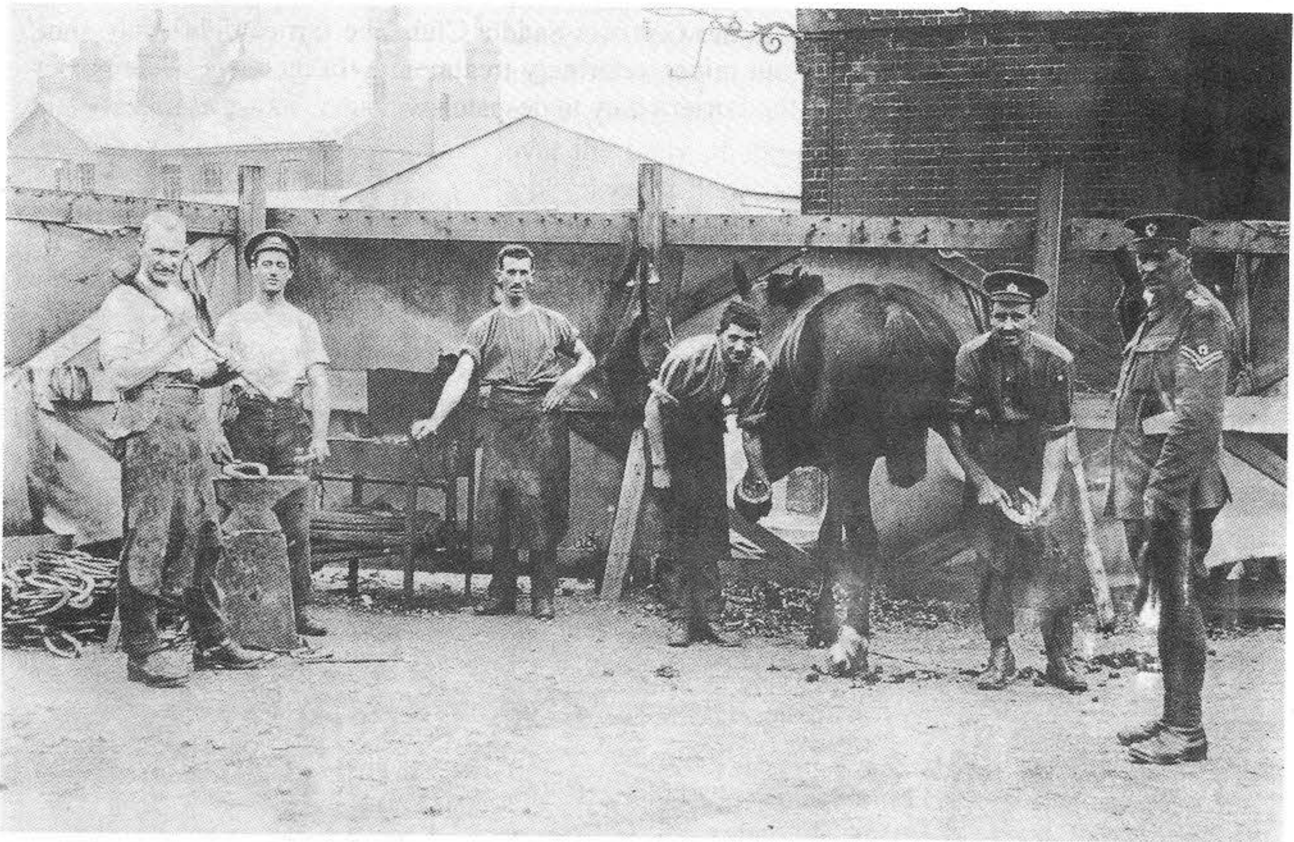
Issue No 3 Price 50p

Colchester Recalled



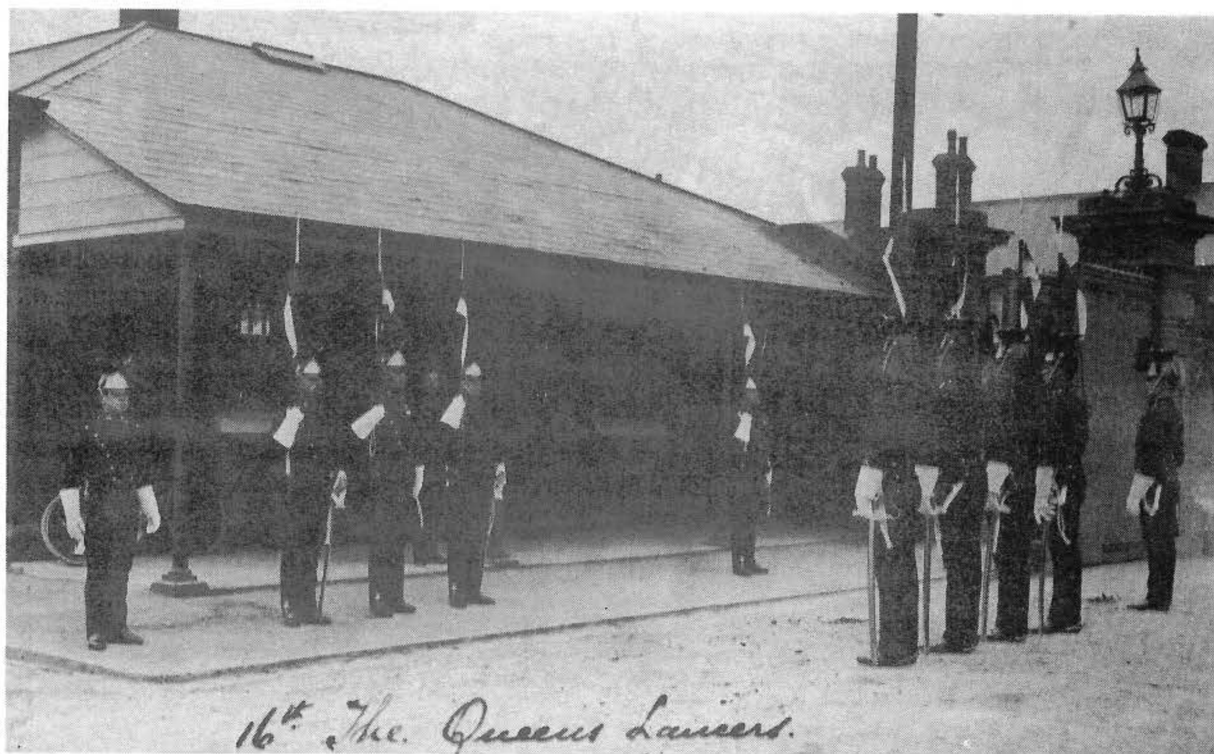
Farriers at work at the Garrison stables - Early 20th century

MARCEL GLOVER IN CONVERSATION WITH EDWARD IRVING

People living in Colchester in 1939 may recall that all the horses in the Cavalry barracks were shot at the outbreak of the war. Despite claims that the British Army was the first to be entirely mechanised, limited numbers of horses and mules were used after 1939 and this tale of what may be the very last British cavalry charge was recorded in 1989 by Mr Edward Irving.

