

COLCHESTER RECALLED

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*The Colchester Recalled Oral History Society
would like to congratulate Gunton's on their
80th Anniversary of serving the people
of Colchester, see page 1*

Also featured in this issue:

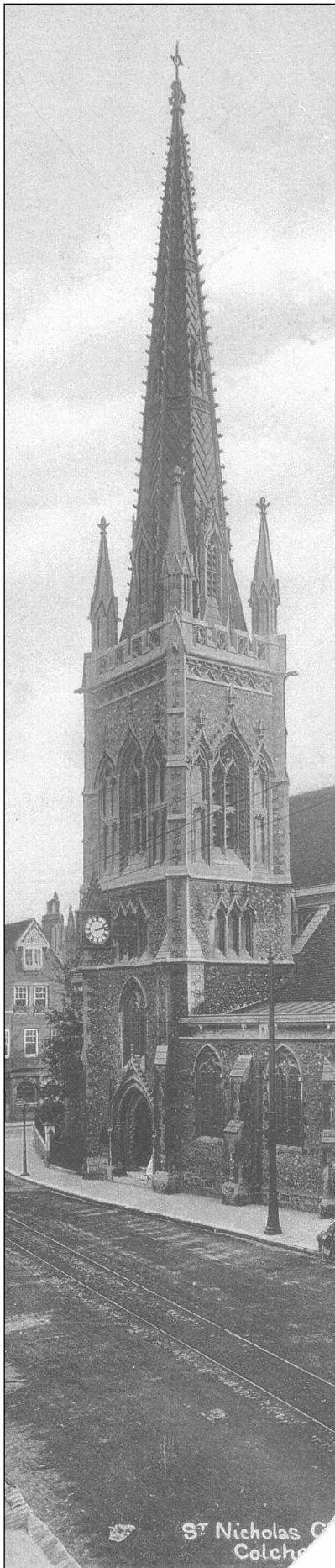
- Culver Street in 1969 · Freddy the Shrimp Man · Things That Tick in the Night
- Jumbo Then and Now · Magdalen Street Boys School 1874
- The Maltings at the Hythe · World War II as Observed By a Young Colcestrian
- Who Do You Think They Are?
- A Recollection of 'Pusser' Wade · Anyone For Tennis? · and much more!

Welcome to No.30 of COLCHESTER RECALLED. Again, as you will see, we have another good selection of articles which we hope that you will enjoy.

We are delighted to feature the 80th Anniversary of H. Gunton Ltd, our longest serving sponsor, having supported us for over 25 years.

A significant event took place earlier in 2016 when Colcheser Oral History Society was chosen by Essex Sound Archive to be involved with the first Sound Bench to be installed in Essex. In conjunction with Essex County Council, the Essex Record Office and Colchester Borough Council, a selection from our recordings were chosen to be available on the bench in Castle Park, situated in front of the rose beds opposite the Castle. The Bench was officially opened on Saturday 4th June - see photograph on page 7.

We are always delighted to receive your articles, letters and photographs. These should be sent either to Jim Robinson
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Colchester CO1 1ZU.
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Pictured left is one of the town's most famous landmarks of yesteryear - St Nicholas Church in High Street, shown with its beautiful spire.

Sadly, the building was pulled down in the mid 1950s to make way for St Nicholas House, the nondescript Co-op building, which now houses several businesses.

The original church was Saxon, but was completely rebuilt in the 1300s, a golden age for Colchester and its wool trade. By 1700 it had become very ruinous and its large square tower collapsed when a London builder was mending it, destroying much of the roof. The builder 'did a runner' and the tower was eventually replaced by a wooden copy! In 1875 it was virtually rebuilt by Sir George Gilbert Scott, the Victorian gothic architect, complete with this 45 metre high spire, dominating that end of High Street, and paid for by our High Steward, the banker George Errington.

This photograph is one of four in this format owned by Glyn Jackson. It is thought to have been taken in the 1920s and published by W H Smith. All four were taken in three parts and put together into four photographs by the camera while the pictures were being taken, resulting in some distortion of the images. In this particular shot the distortion is not all that obvious.

The other views taken by this method will be featured in future issues.

H. GUNTON LTD – 80 YEARS SERVING THE PEOPLE OF COLCHESTER

If you were to ask most people in Colchester where the best place in town is to buy coffee, they would probably point you in the direction of Gunton's in Crouch Street. For this long standing family business has been roasting and blending coffee beans for more years than most people can remember, and they have just notched up their 80th year of trading.

The business was started in June 1936 by Herbert Gunton whose family had relocated to Colchester from Ware in Hertfordshire sometime around 1880. By the time of the 1891 census, seventeen year old Herbert was employed as a grocer's apprentice, and by 1901 he had moved to Ashford



*A young Herbert Gunton -
the founder of the business*

in Kent where he was working as a grocer's manager. By 1911 he is described as a Grocer and Provision Dealer, and was married to Elsie Ballard from Ringwood in Hampshire with whom he had fathered four children – Stanley, Herbert-

Ewart, Audrey and Mona. His son Geoffrey, who would later take over the family business in Colchester, was born in 1914.

