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*Registered Charity 237885*

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for The Colchester Civic Society by Peter Evans

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## ROOM WITH A VIEW

Late last year, I was very pleased to spot the following short piece in the Colchester Gazette:-

*'Car park in Colchester has been handed an award recognising it as one of the best car parks in the country. Priory Street car park has been awarded the British Parking Association's Park Mark Plus status. The award assesses a range of criteria including services, operations, design and build.*

*It is only the second car park in the country to receive the recognition.'*

It is rather nice to have a view over an award winning site, even if it is just a car park.

What the article, very surprisingly, failed to mention, however, is the fact that the Priory Street Car Park has magical powers. Perhaps the journalist who wrote the article was unaware of these powers as they have not yet been demonstrated - I know this because I had to hover in my car for nearly an hour recently, waiting for a space.

So what is this magic? Let me tell you. It is all to do with the ability to create infinite capacity whilst remaining exactly the same size. Quite remarkable! Colchester Borough Council and Amphora are certainly aware and have plans to exploit this extraordinary phenomenon.

Pre-COVID-19, the car park was already heavily used by shoppers, parents of children at St Thomas More's School, worshippers at St Botolph's, St James the Great, St James the Less, the Synagogue, the Spiritualist Church and the Mosque, plus those using their facilities for meetings, concerts etc. It was also the car park recommended to those visiting the Curzon Cinema, Firstsite, the Castle, the Museums etc. and, of course, residents.

Once we went into the first lockdown and, coincidentally, the Mosque closed so that it could be rebuilt, the car park suddenly became the quiet place it was when I first moved to the street 40 years ago. However, the peace was not to last and, as I write this in early December, the spaces are full and drivers are going up and down the car park, endlessly searching for a space even though the Mosque is still a building site and there are no huge weddings or funerals, concerts or meetings at the places of worship. Once life returns to some form of normality, finding an empty space will again become a serious challenge - or will it?

I am not entirely sure who actually holds the magic spell, those crucial words that will turn an already award winning car park into something REALLY special. It could be North Essex Parking Partnership, Colchester Borough Council or Amphora. I suspect it is Amphora but I may be wrong. How do I know that there is such a spell? Well, very carelessly, the information has been leaked.

Despite the fact that both the heavily used Britannia and Vineyard car parks are due to close prior to development of the sites, which will put immense pressure on nearby alternatives, Priory Street is now being touted as the preferred car park for the Alumno development - parking for disabled students, visitors, staff, hotel guests at the new hotel on the site etc. We understand that it will provide the parking for the new creative business starter units in the erstwhile bus garage, too. It is quite possible that business owners and residents with properties close to the High Street/Queen Street corner, including Open Road staff, visitors and clients, will also be told to park in Priory Street as the rights of way to their private parking spaces and garages will be blocked by the Alumno development, certainly during the construction period but maybe for a lot longer.

On the surface, to those not aware of the magical powers, this would seem like a gallon or three into a pint pot. But shh ... we know better, don't we?

*Jo Edwards*

This article was printed in the Colchester Gazette on 4th January 2021

## PROGRAMME

It is with deep regret that we have made the decision not to reinstate our Programme for a while. So many of you have said how much you miss our monthly Coffee Mornings and our coach trips to interesting venues. I know just how you feel but we daren't take the risk at the moment. Rest assured that we will get things up and running again as soon as it is safe to do so.

Similarly, no decision has been made about an AGM at present.

*Jo Edwards*

## PHONE AND CONTACT

I do apologise to anyone who has tried to contact me via my landline number. My phone has finally died because of an issue with cabling from outside. Renewal will involve engineers working in my bedroom which I don't want at the moment so if you want to contact me, please use my mobile number, 07771626561.

*Jo Edwards*

## EDITOR'S CORNER

I mentioned in my last 'column' that I had spotted a number of new homes being built in corners and vacant plots. Just as the Autumn newsletter was going to press, I spotted 2 more, both where advertising hoardings had been removed and next door to pubs. Indeed advertising hoardings are getting rare – they used to be above the section of Roman Wall that was recently up for sale. The sites I am talking about are in Military Road, next to the Grenadier Pub, and by the Grapes in Mersea Road. Expecting there to be a third I was not surprised to find a planning application for a car sales site in Military Road, sites of numbers 72-86, to be for some 50 units. Seems a bit excessive but it is a surprisingly big site

Perhaps the new block, mainly sheltered housing, could be named after the late owner of 72 Military Road, part of the site, Mrs Florence

Edith Caney. Some members who have lived here a long time may remember Flo Caney and her family. Mrs Caney let rooms to those in desperate need and was quite a character, owning various houses throughout New Town at different times. She deserves a proper biography. One of her properties, 72 Military Road, collapsed totally during the big storm of 1987, sadly on top of a number of cars for sale at the car lot by the garage next door. It was not the only gable end property to suffer in the storm, but probably the worst damaged. Typically for her properties, it was not in good condition. Jo Edwards and I could go on at great length about the lady, each having come across her professionally, but perhaps we had better not!

Apart from all the other memories of this summer, 2020 will be the Summer of the Begonia for me. Since my fuchsias caught Gall Mite (nasty) in 2017, I have looked at other plants. I found that some seedlings were growing, self-sown in other pots. They turned out not to be standard bedding begonias but a larger variety, possibly Dragon Wing, often found at Railway Stations and other public displays, much larger. I carefully potted them on, but they kept coming. There were over 40 and as I had had the time to feed them and give them good compost they kept growing. They are up to 10 inches tall, sturdy and stocky. They are still full of flowers, and some look strong enough to



survive at least part of winter, I have given some away and as they have given me so much interest and joy, I hope to keep some through the winter..

I visited the Castle Museum (Friends of Museums have free admission) whilst it was open to look at the Turner painting that is touring the nation and visiting Colchester until April 2021. Colchester and Ipswich Museums and the Norfolk Museums Service have been involved in saving it for the nation. It is indeed worth a look once the Castle reopens.

You will see headlines in the press 'A Turner in the Castle'. This has caused our Vice Chair Miss A (Ann) Turner some confusion. Although she may be at the Castle as a town guide, she has never been a display!

And now some corrections and apologies I incorrectly called our guide at St Andrews's Church Alan when he is Paul Larkin. I even asked Jo to confirm the name. She did and I still forgot. Sorry Paul.

There was also a misprint on the back cover. The illustration showed a map marked TENTERFIELDS but this was converted to TENDERFIELDS by predictive text at some stage. I should have spotted it as I know that large tracts of land were used for drying and stretching cloth in towns and villages involved in the cloth trade like Colchester. It is used as a street name in Lavenham.

*Peter Evans*

## **THE DISAPPEARING POST BOX**

On Saturday 31st October I passed my favourite and most convenient post box in Mersea Road, near the Grapes Pub, only to find Royal Mail staff removing it. They said that they did not know why or if it would be returning. Other residents noticed. It was reported to local councillors and I wrote to Royal Mail at Eastgates. It seems that it was prompted by building work is about to start at a site directly behind the Post Box as mentioned in Editor's corner above.

But the word spread. Soon the Civic Society had taken the issue up and Sir Bob Russell had written to the chairman of Royal Mail. Local councillors were involved and Will Quince MP. It appeared on Facebook when the School Crossing Keeper and parents of the children using the crossing beside the box wondered where it had gone. It has featured in the local press.

