

The logo for the Essex Federation of Walkers (WEA) is displayed in a bold, white, sans-serif font against a black rectangular background. The letters are slightly shadowed, giving it a three-dimensional appearance.

WEA

ESSEX FEDERATION
NEWS SHEET

SUMMER 2021



- Two Victorias
 - Design around the house
 - Watching the detectives
 - Ancient Greece
 - Ellen Willmott
- the forgotten gardener
- ... and much more

**WALKS APPLICATION
FORM INSIDE**

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**WEA Eastern Region
Essex Federation**
Summer 2021

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

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

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

FROM THE CHAIR

I'm sitting here with the patio doors open and the sun pouring in. It really feels like life is improving at last. Hopefully, June will bring normality although I'm sure, like me, many of you will still feel nervous about venturing out too far. I miss my trips to London, visiting Galleries, museums and going to the theatre. However, fingers crossed that is exactly what will happen very soon. In the meantime, we have organised two walks in Thaxted and Sudbury for September. Please look for details at the back of the EF News.

We recently held two zoom lectures on 'Plants that Shaped the World' and Grinling Gibbons. Both were well supported, and we have one further lecture in June about the ways in which cinema has brought the work of Charles Dickens to the screen.

Zoom courses, while not for everyone, have broadened our horizons. The ability to access courses on subjects not generally available in our region, has offered endless opportunities. It has been interesting to chat to course members from all over the UK, even if only to swap weather details! In fact, the zoom courses have been so successful that 39,175 enrolments have taken place over the last year. More than any other educational organisation. WEA has really stepped up to the plate. Zoom courses will continue but we are determined that face-to-face courses will resume in September, subject to successful Health and Safety inspections of all premises.

I recently joined the WEA awards evening, on zoom. WEA received the most nominations ever this year. The winners were all inspiring and well deserved. I must mention that we had a winner in Essex. Margaret Kirk from Billericay won the award for Student Community Contribution. Margaret gave a lot of support to her local members, especially assisting them to access zoom. Kate Jewell, a very popular tutor, was runner-up in the WEA Tutor Support award. Well done to all the winners.

Finally, please do encourage all your members to access the Essex Federation website, where lots of information about courses, events etc can be found. Mike Wall and Anne Mossman have done an excellent job in updating and improving the site.

Joan Black



Simon Parkinson is the CEO and General Secretary of the WEA, the leading adult education charity.

Simon joined the WEA from Co-operative College where he was Principal and CEO for 4 years and previously worked for 19 years at the Royal Mencap Society, including as Director of Education, Learning and Work.

Passionate about education and its ability to empower and inspire, Simon believes that through working together, individuals can have a hugely positive impact on their own lives and the wider community.

Simon is involved in a range of external networks including Co-operative Council Innovation Network, where he is vice chair of the Values & Principles Committee and an advisor to the Executive Oversight Committee. He is currently a commissioner on the Greater Manchester Co-operative Commission and is a trustee of Forget Me Not Children's Hospice

Growing up in Salford, Simon attended both Salford University and Warwick University where he gained a Masters degree in Public Administration.

MEMORIES

As a current member of the Billericay Branch of WEA who feels supported and touched by the presence of this organisation during the pandemic, I began to reminisce during one of the informal zoom tea party chats.

Some 40 years ago, as a young mum, newly moved to Billericay, I knew no one. I remember musing about having 'evening classes during the day'. I discovered to my delight that WEA offered classes in the morning and provided a crèche, all in the Reading Rooms.

The crèche was in the large room where we meet now. The class was in the small room at the front. We met weekly, coffee flasks in hand, for lectures and discussions on sociology.

We made friends, the children made friends and we remain friends to this day.

AND TODAY

I would also like to say how friendly and inclusive the Billericay Branch is, particularly being led and spearheaded by you and the team. Thank you for a brilliant job.

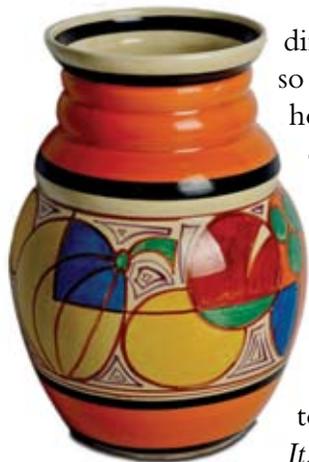
Eleanor

One Day Spring Term Course - March 2021
British Design 1850 – 1950
Tutor: Rosanna Eckersley

DESIGN IN A DAY

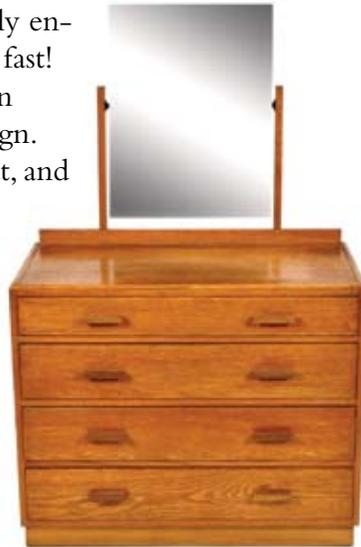
Rosanna Eckersley's British Design 1850-1950 day course on Saturday 20th March 2021 was excellent and totally engaging – the day went by so fast! So many aspects of design were covered in a range from iconic pottery to house design. The discussion around the items was great, and Rosanna asked pertinent questions. She was encouraging and we heard attendees' opinions as to function and form.

Like her output or not, Clarice Cliff's designs are certainly distinctive. Pricey, too. The 'Melon' design vase below might set you back a four figure sum.



What was particularly good about the course was that attendees were able to participate; to show, and proudly share their own memories, photographs and items.

Looking at wedding dress styles was so interesting – to see how the styles had evolved and changed over 100 years was fascinating. We saw Bridal Suits for women marrying during the war years, and I was able to show my parents' (white) wedding photographs in her book, *My Story As I Remember It*.



From the fighters and bombers of the RAF, to the functional styling of Utility furniture (chest of drawers/dressing table, above), rarely has Britain valued design and designers as much as during World War 2. It wouldn't last. In the early 1950s, Terence Conran's innovations were initially met with a sea of indifference.

We covered so many subjects that there is definitely scope for future courses. In fact, there were so many aspects of the course that could be focused on: Clarice Cliff, Architecture, Bridal Traditions, the V&A Collections, designers' lives, researching the people in a photograph ... the list is endless.

Fortunately, we can pursue our own research into the many subject areas, and we were given book recommendations and ideas of where to visit when this awful lockdown ends and places reopen.

Thank you. It was interesting, enjoyable and totally absorbing.



The people in Victorian wedding pictures rarely look happy. Perhaps the need to hold a pose trumped everything else.

Course Student: Susie Flanders

A great day, very well spent, inspirational and beautifully interactive. Rosanna brought British Design to life in an excellently crafted way ... I must do more research on Christopher Dresser. Thank you Rosanna.

Course Student: Christine Townley-Wakelin

I have nothing to add, the above comments completely reflect how I felt about the day.

Course Student: Sharon Walsh

Billericay Committee Comment - 'Zooming' for Courses may not be everyone's preferred option. However using the technology in our own home brilliantly and sensitively managed by our tutor, Rosanna was a real bonus. We were all able as invited to 'show and tell'. A wonderfully engaging course in the best WEA fashion.

The Rise of Detective Fever
Tutor: Margaret Mills
8-Week course (Zoom)

WATCHING THE DETECTIVES

We were delighted to welcome back Margaret Mills, whose gripping course took us into the murky world of crime in days past. As is now the norm, this was via zoom. Perhaps as well – the course was full, with local students joined by others across the UK.

The focus was on two prominent Victorian cases, in the context of the creation of the police force and of the detective department in the latter part of the 19th century. Over the weeks we got to know more about these ‘plainclothes policemen’ and how they became the celebrities of their day.

The first part of the course looked at The Bermondsey Murder. I won’t divulge any spoilers other than to say that the Bermondsey Horror (as it became known) captured the public’s imagination, and thirst for the macabre. We saw how the newspapers of the time reported every detail of the case, concentrating on the glamorous female involved, her fashionable attire and the fact that she inspired love-letters, ballads and poems. This case thrust the still incipient Detective Branch of the Metropolitan Police into the public eye.

A greater amount of time was given to the complex case of the Road Hill House Murder, “a crime...the like of which we have never known”, (*The Times*, July 1860).

The shocking event took place in June 1860 in the manor home of a middle-class family, in Wiltshire, and contained all the details that nowadays would be considered essential elements of a classic ‘whodunnit’ – complete with suspects, who either worked in, or lived at, the manor – as well as numerous red herrings.