Not long after the war broke out we had a bit of bother with the Vichy French up in Syria. They were generally giving everyone a hard time, they were a damn nuisance. They were anti De Gaulle and.. everyone else, and we had to do something about it. So ... the Yeomanry went in there plus a few regulars and we gave them a general jolly good sort out. Incidentally, that's where the last cavalry charge that I can think of took place. That was the Cheshire Yeomanry, well .... about half a squadron of them I think, they'd been well and truly shelled and cut up and in quite a muddle, and there was a Col. Jack Taylor was their commanding officer and he collected these men together, he said "right, we'll stop these blinking froggies," he said "there's a machine gun nest up there" he says" about four guns" he says "we're going to shift them". And they used the country like countrymen would, they got round behind them, these silly arses, they were sitting on the face of the hill. Well the Cheshire Yeomanry gotround behind them without making a lot of noise, and as they came over the top of that rise they out swords and they yelled like hell and they shifted these Frenchmen. Those who didn't get carved up got shot and that was it. Well, certain people have written potted histories about the Syrian Campaign and the First Cavalry Division, of which we were part at the time, saying that these chaps in the Cheshire Yeomanry didn't get a chance to do anything because the Frenchmen had cleared off beforehand, they damn well hadn't, 'cause they got shot with pistols and all blinking sorts, they fixed them up, that was the end of that little job, there was no more trouble from the Vichy French.

Mr Irving, who died earlier this year, was a farrier in both war and peace. At the time of his recording he had just retired as farrier to the Garrison Saddle Club The farrier didn't only shoe horses, he was also expected to carry out minor veterinary treatments. In the days when horses were used in the thick of battle, it was the farrier's duty to despatch wounded horses as quickly and humanely as possible



16th The Queen's Lancers - Changing of the Guard - Artillery Barracks, Colchester - 1905

DO YOU REMEMBER?

I wonder how many readers can recall the remedies and preventive measures resorted to by poor people before the NHS came into existence.
I know of children who were sewn into their clothes for the winter to prevent colds and my grandmother used to make herself a brown paper vest each winter, consisting of several layers of thick brown paper pasted together and sometimes the paste would be spiced with vinegar to prevent bronchitis, so Gran crackled whenever she bent down or sat down.
Children were kept "Free" by regular doses of various laxatives - Syrup of Figs, Senna pods, Paregoric, Liquid Paraffin, whilst Scotts Emulsion, Malt and Cod Liver Oil were also given and Wintergreen or Sloan's Liniment rubbed into the skin cured aches, pains and bruises etc. A cloth soaked in strong tea and often made up as a poultice stuffed with tea leaves was placed on scalds or burns, the tannic from the leaves being a soothing agent. Other poultices for suppurating wounds or abscesses were made up of hot bread and milk, or cow dung and boils were sucked out by a method of vacuum suction, when a bottle would be upturned over the boil after hot water or heat had created the vacuum suction effect. This was effective if well carried out, but often it was extremely painful as the flesh and boil got lodged inside the neck of the bottle.
Head lice or nits were commonplace in some families and bone combing of hair over a newspaper to remove dandruff and nits together which were popped by thumb nail to kill them was often a weekly practice, whilst washing of hair in a paraffin solution was also supposed to kill the little blighters. Chilblains were cured or relieved when it snowed by rushing out in bare feet and rubbing them with snow, or in summer by whipping the offending toes with stinging nettles.

Mothers would cure or pacify children with styes on their eyes by rubbing the stye with a gold wedding ring, also used to determine the sex of the unborn child when suspended over the belly of the pregnant woman. Giving birth often took place at home and some homes were not very clean. Fathers were not allowed anywhere near the birth and kept busy boiling water, usually or mainly unnecessary whilst the doctor often had to use newspapers as the only clean hygienic surface on which to carry out the delivery. Sometimes room was so limited that the doctor had to climb onto the bed to make the delivery and there were few pain relieving measures around. Usually poorer people could not afford the doctor or to buy the prescribed drugs, so wise women and midwives were often the only assistance available to the woman in labour.
Warts were sometimes charmed away or rubbed with the half a raw potato to cause them to vanish, yet with all the poverty, many an elderly person would scrimp and save, denying themselves in life so that they could have a good funeral and not a pauper's one. It was as great a stigma as going into the workhouse where men and women were separated or of going into a geriatric ward where there was no rehabilitation but a bed bound existence leading to an early death.
If you became bound up, i.e. constipated or impacted, a soap and water enema was often the cure, whilst it was only the

relatively well off poor who could afford the cod-liver oil and malt or glucose with Vitamin D to fend off various colds and ills.
So it was in the days before the NHS began in the year 1948 when medicines became free as did doctor's consultations, and whilst some charges have been imposed over the last fifty years it is still an excellent service to those who cannot afford to pay as private patients. No longer do you see elderly people in Woolworth's or other big stores shuffling through a counter full of spectacles to find a pair that suited them, whilst artificial legs are no longer peg-legs with wooden under arm crutches, but well made prostheses made to individual need and cosmetically acceptable. What a change from the old days, were they really good old days or in the field of health does NHS stand for Never had it so Good!

Andrew Millar.

THORRINGTON MILL

When the present Thorrington Mill was built in 1831, it stood on the site of many previous mills. It has one great advantage over any windmill as it is a tidal mill and does not rely as does the windmill on the vagaries of the wind. Tides are reliable, twice daily, though their height can vary and the times of high tide can vary day to day, so that sometimes the miller would have to work at night. In days when there was no electricity and light was supplied by oil lamp or candles, it is not surprising that many a mill - usually a wooden structure, was burnt down, filled as it was with highly combustible material.
A tide mill as at Thorrington works by trapping a pond full of water as the tide rises sweeping up the Alresford Creek and along the Tenpenny Brook, pushing open a pair of water gates and flooding into the pond. As the tide ebbs the water flow closes this pair of gates and so a head of water is trapped giving a source of potential energy to drive the mill mechanism. When the miller wants to grind his corn he simply opens a sluice gate, releasing water down a channel to drive a giant water wheel sixteen feet in diameter, made of an iron framing with African hardwood paddles - the original paddles would have been of elm - and the rotation of this wheel would turn a series of gears, spindles and levers to work the mill.
Although corn was the usual commodity ground by the miller, it was not always so, as at one time boats would go into the river, dredge up a quantity of septaria, which the miller would grind to a powder, dry in a kiln and use as a basis for Roman cement. There are no signs of the original kiln today.
On the ground floor of the mill the drive from the water wheel is transferred through a horizontal wheel known as a "Wallower" to a gigantic vertical shaft on top of which is the "giant spur wheel". The giant spur wheel is made of wood, although metal spur wheels were available, a miller would favour either two wooden or one wood and one metal wheel to mesh together to lessen the noise factor. Around the circumference of the giant spur wheel are set a series of cogs or gear teeth, also made of wood and set into the giant spur by means of a long tail protruding from the cog.
As Thorrington Mill drives three pairs of mill stones, around the perimeter of the giant spur are some metal spindles or stone spindles which rise up through the ceiling to the mill stones situated on the second floor. The spindle would pass through a hole in the lower millstone and be fixed to the centre of the upper millstone. The distance between the stones could be adjusted by means of a lever and bearing at the bottom of the stone spindle, whilst a cogwheel engaged with the cogs of the giant spur wheel to work the drive spindles when grinding was in progress.
The stones themselves were made from stone brought from France in small sections and fitted together with Plaster of Paris before metal hoops were heated and wrought on to the circumference or rim of the millstone exactly as a wheelwright would fix a metal tyre to a wagon wheel.
As much work was done by gravity as was possible, so this necessitated lifting the sacks of wheat to the top floor by a hoist. This hoist could be operated from the upper floor by means of two ropes which controlled a lever on the middle floor which in turn raised a spindle to engage with a leather