There was a further complication. About 5 years ago we included an article about Colchester Post Boxes, by Graham Tuckwell which pointed out that this was one of only 3 'Anonymous' Post Boxes – those without Royal initials. This was followed up by Patrick Denney in his book 'Secret Colchester' and he noticed that one of the other Anonymous Post Boxes, in Lexden Road, had been destroyed in a road accident. This means that the only surviving Anonymous Post Box is in Creffield Road.



*A last sighting of the Mersea Road Post Box, with the building site behind*

At present we know that the Anonymous Box is safe and will return to active service. I have just received a letter from the Executive Resolution Team at the Chairman of Royal Mail's office saying that it will not return to its old site for various reasons. (The letter was dated 14th December and arrived on 23rd December.) I don't think that we have given up. Keep an eye on your boxes!

*Peter Evans*

## HERITAGE WEEKS 2020

Well, Heritage Weeks 2020 did not happen in Colchester. It was felt to be unsafe for the event to take place so instead short films were made of the various places that would have taken part and the films could, and can still be seen on the Visit Colchester website.

Three members of Colchester Civic Society made three minute films of one of the places that would have been open or tours that would have been available.

Peter Evans explained the Roman Theatre that we normally steward, Janet Gardner did part of the Roman tour she would have done and I did some of the Siege of Colchester tour. It was quite an experience for all three of us.

I did mine to start with in the park by the Lucas and Lisle obelisk but we had to redo it in the Castle as the gardeners started cutting the grass and the noise of the mower could be heard on the film. Also some small boys tried to get in on the action.

Let us hope that 2021 will go ahead as usual. You will find a request for stewards enclosed in this newsletter and I hope that many of you will volunteer. I need at least 10 people but if I have more I can give you shorter spells at the venue.

*Ann Turner*

## COLCHESTER'S ROMAN WALL – buying a piece of heritage

We mentioned in the previous newsletter that the Colchester Civic Society had just contributed to the purchase of a section of Colchester's Roman Wall, between the bottom of North Hill and Balkerne Hill. This had formerly been the site of a section of advertising hoardings, which had recently been removed.

An article appeared in the national press in July press spotted by the Borough Council and also by the Colchester Tour Guides Association, who advised the Friends of Colchester Museums. As a result, the Borough Council arranged to purchase the wall, and asked the Guides, the Friends of Colchester Museums and the Civic Society to contribute an equal share of the cost, £1500 each, to cover the negotiated purchase price paid to J C Decaux, the advertising company. The Council covered the legal fees and surveyors fees etc. Philip Wise, Heritage Manager at Colchester and Ipswich Museum Services, confirmed that the Borough Council will meet all ongoing costs involving the newly purchased section of the Wall.

This was an opportunity that could not be missed as it was essential that the Colchester should own the Wall and the Society was proud to join with the other groups to achieve the desired result. However the Civic Society is not a fund raising group. The contribution of £1500 has been paid from reserves but if members felt able to contribute a sum towards the cost, it would help to replenish the reserves.

**If you are able to contribute to our share of the purchase of the wall please make your cheque payment to Colchester Civic Society, c/o Paul Weston, Hon. Treasurer, 46 Wordsworth Road, Colchester CO3 4HR or if you prefer direct into the Society's bank account at Barclays Bank plc, Colchester Branch, sort code 20 22 67, account no 80232424, quoting 'Wall' as a reference.**

Your payment will be appreciated - and you will know that you helped to buy a piece of Roman Heritage for Colchester!

*Peter Evans*

## **THE GIFT OF A BOOK**

We would like to thank Civic Society member, Mary Perrins, for the copy of Alderman Blaxill's fascinating little book entitled 'The Street Names of Colchester', published in 1936. Mary bought the book from a second hand bookshop many years ago and, having read Bob Mercer's article about street names in our last Newsletter, she decided to donate it to the Society. It has already been very useful, Mary, and we are very grateful.

As an aside, I was reminded of Mary's background as a teacher and, I believe, a Magistrate, when I phoned her to thank her for the book. I was severely told off for worrying her! Apparently, she always checks the Newsletter for a mention of my Jack Russell terrier, Cooper. She feared the worst when she could find no reference to him at all in the Autumn edition. I had to reassure her that Coops is alive and well and as vocal as ever! He sends New Year greetings to you all.

*Jo Edwards*

## **CARELESS CAMPAIGN**

We have been approached by Rosie Welch, Air Quality Officer, at Colchester Borough Council to see if we could support their campaign to reduce car fumes. She attended a coffee morning to explain the scheme. This started on 8th October 2020 and whilst the CCS supports the scheme, we were unable to take any direct part due to the Pandemic. However, you may have seen signs displayed near schools discouraging parents and others waiting to collect children with engines running. The campaign has made the point that the old claim that switching an engine on and off takes more petrol than leaving the engine running is wrong. This what they have to say on the issue;

'Falling temperatures outside mean that car heaters are being turned up. However, research for the Careless Pollution campaign reveals that some drivers are leaving their car engines running while stationary to keep the car warm.

The main source of Colchester's air pollution is exhaust fumes and idling engines produce twice as many emissions as an engine in motion. Car are designed so you can turn off the engine and still stay warm - the fan in your car should provide warm air for up to 30 minutes after switching off. Help take care of our air in Colchester and switch off the engine every time you wait this winter.'

Posters, postcards, advice and an entire 'toolkit' (no pun intended) full of hints and prepared text on how to get the message across was available for schools and community groups to pass on to drivers.

As a non-driver living near a school, the need was brought home to me when, just after reading the messages, especially the Frequently Asked Questions and the myth-busting section, I passed a parked car with engine running belching out fumes. The driver was reading and there was no sign of a child appearing for sometime. Thanks a lot on behalf of my neighbours and the kids at the school, including your own!

*Peter Evans*

## **JANET FULFORD**

We were sorry to hear of the death of Janet Fulford, a long serving Borough Councillor, Alderman and Mayor of Colchester 1984-5. Janet was not a member of the Society but had been closely involved in a number of projects that we supported. In particular she worked hard to retain Highwoods and, as a leading local Architect, supported the society over our Architectural Award scheme.

*Peter Evans*

## LET'S GET SOCIAL...

Love it or loathe it, use it or not, social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and the like now play a massive part in how people and organisations choose to communicate.

The Civic Society launched its own Facebook page in 2016 and a Twitter stream followed in 2018. These newer, digital, channels supplement our website and our use of email but we've been careful not to stop or reduce using more traditional channels. We still distribute the twice yearly Newsletter, not to mention the occasional good old fashioned letter sent out in an envelope with a stamp on it. We've also (well, before the Covid pandemic at least!) kept up our face to face activities: the monthly coffee mornings at Greyfriars, the Spring Up meeting, the autumn Burning Issues meeting and, of course, our formal AGM. We also try hard to generate frequent news stories in the traditional print media – especially in the Gazette and the Essex County Standard and we're pleased, this year, to have had quite a lot of good coverage.

We can't, though, get away from the fact that, for many people, using social media is their number one communication method of choice.

What's more it's quick – messages and information can be shared almost instantly. If we want, and we certainly do want, to reach out, to increase our visibility, our membership and our engagement with the wider community, then we must embrace and expand our use of social media.

That's just what we've started to do over the past few months.

In particular we've re-launched our Twitter stream. We've been using Twitter to put out short and succinct messages (actually there's not much choice about that given the limit of 240 characters, including punctuation and spaces, for each one!). These 'Tweets' (messages), aim to publicise the heritage and history of Colchester and our wider work as a Society. We regularly retweet information from others where that supports our aims and the work we do.