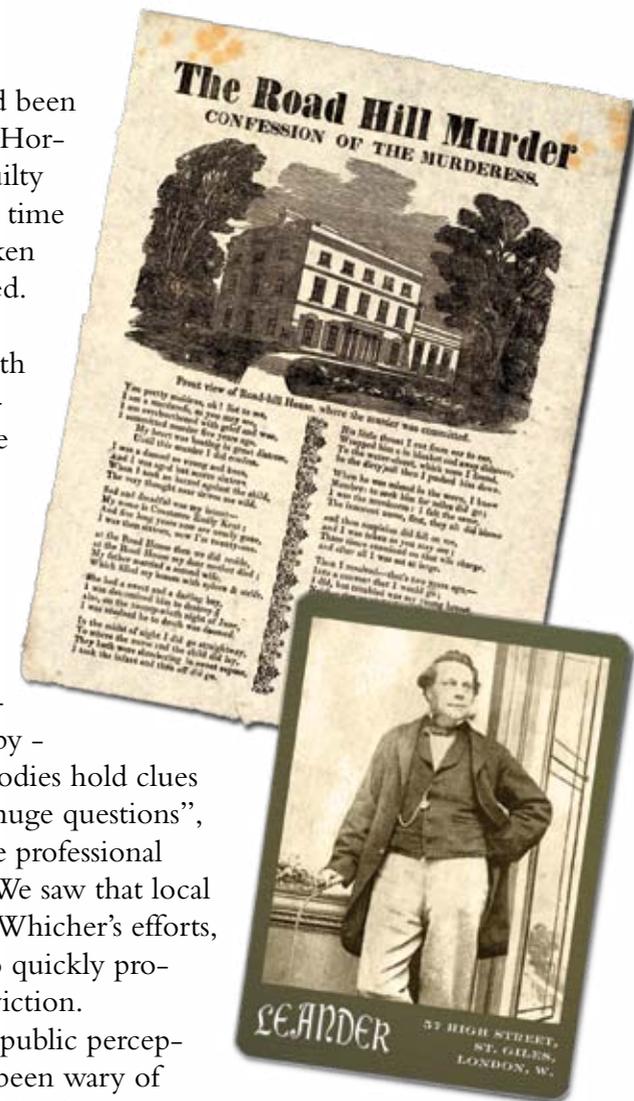
This grisly murder was considered an affront to the ‘security of families and the sacredness of English households’. People became critical of the Wiltshire Constabulary’s lack of progress and an experienced investigator was sent from Scotland Yard – Detective In-

spector Jack Whicher. He had been involved in the Bermondsey Horror, helping to convict the guilty parties. Unfortunately, by the time he arrived, an inquest had taken place and the body was buried.

We considered Whicher’s investigations, his dealings with Wiltshire detectives, and subsequent court hearings, in the context of what were then modern policing ideas, the differences in language and interpretation in 1860, and the prevailing attitudes of the time. Margaret explained to us about his use of the science of physiognomy, whereby – as he believed – “Faces and bodies hold clues and keys; tiny things answer huge questions”, and his struggles to overcome professional jealousy from local officers. We saw that local newspapers initially flattered Whicher’s efforts, confidently expecting him to quickly produce an arrest, trial, and conviction.

One common thread was public perception. Initially the public had been wary of surveillance by detectives, but by the time of the Road Hill House Murder, they had warmed to them. However, attitudes shifted again when people noted that the police, (often someone from the lower class) could pry into the private lives of the middle-class and even accuse them of sordid crimes.

There are many aspects of the Road Hill House case which enlighten us about the societal norms, attitudes, customs, and values



Above: Evidence of the public's fixation with the Road Hill case: a songsheet featuring a 'confession' and a surprisingly accurate rendering of the house. Below: Whicher. Images of someone who was once so popular are surprisingly scarce.

of Victorian England, and particularly the British public's opinions around religious practices and privileges. It can also be considered the inspiration for some of Charles Dickens' works, and for popular literature of the day, such as *The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins with a character based directly upon Whicher, and Mary E Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* with its complicated subplots, twists and turns.

The case created morbid interest around the country. An avalanche of letters was sent to the Home Secretary and to Scotland Yard, outlining various bizarre theories as to the identity of the murderer, the motive, and how they had committed the act.

Even now, there are more questions than answers. The course was well-researched, and we were supplied with information about recommended reading, as well as weekly handouts, and access to the presentation slides. Margaret guided us through the twists and turns of the investigation, managing to provide cliff-hangers aplenty from week to week as we discussed and debated class issues, domestic relationships and local mistrusts and hostilities. Was the involvement of a London detective, used to the darker criminal atmosphere of a city, just an extra complication?

Feedback was extremely positive. Here are just a few comments:

"I have enjoyed the course so far and as always am amazed at the amount of knowledge you (Margaret) have and how readily you pass it on to others. Thank you."

"I found Margaret's course very interesting. It was very thought provoking and packed full of information. Margaret is exceedingly knowledgeable about the case and takes you on a journey throughout the course, which has lots of images and supporting information. I would highly recommend it."

"I have enjoyed the course because it helped me understand how the plainclothes department of the police force emerged. The Road Hill House case also gave us an insight into the social history of the Victorians Upstairs/Downstairs life."

Thank you, Margaret for providing us with yet another fascinating course!

Mel – Billericay WEA Student

Herstory Tutor: Bex Harper 8 Week Course



The sheer variety of courses promoted by Billericay WEA could not have been better illustrated than by those where we have 'met' via Zoom. The latest concerned the role of women in history with sessions ranging far and wide so the class came to understand and appreciate the lives of many remarkable individuals.

The course began with witches. We encountered the impact of prejudices active in the UK, especially East Anglia, nearly 400 years ago and which continue to be all too familiar. Victims were disproportionately female, perhaps 'understandable' in a world where men controlled the levers of power. We jumped 300 years to learn about 'Typhoid Mary' and the part she played in the late 19th century epidemic in New York. Her experiences were particularly pertinent to a class who were in the middle of another pandemic and we were required to debate similar issues: the rights and responsibilities of the individual versus those of the group.



The first session had set the pattern of what was to follow: a steady progression through history, swapping sides of the Atlantic. Some sessions dealt with social and political change and associated 'movements' whilst others concentrated on the achievements of individual women. For example, Ann Lister- the heroine of the BBC's *Gentleman Jack* - led us to consider sexuality as another driver of female identity and status in 'mainstream' society.

For me, the most enlightening session introduced the concept of hysteria and its association with the uterus and female sexuality. So many gender stereotypes were immediately illuminated by looking at the pseudoscience behind these ideas and the ways in which they impacted on the lives of so many people.

The gradual 'liberation' of women from social and political disadvantages - in extreme really persecutions - was a running theme of the course as we took in developments such as 'the New Woman' and the various waves of Feminism. However, it was also clear that this is a journey which for most women is not over. One regular debating point was whether the subjects of that week's class were disadvantaged most by gender or by class, ethnicity or economic and political circumstances, or both.

Some of the women featured are well known but many others far less recognisable: the class learned more about the contributions of Ada Lovelace, Harriet Tubman, Mary Anning and Amelia Earhart but most of us had not been aware of Nellie Bly, Phillis Wheatley, Sarah Grand or Lotte Reiniger to



Like Amy Johnson (see title pic) Amelia Earhart was an innovative aviator. Both set distance records that made them international heroines. Solo flight then, with cumbersome navigation and the need to refuel at remote stops was a precarious undertaking.

Both died as fliers - Earhart in 1937 while attempting a world circumnavigation and Johnson in WW2 after bailing out into the Thames Estuary from an aircraft she was ferrying. A rescue attempt failed mainly as a result of adverse weather conditions.

name but a few. In the final weeks we considered women and events even closer in time: Ruby Bridges, Mahala Yousafzai and the scandal of the Magdalene Laundries.

The course did not focus solely on problems faced by females - much time was spent learning about the achievements of women in spite of, or possibly because of, the attitudes and social, economic and political conditions through which they lived. It was heartening to see so many individuals who were not simply 'victims' of these forces but significantly contributed to changing their societies for the better.

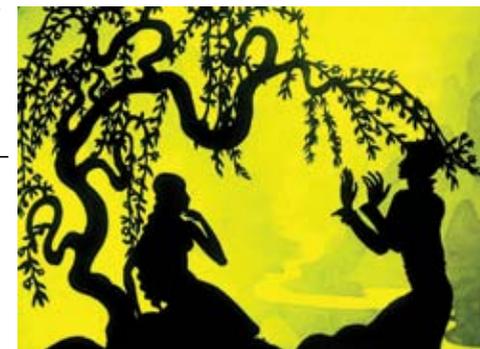
Finally, thanks to Bex who not only led the course but illustrated our discussions by referencing some of her experiences and interests. As a result, our group was more than willing to open up and share family and personal histories, making for lively debate especially in the 'break-out rooms'. As one of the two (shame gentlemen!) men on the course I think we would now all agree that it's impossible to tell 'History' without also telling "Herstory".