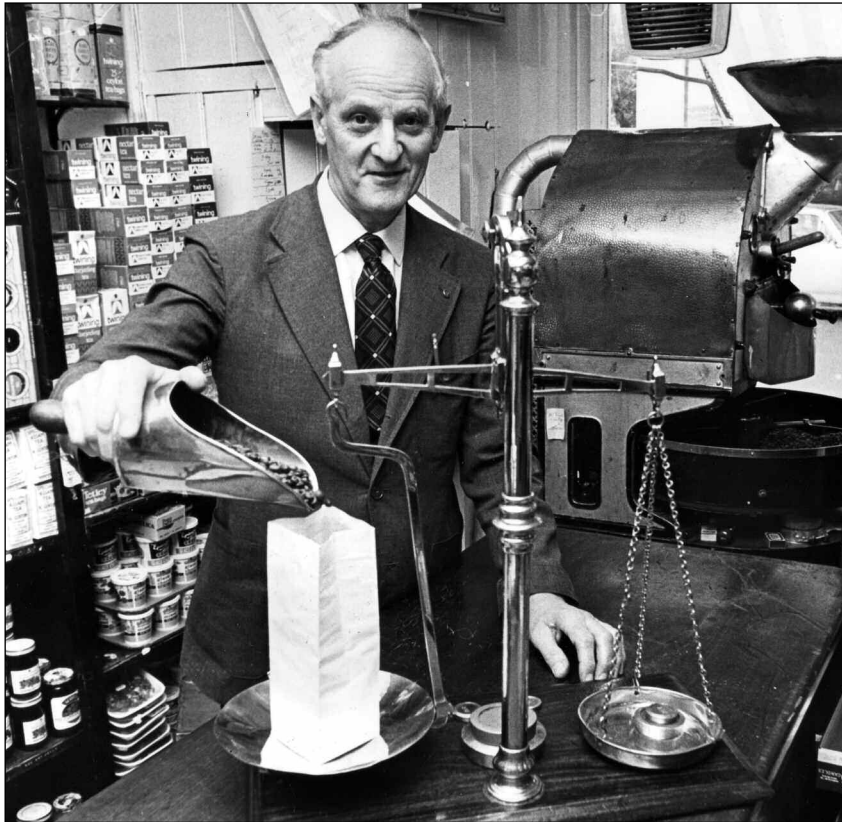
And it was sometime during 1914 that Herbert decided to move his young family back to Colchester where he took employment as a coffee roaster at Joscelyne's Café, which was located in the High Street on the same site that would later become Marks & Spencer. Herbert also went on to work for Forsdike and Bonner on the corner of Head Street and Culver Street, where he remained for several years until at the age of 62 he decided to start his own business. This was in June 1936 when he took over what had previously been a milliner's shop at 81 Crouch Street. About six months later he was joined in the business by his 22 year old son Geoffrey who was later to provide a description of the early shop:-

"The shop consisted of quite a small room measuring about thirty feet square and it had previously been a millinery shop run by Margery Woodward. There was another small room at the back and a small kitchen. The rest was just garden. I remember that the shop floor was covered with dark brown lino, which was polished every day – and it shone. The counter also shone and was made of solid mahogany, about six feet long and three inches thick. It had been purchased second-hand and had originally belonged to one of the banks in the town".

Geoffrey also recalled that as well as selling all kinds of groceries, they always roasted their own coffee – right from the very beginning. Like most shops of the period, there was no such thing as self-service and customers would simply hand over their shopping list to a member of staff who would then get their order up. While



The original shop at No 81 Crouch Street



Geoffrey Gunton weighing coffee beans in 1977

this was happening the customer would be able to rest their legs on one of the two chairs positioned at either end of the counter.

During wartime everyone was issued with a ration book which contained pages for various items such as cheese and sugar. Geoffrey recalls that the system worked quite well – most of the time:-

“I seem to remember that everyone was allowed about two ounces of cheese a week, and about a quarter of a pound of sugar. People could either take their ration weekly or save it up – but they couldn’t take it in advance. Sometimes customers would get very confused – they would spend a coupon and then decide that they wanted something else, and it was very difficult at times trying to explain to them that they had already had their ration. We also had ration books for our

own use because we couldn’t just go and help ourselves. If we took anything extra we wouldn’t have had enough for our customers.”

Although in the early days things like coffee, tea and jams were the specialities, the shop also sold lots of tinned food and other basic foodstuffs that

people needed. And while the present-day business offers much in the way of cheeses and hams and other choice provisions, these were not available to start with. All the food sold in the shop was delivered to their door (no cash and carry then), and in many cases customers’ orders were delivered to their homes, by bicycle.