To encourage regular engagement and interest, we've developed a couple of regular 'themed' Tweets – and have ideas for more. One of them is an 'On This Day' feature where each day recently (well almost!), we've been flagging a person, place or event with a Colchester connection, be it something ancient, modern, odd or quirky...

The second feature – intended as a bit of fun – but with an 'educational' twist to it, sets out to test people's skills as sleuths and detectives. To do that, it asks 'Where and What is it?' - challenging people to identify a local feature from a 'close up' photograph of something they might not have noticed, however many times they've walked past it! We put them out of their misery a few days later with the answer and a link to a bit more background.

We know there are some who aren't (yet) convinced about the merits of social media or who worry about using it.

One important thing to remember, though, is that people don't actually need to sign up to Facebook or Twitter just to see what's being posted. If you use the internet, all you need to do to see our posts and Tweets, is to type '@ColCivicSociety' (for Twitter) or '@ColchesterCivicSociety' (for Facebook} into Google, another search engine or your internet browser and you should find links to our Twitter and Facebook material. Easy-peasy.

If however you do want to engage a bit more, perhaps by commenting on, liking, or sharing one of our Facebook posts or Tweets, then that's simple as well – but you will need to register as a Facebook or Twitter user. It's not difficult to register and you can do it on your home computer or smartphone either directly on the web or by downloading an App.

However sceptical you are – even if you're a staunch and proud Luddite – please do take a look at what we're doing on Twitter and Facebook. It'd be great if you'd encourage all your friends, family, colleagues and other contacts to take a look as well. If you're not a 'techy' person and think



you'll struggle to find, use or perhaps even just to look at our Facebook or Twitter material, then don't panic. It's not as difficult as you might think; there are people who will be only too happy to help. It will open up a whole new world of information and communication.

What's more, if you're active on these two platforms – or we can persuade you to be – then do please, please 'like', 'share', 'follow', 'comment' on and generally 'engage' with our Tweets and posts.

We are really keen to spread the word about the Society and about what we do and about Colchester and its heritage.

We want others to join us – ideally as members – but, failing that, by following and engaging with our work through our social media and our website.

The more the merrier...

*Ged Dickinson*

## **MEMBERSHIP**

We welcome as new members Irvine Road Residents Association, Gunter Klaplake and Jenny Church, John Williams, Patrick Mills, David King and Joff Hopkins

Would all members please remember to let Ann Turner, Membership secretary, know if you change your email address or indeed obtain one. It will be helpful if we have news for you about any events, should we be in a position to hold any. Please keep an eye on our website and Facebook page if you have access. For details of activity on twitter, please see article above.

New members are always welcome and details of how to join are on our website. The Membership page is currently being reviewed to make joining easier. Alternatively, if you know someone who wants to join, please contact Ann Turner, who can send a membership form.

*Peter Evans*

## **PETER LUXMOORE, 1927-2020**

Peter, who was our Society's Chairman from 1993 to 1996 and was particularly involved in planning matters, died aged 93 in October.

In these days of pandemic social distancing, Kay and I were privileged to go to his funeral and hear the tributes from his family.

Peter was born in 1927 into a 'landed' farming family with a tradition of sending their sons to Eton. Peter's days at Eton were curtailed by being expelled for smoking. He went on, having served in the RAF and Oxford University, where he studied agriculture. Some of his childhood years were spent in the US and his early working years were as an agricultural economist working in Ghana before coming back to the UK and Essex in 1963, and eventually to Colchester.

Outside his working life, Peter had become a skilled woodworker and his children recalled that he always had projects on the go, fully utilising his fully equipped workshop/garage. After retirement he was able to fully use these talents for family, friends and for civic tasks. He was relentlessly curious. He developed gilding skills and these were applied, inter alia to the signage he had carved welcoming motorists to the Avenue of Remembrance and the wall war memorials close by the North Station Rd roundabout.



*Peter's handiwork - Street Sign*

Jo Edwards recalls 'I think of Peter every time I pass a lorry trailer with advertising on the side of it in a field beside a major road. He was almost obsessive in his desire to rid the world of such things! Planning laws didn't apply as the trailers had wheels and were thus not fixtures. Static signs needed permission. I think he raised this at every meeting! As the Civic Society only covered the old borough boundary, we couldn't really campaign against the trailers, although we did make the odd comment to the powers that be. He was so frustrated by the law!'

After retirement, Peter enjoyed travelling. He was delighted by a trip to New Zealand to see a mountain named after an ancestor. He threw himself into committee work (The Arts Society, Probus) and following his move to Woodbridge, enjoyed sailing on the Deben into well into his nineties. In Woodbridge he became the go-to man to implement many of the maintenance and improvement tasks required for the upkeep of the Tidal Mill there.

One of his creations was a flagpole in his Ireton Rd front Garden. This flagpole was transferred to his Woodbridge garden where he continued with the tradition of flying different national flags, many provided by his international friends, on the appropriate national day

*Bill Abbott  
October 2020*

## **EYES AND EARS**

The Eyes and Ears team reports ordinary, everyday issues that, when resolved, help make Colchester 'a town worth living in'. Recent 'Seen, Reported, Sorted' items include:

- ◆ 4000 plastic cable ties, used to fix notices on various posts and left behind afterwards, have been collected and handed over to CBC for recycling. There are plenty more about so the initiative will continue.
- ◆ After presenting our concerns to ECC Highways about single use plastic ties being left on posts, it has now been agreed to fix notices with re-useable ties. Good news as this means less waste. We haven't seen the new-style fixings yet but to be re-used, they, and any outdated notices, need to be removed first, something that often doesn't happen. Hopefully, we'll see an improvement
- ◆ After endless emails with attached photos, the saga of the yellow protective 'mat' covering a broken surface drain cover in the Crouch St underpass is finally over. The drain cover has been repaired so the yellow mat is no more
- ◆ The badly damaged East Street sign is on the list for replacement
- ◆ Numerous examples of graffiti and fly-tipping dealt with
- ◆ Blue plastic barriers at East Bridge have been straightened again after sending a number of emails and photos. ECC intends completing its survey of the bridge this financial year.
- ◆ A badly leaking overflow pipe near St Botolph's Church has been fixed
- ◆ White paint along Long Wyre Street, spilt during the Co-op conversion, was cleaned up by a helpful CBC operative
- ◆ Yellow paint on the newly restored High Street pavement, left after the Saxons estate agents repaint, was again removed by CBC
- ◆ Our autumn survey of all Colchester's phone boxes was sent to BT. Sincere thanks to Derek Seaton and the BT engineers who responded by promptly cleaning the boxes and making good the reported faults.
- ◆ Members took part in the Great British September Clean, an annual national event promoted by Keep Britain Tidy. Over two sessions totalling 18 volunteer hours, the Society team collected

31 bags of waste (22 general and 9 recyclable) as well as a number of discarded items - our most unusual being the bottom half of a one-legged manikin! Other litter picking sessions take place during the year.

However, we're not always successful:

We would welcome CBC Planning Office using the same type of recyclable ties which ECC has now agreed to use instead of tape which, when removed, damages the posts. The notices also need to be protected by heavy duty laminate sheets or, better still, printed on recyclable plastic, something that is done in other towns. The flimsy 'poly-pockets' used in Colchester look a mess and are not fit for purpose.