I am sure our class would join me in thoroughly recommending this course to other WEA groups.

Alan McFadden – Course Member



Lotte Reiniger in her London studio c.1960. Pic: Christel Strobel (Wikimedia Commons)



Part of Germany's early 20th century burst of creative energy, Reiniger pioneered 'stop-motion' animation (filming movement in small increments) using her own ingenious cut-outs. The motion and depth of field of her creations is still compelling. Her work is still widely available - try YouTube. Above are stills from her 1920s productions *Papageno* (middle) and *Prince Ahmed* (below).

Victoria – Grandmother of Europe
Tutor: Margaret Mills
A Sunday Special Short One Day Course



A
QUEEN
FOR A
(special Sun)
DAY

Keeping in touch with informal coffee sessions for ‘WEA friends’ led to a discussion about how long a Sunday can be in the life of lockdown! There was only one answer and that was to make a Sunday Course happen and ‘give it a go’.

Credit has to go firstly to Sally Ridealgh at Eastern Region who just said ‘yes’ to helping make it a reality. The next bit was easy as many will know tutor, Margaret Mills and her positive approach to learning for adults. Her response: “Why not?”

The Topic – Victoria, Grandmother of Europe was a ‘no brainer’ with many enquiries even after we’d run 2 courses. Also, we felt it would help promote the 9 sessions planned for ‘Victoria’s Children’. We were right – the Sunday Course was FULL and at the end many asked Margaret about her other courses and were keen to book up.

A Sunday Special indeed, and not only because course and tutor are special but because it was a Sunday – even though for some it felt like a Saturday! We all made it too in spite of the clocks going forward – as someone said “What is an hour when we are connecting all over the country bringing us together and can Zoom!” Laughter erupted when someone referred to ‘WEA junkies’ with affection and expressed joy at connecting in so many ways using technology. However, perhaps the key message was that so many said the time whizzed by on a Sunday and to quote Carolyn from the Midlands (with her permission), “It was the best Sunday ever”, the “fastest 5 hours I’ve ever spent” and “Life starts from today”. I think we can all identify with her that the WEA has been a lifeline in these times. Credit – indeed ‘respect’ to the WEA’s response to this pandemic.

The Course is amazing as expressed in other reviews; however, I went away with 2 special moments:

As people returned from the lunch break with a cuppa, I tuned in to moments of delightful conversation as people shared their cat images and related stories. A joy on a Sunday afternoon!

I also reflected on Queen Victoria’s comment – ‘The day has come and I am alone’. Well, the day did come for our Sunday Course and I am assured people were not and did not feel alone!

Thank You Margaret, WEA support from Sally and Jane, and all the course members. It was a Special Sunday!

Denise Fielding Branch Chair and Course Member

Cancelling our Saturday Course on the weekend before Lockdown in March 2020 with over 40 people signed up and a waiting list was probably one of the biggest disappointments for our Branch.

However, always up for a challenge and with a tutor always willing to give it a go, we rescheduled and looked to Zoom. A challenge for us all and initially hard to imagine how we could run 'A Day' and how could we manage 40 plus?

The answer is simple - you cannot do it the same but you can have a good try. Looking at it from the tutor's perspective and a (learning and social) community standpoint led us to 25 max (about the number of faces you can see in one frame on screen); 2 hours maximum per session with a tutor-managed comfort break and a proper 'time out for lunch' and a Zoom slot to meet need and gaps (especially in COVID times).

Result: Two Short 4 hour (2 hours plus 2 hours) Saturday Courses in September and November with a minimum target number.

Did we get it right? Well of course we could do it better but: 20 plus students on both dates; full house in November (some did it twice); new students and not just locally, a happy tutor (happy to give extra time) and a good feel and feedback from the groups with plenty in the 'Chat' - best summed up in the words of one student:

'I so enjoyed my day with Margaret in September. It was my first WEA course since March, just before lockdown, and it was lovely to 'see' Margaret even though it was on a screen. When she spoke, I could almost imagine myself listening to her back in the Billericay Reading Rooms. As usual, I learnt so many new, interesting things - some from Margaret and some from other people on the course. It was great to see familiar faces but also to 'meet' new people who wouldn't have normally been able to attend because they lived too far away. There were some great questions and comments and you could tell everyone had thoroughly enjoyed themselves. We've had to adapt to these strange times but thanks to WEA and Margaret, enjoyable learning has continued.'
AND there was more:

'A new perspective ...found out new things'

'A fabulous, inspiring course and knowledge share'

'A fabulous Day School, thank you Margaret. Lots of great food for thought, brilliant session'

'Breadth and fount of knowledge (incredibly knowledgeable) - Margaret was completely unfazed and able to answer any question'

'I continue to be amazed at the wealth of knowledge that Margaret has on this subject. I also enjoyed the camaraderie experienced amongst the class that day.'

' I could do this for months'

'Met different people'

'WEA has been my lifeline'

'Doing zoom classes with WEA is the highlight of my week. To have an interesting subject and a Tutor that makes it "very real" and the chance to see some familiar faces is the best!'

'Great to have something on Saturday' ('How about Sunday?')

'I've become a member - amazing'

Zoom....'I don't just need to look at the courses in my area'

'Never attended in person... just taken it up in lockdown, it's all been Zoom. It gives a really wide choice of topics and interests to choose from'

I guess the real test was a call for 'More' and 'Encore' when Margaret suggested the follow up 'Victoria, Grand-mother of Europe Strikes Back' or was it 'Albert Strikes Back'?

Well, Billericay Branch did listen and we are currently planning the next series ready for 2021.

So, we did it twice and some students did it twice - here's to even more in 2021.

Billericay WEA Branch Committee and Student Voices from September and November Courses

Queen Victoria's Nine Children
Episode 1 - Victoria (Vicky) The Eldest Child and Daughter
Tutor: Margaret Mills
Short One Day Course



Princess Victoria by
Franz Winterhalter

Princess Victoria, eldest child of Queen Victoria, is now possibly best known for being Kaiser Bill's mother. Marrying her to German Emperor Friedrich III was part of a plan to connect (more than they already were) the Royal families of Europe. Thus, it was believed, war would be less likely.

The plan has limited success. Within seventeen years of Vicky's death in 1901, her son was deposed and his country was in ruins; the Czar (another relative of Queen Victoria) was deposed and murdered.

who enjoy discovering the intricate and interwoven relationships of Royal Families and the 'what if's' of history, also the responses of people in the past to major events.

On Saturday 17th April 2021, Margaret Mills, one of my and indeed our (Billericay WEA Branch) favourite lecturers gave us a real treat online via Zoom/Canvas and in the comfort of our own homes. This was the first of the 9 classes on the nine lives of Queen Victoria's Nine Children. Each class is a standalone episode and story. The idea for this set of 9 two hour Saturday sessions planned throughout 2021 came from a number of students on Margaret's very popular course – Queen Victoria; Grandmother of Europe. Students were so fascinated and intrigued that they asked for more and wanted to know more in depth about each of the children of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

We started, naturally with Vicky her first-born. The course is planned so you can do one or any number up to nine. The Branch hopes there will be sufficient interest and demand for repeats – so students might do the sessions in any order. It is of interest to those

The focus on Vicky's life in the historical, political and social context gave food for thought with numerous photographs adding to the account of her life. The little Princess Victoria was created Princess Royal of Great Britain in 1841, within a year of her birth. This is an official title traditionally held by the eldest daughter of the sovereign (today held by Princess Anne). Educated by her adored father in a politically liberal environment and possessed of great intellectual abilities, Vicky married Prince Frederick William of Prussia and became the mother of Wilhelm II, German Emperor of World War 1 fame. Vicky shared with Frederick her liberal views and hoped that the later German Empire would be based on the British model. Criticised for this, and for her English origins, Vicky's isolation increased after the rise to power of Otto von Bismarck. Because of his premature death, Vicky and her husband were German Emperor and Empress for only a few months, during which time they had little chance to influence the German Empire's policies.

There were many stories of Vicky that made our 2 hour session from 10am – 12 noon with a cuppa and comfort break both interesting and engaging – the time whizzed by. Everyone always says how our tutor, Margaret is so informative, knowledgeable and thought provoking with stories and snippets that are not always easy to find in a book. I felt that Vicky came to life during our course and her story was so 'alive' in Margaret's capable hands.