According to Geoffrey the business continued to expand almost on a yearly basis, until in 1960 it was decided that more space was needed:-

“In 1960 we bought the shop next door (No 83), and ended up knocking the two buildings into one. This proved to be quite a big operation as everything had to be supported when the middle wall came down. But this gave us much more space and also allowed us to open a coffee room upstairs.”

By this time, however, Herbert had passed away having died in 1958 at the age of 85. Geoffrey recalled that his father had spent his whole life in the grocery trade and was still working to within a week



Keith Gunton roasting coffee under the watchful eye of his father Geoffrey

of his 85th birthday. Geoffrey was thus left to run the business on his own, but this was not to be for long for in 1965, after spending five years training elsewhere, including three years at Harrod's in London, Geoffrey's son Keith joined his father in the family business. From here on the business continued to expand and build upon its past reputation of selling high quality foods with an equally high level of customer service. In time, Keith's wife Valerie also joined the workforce and later both their children, Philip and Beverly, also become involved, although Beverly now works on a part time basis.

Today, the products on offer include an impressive cheese counter and a range of cooked meats, pies and savoury snacks,

and also an impressive range of Tiptree Patisserie cakes and slices. And, of course, we mustn't forget their ever popular upstairs morning coffee room. The cheese counter alone sells around fifty different British farmhouse cheeses, and at least as many continental versions. On the Deli counter one can buy Gunton's traditional home-cooked ham, as well as cooked meats and olives from countries across Europe. Or you may prefer to sample some of their marinated herrings, rollmops, smoked salmon or locally smoked mackerel. One other product which is proving to be a best-seller at the moment is Badu's Masala curry mix which comes in various strengths – and this is all just for starters!

Although working well into

his retirement Geoffrey Gunton finally passed away in 2004 and today the business is run jointly by his son Keith and grandson Philip. And as the firm now celebrates its 80th year of trading, business is thriving. Philip relates that the online side of the business has really taken off over the last decade almost replacing the home delivery side of things. But, of course, there will always be a place for the discerning customer who prefers to make a personal visit and browse the well-stocked shelves and experience what must surely be one of the town's last surviving traditional family run grocers and delicatessen. (See rear cover advertisement for contact details)

Patrick Denney



*A Family Affair: Three generation of the Gunton Family at work in 1998.
From left to right: Valerie, Beverly, Philip, Geoffrey and Keith*

MAGDALEN STREET BOYS' SCHOOL 1874

The *Essex County Standard* reported the following Court Hearing held on 22nd January regarding my family member, George Carlo, then aged 12.

Talking and playing with marbles and knife in class. Pupil Teacher, John Crosbie, told him to stay after school but saw him leaving at normal time. John Crosbie 'laid him on the ground'. Head Master Stephen Clark came out and tried to put George Carlo's head between his knees to tan him. George Carlo refused so was tanned on back and head. Brother Henry Carlo took George's part when John Crosbie trapped George in corner with his knees. George admitted he picked up a stone to threaten John Crosbie ('going to hurl stone at him'). Did same to Head Master and tried to break his cane. John Crosbie kicked George on the ground; a witness said Henry Carlo hit John Crosbie with slate.

Mrs Carlo went to School and said her children should not be punished - therefore both were

dismissed from school. John Crosbie said, in answer to query from Head Master, that he felt children would not have behaved so badly if they hadn't been encouraged by parents.

Mrs Carlo accepted that George was tiresome at home but should not suffer for that at school. She did not object to punishment but 'in medium sort of manner'.

Magistrate, Mr Tabor concluded that the punishment

was rather severe but that the provocation had been very great. The threat with stone would justify almost any amount of punishment.

School log records that Henry Carlo was punished for his threatening behaviour and George Carlo expelled.

Henry (then aged 13 was my grandfather!) Henry and George were sons of William Carlo (1832-91).

Harry Carlo



An early photograph of Harry's family

Back row: Not known, Doris, Ev (Harry's father) and Charles.

Front row: Flo, Grandpa Henry, Grandma Sarah, Gus and Not known.

Those Not known were either Alec or Victor.

WORLD WAR II AS OBSERVED BY A YOUNG COLCESTRIAN

A few days before the end of August 1939, young journalist Clare Hollingworth (now 104 and living in Hong Kong) made a spectacular scoop. She borrowed a diplomatic car to cross the closed Polish-German frontier. While on her journey, the

hessian sheet shielding the view from the road parted, revealing hundreds of Nazi tanks facing east. On 1st September they were moving towards Warsaw and on the 3rd, Chamberlain made his fateful broadcast to the British people. In the following six years more than

fifty million people had lost their lives.

What was the impact of these events on the life of a small boy living in Colchester, who was only a few months past his fourth birthday on 3rd of September?