belt to drive the hoist. The lever was held in place by a metal pin and this could be released by the second rope and so disengage the drive belt and stop the hoist. However at Thorrington there is a unique feature to guard against a daydreaming miller who might not stop the hoist in time causing the sack of wheat to come into contact with the pulley on the ceiling, then bursting open to spill its contents. This mechanism was a simple lever which could automatically disengage the drive mechanism and stop the hoist at an appropriate level.

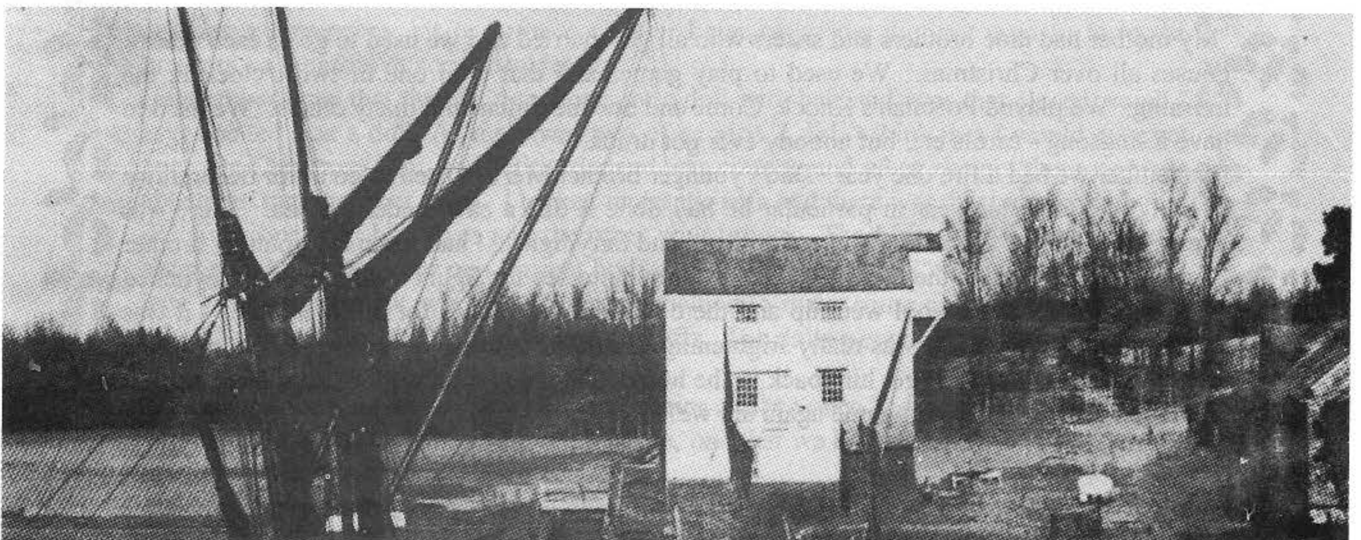
Having hoisted the load of wheat to be milled on to the upper floor, the miller would carry them across the narrow wooden gangplank that formed the only flooring in at this upper level and tip the wheat down into a number of large wooden bins. In the floor of each bin would be a hole leading to either a wooden chute or a canvas sleeve, whilst a trapdoor in the walkway enabled the wholemeal flour to be hoisted up again to the upper floor should the husks be required to be removed. In this operation the wholemeal flour would be fed into another bin, which in turn was connected to a separator on the middle floor. An extra process - an extra charge!

The wheat came down the wooden or canvas ducts from the upper floor and into a hopper which funnelled the grain via a cam or beater consisting of a wooden wheel with four bumps on it which tapped continuously as it revolved enabling a steady flow of grain to be fed down the chute leading to the eye, or hole in the middle of the upper millwheel. When in operation this wooden beater would chatter all day long, and so it was known rather unkindly as a "Damsel".

As the grain was funnelled through the millwheels, the surfaces of which were chiselled into several large furrows with sharp edges, which had to be kept sharp and keen by dressing the stones at regular intervals, which acted as scissors to break down the husks whilst finer grooves milled it down finer and finer depending on the closeness of the millstone setting till the flour of the required consistency was extruded from the edges of the millwheel to be collected inside a wooden casing and then fed through a hole in the floor beneath the millstones down a tube to flow into the sacks below.

This completes the wholemeal process, but if you wish to remove the husks and turn your wholemeal brown flour into a whiter end product, then you raise the sacks up again to the upper floor and feed it down another chute to the separator. This separator is a multisided horizontal framework which is covered in a fabric mesh. Originally this fabric would have been silk, but it is now replaced by some synthetic material and as the flour is fed into the separator it falls through gradually diminishing meshes until the husk or bran which is ground in larger fragments, accumulates at the other end and can be removed to be rendered into animal feed whilst the refined flour is again channelled into sacks to complete the process.

Thorrington Mill is now owned and cared for as part of our heritage by Essex County Council and visits can be arranged by Mr Hoyle, the Visiting Arrangements Officer for all mills in Essex.



Thorrington Tide Mill - When Sailing Barges used its Creek

Christmas Memories

Edward Irving - born. 1918 (parents owned a Haberdashery shop in Long Wyre Street)

"Christmas morning was a leisurely affair for my parents. The shop would have been open until 9pm on Christmas Eve and they didn't want to be woken up early the next day. Gas lighting made it difficult for us children to be active much before dawn as it was our parent's job to light the brackets. However, as soon as there was some light, we children would be into the pillowcases of presents which hung at foot of our beds.
We didn't go to church on Christmas Day but I remember my father going to the Moot Hall to help out with the Poor Children's Christmas breakfast. This was a businessmen's charity which collected money throughout the year and organized a Christmas morning treat for the children from the poorest areas of the town. The treat consisted of a good meal and some small presents to take home.
Christmas dinner at home was fairly conventional usually consisting of a large chicken with the usual trimmings and Christmas pudding. Mother's family would come round for tea and an evening of party games."