The amount of fly posters and rubbish left in empty buildings is an eyesore and a fire risk. According to CBC, no action can be taken

There are numerous bent parking signs including some on the recently restored pavements of the High Street, as well as elsewhere in the town centre conservation area. Disappointingly, when approached, North Essex Parking Partnership said it will only deal with those creating a health and safety risk.

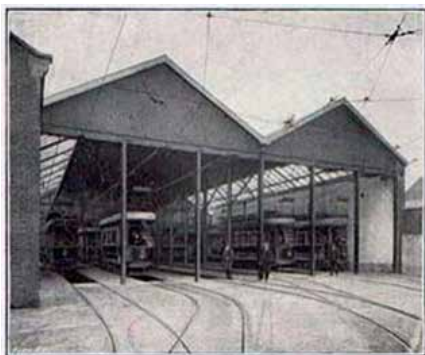
Some issues seem to run on and on. The black 'Map Points' around the town centre let Colchester down. Thankfully, the one opposite our Town Hall was removed during the refurbishment of the High Street paving slabs. We'd like to believe the others will soon follow

The Society has a very good working relationship with CBC's Neighbourhood Teams and would like to thank them all for their support. We report items on a regular basis. If you have an issue to report, this can be done through the CBC website under Your Local Community, or by a direct phone call to one of the team. Telephone numbers can be found on the CBC website.

*Sheila Anderton*

## REMINDERS OF COLCHESTER TRAMWAYS

The students accommodation that has recently been completed in Magdalen Street includes the remaining tramlines that were in the Tramshed, later Colchester Corporation Bus Depot. If you walk between them, the walk leads directly to Military Road, which is a new access. A useful shortcut?



*Tramshed & The shed with the staff about 1935*

I went along to take the attached photograph on a Sunday at 9.45am I found myself pursued by a security man. 'Who was I taking photos of?' 'Which of his students?' It was a bit frightening but also odd as I don't think there were many students there and no self-respecting student is awake at that time of the day at weekend, let alone up, and I certainly didn't see any. I didn't think he would believe me if I told him my interest and I was afraid he would get hit by traffic as he berated

me from the middle of Military Road. Of course the new footpath is technically private property and it is residential but so is everywhere else. All rather odd.

Bob Mercer, Executive Committee member, has noticed that 3 cast iron columns in Greenstead Road were once of the Tramway network, electric cables connected to provide power for the trams. However, the tram network did not reach Greenstead Road, so clearly they were at some stage moved. Bob, who would like the columns to be included on the Council's Local List, providing some protection by the County Council, and one of the remaining three has been damaged. Bob also said that it would be appropriate if any further columns to be removed could be re-erected near the surviving tram rails.

Bob appealed, through the local press, for information about why and when the columns were originally moved.



*The surviving tramlines in the new footpath in Magdalen Street*

*Peter Evans*

## **REMEMBERING COLCHESTER'S SHOPS**

I visited a small branch of Tesco recently and was asked if I needed a bag. 'NO' I said through my mask 'I bet you don't see many of these bags now' and produced a Williams & Griffin carrier bag I had found in a hidden pocket. 'Oh,' said the assistant 'what were they?'' I can only hope the girl was a stranger as WilliGriffs only became Fenwick a few years ago. I stood back in amazement, so what about other, less recent shop names

I still have shirts from C & A, lamps from British Home Stores and DVDs from Woolies. My mother took me to Percy Kings, where a floor walker, Mr Paston, conducted her to a chair so she could buy dressing making necessities. Didn't Luckings do that as well?

I was sad to see Shippey's Bookshop go but still have books I bought there, from pocket money. Somewhere there is a paper bag from East Anglian Paperbacks in Crouch Street. One day I just missed the authoress Margery Allingham who had visited the owner. At that time Mr Oliver's Stamp shop was in Maldon Road, then Crouch Street and finally in Trinity Street.

Lasts, Purdys and Thorogoods were cafes, Heasman the jewellers went into W & Gs. The room in the Council Offices in Angel Court, High Street, above Hearsom's, a former fishmongers (itself now gone) was nicknamed the Fish Room (I think by me) as it still smelt of fish.

I was surprised to find these thoughts about old shops echoed on BBC Radio 2. Colchester born Disc Jockey and presenter Dermot O'Leary was remembering the records that he and his sister had bought locally at Andy's Records and probably Parrott Records, both long gone. He was playing LPs on BBC this Autumn.



I could go on, and clearly I have. I will leave it to you to add to the list – Bonners, Forsdike, Oliver Parker, Jacks and so on, including the massive national chain, Woolworths. Sadly, our current circumstances may well add to the list. For more information on shopping in Colchester, please see the latest magazine issued by Colchester Recalled, available from Guntons

*Peter Evans*

## REBOW HOUSE, 58-62 HEAD STREET, COLCHESTER

You may well have noticed that this building, for some time home to the St Helena Hospice vintage shop, was empty and has been under repair. Tollgate Partnership Ltd. commissioned Purcell Architects to design the project with works carried out by T J Evers Ltd. .

It was built in 1697 by Sir Isaac Rebow, MP, (1701) Mayor, (1716) High Steward and Recorder (1693) of Colchester, prosperous merchant and a leading citizen at that time. He was wealthy and well respected, dying in 1726 and, was a benefactor of St Mary's Church at the time of its restoration after the Civil War. His new house was visited by William III in 1699, as commemorated by the plaque on the front of building. The road that runs alongside, Sir Isaacs Walk, was provided by him. In 1704, whilst living here, he bought Colchester Castle. Sir Isaac followed his father John (d 1699) as a merchant and his son Isaac Leming Rebow and grandson Isaac Martin Rebow, both succeeded him as MP and lived in this house.

This is an important site in Colchester, being just inside Headgate, the main entrance to Colchester as the walls and gates were still in use until the 18th century. It was a new property on an established site. Recent dendro-chronological testing of massive oak binding joists and braces on stone corbels in the cellar has confirmed it dates back to 1380. When the siege of Colchester started in May 1648, the invading Cavaliers would have passed as they entered the town. Three months later, they marched out by this gate, having surrendered to the Parliamentarians under General Fairfax at the Kings Arms Inn (now offices of Ellisons, solicitors) on the other side of Head Street.

The town suffered after the Siege, taking time to recover from the damage inflicted and to pay the fines imposed. The building we know as Jacks was started in 1660s and 30 years later Sir Isaac was in a position to create an impressive new home on a key site, replacing the existing medieval building.

Before any work could be undertaken Historic Impact Assessments were commissioned as this is a Grade II\* listed building. The HIA considers all the building alterations and additions that have been made over the last 300 years, including conversion of the downstairs premises into shops by 1909. The report proposed the removal of many unimportant structural changes and will retain original features, such as panelling, moulded cornices and original doors. Unattractive 20th



*Rebow's House, with the plaque giving details of the history of the house*

century outbuildings have been removed. All changes have to be approved by Historic England. The intention is to provide necessary 21st century facilities while retaining and restoring the original construction.

A particularly interesting discovery was an area of flock wallpaper dating from circa 1700, contemporary with Rebow's original decoration scheme which had subsequently been covered over with lath and plaster. Part of this wallpaper has been exposed and covered by glass for viewing in a ground floor room previously occupied by St Helena Hospice vintage shop.

Rebow House has been in use as shops for about 150 years. In 1963 these included Douglas Studios, a photographer, and F S Daniell, Estate Agents and surveyors.

