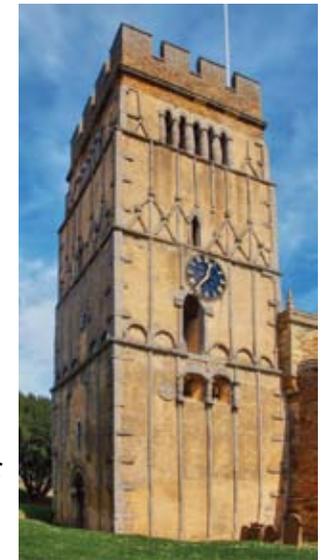
This article is intended as the first of a series illustrating each of the main styles of church architecture (Saxon, Norman, Early English, Decorated, Perpendicular, Jacobean) through examples in the county. We welcome reader's essays on later periods, but to avoid duplication, do let us know of your intention before you start.

Saxon Churches in Essex

Most Saxon structures in England have been knocked about. This results from age, and the Normans' scant respect for the buildings they took over. And - with Essex churches - there's a mix of certainty, ambiguity and wishful thinking.

So, first a certainty, St Peter's Chapel at Bradwell. It was built by St Cedd in AD 654 and has few revelations of the kind to be found in other counties. For example, Earls Barton church tower features pilaster strip - decorative external ribbing - and Bradford-on-Avon's Holy Trinity is typically Saxon - tall and narrow.

St Peter's is built on the site of a Roman fort. As is typical in a county with little quarriable stone, much recycled Roman material was used - most visibly red tiles and bricks. It originally had an apse (a semi-circular space at the eastern end), a porch and a tower above it. From some time in the 16th century until the 1920s, it was used as a barn (large openings - now filled - were punched into north and south walls). At some stage apse, porch and tower were lost. The doorway is mostly original. Probably most characteristic is the arched window high in the north wall which utilises Roman tiles. Although much of what we see is repair or fill, it's inspiring to think the structure has been a feature of the local landscape for about 1350 years.



All Saints, Earls Barton. Note the decorative strips on the tower and, above the clock, the small triangular-headed window.



Top: Recycled Roman tiles in the structure of St Peter's. Below: An original Saxon window.

St Peter's Church, Bradwell-on-Sea

For ambiguity, we need look no further than St Andrew's church at Greensted-juxta-Ongar. What's not ambiguous is that it's the oldest church of wood construction in Europe. Until fairly recently the church wall timbers were dated as AD 845 - Saxon by any estimate. However, in 1995, new dendrochronological research dated them between 1063 and 1108. Even a fleeting knowledge of English history points to the likelihood that the church was built in the Norman rather than the Saxon era. We can console ourselves that Saxon methods were used.

Saxon methods? The nave - largely original - is formed of oak tree trunks, split down the centre - a traditional Saxon building method. The revised dating is the result of tests on the youngest timber. The range of 45 years allows for the weathering of sapwood.

And the Normans did leave their mark - in the chancel wall's flint footings and the piscina in the sanctuary.



Left: The north side. Above: The same wall from the inside, smoothed by adze. Note the triangular shape at bottom right. On the outside it's matched by the aperture (below) which may be a leper's squint, a water stoup, or a spyhole for those inside to check who's approaching.



So to wishful thinking.

When I was at school, church architecture was part of the curriculum. With complete confidence we were told that the tower at Great Leighs was Saxon. Its roundness was said to be a key sign. Not so. There are six round church towers in Essex and all but one (the tower at Bardfield Saling) are Norman. Economy in the use of materials was one reason. Stability and defensibility was another. The base of the Great Leighs tower is said to be Saxon which is some consolation but the tower doorway there is impeccably Norman.



Far left: The tower once thought to be Saxon, which isn't.

Above: The base of the tower. Any Saxon evidence is pretty obscure.