The most disruptive

experience was *the evacuation*. My mother and I, clutching, of course, the obligatory cardboard pack containing, not sandwiches, but a gas mask, were taken by train to Wellingborough and, after a night sleeping on the floor of a hall, were moved into the house of an old couple. Our stay was curtailed after ten weeks because three Lexden evacuees were killed by a bomb, so my mother decided it was preferable to share the dangers with my father at home where we had the protection of a metal Morrison Shelter in our front room.

However, this plan did not work perfectly as, with the curious logic of war, my NFS father was billeted at Tilbury docks while we played host to range of other firemen (although the first two servicemen to join us were soldiers, one of whom, Taffy, died on the beaches at Dunkirk). All this activity took place in a small house where the bathroom was accessible only through two bedrooms and the toilet was outdoors. The situation seems to have been accepted calmly and, in fact, my mother remained in touch

with several of our guests for many years after the war. Our small hero found the variety entertaining.

With war came bombs! We became skillful at distinguishing the aircraft engine sound of 'one of ours' from the dangerous alternative. My first bombing experience was while at Wilson Marriage School. We had been instructed to shelter under our desks but Hitler, in his typically unsporting fashion, had circumvented this by catching us in the school hall, a location singularly lacking in shelter. All we could do was to lie on the floor! Much later, I had a spectacular view from my garden of the incendiary attack which destroyed most of St Botolph's corner. Naturally, the first action when daylight broke was to visit the area and be appalled by its horrible smell of smouldering wood. Even later in the War, I was excited to observe a doodlebug (V1) make its noisy way not far over the roofs of the houses of Harsnett Road. The noise was, of course, for this observer, reassuring, as V1s were dangerous only when the engine cut out. Also, they did not carry machine guns. A

nighttime observation lighting up the sky was even more spectacular.

So for a small boy, war was perceived as more exciting than dangerous and, in fact, as normal life because he had known no other. There was stringent rationing (less severe for children) but we had a healthy diet with controlled prices. Some substitutes, such as dried egg, I still remember with affection. Rationing did not affect only food. For example, due to paper shortages, the government decreed that 1941 was to be the last Christmas when cards were to be allowed. I have no idea what cheerful message people found to include in cards at this darkest period of the War! I was aware that we lived near the sea, but, during the war, cycle rides to Abberton reservoir were an acceptable substitute. And just what were those mythical bananas which the adults missed? And what was special about the long awaited Peace when bread was still grey and sweets *still rationed!*?

Harry Carlo

THE MALTINGS AT THE HYTHE

Many people, I am sure, can recount stories about businesses at the Hythe but in 1956, I went to the Maltings on Hythe Quay that belonged to Brooks (Mistley) Ltd. where the foreman was Clifford Arthur Manning. The maltings, on the south side of the river,

consisted of two separate malt buildings, each with two floors and each with a double kiln attached. The floors were 160 feet long by 45 feet wide and the double kilns at the river end were 70 feet by 55 feet, each building having an overall length of 230 feet.

Each malt building had a

steeping tank at one end where a load of barley was soaked in water for two days. The water was then drained off into the river via a 'sluice' and the wet barley was transferred into tumbrels, to be spread out on the floors to a depth of about six inches. The grains were left to germinate for about four to

five days and during this process the starch (the white part of the grain) was partly turned into sugars whilst three small rootlet grew out of the end of each grain. After regular raking of the floors, a batch was then transferred to a kiln to be gently dried and this halted the germination process. After cooling, the rootlet (malt caulms) were removed and the malted barley was put into sacks.

Barley was delivered in sacks by road and the malt was off loaded in sacks onto lorries or onto barges at the 'New Quay' opposite. A four bushel sack of barley, weighing 16 stone, would produce a four bushel sack of malt, weighing 12 stone. In order to transfer small samples of grain between Mistley and Colchester the local bus service of Beeston's Buses was used.

The business had commenced as a result of William (1) Brooks, the son of a local farmer and aged 15 in 1799, starting work for Edward Norman, a corn merchant and