*Peter Evans*

## MY JOURNEY - from 3000 steps a day to a 252,418 step trek across three counties

As a child, living in Norfolk I frequently walked sections of the Peddars Way, a famous Roman or perhaps pre-Roman road which runs from Holme-next-the-Sea, through my childhood home village of Little Massingham and on to Knettishall Heath, Suffolk. However, I had always been told it actually went all the way to Colchester.

Seventy years on in September 2019, I made a decision. The back story here is that the church of St Andrew, Little Massingham had been victim of three separate thefts of lead from the roof. We were dismayed to hear restoring the roof would cost over £150,000. I decided I had to do something about it.

The first people I told of my plan were friends Rina and John Adams. Once I'd told them, I was committed and there was no backing out. My plan was to walk the length of Peddars Way - plus the bit from Colchester - nearly 90 miles end to end! Rina thought for a moment and said she would join me, adding she could walk no more than seven miles in a day. Up until this point I was lucky if I could walk a mile and then only with the aid of a stick!

We planned our walk to Norfolk would begin in April 2020. At first we met up weekly slowly building our training program. In March 2020 Covid took hold and we were in lockdown. Rina and I were devastated that we could no longer go. We walked alone for the one hour a day we were allowed out. It was my way of keeping up my spirits! When the restrictions were finally lifted we decided that the walk was back on in September.

During lockdown I had planned a media campaign as I was determined to try to highlight the walk and the plight of this country church. I hoped that if there was good coverage it might generate some much-needed donations. To my relief the idea struck a chord and our story was being picked up by several outlets. Before we set off ITV Anglia News came to film us on a training walk near Colchester.

**Day 1 - Tuesday 22nd September** We left Balkerne Gate with High Steward of Colchester, Sir Bob Russell and several others who joined us for the first six miles to Nayland, just over the Suffolk border. It was a very hot day reaching 29°C, we took a break stopping at the Anchor pub for lunch. Having said goodbye to our walking companions we set off to Stoke by Nayland and the other beautiful village of Polstead, which I shall always remember for its steep hills and where I glugged huge quantities of cool water!



*Rosemary and Rina leave from Balkerne Gate*

**Day 2 - 23rd September** A cooler day. Before the walk, people had joked about blisters, but I dismissed these worries having had no problems throughout our training. Shortly after starting off that morning I realised I was in pain. As I stood on the road, balancing myself on one of my walking poles, Rina inspected my right foot, I learnt I had a blister problem. By the end of that day, I was limping badly and the blister had multiplied into at least three!

Later on that day my heart sank when I spied a field of cattle, as it turned out the only cattle we came across. Paul, the driver of our backup car and his companion Jean were waiting for us as we neared the field gate. I didn't hang around and crossed the field in next to no time, as the beasts munched their way slowly towards us.



**Day 3 - 24th September** Because of the painful blisters, I decided to cut the wool from my sheepskin slippers and stuff it inside my sock to help soften the pounding on my poor foot. The 'backup car committee' decided I should try to take the weight off my right foot and use a walking pole in my left hand to try to distribute the weight onto my left leg.

That particular day we were walking on a long stretch of Roman road, which on the map showed it continued over fields. By the end of the day I was limping on my left foot where new blisters had formed!

We took our rest in some beautiful villages, like Chelsworth, and Bildeston and on benches in lovely churchyards, such as Rattlesden and Norton.

En route between Rattlesden and Woolpit, I had a phone call from the East Anglian Daily Times photographer. We decided to meet her in Woolpit, another village with a beautiful church. Soon she was putting us through our paces, walking up and down, you name it we did it, while she snapped us from all angles.

The Rev H Coppinger Hill had written about the Woolpit section of Peddars Way, he noted it crossed what is now the A14 at the Fox and Goose Cottages, presumably once a pub. When researching maps it appeared the road continued via White Elm Road, today it stops short of the A14 crossing. At the end of White Elm Road we found a way through a small wood, bringing us almost onto the bridge over the A14, thus avoiding a busy road.

Once over the A14 we had a rather nasty stretch of busy road to traverse before reaching a railway bridge. The next section took us cross a series of fields; as we dithered at the first, my phone rang. It was the East Anglian Daily Times. I answered it as Rina set off across the first ploughed field, I followed as the reporter asked questions. Rina was totally unaware that I was being interviewed. I hoped that I was giving sensible answers!

We had deviated from Coppinger Hill's research to avoid busy roads which we had already found wasn't much fun on the nasty stretches. We would still cross sections of Peddars Way and we were still heading north west but the main thing was we needed to be safe.

**Day 4 - Friday 25th September** A day and date I will always remember. A horrible day. We were late arriving at Stowlangtoft, we climbed into our waterproofs and high-vis jackets and donned the final layer - a yellow plastic cape which went over our rucksacks.

As we walked out of the village the wind picked up and the rain stung our faces. We were soon joined by a local Roman road enthusiast who had already contacted me via my website. He was suitability clad with stick and wet weather gear. 'You are going the wrong way', he said as he tried to turn us from our route. I stood my ground, 'We might not be on Peddars Way but we're on the safest route,' and so we all three walked on. As we trudged towards Bardwell our new companion identified where Peddars Way crossed our route.



*Weather was not always kind for the walkers*

By now the wind and rain was so strong we could only put one foot in front of another and we didn't seem to be getting very far. I tried to look on the positive side that the rain would give me a lovely complexion! That's what my mother would have told me! As we came into Bardwell, our trusty car and crew were waiting for us. Rina said to me, 'We can't go on, we will have to wait until it stops,' but we soon learnt that it wasn't going to stop until 10.00 pm. I said, 'We have to go on otherwise we will never catch up and we have to walk the first of our thirteen plus miles tomorrow.' We got out of the car, donned our very wet gear again and looked into the north wind and walked!

We met Paul, Jean and the car again in a wooded area near the Icknield Way, just before Knettishall Heath. We set off down the wet and muddy track with the trees bending and swaying above us, we had to negotiate a fallen tree by fighting our way through the undergrowth. My yellow cape snagged on every twig, branch and obstacle.

**Day 5 - 26th September** Rina's daughter joined us today. The pair of them set off at a normal pace with me bringing up the rear, dragging along my sore feet. The first sections of paths were wet and overgrown and it was slow going. After a phone call to Paul, I realised we were a long way from the next check point. Back on track and with a heavy heart and even heavier feet we set off towards the A11! We could hear the road a long way before we saw it, in fact I didn't see it until I was almost out of the undergrowth.

At the A11 cars whizzed by us as we waited, eventually we managed to cross. Then came an unmanned and gated railway crossing without a train in sight. At this stage we were hours behind schedule. The next stage was a good road and we plodded on through the rain, making good time. As we were nearing the diversion around the military area where Peddars Way once passed through, we saw my sister and brother-in-law in the distance.

They had expected to have met up with us much earlier and they had already been walking for over two and half hours! As the day wore on, I fell way behind everyone else. Eventually I made it to just outside the village of Little Cressingham in Norfolk.

**Day 6 - 27th September** Sunday Morning more radio interviews! BBC Suffolk at 6.30 am. then BBC Norfolk shortly after 9.40am. Another interview explaining why we were walking to raise funds for the Church.

Today we were joined again by Rina's daughter, my brother-in-law, and his sister Anna, she left us after 3 miles when my son and granddaughter arrived, All the way through our numbers were well organised, never having more than six people in our group.

At North Pickenham we should have left the road and walked towards water meadows but the ford and entire area was flooded, so we continued on to the village by road. As we got closer to the A47



*Castle Acre - nearly there*



near Swaffham we had to negotiate another fallen tree.

