



A historical map of the Lexden area, showing various landmarks such as 'Corn Mill', 'Shepherds Bridge', 'Shepherds Farm', 'Parsonage', 'Rawthorpe', and 'SOM'. The map is detailed with fields, roads, and buildings.

Lexden History Group

Christmas Newsletter

Issue No: 11 December 2008



Crest of the Great Eastern Railway -
see page 6



Programme of Events 2009

14th January

EGM followed by the inaugural Geoff Pettit Memorial Lecture - "Photographs & the Local Historian." Andrew Phillips.

11th February

"Inns, Taverns & Pubs" by Jess Jephcott

11th March

"The Music Charts, 1952 to Date" by Ray Spiller.

8th April

"The Development of Castle Park" by Ian Baalham

13th May

Annual General Meeting + "Grandad played the Cornet" by David Cawdell

10th June

To be arranged

8th July

BBQ (to be confirmed)

Meetings

Lexden History Group meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 7.45pm in St Leonard's Church Hall, Lexden, except August when there is no meeting. Entry £2 for members, £4 for guests, refreshments included. Annual membership £10 for single, £15 for family living at same address.

Web address: www.lexdenhistory.org.uk

Lexden Land Girl

Joan was just eighteen years of age when this photograph was taken of her wearing a rather smart looking Land Girl's uniform. She was still living at home in Bergholt and her first job had been working at the Co-Op pharmacy, where she

volunteered for fire watching duty. Together with another girl, she would sit up all night, not quite sure what they would do in the event of an emergency.

However, they always felt quite safe walking home in the blackout. But she felt that she wanted to do more to help the war effort, so she volunteered as a Land Girl in 1941.

Joan was sent to work in a farm in Bakers Lane. Her main job was to grow tomatoes and she remembers picking and eating some when the farmer wasn't looking. They were delicious! The

other girls working there were also local and they all knew one another. The least popular task on the farm was spreading the pig manure on the ground. She remembers it was very cold in the winter and they caught chilblains.

Whenever she went up to London, she would wear her uniform and would always be well treated by being brought to the front of any queues at the cinema or theatre. During the war Joan married in Colchester at the Methodist Church where BHS now

stands. Her husband used to claim that they married in the knicker department! After their marriage they moved to Lexden, where they raised their family and lived for many years.

Jane Thornhill



Message from the Chairman

By the time you read this it will be just a couple of weeks before the Christmas festivities begin. A time to enjoy the company of family and friends. The Christmas rush has already begun in the shops, but many will be planning a less extravagant Christmas this year thanks to the Credit Crunch! Home made gifts and cards are always appreciated.

May I on behalf of the Committee wish you all the best for Christmas and the New Year.

Dick Barton

Humour

Schoolboy howlers from 1934

- Q What is the use of cow hide?
A To keep the cow together.
Q What is a herbaceous border?
A A lodger who doesn't eat meat.
Q Where was the Magna Carta signed?
A At the bottom.
Q Why is there no such thing as a whole day?
A Because every day begins by breaking.
Q Why was Adam such a good runner?
A Because he was the first in the human race.

Jane Thornhill

Lexden in Wartime Tea Party

Almost everyone involved in "Lexden in Wartime" was able to attend the tea party in the new Nicholls Room extension at St Leonard's Church. An excellent tea was prepared by Sonia Lewis, which included cucumber sandwiches and sponge cake. All contributors were presented with a complimentary copy of the book and several Committee members were there to help serve the tea and clear up afterwards.

A New Look to our Website

You may have noticed that the Home page of our web site carries advertising. Each time you click on one of these ads, the club earns money!

The advertising is arranged through Google Adsense, who guarantee to use only reputable companies and we have the right to reject any firm of which we do not approve.

On the Recent Events page we currently have pictures and music and sound effects for both the Tea Party and Steam Supper. We hope you enjoy them.

Any suggestions for more links to other organisations for our new Links page would be most welcome.