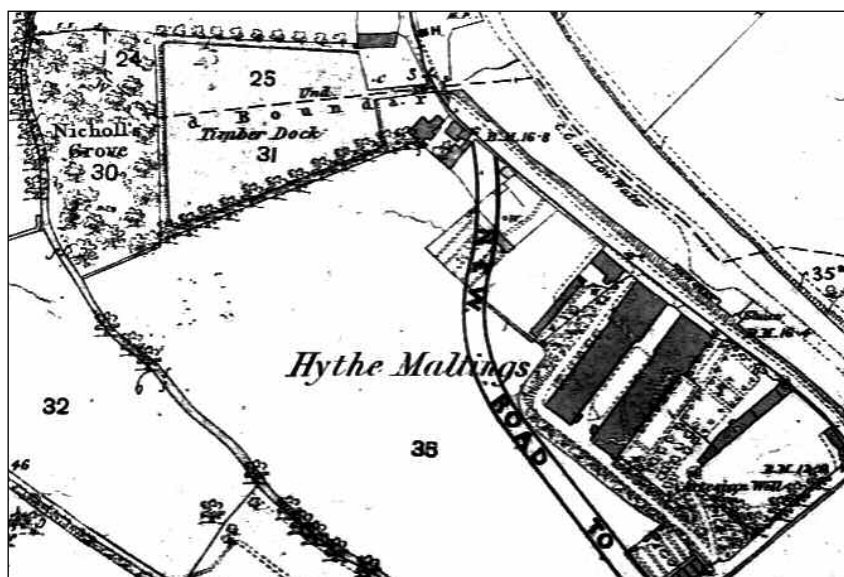
The giant grain silo towers over the old maltings in front. Their two characteristic kiln towers can be seen on their roof, as demolition work begins. Swans often gathered to Hoover up the spilt grain

maltster at Mistley who was later joined by his half-brother, Francis Norman. William (1) Brooks married Mary South on 19th September 1809 at Little Bentley, and he continued being a maltster until he died on 12th August 1844, aged 60 at Mistley. A son, William (2) who had been born on 5th

April 1813, continued the malting business with Edward and Francis Norman. Francis Norman retired to Tunbridge Wells where he later died on 9th March 1871, aged 88 but Edward Norman, ably assisted by William (2) Brooks, continued the business at Mistley.

William (2) Brooks married Mary Death on 16th April 1844 at Stutton, Suffolk and three sons were born, William (3) on 13th January 1845, Robert on 1st April 1846 and Charles Norman on 9th February 1856, but their mother Mary died on 1st March 1856, aged 35 at Mistley. Edward Norman died on 28th March 1862, aged 86 at Mistley Place and he bequeathed the goodwill of the company to William (2) Brooks.

His son, William (3) Brooks



The Hythe Maltings as shown on a map circa 1875

married Anne Hilton Edwards on 5th February 1868 in London and a son, William Hilton Hingeston Brooks was born on 12th October 1869 at Mistley. Having learnt the business of malting from his father, William (3) Brooks branched out and went into partnership in 1870 as 'Brown & Brooks' on Hythe Quay with Ebenezer Brown (formerly a beer retailer on Hythe Quay) but he was soon trading as 'William Brooks, junior, maltster, Hythe Quay'. William (3) Brooks died young on 25 February 1878, aged 33 and the malting business was continued on Hythe Quay and at Mistley by his father and his brothers, Robert and Charles Norman as 'William Brooks & Sons'.

William (2) Brooks had

remarried on 23rd July 1872 in Switzerland, Rose Death, the sister of his former wife and he died on 8th May 1888, aged 75 at Mistley. The two sons, Robert and Charles Norman Brooks having been joined by their nephew, W. Hilton H. Brooks in September 1886, continued the malting business on Hythe Quay and at Mistley under the same title 'William Brooks & Sons'.

W. Hilton H. Brooks became a partner with the brothers, Robert and Charles Norman Brooks in 1903. Robert Brooks died on 26th September 1919, aged 73 and when Charles Norman Brooks died on 30th April 1925, aged 69, Hilton Brooks became the sole owner of the company. In 1927, he turned the private firm into a

limited company, Brooks (Mistley) Ltd. trading in grain, seed, animal feeding stuffs and malt and he died on 11th July 1939, aged 69.

The company was sold to Rank Hovis McDougall Ltd. (RHM) in August 1962. When malting ceased on Hythe Quay in about 1970, a large grain silo was built on part of the site that was variously owned by subsidiary companies of RHM that included Brooks of Mistley, Marriage's of Colchester and Hasler's of Dunmow. All of the buildings have now been demolished and the site, close to the end of the Haven Bridge, has been redeveloped into an accommodation bloc for the University of Essex entitled 'The Maltings'.

Bruce Neville

THE FIRST SOUND BENCH IN ESSEX



Seated L to R: Cllr Julie Young, Mayor of Colchester; and Cllr John Jowers, Vice Chairman of Essex County Council. Standing, L to R: Don Scott, contributor; Cllr Tim Young, Colchester Borough Council; Peter Evans, Colchester Recalled; Sarah-Joy Maddeaux, Essex Record Office; Peter Constable; Patrick Denney, both Colchester Recalled; Cllr Annie Feltham, Colchester Borough Council; Peter Graham; Andrew Millar; Andrew Phillips, all Colchester Recalled; Jacki Barber, contributor; Martin Astell, Essex Record Office.

JUMBO THEN AND NOW

It could be said that there are two histories of Jumbo. The original one spanned 1880-84 and was about its origin in the minds of James Wicks and the Waterworks Committee and the building's early life. The second is still being written and started in 1987 when the redundant water tower was sold to the first of a series of private owners.

