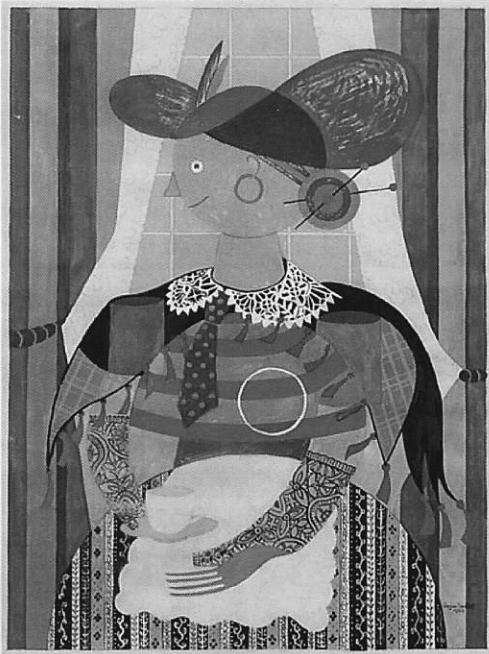


Spring Newsletter Issue
No: 28, March 2013



Pictures by Joyce Pallot, wife of Henry Collins, who lived for many years in Lexden. Recently some of Joyce's paintings have come up for auction at Reeman Dansie's and at a London Art gallery.

Programme of Events

10th April

"Lost churches of Mediaeval Colchester" - John Ashdown Hill

8th May - AGM
and "Grymes Dyke"
- Mitchell McLean

12th June

"Colchester Second World War Defences" - Dr W Ward

10th July

"Sir Alfred Munnings Life and House"- Marcia Whiting

10th August

Summer BBQ
Tim & Carol Holding's

11th September

"The History of the Concertina" - Roger Digby

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 £1 for members, £3 for guests, refreshments included. Annual membership £15 for single, £20 for family living at same address.

Web address: www.lexdenhistory.org.uk

GREENWICH TRIP Thursday 4th July

Enjoy a day in Royal

Greenwich with fellow members of the Lexden History Group, family and friends. The coach will leave Lexden Church at 9.00am and return from Greenwich at 4pm.

Greenwich is a World Heritage Site and home of Greenwich MeanTime and the Meridian Line. Also it's famous landmarks include the Cutty Sark, the National Maritime Museum, the Royal Observatory and Sir Christopher Wren's Old Royal Naval College. Enjoy a walk along the River Thames or in Greenwich Park or visit Greenwich Market before eating in one of the many restaurants in the Town Centre.

Cutty Sark was the fastest sailing ship of her day. Launched in Scotland in 1869, she sailed the tea route to China and later carried wool from Australia. She has been in Greenwich since 1954 and has recently undergone a complete conservation process. **Cost for coach** - £12.50 per person **Options:**
1 Special interest walk – Nelson's Greenwich - £7. **2** Take a walk around the Cutty Sark - Adults £12.50 – Concessions £9.50.

A non- returnable £5 deposit will be taken to secure your place.

Jackie Bowis

From the Chairman

We have known for a long time that there have been people living in Lexden for more than 2000 years. If further proof were needed it is provided by the discovery of a 1st Century Iron Age burial at the PlayGolf site in Bakers Lane. Found by builders working on the site earlier this year, Colchester Archaeological Trust were called in to examine the finds. One item was a Roman amphora used to hold wine or fish sauce, suggesting the burial of a high status person. Also found were a number of corroded iron objects which may be a hoard of currency. The burial was part of an Iron Age enclosure. The golf club is hoping to incorporate the finds into its new development.