The A47 was another nasty road with no central reservation, to cross we needed to have a good gap in the traffic. Finally the traffic stopped and the whole group crossed at the same time. As we neared Castle Acre the usual Peddars Way route was not open to us due to so much water. We approached along the lower roads and made the last climb up the hill and through the ancient Bailey Gate where everyone, including car drivers were waiting for us!



**Day 7- 28th September** Today we were to walk from Castle Acre to Anmer Minque, with a short detour to Little Massingham Church by 1.00 pm. We decided to leave Castle Acre earlier than planned as my feet were really slowing me down. Some way from Castle Acre, my mobile phone rang. I was surprised to hear that it was the Bishop of Lynn, who I had contacted before I left Colchester. 'Rosemary, where are you,' he asked, before continuing, 'I'm at the Bailey Gate waiting to give you a blessing...!' I told him I'd love a blessing. We decided he would meet us at Little Massingham Church.

When Peddars Way left the tarmac road a mile or so outside Great Massingham, we were joined by my other sister to walk the last leg to Little Massingham.

Having made it to Little Massingham, we were able to sit and enjoy the sunshine outside the church. The Bishop arrived and gave us a wonderful and very moving blessing as we stood amongst my family graves. Shortly afterwards we were taken back to Peddars Way where my two sisters and a friend walked with us to Harpley Dams. Having had lunch we set off again towards Anmer Minque and the Bronze Age barrows.



*A blessing from the Bishop of Lynn at the Church*

**Day 8 - 29th September** The last day. I soaked my feet and Rina carefully applied new dressings - a welcome relief! Paul received a tip-off that ITV Anglia news were trailing us in their early news reports. We left early in nasty morning drizzle, along yet another difficult part of Peddars Way where tractors and 4x4s had made walking problematic.

From Fring there was a steep climb towards Sedgeford, with 'good going'. I had a call from BBC Essex, but missed the call owing to wet hands and not being quick enough extracting my phone. The next call was from ITV Anglia, this time I was much faster pulling out the phone. They didn't have a cameraman available but would like a selection of our photos.

Later we were joined by Anna who walked with us at Little Cressingham. She continued with us to Ringstead and our lunchtime stop. The end was now close and after a short break we set off determined to make it in good time to the beach at Holme. As we crossed the final main road we saw Paul and Jean in the car on a grass verge, fast asleep!

We arrived first at the beach car park, the welcoming party arriving a little later. Rina and I followed the little group who walked in front of us, and with bunting and a red ribbon whisked into place we finally reached our destination!

With little mobile coverage we attempted to email the photos to Anglia TV! Finally the photos got through in time for the 6 o'clock



*Rosemary and Rina with bouquets*

news! Shortly after there was another interview with BBC Essex and I was able to relax and enjoy a glass of champagne, some lovely flowers, celebratory food and the fact we'd done it!

We have been very fortunate to have had such a fantastic media response. We were not in the Capt. Tom Moore league, but as a friend said, 'a church roof isn't very cuddly' and given the plight of the country with Covid-19 we have something to be proud of!

Overall we featured twice on TV, I gave several radio broadcasts for BBC Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex, we were reported in newspapers in Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk, had a tweet from the Colchester MP and a Facebook mention from the Secretary of State for Health, Matt Hancock as we marched through and out of his constituency. I would like to thank Rina, Paul and Jean and all those who supported and encouraged me.

Rina has raised over £1000 for her local charities.

Based on this walk, others have been inspired to set up a new charity 'Friends of St. Andrew's Church Little Massingham' - see [www.fosalm.org](http://www.fosalm.org) - to help keep the fund raising going over the next few years. To date I have raised over £9,600. I'd like to thank everyone who very kindly donated and helped my fundraising. My JustGiving page will remain open for a little longer as donations are still coming in. <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/rosemary-peddars-walk>

This walk was not just a physical journey of almost 90 miles, through blazing sun, rain and wind, it has been a journey of discovery and strength and fight back to fitness. Two years ago I wouldn't have believed I would be able to walk such distances. I think I can say I enjoyed every single second of it!

*Rosemary Jewers*

To read the full story see: <https://peddarswaycharitywalk.blogspot.com/2020/10/my-journey-from-3000-steps-day-to.html>

## **MAYORS ON LINE**

I had never seen the Annual Mayor Making ceremony but watched this one online. It has a certain dignity with Adrian Pritchard, Chief Executive, in traditional wig and robes (which Town Clerks, as lawyers, could wear). He is flanked by the committee clerk and the Monitoring Officer.

It is a cross between Rumpole of the Bailey and the Eurovision Song Contest, as votes once given had to be repeated but it works. It took place in the Mayoral suite and looked great, all socially distanced, with oaths taken and the mayoral couples investing each other with robes and chains. You can of course view committee and panel meetings on CBC TV as well.

There was an appropriate Mayoral nomination speech from John Jowers, a practised speaker, and a pleasant deputy Mayor nomination from Gerard Oxford (who appeared to be on the Sound of Music set) and decent speeches from both Mayors and the new Deputy. Gerard said it was the first deputy mayor nomination speech, but I don't know if that is true. It is good that a way has been found to maintain the traditions in these strange times .

*Peter Evans*



*Little Massingham Church - the purpose of the fund raising effort*

## **THANK YOU AND GOOD LUCK – Henry Spyvee**

Long term Colchester Civic Society member Henry Spyvee has been a member of the Executive Committee for 6 years and is now on the move. He has contributed in many ways, in particular in being the expert and lead on Street Naming, in particular with considerable success in getting former mayors commemorated in street names. He has always arranged official naming ceremonies to commemorate the actual event. He arranged for a Blue Plaque for former Mayor Catherine Alderton, and also for her to be included in a list of the most important women of 20th century. He helped with the Society's plaque trail and also with the Spurgeon plaque.

Outside of the Society, Henry continued a theme of his Mayoral year 2009/10 by arranging for Colchester's Roman Wall to be better understood by installing information boards at 14 locations round the town. Henry was a long standing and respected councillor for the Castle Ward. He is now an Alderman.

Before he joined the Executive Committee he supported the Society's policy regarding Licensing issues. He belonged to a number of other local groups. We are thrilled that he has agreed to become a Vice-President of The Colchester Civic Society.

Henry has always been ably supported by his wife Vivien. However, now they retiring to Guildford to be closer to their son Jonathan and his family. It has been a pleasure to have both Henry and Vivien with us and their help and support has been invaluable and very much appreciated. Under normal circumstances the Executive Committee would have given a more traditional and personal farewell, but please take our very best wishes with you.

Enjoy Guildford, but do keep in touch.



*Henry and Vivien Spyvee*

*Peter Evans*

Thanks to Society member Adrian Rushton for use of the wonderful photo.

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NEWS**

Meetings continue to happen via Zoom, arranged for us by Howard Davies, and we are settling into a routine. Whilst not the same, it is certainly easier than travelling across town.

Apart from receiving Henry Spyvee's resignation, Jayne Richardson has had to step down due to health issues and work commitments. We thank her for help and hope she will be able to rejoin us at a later stage. If you wish to join us meetings take place about every 6 weeks. For more information please contact me, or Jo Edwards, or any committee members.

Work continues between meetings on long running issues like Alumno.

We were touched to receive a Christmas card from His Worship the Mayor Councillor Robert Davidson and Mrs Liz Davidson. It says 'Many thanks for the continuing efforts to improve and protect Colchester. An endless but essential task.' Thank you Mr and Mrs Mayor, much appreciated.