It is interesting that both periods were mired in controversy. The cost overruns and initial failure of 'Wicks's

Folly' to provide a constant supply of water were constantly attacked and mocked by the Tories of the time. In a strange echo of the past, the more recent period has been beset by frequent clashes of opinion about the best use for a massive redundant water tower in a central location and dominating Colchester's skyline. For some, infilling the legs with flats or offices, perhaps including a restaurant – variations of which have several times been proposed and refused – is a

perfectly acceptable solution. For others, including the Balkerne Tower Trust, future use must include public access, preserve the building's architecture and celebrate its historic role in improving the lives of the entire population.

For over a century between these periods, Jumbo faithfully performed its role within the water supply system, providing a head of water and thus a decent pressure at our taps. The only way to do this had been by means of a high level reservoir or water tower. But reliable automatic pumping systems made this unnecessary, meaning that the days of water towers were numbered. Many remain in use, nearly all of them 20th century concrete ones in rural areas, simply because the cost of demolishing them and installing modern pumping machinery is uneconomical. However, virtually all the old Victorian ones, and those with architectural merit, have long since been sold off to become private homes or flats. Some are beautifully done and have featured on TV programmes such as *Grand Designs*. The problem is that, almost without anyone realizing it, a significant part of our heritage has disappeared. It is almost as if nearly all our castles had been converted to supermarkets, with only a couple remaining.

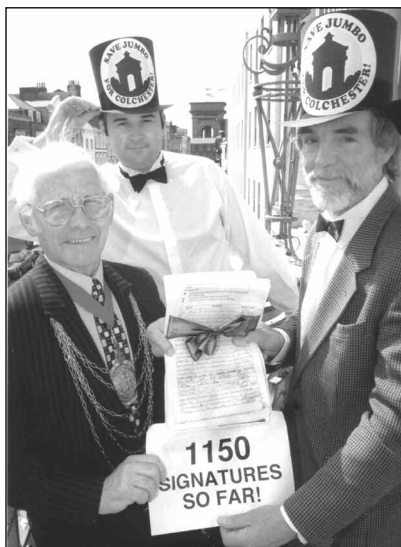
In 1999 a small group got together, calling ourselves the Save Jumbo campaign and started a petition. This called for Borough Council ownership and a use 'appropriate to its



Jumbo as it was in 1884

heritage' including public access. This period ended when the then owner won an appeal in 2001 to convert Jumbo to luxury accommodation for his own use incorporating limited public access. That seemed to be the end of the 'Jumbo question'. In fact, it was just warming up.

Nothing happened until 2006 when, with only a few months of permission left to start work on the conversion, the owner suddenly auctioned Jumbo and emigrated with the £330,000 proceeds. The new owner did not carry out the conversion, citing 'financial viability'. This phrase was to crop up repeatedly in ensuing planning applications, expert opinion concluding that all the schemes involved would lose a lot of money. Looking at Jumbo, it is hard to imagine a more developer-unfriendly building. The only enclosed space is inside the windowless tank. The floor underneath is at the wrong level to use the arches as windows. Inserting



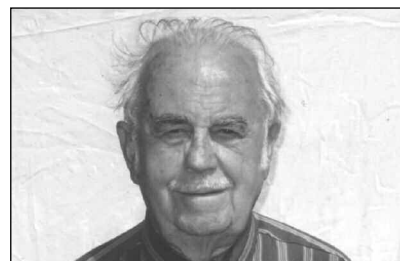
Brian Light and Lloyd Whellams presenting the petition to Mayor David Cannon in 1999

new floors between the legs and glass panels to enclose them is horrendously expensive. On top of this, I had managed to get Jumbo's listing upgraded to II* in 2003, and English Heritage (now Historic England) deemed such proposals 'harmful to the tower's significance'. Even without this constraint, it is difficult to believe that any of the proposed conversions would actually have been carried out, had permission been granted. It is more likely that Jumbo would have been sold on again.

In fact, this is what happened in 2014, the price dropping to £190,000 due to the recession and perhaps the problems listed above having registered with prospective purchasers. The Balcerne Tower Trust published its Options Appraisal in 2009 without a scheme for funding its objectives. But recently the Colchester and North East Essex Building Preservation Trust has published its own report, with two main proposals on which it has consulted many local organisations and the public at an exhibition in May this year. The report commits itself to a grant funded development model as the only realistic one for Jumbo. It can be downloaded from the CNEEBPT website and comments are invited.

After 1884 the warring Council parties laid aside their verbal animosity and set about achieving a constant water supply for the town. Similarly, it is now looking as if the bickering about Jumbo's future is being replaced by a consensus which we can all support.