Joe Lawrence - born 1903

"Mother used to save up all the year for Christmas. There was more meat there at Christmas time than there was in the butcher's shop - it was open house, all the family was there.
The house was decorated at Christmas. Mum would buy strips of paper and we would make chains with paste made out of flour. We used to have a tree - no lights or anything like that and the only presents we got was an apple, orange, nuts and a penny in a stocking.
Mum would be up about three or four on Christmas morning making jam tarts and sausage rolls and we would come down and ask whether Father Christmas had been. The day was spent mostly eating and drinking and singing songs. Mum would buy a 'four and half' of beer and a good time and dancing was had.
Boxing day was mother's day - she did nothing. That day you looked after yourself and it was her rest day. You had plenty of leftovers."

Joan Reynolds - born 1922

"My mother had nine brothers and sisters who all got married and we used to go to each other's houses all over Christmas. We used to play games and that until one or two o'clock in the morning. We played Postman's Knock, Come and See the Sultan and many others. We used to have a singsong - carols etc, but nobody ever got drunk.
I remember we had a fire one year. Dad's younger brother Mervyn used to go in for decorations in a big way and this year in particular he had done it like a cave under the sea. There was streamers all across the ceiling and cotton wool and fairy lights. I had taken my younger brother Ronnie down there and they said to take him through to see the lights. Well when he switched them on all this cotton wool went up and there was pandemonium for a few minutes - it was dropping on everybody, it was really frightening. Little Ronnie ran down to the bottom of the garden and it took ages to get him back in the house. The next time we took him there he said "we're not going to play that game again are we?"

Les Crick - born 1906

"Christmas was a very special occasion when all the family would get together. There would be all of us boys and then several of our cousins, both boys and girls, and they would all come round especially on a Christmas evening for a get together and party. The wine would be flowing, that is the home made wine because that's what they used to do in them days - make home made wine.
Perhaps one would bring an accordion, or a violin or something like that and we would really lift the roof We used to sing all the old songs - they were really happy days."

Alice Farthing - born 1907

We always had a nice Christmas, there were lots of us - a big family. We used to hang a stocking up and would get a new penny, an orange and a few nuts, never a toy. We thought that was marvelous as we didn't normally get oranges in those days - they were a luxury.
We would have a good Christmas dinner and pudding. Mum would always have a goose, never a turkey. We used to have big family gatherings but we would never had any decorations or a Christmas tree.

Albert Cork - born 191 1

Christmas always used to be a good event in our family. We all had our stockings and little presents that we wanted - toys. I had a magic lantern one year and two or three boxes of slides.
We used to decorate the home with paper chains and holy - we made the paper chains ourselves. Christmas dinner was usually chicken, not many people had turkey in those days although some had a goose.
People used to send Christmas cards but not to the extent that they do today - you wouldn't get more than 10 - 12.

Phyllis Gibbins - born 1915

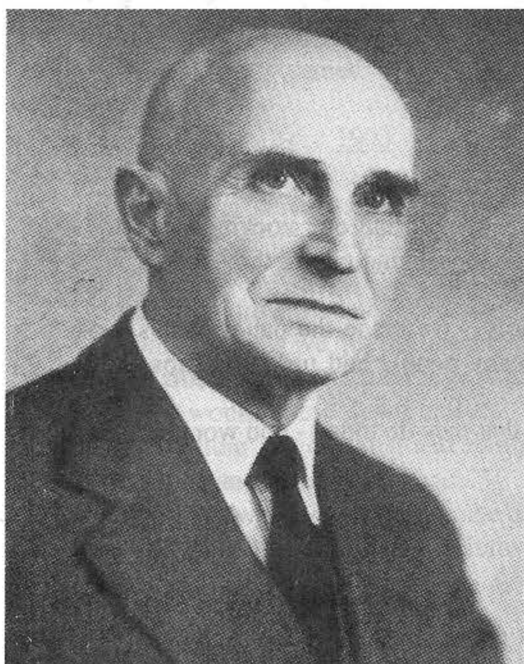
We used to hang our stockings up and would perhaps get an orange, a few nuts and perhaps a threepenny bit or some coppers. Later on in the day we used to have the presents - a pinafore or some hankies etc.
I remember once that the girl next door got a doll with hair and eyes that closed, so all I ever wanted was a doll, As there was two of us girls, I didn't think that I would ever get one. On Christmas Day, brother's girlfriend was coming and when she got there we were able to go into the front room. I looked under the sofa and there was this big box with two dolls in - one with blue eyes and the other with brown. The blue eyed one was for my sister and the brown eyed one for me, both were dressed, about 18" long and had straight legs. My sister-in-law, who was in service, helped to make some dolls clothes. It had a dress that was all frilly, a cloth coat and fur cuffs. The dolls were dressed more like grown women than children.
We used to decorate the home with paper chains and we once had a tree. We always had a family Christmas and would have a chicken, one that we had reared in the back garden. It was the best that we could afford.

ROBERT BULTITUDE' S MEMOIRS

An extract from the memoirs of Robert Bultitude, born in Colchester 1885 and former manager of the Essex & Suffolk Fire Office, High Street. (edited by Patrick Denney)

"For about 12 years from 1886 my family lived at 67 Castle Road. I was one year old when we went there. Our community was a wholly respectable one unsullied for instance by the type of casual labourer to be found in the neighbourhood of the Catholic church in Priory Street and some other quarters of the town, with the possible exception of a few widows who took in a highly desirable lodger or two.

Our accommodation, which was probably a good average, comprised of a parlour, used once or twice a year on special occasions, containing some plush furniture and horse hair rugs, a fine jingling contraption of brass rods and twiddley bits hanging from the centre of the ceiling, a fringed crochet mantle border, a stuffed kingfisher under one glass dome and a collection of wax fruits under another and of course one or two anti-macassars on the backs of the armless armchairs. The Keeping room, the centre of our domestic activities, including meals, contained a coal cooking range and the only time piece in the house, a square domed clock which had cost five shillings 25 years before and kept perfect time. The communicating scullery, just big enough to accommodate a wood fired copper, a mangle and the sink had a running supply of water.