Members attending the February and March meetings will be given a questionnaire issued by the Group's Committee, seeking views on the Group's activities and suggestions for new ones. Completed questionnaires should be handed in before the end of April. If you are unable to attend either of those meetings and would like a copy please contact me. **Dick Barton**

Development of the Telephone Service

(Continued from December Issue)

Over the years, technology improved at a gathering pace. Magneto exchanges such as I have described gave way to central battery signaling which dispensed with the need to turn the handle to call the exchange, it being only necessary to lift the handset, but still needed a battery at the subscriber's premises to power the microphone. These in turn developed into central battery exchanges which enabled the microphone to be powered by current from the exchange and the subscriber's battery to be dispensed with, but still needed all calls to be made via the operator. Although automatic exchanges using electro-mechanical switching came in during the 1920s, manual exchanges continued to be used until the last one at Abingdon in Oxfordshire was replaced in the 1970s. While most people welcomed the introduction of automatic exchanges there were a few, particularly elderly folk, who wished to have their calls connected by an operator and found it difficult to come to grips with even this simple advance. And until subscriber trunk dialing came in just before 1960, only comparatively local calls could be made without operator assistance.

At the same time that telephone exchange switching systems were being developed and improved, similar improvements were being made on the line transmission side. Amplification of trunk lines came in during the 1920s with

the thermionic valve and with the development of underground cables, much of the overhead wire scape began to disappear. Carrier systems introduced in the 1930s using higher frequencies enabled 12 and later 24 trunk circuits to be carried over a single pair of wires, although for technical reasons, it was necessary to use a separate pair of wires in each direction for these and all amplified circuits. Widespread use of co-axial cables and microwave radio relay systems during the 1950s and 1960s enabled television signals to be sent between the various studios and transmitters, and networked across the country. A circuit capable of carrying a colour TV signal could alternatively be used to carry 2400 telephone channels.



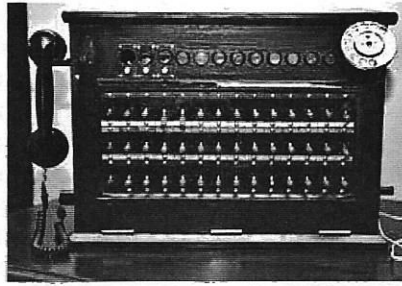
From the end of the Second World War, demand for telephone service increased dramatically, and with it, the need for improved transmission and switching systems. Although in isolation, the reliability of

individual electro-mechanical exchanges was good, the introduction of long distance communication, causing calls to be routed through a number of telephone exchanges in tandem, meant an increasing chance of call failure. In the 1960s electronic exchanges were developed and in the 1970s increasingly used to replace those electromechanical exchanges coming to the end of their working life. Reliability improved dramatically. The introduction of the telephone keypad to replace the dial and use of tone signaling meant the end of that long wait between dialing a number and, if you were lucky, hearing the ring

tone and, above all, getting the right number. With the introduction of digital transmission systems over cable and fibre optics and modern computer controlled digital telephone exchanges, we have the system of today, where we can pick up a telephone and make a call within a few seconds to virtually anywhere in the world. Modern exchanges can diagnose their own faults and by-pass them although it still needs a human to come along and change a faulty printed circuit board.

During my career of nearly 40 years with the telephone service I saw many changes which few could have envisaged when I left Colchester Royal Grammar School in 1949 and started

working as a trainee engineer for Post Office Telephones here in Colchester. Although the early magneto exchanges were long gone some of the old overhead trunk routes still existed, but were being recovered when the opportunity arose. As well as Colchester, some of the local villages had small automatic exchanges of a few tens to a few hundred lines, in buildings ranging in size from a small garage to a small bungalow. Dedham, Ardleigh, Nayland, Bures, Fordham, Peldon, Layer de la Haye, East Mersea and Wivenhoe were examples. Tiptree, Kelvedon, Coggeshall, Birch, West Mersea, Marks Tey and Manningtree still had manual exchanges, often in the same premises as the village Post Office.



Even larger places such as Clacton, Walton, Braintree and Halstead still had manual exchanges. When I retired early in 1988 most of the changes I have written about had taken place and digital transmission and switching was rapidly being introduced.

On the international scene short wave radio gave way to submarine cables across the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans in the late 1950s and 1960s soon to be followed by satellite communication. Likewise satellite communication replaced short wave radio for long distance communication to shipping and aircraft.