Bob Thornhill, Webmaster

President's Page

Look at any old map (Chapman & Andre 1777 is best) and you will see the immense extent of Lexden & Stanway Heath. It embraced a broad area where Straight Road now runs, down to Shrub End Road, along Shrub End Road to Norman Way, and north to Church Lane Lexden. Then west along Lexden Road to Villa Road, south to the junction with Dyers Road, where a fragment of heath survives, then east across country to Shrub End Road. Very large. Here for over 70 years large encampments of soldiers were housed most summers. Mostly they were regular troops but in the wars against the American Colonies, and then France, we had to draw heavily on the Militia, a part-time Army of supposedly volunteer citizens. Each year they had a summer camp. They too used Lexden Heath.

The Heath was first cleared of furze and scrub in 1741 and almost 10,000 regular troops assembled for transfer to the Continent. Later the king, George II, arrived, on his way to Hanover. Almost annual encampments followed. In the American War military resources were stretched to the limit and local Militia were called to arms. The camp on Lexden Heath was laid out to even higher standards with

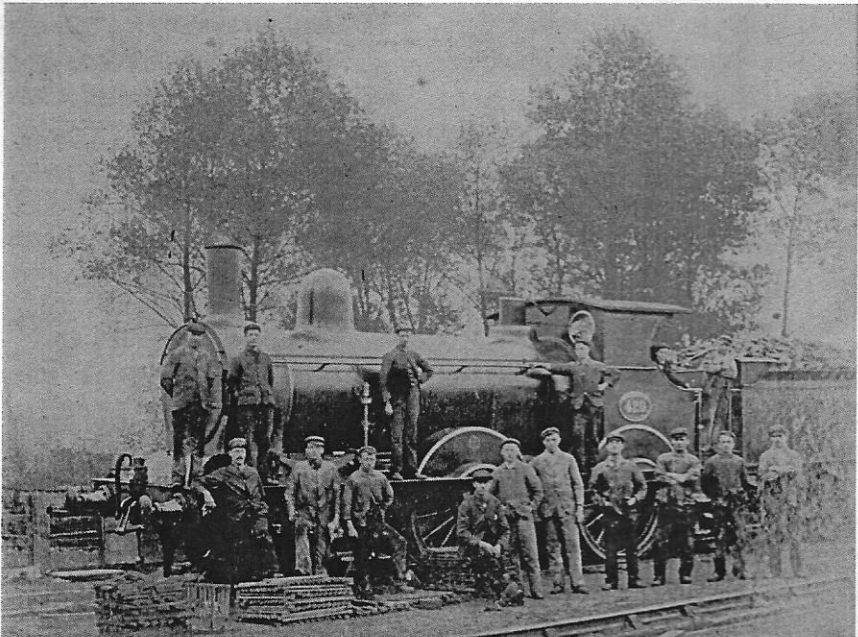
magazines, storehouses, ovens and gravel walks throughout. The lines of tents ran North \South, east of Gryme's Dyke. A map of these lines, including details of the village of Lexden and the surrounding countryside, is held by the British Library. I have never seen it. An even finer copy survives in the Royal Collection at Windsor. If we ever compile a history of Lexden we must get a copy. In 1811, 70 years after the Heath had first been cleared, we were now at war with Napoleon. The Colchester garrison, now housed in wooden huts south of Barrack Street, was drawn up on the Heath to be inspected by the Prince Regent – the future George IV – acting on behalf of George III, currently deemed out of his mind. On to the field rode an elderly man in an ancient uniform. He was Lieut. John Andrews who had joined the Army aged 16 and was now 78, yet had volunteered to fight Napoleon. Introduced to the Prince Regent, he received, as a result, a £50 pension for life. He died in 1817 and is buried in St Mary's-at -the-Walls churchyard. Should we not have a John Andrew's Road in Lexden?