Robert Geoffrey Bultitude

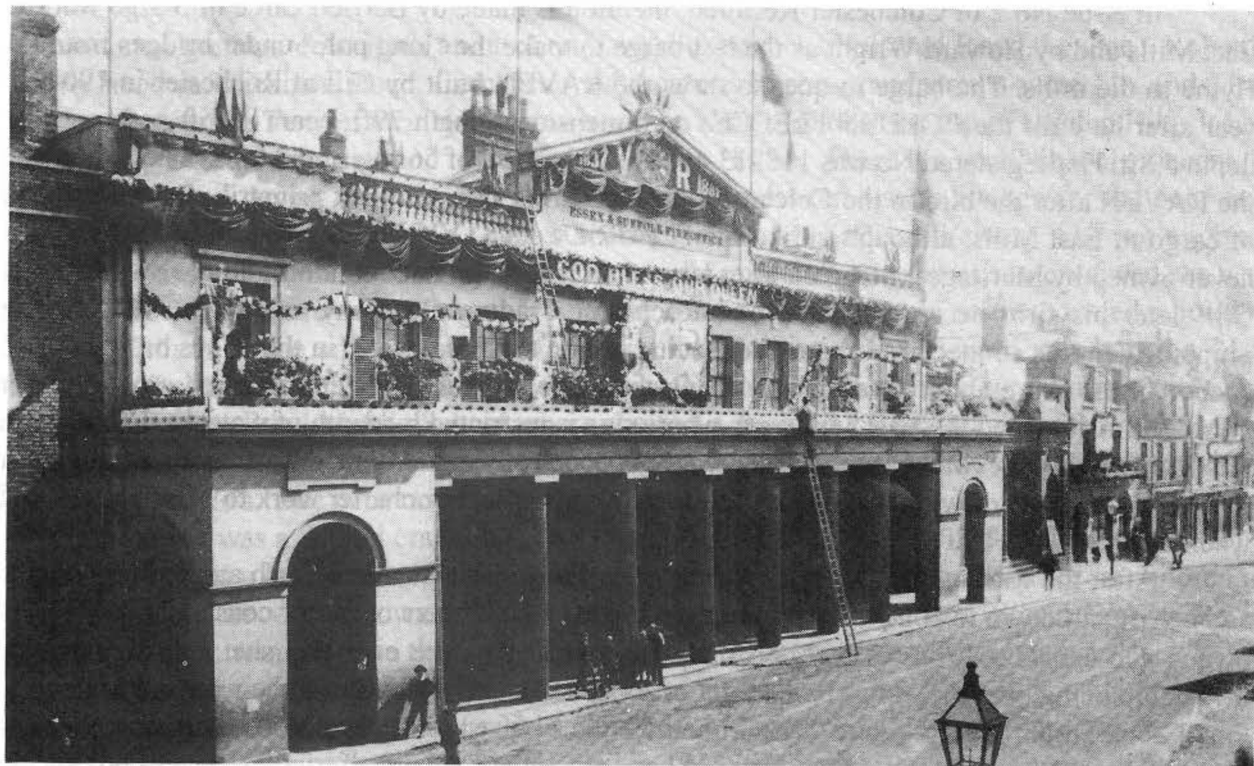
On the first floor were three bedrooms; lighting was by oil lamps later scrapped in favour of gas which was more convenient to operate giving a much more satisfactory illumination. A year or two before we left, a brick WC complete with flushing water was built as a lean-to against the scullery. It was only a step or two from the back door and very much more convenient than the wooden built earth closet known as 'the potty' adjoining the boundary wall at the end of the back garden, and more economical too, to the extent of 2d a week, the sum my father invariably threw out of the bedroom window to the night soil men on their odorous Saturday night visit.

At about tea time on a Sunday evening one could expect to hear the street singers, generally a down-at-heel man and his bedraggled wife, clutching under a shawl a white faced puny infant. Ordinarily the woman was a soloist, the man a few yards behind keeping an eye open for faces at windows, or doors ajar. We were not affluent enough to attract a German band, although a one man band occasionally visited us and an Italian organ grinder and attendant found it worthwhile to visit us once a week.

On reaching home from morning school on one occasion we boys were disappointed to learn that we had missed one of the infrequent visits of a gentleman from mid-Europe with his dancing bear. "Dance Joseph, catch de ball, turn a somersault" On passing through the Hole in the Wall on our way back to school in the afternoon however, we had the good fortune to find bear and bear leader stretched out, side by side, on their backs fast asleep just inside the meadow bordering Park Folly. Naturally we lost no time in ascertaining how many stones on their respective noses would be needed to restore them to wakefulness.

My brother Reg and I and three of our sisters began our secular education at a school in the town which, although called the Weslyan School and adjoining the Weslyan Chapel, was generally attended by children of all dissenting denominations. I think that we got a very good grounding in the three Rs in spite of the fact that in the boys classes, at any rate, the cane was the main vehicle

by means of which it was imparted,
Being of exceptional brilliance at the age of 10, I obtained a scholarship to the Grammar School. If discipline and practical groundwork were the basis of the teaching at the Weslyan, the Grammar School at that time concentrated on humanities in accordance with the school tradition of something like 400 years, ago, although only the boys in the upper forms took Greek even we first form boys were given copious amounts of Latin. I did not object to this mainly because I liked words and found it mildly interesting to try to apply Latin roots to English ones.
Our School's feud with the Blue Coat cads began before I became a Grammar bird and I do not know of its origin, but our enemies used to visit our part of town en masse to pick up a game fight. I assume that they were the ones who started the vendetta. These poor little wretches who attended the National Charity School were compelled to wear a uniform more or less similar to that of Christ's Hospital Boys which of course was an indication to all and sundry of their charitable status.
Blood knots are a simple and effective weapon for work at close quarters having the advantage of inflicting considerable pain without causing any serious injury. A 3 foot length of tough string, picture cord is good, and all that is needed, about 3 inches from one end, is the string drawing up
Our School's feud with the Blue Coat cads began before I became a Grammar bird and I do not know of its origin, but our enemies used to visit our part of town en masse to pick up a game fight. I assume that they were the ones who started the vendetta. These poor little wretches who attended the National Charity School were compelled to wear a uniform more or less similar to that of Christ's Hospital Boys which of course was an indication to all and sundry of their charitable status.
Blood knots are a simple and effective weapon for work at close quarters having the advantage of inflicting considerable pain without causing any serious injury. A 3 foot length of tough string, picture cord is good, and all that is needed, about 3 inches from one end, is the string drawing up
into a loop. The single strand is then wound tightly and closely around this loop to the extent of 3 or 4 thicknesses and secured by slipping the single end through the loop. One now has a satisfactory, but not too deadly, cosh at the end of say 8 inches or 9 inches of cord by which to swing it. Sometimes the fights were bloody and always took place in our West End part of the



Essex and Suffolk Fire Office - Queen Victoria's Jubilee 1887

Bluecoat SchoolBoy in Colchester

town, to the great annoyance of the well-to-do residents. Their complaints and serious injury to one participant eventually brought visits to both schools by police officers who threatened arrests if the nuisance continued.
My way home from school was by way of Park Folly through The Hole in the Wall and so on to Castle Road, and more often than not it was my misfortune to encounter small gangs of Irish casual labourers in the making, to whom a Grammar school cap was like a red rag to a bull. I cannot now remember whether anyone had ever taught me the value of the technique of trailing the code, or whether I was driven to it because there seemed no alternative. I do remember, however, my keen surprise when my bluff succeeded on the first and several subsequent occasions, secretly quaking in my shoes as I forced myself to push my way into the group, shove a scaring face close to each in turn and demand "which of you wants a fight - come on who wants a bloody nose". As I have said, it worked like a charm until one day a hulking youth that I had not seen before, and who had obviously been brought along especially for the purpose said "I do" and took care of the offensive with efficiency and despatch. Mother was not amused when I arrived home with a rapidly swelling eye, cut lips, a bloody nose and no cap."