It was also apt that our first Course and the first of Victoria's Children was the topic on the day of the Duke of Edinburgh's funeral. It seemed poignant to make links to the Prince, Queen Victoria and the Royal Family and to consider further the parallels to the life of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

As Margaret commented at the end of the course 'It seems very fitting somehow that on the day of the late Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh's funeral we should be looking at the life and times of his great-great aunt – an aunt he shared with Her Majesty The Queen. Another example of the complex ancestry of the Royal Family'.

I have no doubt that many like me then switched seamlessly to the TV and continued the story, our thoughts and deliberations.

Thanks too to Sally at Eastern Region for her help!
Chris Wilkins, Course Member

Episodes from Local and Family History in Essex and Suffolk-
Tutor: Ted Woodgate
Short Course: online via Zoom and Canvas

**TED
WOODGATE
MADE
HIS
CONTRIBUTION.
MARGARET
KIRK
THEN ADDED
HER
PART
OF
THE
STORY**

Many of us in Billericay WEA Branch were so disappointed when COVID arrived and our plans for Episodes from ‘Two Counties: Essex and Suffolk Part 2 – Men, Women, Work and World War’ were cancelled for May 2020. So many of us had enjoyed Part 1 that we could not wait to hear another episode from a completely different angle in Part 2. A number of enquirers were assured and reassured that they did not have to do Part 1 to join Part 2. Each episode is a stand-alone short course of a couple of hours. Ideal, as a very successful trial of a Friday Afternoon had proved with Part 1!

We were all hoping that the cancellation would turn into a post-

ponement and indeed that we would all be back in the Reading Rooms on Billericay High Street enjoying ourselves with one of our favourite local tutors as well as chatting and socialising over our refreshments. Our One Day and Short Course students enjoy such events as well as our offer of tea and coffee with cake and biscuits (often chocolate ones). On a Saturday Course, the lunch break in the High Street – pub or retail therapy for some – proves very popular.

It was not to be for Autumn 2020 but, thanks to the staff in WEA Eastern Region (especially Sally) and our commitment at a local level, we planned our short course online via Zoom for October. Hurrah – and then Ted (probably like a number of us at times) started to worry whether such courses would work on Zoom. We all know that students enjoy Ted’s engaging and participative style so like Ted, we were bound to ask whether it would work with this technology and be concerned about that sense of loss particularly for our community opportunity to be together and learn together face to face.

Well I can report Ted did it, we did it and it was a huge success. How did we all make it happen?

A lot of credit goes to our Treasurer, Margaret Kirk and not for her usual role of sorting the money and the Annual Return etc. Margaret so enjoyed Part 1 that she was inspired to do some research (a keen Family History researcher herself) to solve a mystery Ted posed. Each Episode is an insight into a story, social and economic history as well as family history but Part 2, with Margaret as Assistant and Co-host online, was also an insight into how to problem solve and offered a new angle for us all to consider plus new and additional information for The Woodgate Story.

As always Ted was a superb tutor, we were gripped and together with Margaret this course got us all thinking about the time, the area, the story as well as about our own story – family history. We had such an insight too into the work that goes on behind such programmes as ‘Who do you think you are?’

This is a course – Part 1 and Part 2 – to be repeated. Look out on the WEA website and Billericay Branch. We are working on Ted and Margaret to ‘do it again’ and by popular request.

Many, many thanks.

Denise – Billericay Branch Chair - a very relieved one too!

The Lady of Warley Place - Ellen Willmott
 The World-Famous Horticulturalist
 Tutor: Margaret Mills
 One Day Course



Pic: Daderot (Wikimedia Commons)

MISS WILLMOTT'S GHOST IS ALIVE AND THRIVING IN A GARDEN NEAR YOU

It is often the case that what is on your doorstep is the last place you visit and others living miles away know all about it and may have already visited.

Well, the joy of lockdown and online courses, thanks to the tutor and the student group, is that I now know about Ellen Willmott, Warley Place, the Art Nouveau Church of St Mary the Virgin at Great Warley - a church often referred to as the Pearl Church, or the Mother of Pearl Church because of the extensive use of this material in its design, and the local Threshers Pub plus recommended menu! ALL of these are now a 'MUST' to visit though opening times need

to be checked and not just because of lockdown/ the pandemic. A visit to Warley Place in the Spring with the snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils was highly recommended.

Our Branch has been asked about a field trip at some future time so watch this space!

I then found out about the Willmott family link to Spetchley Park, a fine 18th century mansion near Worcester, . Ellen's younger sister, Rose, married into the Berkeley family which had owned Spetchley for over 400 years.

So, a quick call to a friend is now a date to visit the gardens at Spetchley - fingers crossed. It probably means I will get there before I get just down the road off the A127!

The gardens at Warley Place are not as manicured as they were in Ellen Willmott's day, when over 100,000 varieties of plants were grown there. Ellen



Ellen Willmott's gender might have hindered her progress, but inherited money and family connections helped her into influential circles.

She spent prodigiously on developing her three garden estates in Italy, France and England - at one time she was thought to have employed over 100 gardeners.

She is said to have cultivated over 100,000 species of plant. One reward (she also received medals and memberships of learned societies) was to have her name attached to many.

Her legacy equals that of the better-known Gertrude Jekyll. Originals of her lavishly produced 2-volume The Genus Rosa are now highly prized - decent copies cost in excess of £1000.

She died in 1934, her assets spent. Warley House and grounds were sold to pay her debts.



Ellen Willmott's book The Genus Rosa is, sadly, often broken up to access the superbly printed colour plates by Alfred Parsons. This one - Rosa Virginiana will set you back \$95.00

spent lavishly to achieve her ambition of making a glorious garden, in spite of lacking any formal botanical education or training.

Her remarkable story was recognised with The Royal Horticultural Society's Medal of Honour for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee of 1897. Ellen was one of only two women out of 60 recipients.

Kew and Wisley owe a lot to Ellen Willmott as does many a garden - look out for those plants attributed to her e.g. the Lilac - 'Miss Ellen Willmott'; Sweet Peas, Rose and Zinnia - 'Miss Willmott' or any denoted 'Warley'. It is said that at least 40 plants are named after her or contain the name of 'Warley'. Ellen Willmott developed her family garden into a world-famous botanical showpiece and funded international expeditions to discover new plants.

Her garden is now Warley Place Nature Reserve, run by the Essex Wildlife Trust and its volunteers. It's a magical place for a visit.

A course that opens your eyes to an amazing woman who was ahead of her time and to a place of local interest. Ellen's own words perhaps sum her up best:

"My plants and my gardens come before anything in life for me, and all my time is given up to working in one garden or another, and when it is too dark to see the plants themselves, I read or write about them."

Denise Fielding and Tutor: Margaret Mills

P.S. Billericay Branch did not plan it, but the WEA live lecture that evening was 'The Arts & Crafts' Movement: Gardens. A number of students thus moved seamlessly on to the evening appreciating the contribution of Gertrude Jekyll: the only other woman recognised with The Royal Horticultural Society's award of a Medal of Honour for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee of 1897.

Review: *Radical Wordsworth - The Poet Who Changed the World* by Jonathan Bate. Publisher: William Collins

from the booklist of the course 'Appreciating the Romantics' with Ron Marks.

Jonathan Bate has written a modern and accessible biography of William Wordsworth. His challenge is to prove that this Romantic Poet really did change the world. In his preface he says that he is keen to include only the events and people in Wordsworth's life that influenced him the most, and so spares us irrelevant and trivial detail. He also omits the history of Wordsworth's decline in his later years. With this approach, the biography maintains a momentum, and a sense of purpose throughout. Despite the intellectual content there is a lightness of touch that is not without humour.

The book has a conventional chronological structure that is easy to navigate. Wordsworth's poetry is used throughout to illustrate his experiences, relationships and his growth as an individual, poet and radical thinker. We are taken through Wordsworth's childhood in the Lake District, on walking tours in Europe, and to France during the time of the revolution. Bate portrays his sister Dorothy as having a positive and influential presence in his life. During the French Revolution Wordsworth is witness to horror and violence which changes his attitude to the politics of his time. His poetry and life is influenced by friends, such as Coleridge, and the natural world around him.

This literary and historical biography has an appeal to the general, modern reader. It is a good introduction to Wordsworth and his poetry but provides additional insight to those who may feel they already know Wordsworth well. Bate views Wordsworth as a revolutionary and he invites you to understand the poet in this way. For example, Wordsworth's ideas about the intellectual development of children and the understanding of self continues to shape the thoughts of writers and thinkers today. Wordsworth's attitude towards nature still endures in our appreciation of places of natural beauty. And through his poetry Wordsworth speaks to us today. In this excellent biography Bate succeeds in showing us how radical Wordsworth has been, and that he is truly the poet who changed the world.