The technology has continued to move on apace. The Internet, e-mails, mobile phones have all proliferated. The microchip rules. The technology now

packed into a mobile phone today would have needed several racks of equipment 30 years ago and cost thousands of pounds. And the modern personal computer would have needed a small room full of racks, kilowatts of power, and taken minutes to process what is now done in fractions of a second. We owe much of this latest technology to the efforts to develop the space programme. As to the future, who can tell. The changes in my lifetime have been enormous and unparalleled in history. My grandchildren will no doubt see even more advances in communication during their lifetimes.

Mike Beattie

Colchester in World War one

Throughout those wartime years we have forgotten there was no radio, no television, no computers, few telephones, only newspapers and communications by way of distributed leaflets issued by the Government or the Borough Council.

The town's local newspapers kept readers informed of what was happening locally, providing they did not breach national security measures. Here are some extracts from press reports.

The news that war was imminent first came on July 29th 1914 when an Officers' Club Garden Party was interrupted by a garrison bugler sounding the alarm announcing "Mobilisation". Officers left instantly for muster stations and within an hour were en route for the coast. Field Marshal Lord Kitchener was in charge of organising recruitment for national service with the slogan "Your Country Needs You". Young men were quick to respond to the call and reported to the Recruiting Office set up in St George's Hall in the High Street, Colchester. Part of Kitchener's campaign was to offer recruits "The King's Shilling," the basic soldiers' pay for one day.

Mrs Ethel Coats Hutton of Lexden Manor and a band of lady helpers formed a group as war workers and opened a series of workshops in the School of Art.

Quantities of socks and underwear were provided for the troops and white linen shrouds were made by the ladies for the soldiers killed on active service on the French battlefields. Mayor Wilson Marriage organised a series of Rest Rooms for the troops in the town. Two of these were in Lexden: The Parish Room on London Road open week days 7 to 9 and Sundays 3 to 5 for reading, writing, games and weekly musical concerts, with similar facilities at the Church Institute on Lexden Hill.

Although there was not food rationing until later on, citizens were encouraged to turn their flower gardens into vegetable plots. The Braiswick Golf Club ploughed up some of the greens for growing crops.

On 21st February 1915 enemy bombs were dropped on a house in Butt Road, occupied by Q.M. Sgt Robjohn. At the time Robjohn and his wife were preparing a meal when the explosion occurred and shrapnel passed through the kitchen door. Their young daughter was asleep upstairs and thankfully she was unharmed.

In September of 1915 the Mayor, Alderman Coats Hutton organised a sale in aid of the Colchester Red Cross Fund. He appealed for gifts of furniture, pictures, jewelry, curios, also live and dead farm stock, poultry, eggs, hay and straw. In fact anything else that was saleable! After the sale held in the Corn Exchange the local press

reported "a considerable sum was raised for the Red Cross Funds".

By 1916 because of the shortage of male tram conductors, women were employed for the first time to carry out this work. They were often seen collecting fares on the route from the town through to the terminus at Lexden.



In May 1916 every household in the Borough received a card with instructions for evacuation should it become necessary. "This card must be carefully kept, as it shows you what to do if the Military Authorities give

an order that everybody is to leave Colchester. By order, no sound or other signal is permitted, but should the emergency arise, steps will be taken to advise you in the shortest possible delay". For Lexden residents the route was from Chitts Hill, Fordham, Great Tey, Stisted, Thaxted, Debden and thence to Clavering. Fortunately these directives were never put to use.

Gerald Benham, a lawyer with the firm Sparling, Benham & Brough of West Stockwell Street had been a member of the Essex Territorials before the war, joined the 8th Essex Battalion in 1916 with the rank of Captain. On service in France he was

promoted to Major. After the war Benham served as Mayor of Colchester 1936/37.

When a German Zeppelin crash landed at Little Wigborough in September 1916, the crew that survived were arrested by the local police constable until troops arrived



to take control. The prisoners were brought back to the barracks and those injured were cared for in the Essex County and Military Hospitals.