To be continued

COLCHESTER BARGES

In Issue No 2 of Colchester Recalled, mention is made by Barrie Pearce of barge work to East Mills and by Howard Wright as the last barge to make the "long pole" under bridges from the Hythe to the mills. The barge in question was the RAVEN built by Gill at Rochester in 1904 (a year after he built the GOLDEN FLEECE) on dimensions length 79ft, beam 17.6ft and moulded depth 5.8ft. Her registered No was 118213 and PLA No 9750 of 56 registered tons. She was named the RAVEN after the bird in the Colchester Coat of Arms and was built primarily for the carriage of cargo to East Mills, although unlike the FLEUR De LYS, VIOLET and Le OFLEDA, she was never owned by Marriages, being on long term charter to them and remaining in the ownership of Gill(later his firm became London and Rochester Trading Company and later still Crescent Shipping). In this connection I remember seeing her on the Blackwater in the 1930s brought up at anchor in the Ware above Osea Island flying their bob, a white crescent on a red ground at her masthead. As befitted the East Mill work where size is restricted by depth of water and air draft in the bridge holes she was a comparatively smallbarge carrying about a 100 tons or a little over (about 500 quarters of wheat) and I would hazard a guess that her charter work to Marriages closed when their own LEFLEDA was built in 1915.

After the war, in the 1950s, like many other barges she was fitted with an auxiliary engine and her rig cut down to compete with the ever increasing numbers of motor coasters, many Dutch owned and subsidised, but in the 1970s her working days were over and she went into private ownership being used as a houseboat at Battersea and Chelsea. From there she went via Maldon to Flag Creek Brightlingsea where John Sunnucks the civil engineer in charge of maintenance at Essex University, did his best to hold her old bones together by the well tried method of boxing her in a chicken wire and concrete cladding.

I seem to recall that David Pettitt, a well known Wivenhoe yachtsman, told me that his grandfather, Captain Pettitt was one of her first masters, having previously served in their FLEUR De LYS. His two sons later became well known barge masters, Fred being skipper of their VIOLET and Jack of London and Rochester's MARIE MAY. Incidentally, Jack, well into his eighties is still going strong and despite deafness and failing sight, still goes hopping around Europe, returning home to Wivenhoe from time to time to see if his house is still there, - a fine bargeman and racing skipper and a hard man to beat.

When I was working for James Lawrence, the Brightlingsea sailmaker and former barge skipper in the early 1980s, the RAVEN was acquired by the owner of East Mills Hotel, who was, I believe, a Greek, the idea being to moor her alongside the Mill, rigged with sails made from netting, to be used as a tea room, thus adding a picturesque touch to the scene. The barge was brought to the Hythe and Jim Lawrence and I bodged up a couple of poles for use as setting booms to shove her along. With Peter Powell the Harbour Master and ex barge skipper in his dinghy and outboard motor ahead, off we went as soon as the tide came and she was afloat (this being necessary as the air draft through the bridge holes is minimal). The rest of our crew consisted of a young lad named Everitt I believe, who knew nothing of barges or the river, and the Greek owner. The river shoals on the way up and from time to time the barge would literally grind to a halt, rattling the pebbles under her bottom, the sound being magnified by the hold o the barge being empty. This seemed to upset the owner who thought that disaster was at hand and that she was going to sink. As the tide flowed we would be off again until the next shoal caused us a temporary halt. We moored up at the mill, had a pint in the hotel and left her to her fate. Sadly the idea of the tea room came to nothing, she lay neglected, leaked and settled on the bottom, finally being pumped out and taken below the bridge where she rapidly deteriorated and disintegrated, grass and weeds growing from cracks in her hull. Her final demise, when she was broken up by a demolition gang, was reported in the Essex County Standard last year - a sad end indeed.

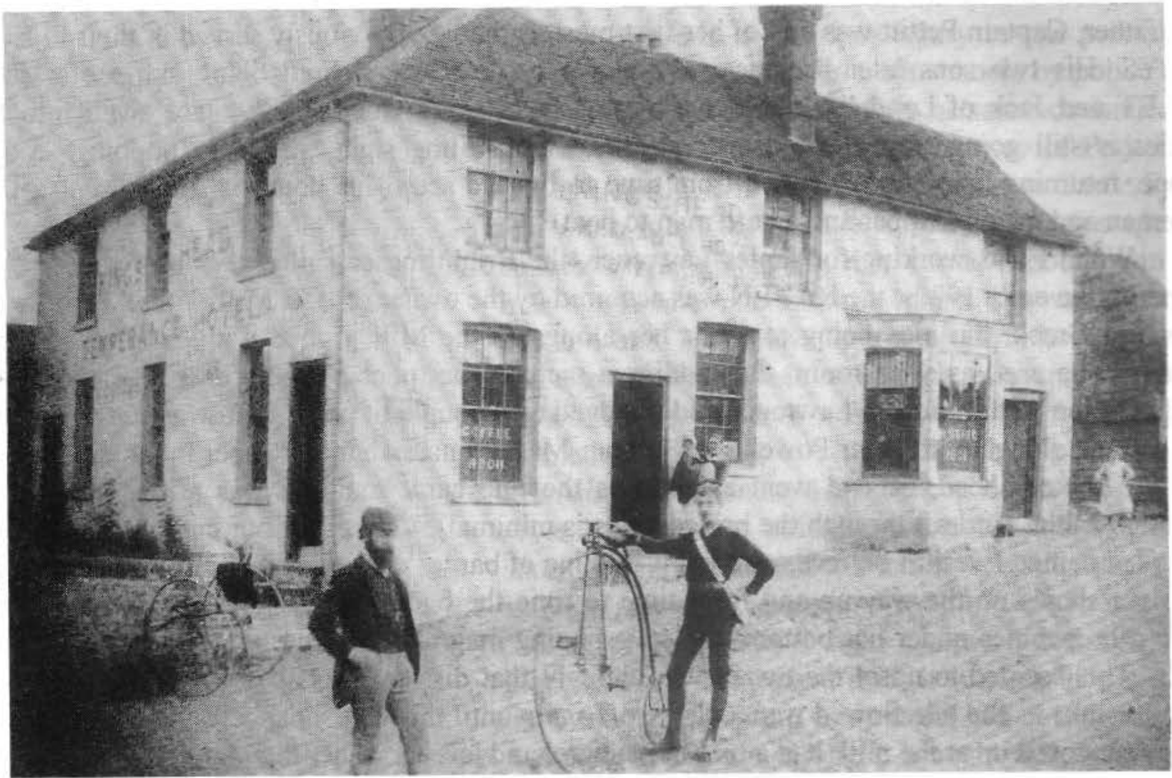
From Frank Thompson, Swallow Close, Layer de La Haye