Brian Light



Jim Lee joined the Water Supply Department in 1933 and became Superintendent, retiring in 1981

The office was in Bank Passage and heated by a coal fire. Mackworth Wood, who designed the Victorian pumping station, was still a consultant and used to dictate letters to me by shouting. He was deaf and you had to shout into his ear trumpet. The works depot was at Balcerne and gangs went out with push carts from there, or took heavy materials by horse and cart, and the foreman covered the area on a motor bike. There was a lot of unemployment and the depot took on temporary labour, 13 weeks at a time. There were no proper records so I used to go out with the foreman when the gangs were working and decide what valve did what, and in 1938 I got the job as a draughtsman.

Loose mortar from Jumbo's tiled roof fell into the tank, together with pigeon droppings blocking the guttering and overflowing into Balcerne Passage. Every year mosquitoes bred inside the tank, their eggs became blood worms which sank into the water. There was no filtering or water treatment then. We started to chlorinate the water after a typhoid outbreak in Croydon in 1935.

Jim Lee



ANY ONE FOR TENNIS?

Another cartoon owned by Michael Buse, drawn by 'Nobby', whose work was featured in the *Colchester Gazette*.

This one features the Frinton Lawn Tennis Championships of 1955, held at the Frinton Club's Courts in Second Avenue.

These championships were more important than they are today, with leading players keen to appear, press coverage being substantial.

FREDDY THE SHRIMP MAN

One of my abiding memories of growing up in Colchester in the 1950s, is going into town with my mother and seeing Freddy the Shrimp Man standing with his barrow at the top of Scheregate Steps, selling his shrimps and other shell fish products. He was always there and I always looked forward to seeing him.

His full name was Frederick Thomas Chapman and he was born in Colchester in 1894. His parents were Edwin and Elizabeth Chapman and he had two sisters and one brother. At the time of the 1911 census Freddy was living at 37 Barrack Street with his mother, his sister Maud and brother Sidney. His father had been admitted to the infirmary so was not at home at the time. Freddy was aged 16 and his occupation was given as an errand boy and fishmonger.

According to Freddy himself he first started in the trade as a young boy when someone paid him sixpence for every Saturday morning that he went out selling oysters. The oysters were

sold for three old pence a half dozen (1p) so Freddy soon realised that there was money to be made in the business.

Having later decided to set up business for himself, he used to go out with a tray of bloaters, wet fish, dry fish, winkles and whelks – and later, of course, he began to specialise in selling shrimps. In later years he lived in Winchester Road and neighbours can recall hearing his barrow trundling along the road towards town in the early hours of the morning.

Over the sixty odd years that he was trading he went through three barrows and was only finally forced to call it a day in the late 1960s when his supply of fresh Tollesbury shrimps dried up.

His barrow was sold to a Tiptree family for twelve pounds ten shillings (£12.50). Even then Freddy didn't stop working and continued to come into town to do cleaning work for a couple of firms during his retirement.

Patrick Denney



CULVER STREET IN 1969

This is a walk down memory lane, namely *Culver Street*, the longest pedestrianised street in Colchester, or, part of the street for part of the time.

'Culver' is the old English name for a dove or pigeon and *le Duffhous* is mentioned in old records and that suggests there

was a dovecote here. *Culver Street* lies parallel to High Street and this renders it access to the backs of the High Street properties, thus it had previously been called 'Back Lane'.

Culver Street in 1969 was before Culver Square and the Lion Walk Precinct were built

and before the 1970 demolitions and the large archaeological digs took place, all of which changed the street dramatically.

The entrance from Head Street was between, on the left W. T. Forsdike (formerly Forsdike & Bonner), family grocer and on the right the

Fleece Hotel (demolished in 1970). This wide entrance was the result of the demolition of the Tudor Café in the late 1940's (now the site of the Halifax Bank and a large proportion of the roadway). On the back wall was a large billboard on which the Repertory Company used to advertise their present and forthcoming shows at the Albert Hall. The final performance there was on 22nd January 1972 before they moved to the Mercury Theatre.

On the left was the Bunting Gymnasium, (formerly St. George's Gymnasium), built in 1906 that now carries a plaque to the 1st Colchester Boy Scouts. On the corner of Bank Passage were the offices of the *East Anglian Daily Times* who also printed the *Green Un*, with all the football results on each Saturday evening, on green newsprint.

Bank Passage used to be the back entrance to the *White Hart Inn* that closed in May 1816. The Inn had been in existence for at least 200 years and the entrance from *Culver Street* would have been much wider than present and that would have enabled the Stage Coaches to enter and turn, in the Inn Courtyard.

The large open space on the right of *Culver Street* in 1969 was a car park but it had formerly been several different properties. Firstly, it was the stables and coach houses for the White Hart Stage Coaches and next to them the mansion and grounds occupied by Charles Whaley, the owner of the *White Hart Inn* until 1768. James

Paxman occupied the site after having commenced his engineering company, the 'Standard Iron Works', in 1865. He moved to the Hythe and sold the works to Arthur Mumford in 1877.