In June 1917 a Council Emergency Meeting resolved "That this Council concurs in the proceedings of the Emergency Committee and instructs the Borough Surveyor to fix a buzzer or siren on the chimney shaft at the Electricity Supply Station for use in giving warning to the inhabitants in the event of daylight air raids." The proposition was carried 14 for, 2 against.

(continued on Page 8)

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As the war progressed food became a major problem for Colchester families, as there were many shortages. Some 80,000 to 100,000 ration books were completed by lady school teachers, sitting at tables in the Moot Hall



before the books were distributed by local Colchester Scouts. Even supplies of potatoes were short and often queues were to be seen at greengroceries for an allocation.

A special meeting was called on April 17th 1918 by the Lexden & Winstree Guardians held at the Stanway Workhouse to consider the appointment of an acting clerk to replace Mr Bentley Porter who had been called up for the Army. Two candidates applied, Mr Winder, a 50 year old barrister, and Mr Baddery, aged 45. The Guardians engaged the younger man and the local Government Board consequently

pointed out that they had selected a man of military age.

Each month a Borough Tribunal met to deal with men claiming deferment from military service, one of these, Mr D Brown, a butcher of Lexden, received a conditional exemption "as he undertakes slaughtering of cattle in the town."

The Essex County Standard dated 9th November 1918 - "What a weekend! German plenipotentiaries in the Allied lines suing for peace. An expectation at

home that the end of the war must now come, because of the enemy's plight. Would the news arrive in time for a Te Deum at Sunday evening services? Monday morning, no news, but a rumour that at 5.00am the armistice had been signed. Rumour was a long way ahead of the official messages, but she was not a lying jade this time. So in the High Street in Colchester, where so many historic scenes have been witnessed, crowds began to assemble confident that a momentous proclamation was imminent."

Bernard Polley

My Aunt Joslin by Mike Beattie

Agnes Joslin was the eleventh of fourteen children born to Walter and Elizabeth Joslin (née Baker) in Boxford, Suffolk. Her father was a farmer and the family lived in a timber framed but externally rendered house (actually

three cottages) on School Hill just up from and opposite the church. Being the youngest daughter, but having three younger brothers Agnes remained at home to look after aging parents. She also brought up my mother who was left with the family in

about 1900 when my grandmother got into difficulties.

By 1911 both Joslin parents became infirm and died. The farm was sold and each of their children received £100. Agnes, with nowhere to go went into



Aunt Joslin & Violet

service and arranged for my Mother, Violet, who was twelve, to be looked after by a close friend, Carrie Pipe who had married a Mr Dunkley, a civilian farrier working for the army in the Cavalry Barracks in Butt Road, Colchester. The Dunkleys lived in Old Heath Road and Violet attended Canterbury Road school. Presumably much of the very small income of

Agnes went to the Dunkleys to support Violet until she was old enough to go into service herself as maid to Edwin Howe, Estate Agent and Valuer of 1 Maldon Road, Colchester. This would be about 1913/14. Some time later around 1916, my father Joseph Edgar Beattie came to work for Edwin Howe and in 1931 he and Violet married and with the help of a loan from Edwin Howe purchased 16 Irvine Road, a 3 bedroom semi which my father did his utmost

to repay as soon as possible. I came on the scene in May 1933.

Meanwhile Agnes Joslin was working as a live-in domestic for the Buntings, a prominent local family who at that time lived in Lexden Road.

(continued overleaf)

What her duties were I have no idea, but she talked about taking the grandmother out in a bath chair to Eld Lane Baptist Church, which she attended regularly every Sunday, usually morning and evening.

Some time around 1934, Agnes was taken ill with a diseased kidney and so was dismissed from her employment ending up homeless. Having nowhere to go my parents took her in and she was not expected to survive. However she was taken into the Essex County Hospital and operated on by a Mr Read who removed the diseased kidney and she made a good recovery. She came back to Irvine Road and occupied the second bedroom. When she recovered sufficiently my father apparently suggested that she might find herself a little job to help pay something towards her keep but she felt unable to do so. However she did lend my father the £100 legacy which she still had in the Post Office and for which my father paid her 5% interest, 25 shillings every quarter day on the dot. She finally was able to contribute a little towards her keep in 1937 when she started receiving her old age pension.

