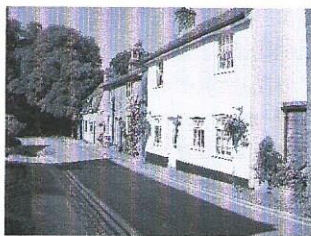


# Lexden History Group



**Welcome** to the first edition of the Lexden History Group magazine.

Since our exploratory meeting at Lexden Church on March 20th lots of things have happened. We had two meetings of the volunteer committee members to discuss all the suggestions you made at the first meeting.

## **NEW NAME**

You will see from the title of this newsletter that we are now the Lexden History Group. We left out 'local' because some members may be pursuing family history or some other research. It is a name that embraces all interests and all are welcome to join, not just Lexden residents, wherever the true Lexden is.

If you know of a family that has moved away who might be interested in joining do please get in touch with them.

Issue No 1 April 2006

**Now for the really good news!**

## **BOOK THIS DATE!**

The first meeting of the Lexden History Group will be on;

**Wednesday May 10th at 7.45pm  
in Lexden Church Hall**

We have been doubly fortunate in that the well-known local historian, author and broadcaster **ANDREW PHILLIPS** has agreed to give the inaugural talk on;

## **"The Rise of Modern Colchester"**

He has also agreed to become Honorary President of the Lexden History Group.

**Please attend and bring a friend.**

Membership forms will be available on that evening. The proposed programme for the rest of the year will also be available.

We agreed that the membership subscription for an individual would be £10 per year (from April to April) and £15 for a family all living at the same address. Included in the cost will be a quarterly Newsletter mailed out to every member address. This subscription will also include the cost of hiring the venue and booking speakers.

Tea, coffee and biscuits will also be available at the meetings and donations of £1 per person would be gratefully received

Anyone joining within three months of the new membership year would be a complimentary guest until the new year starts.

### ARCHIVES

The Committee discussed the situation regarding the acquiring of archives and agreed that any which came our way would be lodged along with the Church Archives on a permanent loan basis.

In that way it will avoid duplication and Group members will benefit greatly from access to the existing records which the church hold via Dave Wheal.

Andrew Phillips	President
Geoff Pettit	Chairman
<b>Vacant</b>	Secretary
Sonia Lewis	Social Sec.
<b>Vacant</b>	Treasurer
Dave Wheal	Archivist
David Cawdell	Publicity
Jean Orpen Smellie	
Moir Green	
Brian Barton	
Bernard Polley	

### HELP !

We still need a Treasurer and Secretary. If you feel you can help us in either of these posts please contact Geoff Pettit on Colchester 579819.



## MEETING PLACE

Venues are very hard to come by in Lexden so we have been fortunate in being able to book Lexden Church Hall on the second Wednesday of each month for our regular meetings.

The hall is in use until 7.15pm so our meetings will start at 7.45. The bonus is that the hall will already be warm in the winter.

We are hoping to arrange a couple of 'Summer walks' during June and July and then evening talks in the hall from September onwards.

