

The Newsletter of the

Wivenhoe History Group



Newsletter No. 7 - April 2014

The Wivenhoe Memories Exhibition

It is only when one sees John Stewart's blog, *Wivenhoe Heritage*, which has now had almost twenty thousand hits within a few months, or sees his exhibition of photographs and other memorabilia in the William Loveless Hall as we did at the start of this month,



that one realises how lucky our community is to have his collection of priceless photographs covering Wivenhoe's history over the last century.

Many other places would give their eye teeth to have such records available to them. The photographs below give an idea of the wealth of his collection and the interest it arouses in local residents. Many congratulations to John on another successful exhibition.

See John Stewart's Heritage blog:
<http://wivenhoeheritage.blogspot.co.uk>

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Pat Smith's Brainwave

Almost everyone in Wivenhoe knows Pat Smith, who is a stalwart member of The Wivenhoe Society. A few weeks ago, Pat attended a weekend fair in Great Bentley. One of the big attractions on display in the parish church proved to be the earliest surviving parish registers – of births, marriages and deaths – for Great Bentley which had been temporarily transferred from their place of legal deposit, the Essex Record Office, to the church where they had originally been kept. Pat was kind enough to let the History Group know of this and enquiries have been made of the Essex Record Office to ask if our earliest parish registers may be sent here to be seen in St Mary's church in the near future. We shall let you know if this is practicable.

Letters from Wivenhoe

Wivenhoe is one of the very few places in Essex from which correspondence survives from the fifteenth-century. The reason for this is that Wivenhoe Hall came into the possession of the de Veres, Earls of Oxford, following a marriage to the Walton heiress. A very large house was then built here. The letters below are from the 12th Earl's wife to one of the de Vere family's servants in Norfolk, John Paston, in the early-1450s. Traditionally, great landowners like the de Veres were expected to protect the interests of their allies, servants and tenants, which is what the Countess of Oxford was engaged in doing. (The language has been modernised to make these two letters more intelligible.)

1. The Countess of Oxford to John Paston (no later than 1454)

Right trusty and well beloved John Paston, Esquire

Right trusty and entirely well beloved, I greet you well, praying you as I specially trust you that you will be [a] good friend to James Arblaster [of Fishley near Acle in Norfolk] in his matter [i.e. legal case] touching the manor of Smalbergh, as I know well you have ever been to him [a] right special friend; and though it be said that the said James had great troubles, losses and adversity heretofore, nevertheless he shall not be so bare of friends nor [of] goods but that I will see him helped, with the mercy of God. In performing whereof the bearer of this [letter] shall inform you of my intent and disposition more largely than I will put in writing.

And the [Holy] Trinity have you in his keeping. Written at Wivenhoe the vij [7th] day of August.

ELIZABETH VERE, Countess of Oxford.

2. The Countess of Oxford to John Paston (no later than 1466)

To my right entirely well beloved John Paston of Norwich, Esquire

Right entirely well beloved, I greet you well, thanking you of the great gentleness you have showed to my right well beloved James Arblaster, praying you to continue it; and if there be any thing that I may do for you or any of yours, here or in any other place, I pray you let me know and I shall be ready to do it, with the grace of God, who you have in his keeping. And I pray you to be friendly unto my right well beloved Agnes Arblaster, which is to me [a] great pleasure and heart's ease and you so be.

Written at Wivenhoe the xiiij [13th] day of April.

OXENFORD

ELIZABETH

People in the fifteenth century understood that those at the top of the social scale owed an obligation to help their allies further down that scale and, in return, received their loyalty.

Steve Ford

As many people will know, Steve Ford passed away on 4th April. One of the last things he was able to do as one of our Councillors was to approve a grant of money from the Locality Budget of the Borough Council to our History Group. It is only right to record our gratitude to him for this grant. It will not be forgotten.

Future Events

Wed 21 May. Meeting in the Scout and Guide Hall starting 2pm. Talk by Barney Loughran from the War Graves Photographic Project and his research into Wivenhoe man, Thomas Baker who lost his life when the SS Abooso sank off the coast of Nigeria. Also, former Wivenhoe resident, Richard Moreton, who used to live at Vine Farm House in Colchester Road, whose family sold off the land behind the Farm House in the 1960s for building what we now call Vine Farm Estate. He will talk about his memories from that time.

Wed 11 June - 7.30 p.m. Group Meeting in the Scout and Guide Hall with talk by Andrew Phillips on "Colchester 11th June Recalled". Andrew is a well-known local historian and a delightful speaker.

Wed 9 July 2.00 pm. Group Meeting in the Scout and Guide Hall to finalise plans for an Autumn Exhibition on "Wivenhoe 1914 - 1918".

23-25 August (Saturday to Monday) 10.00 am to 5.00 pm Wivenhoe Memories Exhibition in William Loveless Hall. More memorabilia from John Stewart's collection.

September - Group Visit to the Imperial War Museum planned.

Fri 17 October - 7.30 pm. Public Talk in St Mary's Church by Paul Rusiecki publisher of a book called "The Impact of Catastrophe - The people of Essex & WW1".

WW1 Project

If anyone has information on a Wivenhoe person who was involved in WW1 at home or abroad, do get in touch with us. We are interested in both soldiers & civilians, and stories which have been passed down through the family.



Please do get in touch with us at: wivenhoehistory2@gmail.com

The Wivenhoe History Group web site:

Want to know more about us and the sort of things we are interested in doing? Check out our website:

www.wivenhoehistory.org.uk/home