There's much evidence of Saxon Building in England - just not in Essex. As well as pilaster decoration, some of the signs are: tall narrow round towers (below left, Little Saxham, Suffolk); triangular-topped windows and paired round-topped windows with thick balusters (below centre, Barton-on-Humber); tall narrow openings with round but crude arches (below right, St Patrick's, Heysham, Lancs).



READER'S PICTURES



A terrapin (lower left) on the Stour near Lamarsh. pictured by Dave Bazley of Halstead Branch.

Below, unusually abundant Field Scabious not far from Writtle.



During this time of limited activity, many of us are seeking refuge in the countryside. One person who doesn't waste his time is Dave Bazley. As well as the terrapin featured on page 31, he caught this grass snake at Marks Hall.

Pictures with an Essex slant are always welcome.



If you're considering sending us a pic, please bear in mind that we need:

- 1) Your clearance to use the picture.*
- 2) The credit (who took the picture) you'd prefer.*
- 3) A caption (who, what, where, when).*
- 4) Resolution should be as high as possible (width at least 1000 pixels).
But if in doubt, send us the pic. We'd rather see it than not.*

LAWRENCE O'BRIEN

20th February 1927- 3rd July 2020

Danbury and Little Baddow branch recently received the sad news of the death of our immediate past Chairman Lawrence O'Brien.

Lawrence was a passionate believer in continuing education and a dedicated supporter of the WEA. He was a charismatic and extremely hard-working chairman of the branch for eighteen years and is very fondly



remembered by the many students he encountered over these years. He worked tirelessly for the branch, retiring as chairman in 2017 on grounds of ill health, but he soon returned to support us as a member of the branch committee, serving until last year.

His legacy will be extremely hard to follow.

In 2018, at the request of the branch, Pearl Ryall awarded him the status of Life Member.

The following reminiscences are provided by Judith Johnson a WEA student who knew Lawrence for over thirty years.

Lawrence was a man who wore many different hats. These are just a few of them, but I know there are many more.

One of them was as a governor of a local primary school when I was the clerk to the governing body. As chairman he was always wise and thoughtful in his recommendations and judgements.

For many years he was chairman of Danbury & Little Baddow WEA and guided the development of this lively branch. He led the Art History class on a number of field trips in the UK, as well as to the Netherlands, Paris, Venice and Berlin. Lawrence did a huge amount of research before these trips. On boarding the coach we were given several closely typed pages of notes on everything from how much luggage to take, what we would see, places to visit, everything we could conceivably want to know, right down to buying a bus ticket and how to open the doors of the bus. My husband would joke that there was everything but a word search and crossword puzzle.

During one of these trips he let drop the fact that he also led tours of the wartime battlefields in France.

Lawrence was also extremely interested in politics and was the guiding hand behind the local SDP and Lib Dems groups. Somehow he enabled me to be an invigilator at a General Election count which I found very exciting.

In his working life he had been in the Inland Revenue Fraud Department, and regaled us with tales of how he had to bring actions against tax evaders. He was at some point sent out to Africa to set up a taxation system in an emerging nation.

When I lost my husband, I was advised that Lawrence was the go-to man for help with probate, tax and all the form filling, and I know he has helped many in this way.

In addition to all these varied activities – and I have probably only scratched the surface here – Lawrence and Jean (his wife) had love and time to spare for their own, their “adopted” families, friends and indeed anyone in our WEA Branch who needed his help.

Lawrence always had time. We will miss him.

Audrey Saunders

ESSEX FEDERATION
AUTUMN ONE DAY SCHOOL

Saturday 21st November, 10.30
am - 3.40 pm **ONLINE:**

Professor Edith Hall:
Troy: Myth, Image and Reality

Edith Hall is Professor of Classics at King's College, London. She is a leading authority on the Ancient Greek language and the Ancient Greeks. She is an outstanding lecturer and author or editor of a number of books on Greek Tragedy and related topics. This one day online course replaces the 2020 two-day Summer School she was going to deliver in Colchester.

Fee £14

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.



Education & Skills
Funding Agency