Sue Fisher

Friendship Tea
March 2021

It is almost 2 years ago that the Committee met face to face and explored ideas about how to reach out to more people and raise the profile and benefits of the WEA in our local community. We jokingly used the term BOGOF (Buy One Get One Free) then moved quickly on to the idea of a Friendship Tea plus Invitation to Bring a Friend. We booked an extra week on to the end of our 2021 Spring Course ready for a local social occasion plus Sue's popular and highly coveted cakes with WEA regulars, supporters and friends to meet in our lovely community facility and building in the High Street- The Reading Rooms. Perfect!



None of us could have anticipated what happened next!

March 2020 - COVID 19, Lock-down and sadly the loss of so much for so many and for our WEA Branch, the loss of someone in our lives and to Billericay.

March 2021 - We hosted as scheduled our first Friendship Tea. Zoom meant we could go ahead with an informal invitation even though you had to bring your own tea/coffee plus biscuits/cake

and invite a friend to WEA.

Our first Friendship Tea was also our occasion to celebrate a friend, class member and WEA supporter Gillian Curry. Gill - We remember her fun loving approach to life, warm and generous personality, that sunny smile, the red wine and chocolates especially Maltesers and all those occasions at class and over the tea break. Gill always expressed her thanks and appreciation for the classes and tutors - in her words, the WEA 'added a new dimension', 'thank you again for the knowledge and pleasure you have given me', 'Thank you for your friendship', 'Thank you for making us feel welcome', 'I'm looking forward to seeing my lovely WEA friends soon....'

The first Friendship Tea for a Friend to the WEA went well!

"Thank you for the invite I enjoyed today's meeting, folk are friendly and the information very useful. I would like to attend any future Friendship Tea meetings."

"The first Friendship Tea was both sad and joyous. It will be an Annual Friendship Tea!"

"Thank you for the lovely tribute to Gill. It reminds us how important friends and community are and how Billericay Branch can play a part in bringing people together. An annual tea with- bring a friend- is a good idea."

"It was an amazing tribute. I was looking at people's faces as you were talking and there were a few tears being shed. We remembered Gill and also the pictures were a memory of happy times in the Reading Rooms."

"It keeps our connection to our friends and our beloved WEA, reminding everyone that we're still here and thinking of you and the memory of our lovely Gill."

"That gathering on Zoom to remember our dear friend Gill, was so moving and evoked many happy memories of a very special lady. I could picture her looking down on us and giving us that lovely smile, she would have been taken aback but delighted, to see we all remember her with love."

"What you said about Gillian was perfect and really did say it all. So very sad when another familiar face is no longer part of 'the Team' at Billericay, but lovely memories and what a fun, friendly and positive lady she was. People like Gillian give an enormous amount to other people I always think, and are an inspiration. One of my favourite sayings has always been 'it's not the years of your life that matter, but the life in your years!'"

"I asked her to go with me to WEA, which she said had been the best tonic for her. We spent many happy times giggling in the back row in the Reading Rooms and putting the world to rights whilst walking her dog, Ruby, around Norsey Wood."

"It was great to spend part of the afternoon remembering Gill, such a caring, gentle lady. On the evening courses we both used to park at the top of Chantry Way so would walk to our cars together, discuss the course, have a laugh and generally put the world to rights."

Billericay WEA Committee and Friends

Book Review

Black Tudors (their untold story) by Miranda Kaufmann



Many of you may have seen the Field of Cloth of Gold tapestry. Did you spot a black trumpeter? The Trumpeter's name was John Blanke and he is shown wearing a turban which suggests that he was of north African heritage, possibly Muslim. The first record of wages being paid dates from December 1507, which determines that he was not a slave. His annual wage was £12, twice that of a labourer and three times that of a servant. It was a high status job which bought board, lodging and a clothes allowance.

John Blanke was one of very many Africans living in England at the time as free people, not slaves. In fact it seems that where they would have been enslaved in other countries, they made a deliberate effort to escape to England knowing they would be free.

It was interesting to read that there were attempts to salvage the Mary Rose in the Tudor period. Some of the men qualified to undertake this were from Africa. Jacques Francis was employed by a group of Venetian salvage operators. He is thought to have grown up on an African island where he would have learnt to swim and dive for pearls and gold, so could stay underwater for relatively long periods of time – known today as free diving.

Reasonable Blackman was a silk weaver living south of the river, who became quite wealthy. Cattelena of Almondsbury was an independent single woman living close to Bristol. Their lives and many more have been written about in this fascinating book.

To quote David Olusoga- 'this book is cutting edge and alive with human details and warmth'. It won the Wolfson History prize and is definitely worth a read.

Joan Black

Publisher : Oneworld Publications

Hardcover : 384 pages ISBN-10 : 97817861842

The Rise of Detective Fever

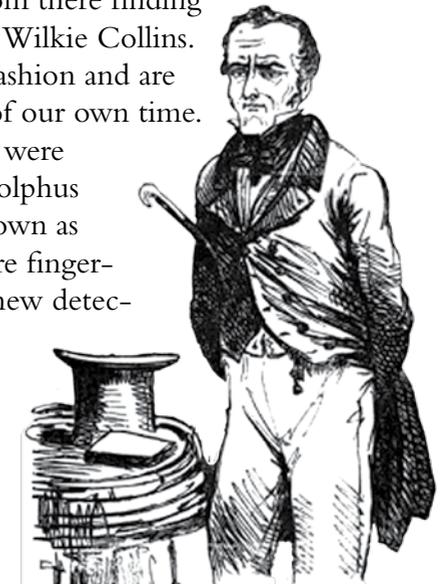
Tutor: Margaret Mills

10 week course

This course, which under normal circumstances would have been held in the WI Hall, Rayleigh, was the first on-line learning experience for many of us. Memorable for that reason it will also be remembered as an absorbing course in which the participants were able to exercise their deductive powers in trying to solve one of the most controversial murder cases of the Victorian era.

Fortunately the official investigation was not undertaken by the amateur sleuths of Margaret's course but by a new breed of policeman established by the Metropolitan Police in 1842. First based in Scotland Yard they were an elite, plain clothed force, chosen from the best of the uniformed service. Although public reaction was initially wary – many regarding them as informants or Government spies – it was not long before they were receiving the enthusiastic endorsement of the national press and from there finding their way into the fiction of Dickens and Wilkie Collins. Since then they have never been out of fashion and are ever present in the books and TV series of our own time.

Prominent among the early detectives were Charley Field (the master of disguise) Adolphus 'Dolly' Williamson and Jack Whicher, known as the 'Prince of Detectives'. In an age before fingerprints, DNA and other forensic aids the new detectives adopted a systematic, wide-ranging approach to criminal investigations that also made use of physiognomy, the art of judging character from a person's appearance. The reactions of suspects, their facial expressions and mannerisms were therefore closely observed by these early exponents of the scientific approach to solving crime.



Patrick O'Connor, the 'Bermondsey Horror' victim.

In 1849 the reputation of the new detectives was secured when they were called in to investigate the 'The Bermondsey Horror', the brutal murder of Patrick O'Connor, a Customs official and money-lender. The crime sensation of the decade (eventually filling seventy-two pages of The Times) was solved by Field and Whicher who not only conclusively established the guilt of the culprits but apprehended them in distant parts of the UK where in earlier times they might well have avoided capture.

Eleven years later the London detectives were to face their greatest challenge yet when Wiltshire Magistrates requested their assistance in investigating the murder of Francis Saville Kent, the three year old son of well to do factory inspector, Samuel Kent. The initial investigation by the local constabulary had, to use a modern expression, proved unfit for purpose and by the time the detective assigned to the case, Jack Whicher, arrived at Samuel Kent's large house the much picked-over crime scene was of little help to his enquiries.

Another complication was the large number of suspects. Road Hill House where Kent lived with his second wife, Mary, was also home to four children from his first marriage and three from his marriage to Mary. In addition to three live-in servants, six more worked in or about the house during the day. While firm evidence was in short supply it soon became apparent to Whicher that the older children, now in their teens and twenties, resented their half siblings, and that their father was much disliked by local residents and former servants. Rumours that he had, and was having, improper relationships with female servants was another discordant undercurrent that seemed somehow connected to the murder.

Who did it? I'm not saying. If you want to know you will have to do the course. But if you do, be prepared to be surprised

Our thanks to Margaret for an intriguing course, and to the WEA for their stewardship of Zoom.