*Peter Evans*

## LOCAL BOOKS

We often mention books about Colchester and there are usually several. Last year, they included our own publication *The Historic High Street* which is still available either from the Society or a local bookseller. This there are actually no books about Colchester specifically but several about the surrounding area.

One of these is *The Longest Path – Walking the Essex Coast* and has been written by Mark Russell. It starts at Harwich and goes to Shoeburyness, ten days of walks. There are hand-drawn maps and more than 500 photographs. It is available at £11.99p at local bookshops and available online at [redlionbooks.co.uk](http://redlionbooks.co.uk). In case you are wondering it is indeed the son of Civic Society member Sir Bob Russell.

There is the latest volume of the Victoria History of Essex, *St Osyth to the Naze* written Chris Thornton and Herbert Eiden, published by Boydell and Brewer.

I know some members have attended (well not in 2020 of course) the Frinton Summer Theatre. Jacey Dias has researched the 80 years (and more) since the first production and the book features reminiscences of actors who have appeared there – Julian Fellowes (Downton Abbey creator) Sir Anthony Sher, Jane Asher, Neil Dudgeon (aka Inspector Barnaby) and the Watling family. *The History of the Frinton Summer Theatre*, published by The Frinton Summer Theatre Ltd for £20 also includes memories of playgoers, including some from Colchester (from me).

Colchester booksellers may not stock it but you can probably obtain it at Frinton or on-line at [frintonsummertheatre.org](http://frintonsummertheatre.org).

I did come across some books in an on-line sale with a Colchester connection. They are for *Tarry At Home Travellers* and the 3 quaint volumes on Europe, Asia and Africa were written by Rev Isaac Taylor and published in 1820. The Rev Taylor was, of course, the father of Ann and Jane Taylor of ‘*Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*’ fame. The books are aimed at children but are entertaining and well illustrated. See the frontispiece for one edition.



*Peter Evans*

## WALK COLCHESTER – The Colchester Orbital

Walk Colchester and Colchester Borough Council have launched the Colchester Orbital online interactive map, a collaborative project between the community and Council marking completion of the latest phase of work in support of the 14-15 mile Orbital walk/cycle route.

The Colchester Orbital is a circular route of 14-15 miles around the periphery of the town, taking advantage of and connecting some of its loveliest green spaces and off-road pathway networks. The route follows existing public rights of way, linking with cycle paths wherever possible. It is hoped it will bring much pleasure around the year, to locals and visitors alike, and offer some surprises even to who have live in Colchester many years.. We have learnt to love our open spaces and Countryside recently, For a map, and other details, including how to join the friends of the Colchester Orbital go to;

<https://www.walkcolchester.org.uk/the-colchester-orbital>

*Peter Evans*

## **ANOTHER ASSET LOST?**

You may have seen in the papers recently that an exhibition of 200 years of Colchester Engineering currently located in the Museum of Rural Life in Stowmarket has been served notice.

The Colchester Engineering Society initiated the display as a Millennium project with our own Andrew Phillips having a considerable input. The exhibition occupies over 1200 square feet and includes many products from local firms and some are quite large such as a full size cross section of an 18 cylinder Deltic diesel engine.



*Part of the display in Stowmarket*

What to do with, it that is the question? With Paxman having a large presence in the display, coupled with the impending factory closure, it would seem only right that it should return to Colchester. But where to put it? The Castle Museum does not have the space or the money to do anything. There was speculation that a building in the Paxman factory might be set aside. That will depend on what the company want to do with the site but with the site over a mile from the town centre it is a bit off the tourist trail.

The future of the exhibition does not look promising. Will this be another lost chance to capitalise on Colchester's heritage? Another asset lost like the clock museum and the local history museum? A couple of years ago there were moves to try to acquire an army building from the barracks to establish a military museum that came to nothing. I seem to remember that the unique Roman Circus had a lot of problems getting establishing itself as an attraction and why do the signs to it disappear when you emerge from the Westway underpass? I just wish that Colchester could make the most of its past in the way that Chester and York do.

*Peter Jones*

## **A SURVEY OF POST BOXES IN THE BOROUGH OF COLCHESTER.**

*'Royal Mail boxes are a cherished feature of the British Street furniture scene. As well as being in daily operational use for an essential public service, they are national treasures.*

*Post Boxes make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the areas in which they are located.'*

(Opening section of the Joint Policy Statement by Royal Mail and Historic England, July 2015)

For the purposes of Local Listing status, the survey results are restricted to those Post Boxes that are of particular interest through age and rarity.

As a consequence no record will be made here of those made and installed during the reigns of George V (1910 – 1936 ), George VI ( 1936 – 1952) and Queen Elizabeth II ( 1952 - ) due to the large surviving numbers nationally and locally. However those in the town have been recorded and a photo record retained for future use.

The beginnings of Post Box use and development began in 1852 in the Channel Isles and were



rapidly extended to the mainland. After a gradual design evolution, in 1864 a hexagonal design by J.W.Penfold had been adopted as a national pillar box in cast iron. The paint colour of 'Pillar Box Red' was adopted nationally a few years later.

In 1879 a new circular pillar box design was introduced as more easily cast and as well as cheaper and stronger. These were manufactured by Andrew Handyside & Co of Derby at their Britannia Iron Works foundry. These were the first of the style now known as Type B, which has continued with minor alterations to this day. As a consequence of a foundry oversight, the pattern failed to incorporate either the Royal cipher of Queen Victoria or the name 'Post Office'. As a result these boxes are now known as the 'Anonymous' Boxes and surviving numbers nationally are in the region of 122, according to the figures of the Letter Box Study Group. Currently, Colchester now has one only of this pattern.

After 1883, the design mistake was rectified by the foundry and subsequent Pillar Boxes incorporated the 'V.R.' cipher and the words 'Post Office' in the casting with this model becoming known as the 'Jubilee' pattern after 1887.

Colchester has five of this V.R cipher type still in the Borough.

Post Wall boxes had been introduced from the beginning in 1852 and due to the cost of producing the Pillar Box, production of these was greatly increased to meet the demand for a rural Postal collection service. The great majority of these nationally date from the 1880's when a large contract was placed with the London Company, W.T.Allan &Co. The castings were made for them by the James Maude Sherwood foundry of Mansfield who continued to cast these wall boxes and lamp boxes from 1881 -1965 with a total of 73 versions in all.

The Borough still retains seven of this pattern.

Edward VII acceded to the throne on the death of Queen Victoria in 1901 but his reign was to be a short one and he died in 1910. This modest period has resulted in low number of surviving Post boxes with his cipher and so has been included in those recorded as needing Local Listing status

From this reign, Colchester has six Pillar Boxes and three Wall Boxes.

The reign of Edward VIII was even shorter. He acceded to the throne on the 20th January 1936 and abdicated in December of the same year before his Coronation.

Despite this, the Post Office had produced 271 Post Boxes bearing his cipher. Of these it is believed that possibly 171 survive. Only one wall box exists in Suffolk due to an oversight when all the others had their doors replaced with the pattern for George VI.

Colchester is fortunate to have one of these Pillar Box patterns in the Town.