Andrew Phillips

A Colchester Railway Family

I am most grateful to Mrs Joan Gallifant for the loan of this splendid photograph of a locomotive with railway workers surrounding it. The picture was taken around 1900 and the man standing on the locomotive

of the services the railway provided in those days was a man with a pole who would come and tap on the bedroom windows to wake up the workers on the early shift. Walter's brother Sam, also an



nearest to the cab and with his right hand holding the rail is Joan's father-in-law Walter Arthur Gallifant. When the picture was taken Walter would have been 17. The Gallifants were a large railway family, of whom several were engine drivers, all of whom lived close to Colchester station. One

engine driver, used to be teased because he worked on the Brightlingsea line and spent his days chugging backwards and forwards between Colchester and Brightlingsea.

At the beginning of the 20th Century, the local railway company was the Great Eastern Railway (GER) which had been

formed by Act of Parliament on 7th August 1862 by the amalgamation of the Eastern Counties, Eastern Union, East Anglian, East Suffolk & Norfolk Railway companies, along with their subsidiary undertakings.

The locomotive in the picture is a T26 class 2-4-0 designed by James Holden in 1891 for mixed traffic. It hauled agricultural freight, cross-country and slow main line passenger services. The driving wheels were 5ft 8in, which you can probably gauge from the men standing by them. A total of 100 T26s were built between 1892 and 1902, so this one in the picture was either new or at least not very old when the picture was taken. It would have been painted in standard GER colours of ultramarine blue, with some black and vermillion lining.

Immediately before Groupage in 1923, when the GER was incorporated into the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER), records show that just one of these locomotives was based at Colchester, with the remainder distributed around the region with the largest number, twenty-three, at Norwich.

Under the LNER the T26s were reclassified as E4s and began to be withdrawn at a slow

rate, starting in 1926 and continuing to 1940 when, because of the War and potential shortage of motive power, withdrawal ceased. At this point eighteen of these locomotives survived and remained in service in East Anglia until 1954 when withdrawal recommenced. Only one engine survived beyond 1957 and that was eventually withdrawn in November 1959. There is just one remaining example of this class of locomotive which is located at the Bressingham museum, near Diss, Norfolk.

Walter Gallifant left England a year after this photograph was taken and emigrated to South Africa, where he worked, naturally, as a railway engine driver. Although he enjoyed life in South Africa, his fiancée, Ada was not prepared to join him out there and so he returned to Colchester after 15 years. On his return Walter married Ada and eventually bought a house with an acre of land in West Bergholt, where on retirement at the age of 39, he lived a happy self sufficient life and continued to raise his family.

Bob Thornhill

Lexden War Memorial

The War Memorial Cross that stands in the Churchyard of Lexden Parish Church was unveiled on 17th July 1920 by Major General Sir Charles Harrington, Deputy Chief of the



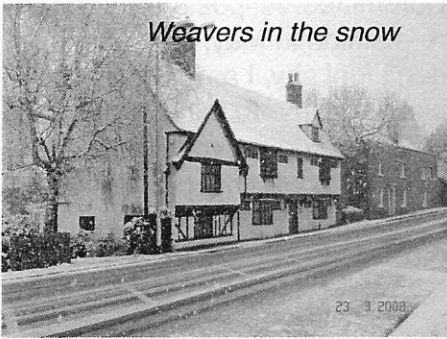
Imperial Staff, and dedicated by Canon G.T. Brunwin-Hales, Rural Dean. A short service followed conducted by the Rector, Rev T.S. Raffles. Before the unveiling, the Memorial was draped in flags - the Union Flag, the White, Blue and Red Ensigns. A guard of honour was provided by soldiers of the Second Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment. The eighteen foot high memorial was designed by Mr Duncan Clark and the work carried out by L.J. Watts Ltd, Colchester stone masons, and carries the names of 38 men who fought and died in the Great War.

Bernard Polley,
LHG Archivist.

Weavers by Liz White

The Victoria History of Essex states that “Weavers, perhaps formerly the Angel Inn, has a late medieval cross wing. The rest of the house was rebuilt in the early Seventeenth Century with a continuous jetty along the street.”

The White family moved in at the end of October 1994 and once settled spent many happy hours exploring all the corners unnoticed on our earlier viewings. Every day we found something else of interest, which is not surprising in such an old house!