Richard Banks,
Secretary, Rayleigh Branch

If you're paying attention, you'll have noticed that this is the second article covering this course. Both are used, first to show the popularity of the subject, second to give an alternative perspective. (Ed)

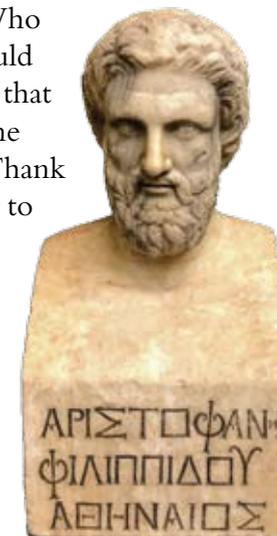
Greek Tragedy

Tutor: Dr Ben Pestell

COOKIN' WITH GREECE

We were delighted to hear in January 2020 that a new lecturer would be coming to Writtle in the Autumn. He had agreed to teach our large Tuesday morning group of 40-50. Then came the pandemic! Who could have predicted that our digital skills would need to improve so quickly? I can only think that many people were put off because of the online format as just three of our branch signed on. Thank you to the WEA for extending the advertising to East Anglia and beyond and for letting it go ahead with such a small group. Several of us developed our digital skills signing on for the first session!!! Thank goodness for Zoom and thank you to the WEA staff who helped that first morning!

Ben's course was fascinating. Ben was so good at taking us back to the Athens of 500 BC, their views on life and the way the plays were performed. I had always thought Greek Tragedy might be too obscure, but its relevance to modern life is amazing. It was interesting to



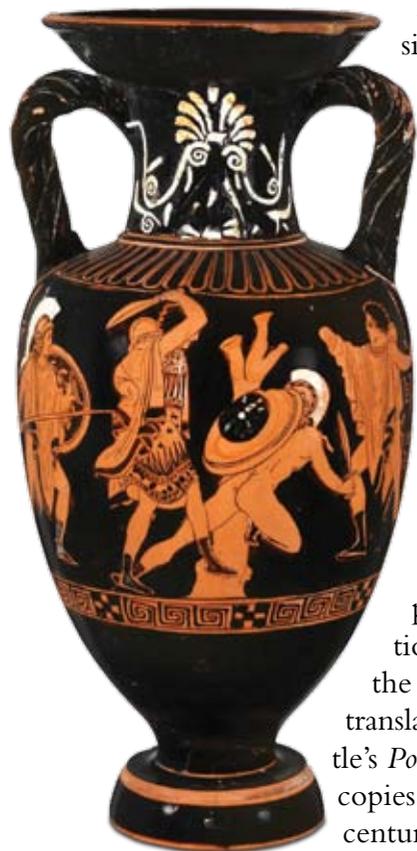
*Aristophanes - a bust in the Uffizi, Florence.
Pic: Alexander Markofsky
(Public Domain)*

pick up on the connections to Shakespeare's Plays. Just reading the texts could have been dry but Ben provided links to good versions of the plays on YouTube and alternate texts, so we were prepared before the session (I have never had so much homework for a WEA Course, and that is not a complaint but a huge thank you). Since some of the Plays were heartrending it was fun to have the week on Aristophanes *The Frogs* to lighten our mood. Who knew frogs went "Brekekekéx-koáx-koáx" rather than "ribbit ribbit"? The YouTube

links included two Cambridge University productions, *The Frogs* (hilarious) and *Prometheus Bound*. The more serious side of *The Frogs* was the chance to compare the styles of Aeschylus and Euripides. The moving 1971 version of Euripides *The Trojan Women* with Katherine Hepburn and Vanessa Redgrave certainly challenged most of us. The plays were written in turbulent times with the Persian Wars and the Peloponnesian Wars with Sparta, a time of grief and the worst of human experience. Tragically, twenty-five centuries later, we have still not learnt the worthlessness of war.

To broaden our understanding of the plays, Ben guided us through the conventions governing their theatre productions, the format of the texts and the challenges of translation. We read a little of Hesiod and Aristotle's *Poetics*. We also learnt of the routes by which copies of the texts were transmitted down the centuries.

Ben succeeded in giving our 'mixed experience' group a wonderful glimpse into Greek Tragedy. Huge thanks, it has definitely been my autumn highlight under the shadow of Covid. We hope to join you for *The Odyssey* next term.
Mary Roberts



This urn dates from c. 400 BC, about the time of the Peloponnesian Wars. The subject, duelling warriors, was perennially popular. (Metropolitan Museum NY, public domain.)

COLCHESTER

Plants that shaped the world
Tutor: Andy Beharrel
One Day School

How have plants affected our economy? Andy started by asking us what are the three most important plants, but it soon became clear that everyone had a different view. Are we talking culturally, economically or medically? Wheat for food, chocolate for pleasure, hops for beer, oats for whisky – these were a few suggestions.

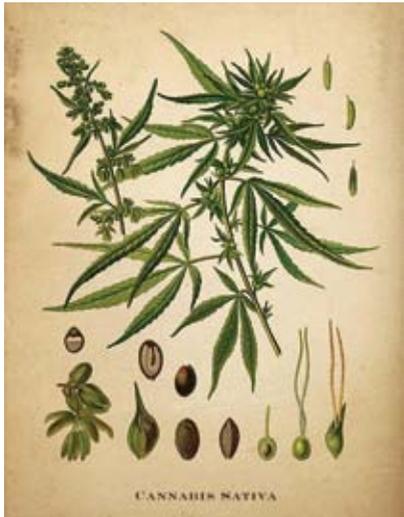
However the first plant we considered as a class was the bark of the cinchona tree, better known as quinine. Consider the world without quinine. We had a quick lesson about malaria and how it has devastated people from the ancient Egyptians, the Romans, the peoples of the Middle Ages and the British Empire, the United States of America and the sugar industry. It was the Jesuits in Peru that brought the cinchona bark back to Spain in the 17th century after it was discovered to be beneficial in the treatment of malaria. Although during the Napoleonic era a third of soldiers died of malaria, the supply was limited – a lot of bark was needed to treat each person, making it expensive.



An engraving of the quinine tree from a textbook published around 1870. The first European to take quinine was probably the Spanish Countess of Cinchón in 1638. During a visit to Peru, she was successfully treated for a fever with a local remedy called quina quina. The genus was named *Cinchona* after her. As a full understanding of the extraction of quinine developed, the tree was exploited almost to extinction. It was saved by the development of a synthetic substitute in the 1940s.

The British did manage to smuggle trees out from South America and grow plantations in India but it was the Dutch who monopolised the market by developing plantations in Java. By 1930 they produced 22 million pounds, which equalled 97% of the world production of quinine. In 2015 Tu Youyou became the first Chinese woman to win a Nobel Prize for discovering artemisinin to treat malaria, a synthetic medicine.

Our 2nd plant of the day was hemp. One of the fastest growing plants on earth. We maybe think of it today more because of cannabis



Hemp, illustrated in a 19th century print. Thought to have been one of the first plants cultivated by humans, it has long been prized as a basis of food, fibre, paper and much else. Its use as a narcotic also has ancient origins, but in precisely what context (religious, remedial, palliative) is a subject of debate.

controversial topic and no conclusion could be agreed.

We could have talked about any number of plants but these two and the way Andy explained their relevance and consequence were most enlightening and enjoyable.

Linda Vowles

but throughout history it has been used for many things including paper, rope, textiles, clothing, insulation and food for both humans and animals, to name a few. We talked in more depth about some of these uses – including caulking ships. This was a way of making the joints on ships watertight by pushing hemp into the gap – when the hemp is wet it expands to prevent water entering. The many ways hemp can be used to feed people and livestock – making bread, oils, flour and beer. The Gutenberg bible, the first printed version is on hemp paper, also the draft of the American Declaration of Independence.

We rounded up our one day school lecture by considering cannabis and its uses today, whether it should be legalised for medical and recreational use. We split into groups and discussed the pros and cons, it turned out to be a very

Art in East Anglia

Tutor: Andrew Casey

2-Session Course

A delightful insight into some East Anglian artists. Andrew introduced us in Part 1 to traditionalists and the first British impressionist painters.

Anna Airy and Leonard Squirrell lived in Suffolk, the former was commissioned as a war painter and was commissioned to paint foundries and munition factories. Anna was very varied in her work and could put her hand to many types of subjects including still life and portraiture. Leonard Squirrell was particularly known for his etchings and at the International Print Makers Exhibitions in Los Angeles he won a silver medal in 1923, and gold medals in 1925 and 1930. Then onto to plein air, the forerunner of French impressionism. Those who followed the Impressionist path included Harry Becker, Cor Visser, Sir Cedric Morris, Sir Arnesby Brown and Philip Wilson Steer to name a few – most with much success.

