

The Newsletter of the  
*Wivenhoe History Group*



October 2013

The last few weeks have been busy for us with a Group outing to Broomfield Hall, Felsted and Leez Priory, organising our very first lecture which was extremely successful, setting up a temporary web site whilst we get the necessary funding for a full Community Archive, completing a grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund and holding a monthly meeting which had a Family History focus. Thanks to all the people who made this all happen.

*Peter Hill, Chairman*

**October 11<sup>th</sup> talk in St Mary's Church**

We held our first public talk in our parish church on Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> October, given by Chris Thompson, one of our Group's founding members.

On a cold, wet night, over 120 people came to hear about the fortunes of the de Vere and Howard families in the period of the

Wars of the Roses. We also heard about Wivenhoe Hall, which was one of the largest, if not the largest, late medieval house in Essex. It must have been larger than Layer Marney Towers and lay



between the High Street, de Vere Lane and the KGV Playing Field. The survival of the accounts of the 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Norfolk and of the 13<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford mean we know some things about life in the Hall in its heyday.



Chris Thompson's research into the records of Wivenhoe Hall revealed that around 1485 a bricklayer called John Perrekyn from Mile End agreed to make 80,000 bricks in a kiln here subject to then owner, the Duke of Norfolk, providing the necessary wood, sand and straw. This would have been for a major extension as the building of the Hall was first started in the 1440s. Sadly not much of the original building survived past about 1625.

A transcript of Chris's talk is available on our new web site [www.wivenhoehistory.org.uk](http://www.wivenhoehistory.org.uk)

## **Visit to Broomfield Hall, Felsted Old School and Leez Priory**

On a rather damp Thursday, the 19<sup>th</sup> of September, a small group of us went exploring a part of Essex that none of us were every familiar with. Led by Chris Thompson, who regaled us with his considerable knowledge of the Rich family, we went first to Broomfield Hall, just north of Chelmsford, which the Rich family acquired around 1541. The Rich family were indeed rich owning many other grand properties in Essex including Leez Priory. Lord Rich founded the old school in Felsted and was buried in Felsted Church upon his death in 1567.

*Right: Picture of the tomb of Lord Rich in Felsted Church*



## **Forthcoming visits**

Next Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> October, a group of our members is going to Castle Hedingham for a guided tour of the ancestral home of the de Vere family. The Norman Keep is one of the best preserved in the country and well worth seeing.

## **Essex Record Office**

The arrangements are now in hand for a visit to the Essex Record Office at **2 p.m. on Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2014**. This will give everyone going the chance to learn about the resources available there to investigate the history of Wivenhoe. One of the archivists will act as our guide.

## **Albert Sloman Library**

The Group has made contact with the University of Essex's senior librarians. The Library has some important books and periodicals on local history in its collections (as well as housing the magnificent library of the Essex Society for Archaeology and History). We are hoping to see these as well as some books from the seventeenth-century library of Samuel Harsnett, the Colchester man who became Archbishop of York, and to be shown the on-line databases accessible via the Library.

## **Family History**

Two of our members, Louise Coleman and Di Naylor, gave talks at our last meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> October about their enquiries into their family histories. It was clear how enthusiastic they were and how interested other members were. A highlight not to be forgotten.

## Group Website

A temporary website [www.wivenhoehistory.org.uk](http://www.wivenhoehistory.org.uk) is now operational, and has for instance a transcript of the talk given on October 11<sup>th</sup> on the de Veres and Wivenhoe Hall. Eventually the contents of the website will be uploaded to our planned Community Archive.