We were fascinated by the different doors. The grand Georgian ones in the main part of the house must have demonstrated to visitors in those days that the owners would not tolerate the outdated mediaeval furbishment. As we moved away from these rooms we noticed the quality and age of the doors changed. Thinly panelled or simple tongue and groove doors were probably deemed adequate for the family and servants! By the time the

attic is reached, doors left over from the Seventeenth Century makeover still remain, together with their original tapering ‘T’ hinges and latches with ‘penny ends’, or the ‘H’ hinges which barely seem strong enough to hold the door firmly. One old door has even been turned to show a less worn edge.

My imagination frequently takes over and I wonder who walked through those doors, their conversations and their clothes. How did the servants cope with the old, narrow, twisting back stairs, the numerous steps up and down, answering the still evident bells, and the cold? It must have been unbearable! We know that about 40 years ago a mother and daughter spent the winter in one small room, their only heating being a small, inefficient boiler. The draughts were certainly mediaeval when we first arrived, but we did at least have central heating!

Previous occupants have left items behind, especially under the wide, dark floorboards. We have recently found a cache of clay pipes stashed under the boards in the attic, where we also found early Bakelite items, beads, a child’s saucer and a Biretta pistol case – no gun though! We have also found what we think was a cat’s skeleton under the floor just inside the door to the garden – to ward off witches? And what about the ghosts? I’ll leave that for another time!

Editorial

Please note the January meeting starts with an **Extraordinary General Meeting**, followed by Andrew Phillips, our Honorary President, giving the first Geoff Pettit Memorial Lecture. The reason we need to hold an EGM is because at the last Committee meeting, it was decided to move the AGM from April to May in order to allow time for our Club accounts to be fully audited by a Chartered Accountant. All members are able to vote. However, I should like to remind everyone to bring along their membership cards as proof of membership, because only members are entitled to vote.

The Lexden in War Time book has proved to be a great success and a big thank you to everyone who contributed to it, not only those whose memories are published, but especially to Liz White who edited it and both Liz and Alan, who printed and collated it, and Diana Childs who assisted Liz with all the visits and interviews. The Committee of LHG held a Tea Party in October, to thank all participants. (see p.4) Anyone wishing to buy a copy at a cost of £10 each payable in advance, can contact Liz White

by email or telephone. (see p.11) Work has already begun on a second volume, but that won't be ready for a few months.

Your Committee would like to thank you for your support throughout the year, attending monthly meetings and the special events we have arranged for you.

We hope that some members will feel able to give their support by volunteering to take up positions on the Committee. All posts are up for re-election in May, so please don't feel shy, I am giving you plenty of time to think about what you could do for your Club. A few new faces with new ideas are always most welcome. Please feel free to talk to any Committee Members regarding volunteering, as some Committee Members do not wish to stand next time.

Thank you to all our speakers and to our Committee Members who give up their time for the benefit of us all at Lexden History Group. Also many thanks to Bernard Polley our archivist, and our Honourary President, Andrew Phillips.

**See you in the new year!
MERRY CHRISTMAS ALL.**

J.T.

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LHG EVENTS 2008



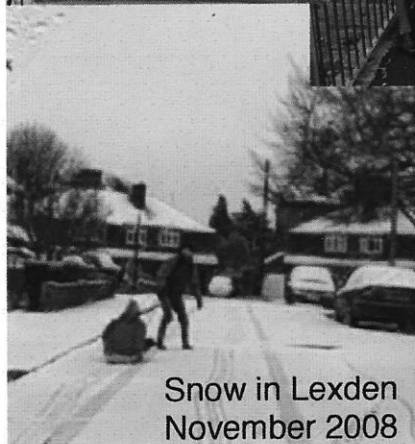
Unveiling of the Village Sign 19th April



Village Sign



Lexden in Wartime Tea Party
21st October



Snow in Lexden
November 2008



Steam Fish & Chip
Supper 16th July