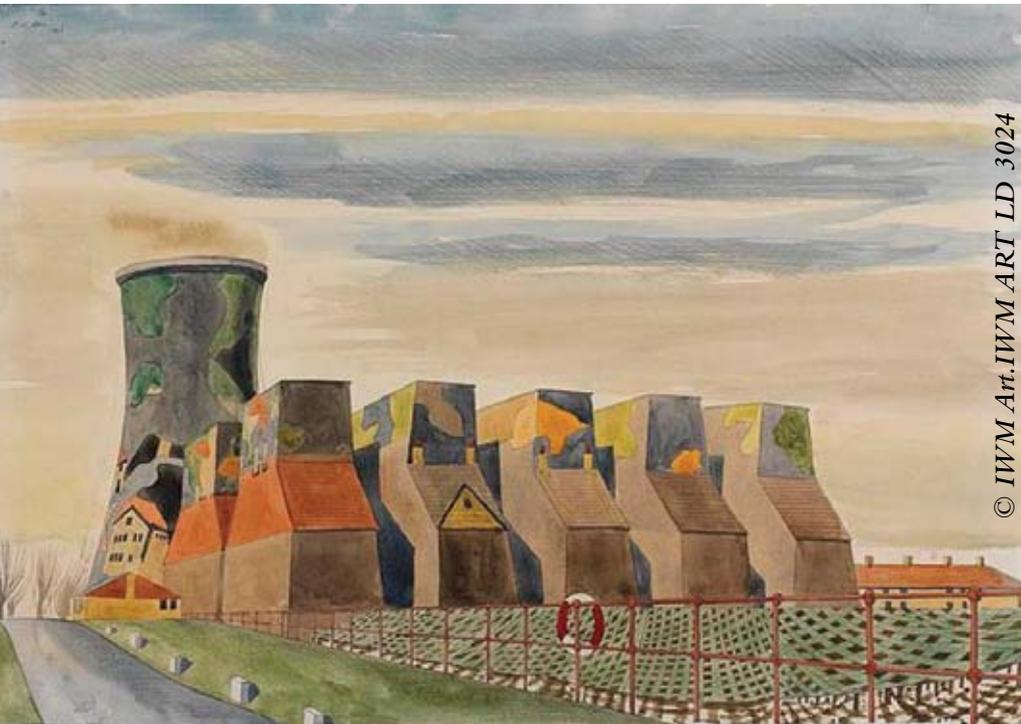
We learnt that East Anglia attracted artists like these because of the rural setting and big skies. Steer, for example, produced celebrated works during visits to Walberswick in Suffolk.



Harry Becker: Man Hedging Becker (1865-1928) worked extensively on farming images. This, a man scything, is a subject he often returned to. He was prolific, but is not - as yet - hugely known outside East Anglia. Thus his work is often sold at prices that do not reflect its full value.

Part 2 covered post war to modern times. Peter Coker (1926–2004) and Derrick Greaves (1927– 2021) both were noted for their kitchen sink portrayals. Colin Moss (1914 – 2005) founded the New Ipswich Art Group in 1958 and had Maggi Hambling as a onetime pupil. Valerie Thornton (1931–1991) was known for her architectural etchings with distinctively little colour but hints of red on black and white. Finally bringing us up to date we discussed Maggi Hamblin. Her depiction of a statue for Mary Wollstonecraft in London produced a lively discussion, while Laurence Edwards also a sculptor, left us with haunting memories of his sculptures of men.

Andrew does longer courses for those who want to take this subject further.



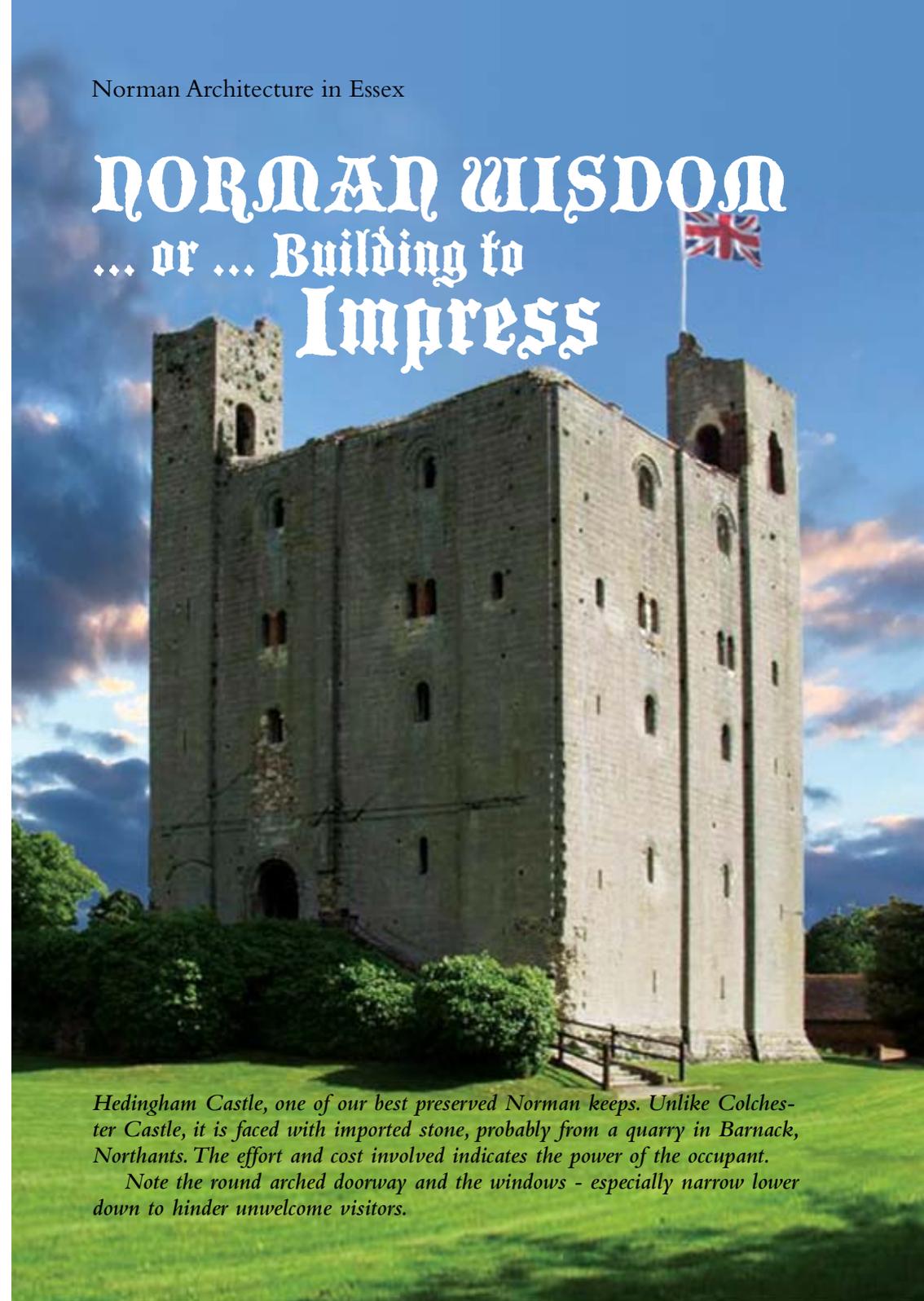
© IWM Art. IWM ART LD 3024

Camouflaged Cooling Towers by Colin Moss
When the Second World War broke out, Moss offered his services to the Ministry of Defence as a designer of camouflage. This watercolour is part of that archive. In 1941, he was transferred to the Life Guards and served in the Middle East. Afterwards he taught at Ipswich School of Art. He became a major influence on the local art scene, and exhibited extensively.

Norman Architecture in Essex

NORMAN WISDOM

... or ... Building to Impress

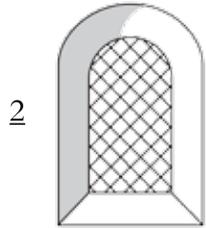


Hedingham Castle, one of our best preserved Norman keeps. Unlike Colchester Castle, it is faced with imported stone, probably from a quarry in Barnack, Northants. The effort and cost involved indicates the power of the occupant. Note the round arched doorway and the windows - especially narrow lower down to hinder unwelcome visitors.

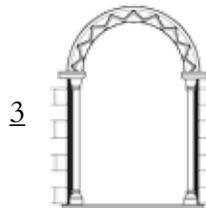


1

Most churches have been subject to comprehensive series of alterations over the centuries. Even where a church appears to originate from a later period, Norman features can frequently be found.