*11 Glen Avenue  
East Facing  
Grid 597622 225347*



*The Post Boxes and Wall Boxes have been recorded by location, with a note of the compass direction the front of the box faces with a close up photo and a street scene photo each and a Grid Location reference.*

**'Anonymous' Type B pillar box 1879-1883** Low Aperture model to prevent post being caught under the rim of the cap.



*27 Creffield Road/Oxford Road.  
E Facing  
Grid 598857 224724*

**Victoria Regina Imperial V.R. cipher Type B Pillar Box 1883 – 1901**

*20 Lexden Road  
South Facing  
Grid 598600 224922*



*50 Wimpole Road  
South Facing  
Grid 600645 224299*

*Military Road at the side of  
Bob Russell House  
East Facing  
Grid 600428 224351*



*Magdalen Street, opposite 117/118  
East Facing  
Grid 600531 224753*



*91 London Road, Premier Stores  
& Post Office  
North Facing  
Grid 591738 223770*

**V.R.Wall Boxes – 1901. With block initial ‘V & R’ and Imperial State Crown.**

These are all to be found outside the town and all were built into a brick wall. The very first models allowed water to enter the post storage area but this was rapidly resolved.

The box is made in a three part casting, which has much strength and with the brick surround, has helped secure the survival of high numbers nationally.

*The Angel, Heckford Bridge, Maldon Road South East Facing Grid 594629 221810*



**Edward VII Pillar 1901 -1910 Pillar Post Boxes.**

These incorporated the ornate E.R VII cipher and numerals from the beginning but the pillar box was redesigned in 1905 with a new door which incorporated the post aperture rather than the body of the box. This was to prevent post being caught up in the top.

This basic design remains the same today, having served through the reigns of George V, George VI and Queen Elizabeth II.





*129 Lexden Road  
opp Fitzwalter Road  
East Facing  
Grid 597810 225093*

*145 Maldon Road  
pre 1905 Model  
West Facing  
Grid 598636 224377*



*Middlemill, opp Ryegate  
Pre 1905 model  
South West Facing  
Grid 599709 225547*

*27 North Station Road.  
East Facing  
Grid 599365 225739*



*Mersea Road  
opp Roberts Road  
East Facing  
Grid 599953 225211*



61 King Stephen Road  
 East Facing  
 Grid 600792 224512  
 Note knitted woollen hat

**Edward VII wall Boxes.**

From 1901 – 1905, the Post Office used the pre-existing Victorian design with the ‘V’ replaced by a block ‘E’. The earliest of these models also retained the Queen’s Imperial State Crown and this was only changed in 1905 to the Tudor Crown. Toward the end of Edward’s reign, his Royal cipher was incorporated into the door casting but there are none of these in Colchester.

By now these boxes have been built into brick posts.

All of the three examples in the Borough are of the W.T. Allen & Co models although of two different designs. Both these patterns were produced from Victoria until at least George VI.



1 Cherry Road, Heath Road  
 North Facing  
 Grid 596730 224418  
 ‘Tudor’ Crown

77 Halstead Road,  
 opp King Cole Road  
 South Facing  
 Grid 596001 225234  
 Early ‘Imperial State’ Crown



**Editor’s note:** this has been abridged and a full version of Bob Mercer’s report is available on our website



## The objects of the Civic Society are to:

- a) Encourage high standards of architecture and town planning in the Borough of Colchester
- b) Stimulate public interest in and care for the beauty, history and character of the area of the town of Colchester and its surroundings
- c) Encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general public amenity and of public interest
- d) Pursue these ends by means of meetings, exhibitions, lectures, publications, others forms of instruction and publicity and the promotion of schemes of a charitable nature
- e) Co-operate with other local, regional and national organisations in the pursuit of the same objects on a broader geographical basis.

### CURRENT OFFICERS

PRESIDENT	<b>John Burton</b> MBE
VICE PRESIDENTS	<b>Right Reverend Roger Morris</b> , Bishop of Colchester <b>Mr B A Barton</b> <b>Henry Spyvee</b>
CHAIR AND PROGRAMME ORGANISER	<b>Jo Edwards</b> , 43 Priory Street, Colchester CO1 2QB 07771 626561 <a href="mailto:josiemedwards@hotmail.com">josiemedwards@hotmail.com</a>
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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OTHER ELECTED MEMBERS	<b>Sheila Anderton</b> , 30 Rosebery Avenue, Colchester <b>Bob Mercer</b> , 59 Shrub End Road, Colchester CO3 4RA <b>Howard Davies</b> , 60 Rawstorn Road, Colchester CO3 3JH <b>John Salmon</b> , 68 Castle Road, Colchester CO1 1UN
CO-OPTED MEMBERS	<b>Pamela Bradbury, John Collett</b>



Arms of the City of Colchester



Arms of St. Joseph's Archdiocese

# COLCHESTER

"THERE IS NO TOWN IN GREAT BRITAIN THAT CAN COMPARE WITH COLCHESTER IN THE FACT THAT IT IS THE OLDEST RECORDED TOWN THAT WE KNOW OF AT ALL IN THESE REALMS."

SIR HENRY HOWORTH, D.C.L. F.R.S. F.S.A. F.R.C.



STATUE OF ROMAN



COLCHESTER CASTLE  
BUILT ABOUT A.D. 1100



COLCHESTER TOWN  
HALL AND VICTORIA  
TOWER



ST. BOTOLPH'S PRIORY CHURCH



ST. JOHN'S ABBEY GATEWAY

## VISITORS TO COLCHESTER SHOULD INSPECT THE FOLLOWING PLACES OF INTEREST. ♦ ♦

COLCHESTER CASTLE and Dungeons and the beautiful GARDEN PLEAS with Roman Remains and other objects of interest.

MUSEUM OF ANTIQUITIES containing many thousands of Coins, British Weapons, Tools, Pottery, and "Medieval antiquities—the Royal Seal Museum of Gold and Silver coins—up to the Nineteenth Century—Antiquities from the great mounds at ST. BOTOLPH'S PRIORY CHURCH.

The beautiful Old Roman GATEWAY OF ST. JOHN'S ABBEY near the Military Camp Field and Barracks.

The TOWN HALL (High Street)—containing many pictures and objects of interest.

The ROMAN WALLS nearly 10 miles in length surrounding the old Roman London—Colchester. The Roman Forts at the Barracks and elsewhere should be visited.

The unique GARDENS situated at the "Green, Church," where in the summer of the year 1860, WILLIAM GILBERT, Father of English Drama, wrote "The Beggar's Opera" in Queen Elizabeth and James I.

TEMPERANCE a new Trade Building contains Holy Trinity Church, the Residence of the "William Gilders."

ST. MARTIN'S and ST. MARK AT THE WALLS CHURCHES being visited by the Bishop of Exeter in 1067.

The BRIDGE OF ST. JOHN, a fine stone building near East Bridge. The one hundred feet bridge with better views of the River of Colchester.

ST. COLMAN'S CHURCH (near St. John's Abbey) being with Museum in the Old Stone Church and the Old Ship.

OTHER CHURCHES of the town contain valuable Pictures and Manuscripts and Remains of Architectural Interest.

SIR JOHN COLE'S KITCHEN, an antique kitchen furnished in 1663-1664, is at St. Lawrence and St. Clement.

The OFFICE of Sheriff of the Town is in the S.E. in the direction of Winton, Boreham, and Brightlingsea where the famous COLCHESTER PEPPER POTTERS are produced by the Colchester Corporation Works.



COLCHESTER is FAMOUS for its OYSTERS, ROSES, LILIES, ALPINE PLANTS and WATER GARDENS: and also for its ENGINEERING and MILLING INDUSTRIES.

REVISED BY  
SIR JOHN COLE  
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CITY OF COLCHESTER