MY ANCESTORS

My maternal grandparents, Ruth and Robert Tweed lived at 12 Halstead Road, Lexden. Robert's family lived in Wickham Road, Colchester. My maternal great-grandparents were Mr. and Mrs. Abbott who ran the Temperance Hotel known as The King's Head at the top of Lexden Hill. It has now been converted into flats and is known as Victoria House. There is a small chapel adjacent to it. They were all devout Quakers and my great-grandparents ran a soup kitchen for the poor and needy. My grandmother went to a Quaker boarding school at Saffron Walden. She got a job as children's nurse to the Hurnard family of Hill House, " Lexden. When she was interviewed she was asked if she could "drive" - they meant "could she drive a pony and trap" as they owned a holiday home at Frinton! The answer was "yes"! My mother, Louise Aileen Tweed was born on 24th March 1912 and went to Lexden School which was then opposite Lexden Church. From there she went to Hamilton Road Middle School where she had a good education, leaving schol at 16 years old. She then became an apprentice milliner at Piper's the drapers in High Street, Colchester which is now McDonald's. She became a brilliant needlewoman.

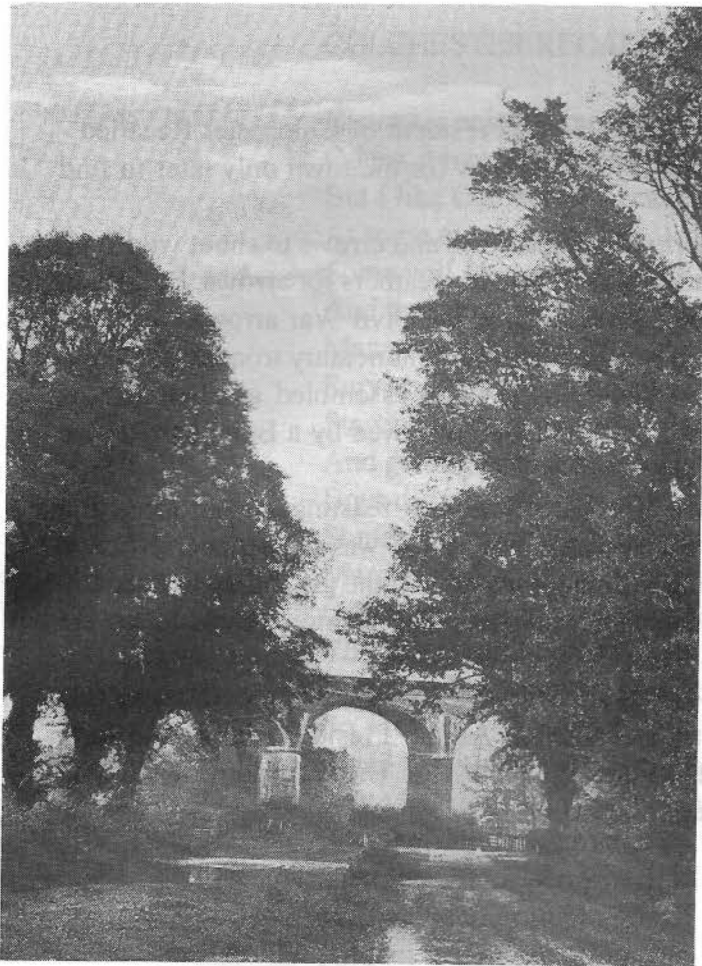
My grandfather was a skilled craftsman - a joiner. He had a shed at the end of the garden with a bench, a vice and a little stove where he did his carpentry. It was a lovely place for us children to play in during the war. He was called up towards the end of the first World War and was transported on a troop ship via the Cape of Good Hope to Mesopotamia where he was stuck in the desert on starvation rations waiting for a transport from Bombay to take the soldiers home. He got home several months after the war finished. His health was ruined. He had to sleep in the garden some of the time because he was so ill. He died in 1933; the same year that Granny Abbott died.

It was in 1933 also, that my parents were married at Lexden Church. My father, William John



The King's Head Temperance Hotel - Lexden

Bryant had left his home in Somerset to join the Regular Army and was stationed in Colchester Garrison working as a Batman to an officer, exercising his horses etc. He met my mother on the fairground at Lexden which is now an Ambulance Station. When his tour of duty ended, he went to work in London as a chauffeur and my mother followed him and found a job at Bourne & Hollingworth's in Oxford Street- she said they liked "country girls" so she was given the job. After my parents were married, they went back to live and work in London. My brother and I were both born in London. My father had a succession of jobs, but the best one (for us) was for the Strauss family who owned a beautiful country estate called "Stonehurst' outside Haywards Heath in Sussex. We lived in the Gate Lodge and were able to roam over the whole estate. My father got another job, working for a family who owned a chateau in France where they wet for their summer holidays in the summer of 1939. My parents went to live and work in France and Raymond and I were sent to stay with my grandmother Ruth Tweed at 12 Halstead Road, Lexden. When war broke out my parents had to flee from St. Malo - they had to leave their employer's Rolls Royce on the quay!
As soon as daddy arrived back in England he was called up and was shipped straight back to France with the BEF where he was caught up in the Dunkirk disaster. Mummy returned to 12 Halstead Road and went back to work at Piper's on the dress fabric counter. She worked five and a half days a week - Thursday was -"early closing day". She made most of our clothes including her mother's. Raymond and I had matching royal blue tailored coats and leggings when we were very young.
I was 5 years and Raymond was 4 years old when war broke out and we couldn't understand why we had been uprooted from our lovely home in Sussex to live in Nanna Tweed's cramped cottage in Halstead Road. It was traumatic for us and we didn't like Nanna Tweed - she seemed old and bad-tempered and she nagged us but she provided us with a home throughout the war years. We didn't see much of our mother as she worked long hours; she cycled to work every day and we were usually in bed by the time she got home. We rarely saw our father as he only came home on leave occasionally and living with Nanna Tweed was difficult as she was so puritanical.
Ray and I were enrolled at Lexden County Junior School, Trafalgar Road, Lexden. It was in the middle of a council housing estate which was locally known as "The Garden Village". It had been



Seven Arches, Lexden

built to rehouse people from the slums of Vineyard Street which were demolished - It is now a car park. The residents were rumoured to keep "coal in their baths". My first teacher was Miss Hall who was kind and motherly. My first headmaster was Mr. Mirrington followed by Mr. Orrin. One of my first memories was being herded into a dark concrete corridor during an air raid. We were very frightened. There was a "dog-fight" going on overhead. Later, underground shelters were built but we didn't have to use them much as the enemy aircraft usually went over Colchester seeking other targets. Some bombs were dropped on Colchester early in the war - they demolished the "Empire" cinema in Queen Street.