2

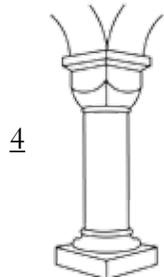


3

They include:

1) Stone cut with chevron decoration

2) Narrow, round arched windows. The depth of inset is a guide to the thickness of the walls.



4

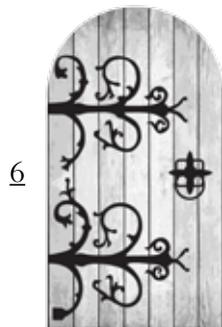
3) Round arches, pillars enhanced with subsidiary shafts.

4) Cushion capitals and pier bases.



5

5) Extra chamfering of cushion capitals. There is sometimes added foliage (see Copford pics).



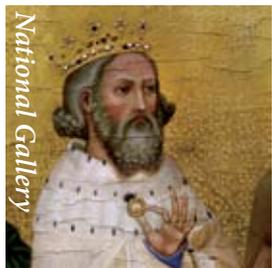
6

6) Highly decorative ironwork on door hinges. Possibly one of the few examples of Saxon craftsmanship that lingered into the Norman period.

The Normans descended on England with total conquest their objective. Any notion that much of the Saxon regime would be worth retaining was anathema. Old power structures were dismantled, new building methods were introduced.

Both Saxons and Normans used structural techniques inherited from the Romans. But the Normans were more ambitious. They built bigger, more solidly and, if needed, intimidatingly.

Neither had retained the knowledge of brickmaking, so they used available materials. In Essex that meant wood, or for greater permanence, core structures of ballast (recycled Roman brick often features) faced - when available - with flint or imported stone. Many exteriors were left unfaced. As things turned out, this didn't hinder longevity.



National Gallery

Edward the Confessor (left) was childless. He died in January 1066, precipitating a process that ended later that year at Hastings. William claimed he had been promised the throne, and Edward's appointment of Norman officials helps support that. He's featured in *The Wilton Diptych*, painted over 300 years after his death.



Copford Church is uniquely endowed. The typically Norman circular apse boasts windows with classic characteristics (round arch, decorated capitals, recycled bricks or stone).

Inside is a revelation: wall paintings, some of Norman origin. The 'Christ in Glory' fresco in the apse is - in spite of heavy Victorian 'restoration' - much as it would have been when new. Elsewhere are geometric patterns and military images - a reminder of who was in charge?

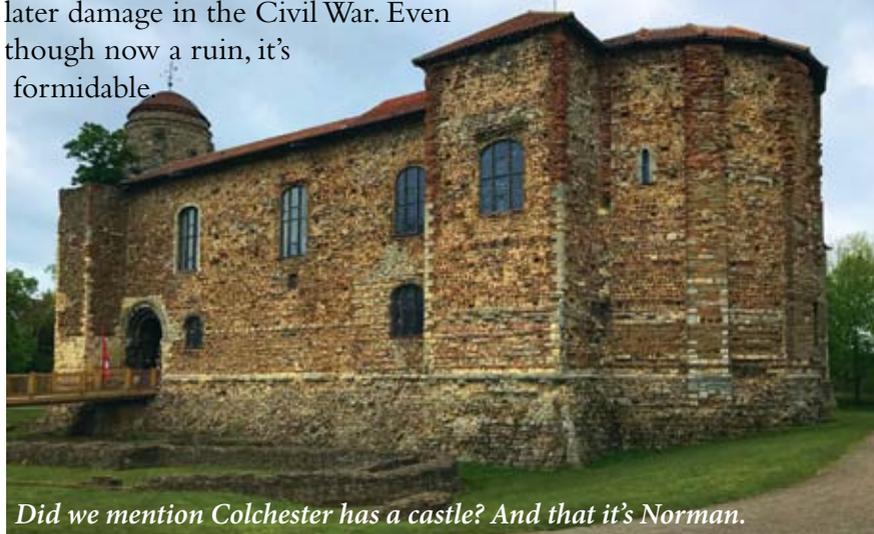


Little's better than the real thing - see the church if you can (it's off the A12's Mark's Tey exit). If you do visit, don't forget to put a quid or two into the box.

Part of the process of control involved the building of castles throughout the kingdom. These were usually formed of an outer wall and an inner 'keep' and would probably have been the largest structures any of the local populace would have seen. Two such keeps can be seen in Essex to this day, at Colchester and Castle Hedingham. Even now, they're impressive. The message then would have been simple: 'We're the bosses now and we're here to stay'.

William distributed land to those who had supported him and to various churchmen and religious orders. Most seemed to have been eager to leave a substantial built legacy. Copford Church was probably built as the private chapel of the Bishop of London whose country manor stood nearby. Oddly, since 1051, the Bishopric had been in Norman hands when William the Norman (not the Conqueror) was appointed after Spearhafoc, the last Saxon bishop, disappeared. Bishop William was well placed to enforce the Conqueror's interests in East Anglia and he seems to have been very ready to do so.

As with other architectural periods, from the Roman onwards, Colchester can yield several examples of Norman building. The most celebrated is the castle, but St Botolph's Priory, after centuries of neglect, is still impressive. The sheer bulk of the remaining structure is a reminder of the Norman principle of permanence - even in religious construction. The priory was built for the Augustinian order from about 1093. It suffered the Dissolution of the Monasteries and later damage in the Civil War. Even though now a ruin, it's formidable.



Did we mention Colchester has a castle? And that it's Norman.



The arched gallery (left) above St Botolph's doorway, would have caught the eye. Possibly the individual niches would have housed statues of saints or worthies. The nave (below, left) demonstrates the simplicity of Norman thinking: if you want height, just build a second series of arches on top of the first.

As with Copford, the exterior surface would have been rendered.



AND FOR YOUR DIARY

The Annual Conference of the WEA, free to Members, will take place on Thursday 7th October in Leeds and online, with the theme being The Future of Education.

Following an hour of formal business there will be speakers from the WEA, the Open University, Leeds University and Royal Holloway London University, to quote: “showcasing best-practice in teaching and learning. In doing so, they will expand your knowledge of Dickens, develop your crafting skills and open your eyes to how to explore the stars and cell structures from your front room. They will also put some bite into the study of philosophy and discuss the WEA’s educational responses to Climate Change.”

There will be lots of ‘networking opportunities’ too. It is intended to be “a thought-provoking and stimulating day.”

Ron Marks, Chair of Conference Planning Group

WEA LATE SUMMER WALKS 2021		
Date	Venue	Your record of booking
Tuesday 7th September	Thaxted	<p><i>A Guildhall, a windmill, a medieval church and a one-time centre of cutlery making.</i></p> <p><i>All in a small rural North Essex town</i></p> <p><i>- Meet 10.30 am at the free car park in Margaret St. CM6 2QN</i></p> <p><i>Cost: £7 per walker</i></p>
Friday 18th September	Sudbury	<p><i>Sudbury, a Suffolk market town with an industrial and agricultural history and links to some very famous authors.</i></p> <p><i>- Meet 10.30 am at Gainsborough’s statue on Market Hill outside St Peters Church.</i></p> <p><i>Plenty of car parks in Sudbury.</i></p> <p><i>Cost: £7 per walker</i></p>

BOOKING SLIP

Walks usually last 1 1/2 - 2 hrs. Sensible footwear is recommended. These are open air walks, so should be Government compliant. If we have to cancel either walk, a full refund will be given. Please indicate number of places for each walk

Name(s):

.....

.....

Email:

Phone No:

Sudbury Thaxted

Please detach and return the completed slip with a cheque (payable to WEA Essex Federation) to: 23 Highfield Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 2NF

GROUPS ARE STRICTLY LIMITED TO 20. PLACES MUST BE BOOKED IN ADVANCE.



ESSEX FEDERATION SUMMER ONE DAY SCHOOL

Saturday 19th June 2021
James Clarke – Charles Dickens on Film
C2228040

ON ZOOM

Join WEA tutor and film-writer James Clarke as he explores some of the ways in which cinema has brought the work of Charles Dickens to the screen. James's focus will be David Lean's adaptation of *Great Expectations* and the very recent film adaptation of *David Copperfield* that was released in 2020. James's talk will explore how these two films adapt the novels. The talk will consider film style, the role of the film director and some of the ways in which Dickens' wider social interests are dramatised for the screen. Prior to the talk, James will provide a range of resources for reference. James's talk will also include the opportunity for discussion with those in attendance about the films.



For up-to-date information on upcoming courses and events, visit the WEA website: wea-essex.org.uk. Also available on the WEA website: back copies of this Newsletter.



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