She was universally known as Aunty to all including myself, but I think secretly she may have regarded herself as my grandma. Both my paternal grandparents had died and I can only remember ever

seeing my maternal grandmother once when I was about 10. So she certainly filled a gap in my life, taking me out for walks when I was small, and reading to me. When we got a dog in about 1945 she used to take her around Bluebottle Grove most afternoons until she became ill in the early 1950s by which time I was doing my National Service in the Royal Signals. Looking back I think it was a form of cancer and she died in 1953. I was able to relate her story to my CO who allowed me a couple of days leave to attend her funeral.

As I mentioned, Aunty was a regular at Eld lane Baptist Church and had been a member of the choir at Boxford Baptist Chapel. She had a fine contralto voice and would join in in harmony with any hymns on the radio.

One final point of interest is the family home on School Hill Boxford. I mentioned that it was a timber framed house but the outside was rendered. After the old folks died it was sold to a former army man. He had bought and demolished one or more other timber framed houses and he used these parts to extend the original after having removed the render. Some time later, the house was demolished and re-erected near Billingshurst, Sussex where it was known as Beke Hall. It later burned down.

Mike Beattie

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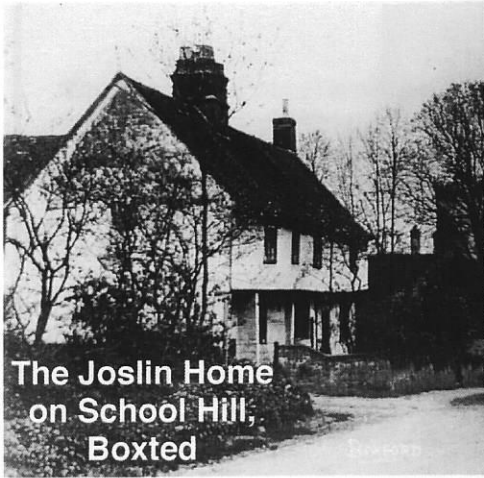
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Other activities being planned –further details at a later date

Trip to Cambridge Tuesday 21st May - a day trip to Cambridge is being organised

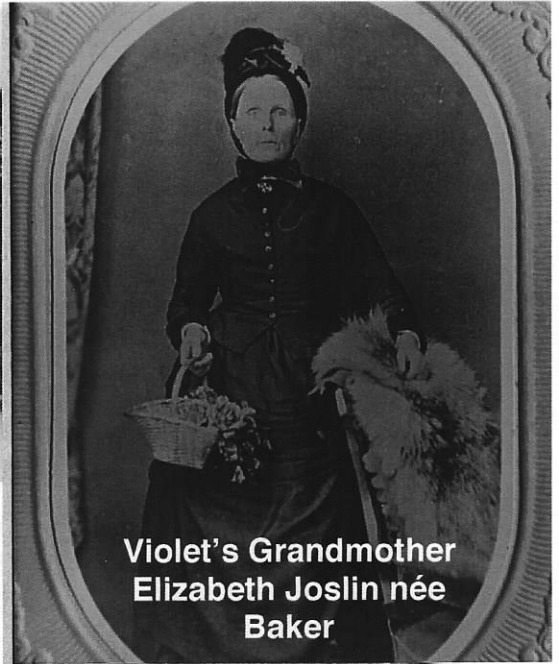
Munnings House Friday 26th July – an afternoon visit to Munnings House, Dedham

**PLEASE DO NOT FORGET TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP BEFORE THE AGM ON 8TH MAY
CHEQUES TO BE MADE OUT TO LEXDEN HISTORY GROUP AND GIVEN TO JACKIE BOWIS**



The Joslin Home
on School Hill,
Boxted

See article on page 9 -
"My Auntie Joslin" by
Mike Beattie



Violet's Grandmother
Elizabeth Joslin née
Baker



Boxted Church Choir 1905



Auntie Joslin



Violet, aged 5