Another memory was at home we had an -"Anderson" shelter which took up nearly all the space in the front room. The sound of the air raid siren still sends shivers up my spine. There were a lot of "ack ack" guns in Colchester being a garrison town and they would be firing all night long some of the time. There were also "searchlights" and barrage balloons in the sky which made a spectacular sight at night time.

Life was very austere. My mother was virtually keeping us all as Nanna only had her very small widow's pension and my father was earning only a pittance as a bombardier in the Royal Artillery and he was saving as much as he could to buy a house at the end of the war. My mother was friendly with the butcher which ensured that we always had meat to eat. Otherwise I can only remember Marmite, beet root and cold rice pudding although we used to go mushrooming, blackberrying and crab apple picking. Mummy made as much jam, bottled fruit, chutney etc. as she could. There was a big plum tree in the garden and a white currant bush. There was also a very big William pear tree but most of the fruit dropped when it was ripe and the wasps swarmed over it. Cold meat was kept in a "safe" which hung on the wall outside the kitchen. Milk was delivered by horse-drawn float on which we had rides. Later we rode on the electric float. Milk did not stay fresh for long in summer. My mother made cream cheese with the curded milk. We had no fridge-milk was kept in a bucket of cold water in hot weather.

As we grew older, we were allowed to wander over the fields, woods and nearby lanes. We were very free and the summers always seemed to be hot and the winters were cold with plenty of snow so that we could go sledging over the Hilly Fields where we would try to "loop the loop". We used to go over "Hedge's Fields" and down the lane to the Seven Arches where a dam had been constructed to prevent enemy craft going up river. It formed a deep pool and a waterfall where we had a great time swimming and splashing. We used to go about in gangs. Our next door neighbours - the Addys - had 9 children. The two youngest, Leo and Jean, were our ages and we spent a lot of time playing with them. My grandmother was teetotal - therefore, strong drink and smoking were banned from our household. Consequently, my brother and I grew up in a very frugal but wholesome environment. Sex was never mentioned.

To be continued

THE NEW CLUB THAT WASN'T *by SEAX*

Colchester and District Archery Club was formed in 1954 by President of Colchester Recalled - Bill Tucker who smugly thought he had started up something new for the town only later to find out this was far from the truth.

Archery in Colchester has a long history. Prehistoric man used bows and arrows to shoot wildfowl. In the medieval period geese were raised to on our greens to provide feathers for arrows. Butt Road led to archery butts kept repaired until Elizabethan times. During the Civil War arrows were shot over the town wall to the besieged calling on them to surrender to Parliamentary troops.

Research shows there was an archery club in 1860. "A large party assembled at Lexton (now Lexden) Manor House (PO Papillon MP) on July 2nd for practice followed by a Ball at the Town Hall."

Archery meetings in Victorian times were a social event often with feasting in marquees and music. Some were staged at Berechurch Park. Between the wars there was a Garrison Officers' archery section and the photograph shows shooting the clout - a target on the ground up to over 100 yards away, the yew bow being aimed high to get the distance. The fashion points to an era between the two world wars.

The present day club is well known throughout the country for organising world record status two day tournaments which have attracted the country's best shots. All our President did was to form the post second World War club using first, Land Lane, then Garrison Ground and now the Mill Road Sports Centre, home also of Colchester Rugby Club.

Bill Tucker

Garrison Officers' Club between the wars - Can you recognise anyone?

COLCHESTER RECALLED

History is enjoyed by some
Others it just leaves them numb.
But I like Colchester Recalled
At some events I am appalled.
Some will interview old folk
And their hardships is no joke.
Many lived a frugal life
Survived through trouble and through strife.
Starting work at an early age,
And getting such a little wage.
Boys did engineering, or worked upon the land,
Sometimes their skills they were able to expand.
Many girls did tailoring, some worked in a shop,
Others worked in offices and progressed up to the top.
The Wars caused much disruption
And the need for more production.
So situations changed a lot
Some were better off, some were not.
It is good to hear these stories
And their future guarantees
That the Oral History Section
Will value their protection,
And all this information
Is good for conversation.

D.P. Day Jan/Feb 1998

Dear Colchester Recalled,

We were both born in Colchester and brought up there in the 1930s, so naturally we were very interested to see a copy of Colchester Recalled. Rita was living in Lexden and I was in the New Town/Hythe area. A relative of mine in those days kept the Lord Nelson Public House on Hythe Hill and this was frequented by many men from the barges. Unfortunately I was too young to be interested at the time but the article by Patrick Denney certainly revived memories. I wonder if the pub is still there?

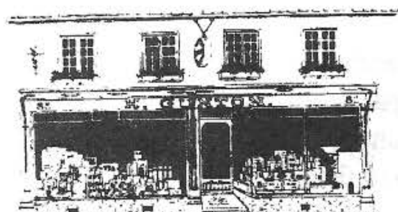
We left Colchester in 1966 to run the Post Office and Village Store/News Agency in Tostock, but retired at the end of 1994. The village has changed greatly over the 30 years that we have been here so we are heavily involved in recording older resident's memories before it is lost forever.

On our odd visit back to Colchester we find it heartbreaking to see changes that have taken place although it is called progress!!!

Best Wishes
John E Wheeler, Tostock, Suffolk.

H. GUNTON

Tea & Coffee Specialists



81 - 83 Crouch Street,
Colchester, Essex.
Telephone: (01206) 572200

WE ARE A FAMILY RUN BUSINESS ESTABLISHED IN 1936 BY THE LATE HERBERT GUNTON. AND HAVE BUILT UP A REPUTATION FOR SELLING HIGH QUALITY AND UN-USUAL FOODS WITH PERSONAL SERVICE AND ADVICE FOR OUR CLIENTELE.

SPECIALISING IN

COFFEE, ROASTED ON THE PREMISES,
11 PURE COFFEES AND 4 BLENDS
GROUND FRESHLY FOR EVERY PURCHASE,
(IF REQUIRED)

OVER 140 BRITISH AND CONTINENTAL CHEESES, FARM-HOUSE WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

DELICATESSEN, WITH OUR OWN HOME COOKED HAM,

AN EXTENSIVE RANGE OF LEAF, FRUIT AND HERBAL TEAS

GIFT HAMPERS SUPPLIED ALL YEAR.

WE ALSO DELIVER LOCALLY

EDITORIAL

This is the third edition of COLCHESTER RECALLED. It is published by the Oral History Group of the same name, which was set up to record for future generations, memories of Colchester and the surrounding area. The Colchester Recalled Group holds monthly meetings on Thursday at Colchester Institute and you would be very welcome to join us. We would also like to receive your articles, photographs, letters, queries and comments for future editions. These should be sent to Jim Robinson or Margaret Thomas. Anyone wishing to subscribe to the magazine should get in touch for details.

Margaret Thomas, Tudor Cottage, Water Lane, Little Horkesley, 01206 271244
Jim Robinson, 36 Mersea Road, Colchester CO2 7QS, 01206 540655

Colchester Recalled disclaims any responsibility for content of articles.