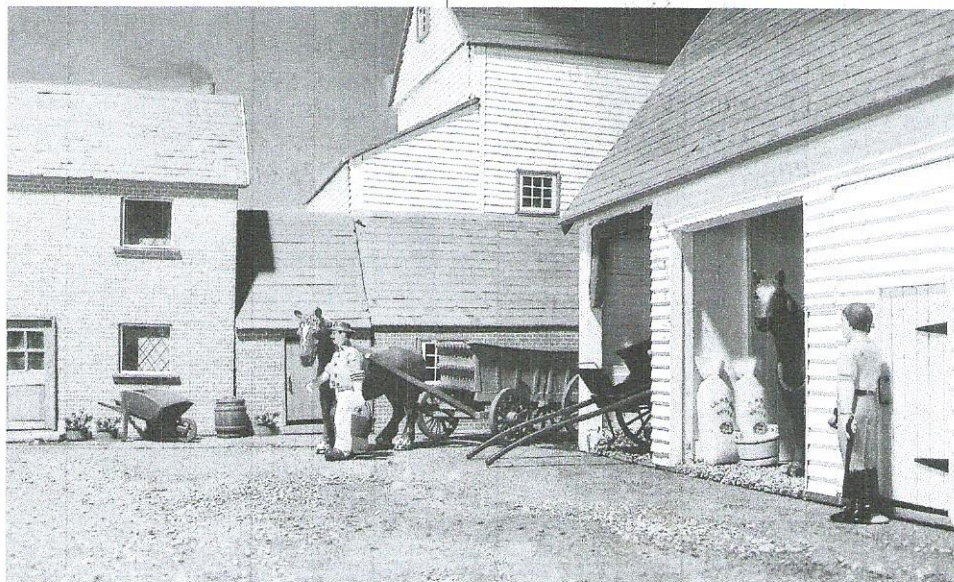
For details of our special inaugural meeting on May 10th. See elsewhere in this issue. New members are always welcome.

## COLCHESTER OYSTER FAYRE

This is a very interesting weekend of exhibitions and activities to be held in Castle Park on the weekend of June 10/11th.

Activities include archery falconry, medieval music and dancing, combat demonstrations, many craft stalls and a showcase exhibition area for local societies.

We have taken stand space and need volunteers to 'man' the stand to chat with visitors and sign up new members. Visual items are also needed for the displays. David Cawdell will be loaning a large 1/24th scale professionally built model of Lexden Mill but maps, pictures and artefacts will be welcome. There are 24 hour security guards on duty at night and a large crowd is expected to attend.



## THE CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

### *The Rise of Modern Colchester*

This may seem an odd choice for a talk to a newly formed history group but if we think about it for a moment it is an ideal subject with which to start our activities.

Andrew will give us an overview of how we got to this point which will give us so many ideas to explore whether it be transport, politics, economics, commerce social history, education or whatever.

He will try to include Lexden as much as possible but the rise of the town affects the rise of Lexden also.

The volunteer committee are working very hard to not only arrange an interesting programme of speakers and walks but this year also we have opportunities to publicise our new group at the Colchester Oyster Fayre and the Lexden History weekend.

Ambitious? Yes, but I believe it's good to have something short term to act as a catalyst to member involvement.

Please support all our events by your presence and tell any friends who you think might also be interested in joining us.

Geoff Pettit  
Chairman

## PROPOSED PROGRAMME

Subject

### MAY 10th

7.45pm Lexden Church Hall

### INNAUGURAL MEETING

A talk by Andrew Phillips

### "The Rise of Modern Colchester"

Please attend and bring a friend. Membership starts from this meeting — membership forms will be available on the night.

### JUNE 10/11th

The Colchester Oyster  
Fayre at Castle Park.

We are having a stand at this local history exhibition and need volunteers to explain about the Group and recruit new members.

### June 14th 7.45pm

To be announced at the May 10th meeting

### July 12th

Evening walk. (To be confirmed).



## **AMME OF EVENTS**

change

### **AUGUST No Meeting**

### **SEPTEMBER 13th 7.45**

*Preparing for -*

***Lexden History Weekend  
Lexden Church -date tba***

*Our big 'showcase' event and membership drive The September meeting will be to receive items for display and finalise arrangements.*

### **OCTOBER 11th 7.45pm**

*To be arranged.*

### **NOVEMBER 8th 7.45pm**

***Films of old Lexden  
Bernard Polley—Member of  
Colchester Film Makers Club.***

### **DECEMBER 13th**

***Seasonal Social event.***

## **DID YOU KNOW.....**

*You can have free access to some of the best data and reference material in the UK from your own computer at home ?*

*If you hold an Essex Library ticket (and most of us do I am sure) you can obtain very useful information from at least 18 of the top reference publications such as;*

*The Oxford National Dictionary of Biographies.*

*Back issues of all The Times Newspapers from 1785—1985*

***NEW April 2006!***

*"Original Sources" The world's greatest minds as recorded in their own words and first hand accounts.*

*Just visit the Essex County Council's website,  
click on Libraries,  
then click on 'online access',  
then click on 'Connect' for the site of your choice,  
type in your ELAN Readers' Card number (without any spaces) add your pass word (which is normally the last part of your postcode that you now use to obtain your library books) and bingo, the world of facts an figures is at your fingertips.*

*Essex County Council are Corporate Subscribers to this service which means that everyone in Essex can access the material completely free of charge. (as part of our Council Tax)*

## A GROUP PROJECT FOR THE COMING YEAR

*As well as the individual research that members are currently doing it was felt that the group as a whole could also work on a joint, corporate project to create something worthwhile for the Lexden village of the future.*

*Several suggestions were discussed and finally we chose "Lexden in Wartime" as a suitable subject to study, given that wartime memories are fast fading out of existence and will soon be lost forever, along with documentation, pictures, recollections etc.*

*If you have any memories or research about the Home Guard, firewatching, pillboxes, rationing,*

*street parties, evacuees, etc. please write it down for posterity.*

*Members may safely deposit material with the archive and it is hoped to produce a booklet at the end of the session so that a written record of life in Lexden at that time can be left on file for future generations.*

*There's no rush., we have all year to collate and write up the material and at the end of the year we can have something to be proud of that we can leave for others to study.*



**Lexden Home Guard - Recognise anybody?**



## TRAGIC ACCIDENT TO LEXDEN PARK SERVANT

A sad and fatal accident occurred in October 1831 to Robert Hewitt, a servant to Mr J F Mills of Lexden Park.

Mr Mills' carriage was returning from Copford in the evening, when Robert Hewitt, who was sitting behind, suddenly had a fit and fell upon the wheel.

He remained there until the carriage reached Lexden Park, where he was found lodged on the wheel. He was severely injured by the wheel which had literally ground away a large portion of the shoulder, separating the arteries.

The blood which flowed from the wound was traced back nearly two and a half miles.

He lingered with little pain, until he died. He had no recollection of what had happened, except that he remembered his hat falling off. His hat was found near Mr. Ambrose's house at Copford. Robert Hewitt left a wife and six children.

He was buried in Lexden churchyard along with two other of Mr Mill's servants who died in three consecutive years. Mr Mills had the headstones made (pictured below) as a memorial to his three faithful servants.

Brian Barton.

Perhaps Brian can tell us what happened to the other two in the next issue. Ed.



**SALES WANTS  
AND  
MEMBER'S NOTICES**

*I am going to leave this space for members to advertise sales, wants, requests for information about projects etc. Here are some examples.*

**WANTED**

*Information about the demolition of Lexden Mill in Spring Lane around 1970. Any info or pictures please contact David Cawdell (Colchester 540403)*

**WANTED**

*Items, articles, letters, photographs from members to put in this magazine. I don't want to write every issue myself. Copy can be emailed to me at d.cawdell@btinternet.com*

**WANTED**

*Local businesses to support the magazine by placing adverts, either using existing artwork or I can produce new artwork free of charge. Very reasonable rates can be negotiated—small ads as cheap as £5 per year.*

**NATIONAL LOCAL  
HISTORY MONTH**

*September has been designated as a national focus on local history groups and we are hoping to arrange a History Weekend at the Church during the latter part of the month.*

*We will be arranging an exhibition of pictures, exhibits, bygones etc. in the Church Hall. It will hopefully be open to the public all day Saturday and Sunday afternoon with a private viewing for churchgoers on Sunday morning.*

*It will also be another opportunity to recruit more members.*

*Any suggestions or offers of help, loan of artefacts etc. will be very welcome.*

*This will require a great deal of planning and preparation and all members are asked to help make this Showcase event a success.*

*The September 13th meeting will be a 'working meeting' given over to receiving, recording and sorting out artefacts, maps photographs etc. so please look out any items you think will be suitable and bring them to that meeting.*

*More details later.*