Further down on the right was Shewell Road that was formerly a cul-de-sac off Sir Isaac's Walk. Here was the Library, up several steps, now it is a shop with its doorway level with Culver Square. The windows still have their convex glass panes, built to give maximum daylight to the inside of the Library.

Behind and to the side of the Library was another car park. This used to be the Distillery of George Savill and later the brothers, George and Charles Bawtree. There was also an adjoining Timber Yard that belonged to Edward Taylor, cabinetmaker of No.27 High Street by 1854. Both sites were sold to Nicholl & Co., brewers

on East Hill.

To return to Bank Passage in 1969, there was then no public back entrance to Barclays Bank but the properties that I can remember on the left were Lay & Wheeler (with its crane attached to the wall), Woolwich Building Society, Essex County Standard offices, J. Lyons where you could get a good breakfast and C. M. Stanford, auctioneers. Further down on the left hand side was Cramphorn's that went through to the High Street and the shop had a characteristic aroma (once smelt never forgotten). Next came F. R. Cooper & Son, jewellers, (the upper windows, with iron bars on the inside, are still there) followed by Luke Berriman's china shop.

Here also were the original premises of the Co-operative Society that had been formed in summer 1861. They had occupied a former 'Working Men's Club in Culver Street,



Culver Street looking east in May 1934. On the right, is the partly demolished Charles Whaley's house, with Mumford's roof beyond. On the left is Benham's sign (the Essex County Standard offices).



ABOVE: *Culver Street looking east with Cramphorn's on the left, Marks and Spencer in the centre and Trinity Churchyard on the right.*



RIGHT: *The front of the rebuilt Culver Street Methodist Church that opened on 30th August 1928 after the disastrous fire of 31st December 1926.*

nearly opposite Trinity Street' before moving further down *Culver Street* to the rear of St. Nicholas Church.

After passing Holy Trinity Church on the right, there was the entrance to the former large house and grounds of 'Trinity House' that had been occupied by the Rev. John Halls until 1754 when he moved to his newly built house, 'The Priory', later called 'Grey Friars', at the top of East Hill. In 1969, the grounds had just been released by Kent, Blaxill who had used them as a builder's yard for upwards of 75 years. On the corner was the 'Public Baths & Lavatories', clearly signed. Earlier in my childhood, this building used to mystify me because I could not imagine why anyone would want to have a bath, in public when they could have one at home, in private.

Unimpeded, the road continued straight with, on the

left, the rear entrances to Marks & Spencer and the *Red Lion Hotel* with its doors opposite Lion Walk. The doors into the *Red Lion Inn* were high and wide and were usually shut but they clearly showed that like the *White Hart Inn*, this had been the entrance for the Stage Coaches into the Inn Yard. The narrow and low entrance from High Street would have been for pedestrians and handcarts and their hub-caps have clearly left their mark on the gateway jambs.

Returning to *Culver Street*, just beyond the Red Lion entrance was '*The Lion Bar*' and that was a smart multi-windowed building, painted white. The back entrance to Woolworth's quickly followed where later in October 1973 after reportedly 'an incendiary device, left among soft furnishings' had been planted, the store was gutted by fire and it never reopened on that site.

On the right was St. Nicholas' Square, renamed from Finch's Almshouses. The eight almshouses had been built in 1836 as a result of a bequest from Ralph Finch in 1552 and William Goodwin in 1827. When they were demolished in 1970, they were replaced with modern buildings on Riverside Estate where a memorial stone was also erected.

Next to the Almshouses was the Methodist Church where Margaret Roberts (later Margaret Thatcher) regularly came and sometimes read the lesson when she lived in Colchester between August 1947 and June 1949. It was demolished in 1970 and the site until recently, was occupied by British Home Stores.

We have now reached the Co-operative Society on the right, opposite the graveyard of St. Nicholas' Church, the church having been demolished in spring 1955. Crossing over

the junction of St. Nicholas Street and Long Wyre Street, on the left-hand corner was 'Jacks', established in 1946 and on the other corner was the *Cross Keys* public house.

The next building on the right and the first building in All Saints' parish was called 'Westons'. It had been the former Free Grammar School for 300 years until it had closed in June 1852, to reopen on its

present site in Lexden Road in August 1853.

The buildings here on the left of *Culver Street* are less interesting, they being the back entrances to the High Street properties until we reach the rear of the Post Office (former Rectory) and the Museum of Natural History (All Saints' Church). The last building on the right was The Affair Club and the former home of Peter

Daniell who was declared bankrupt in 1783 and again in 1789.

We have now arrived at Queen Street, a distance of 600 yards from Head Street. I hope you enjoyed my reminiscences of 1969 and that you were able to refresh old memories and associate some of them with the present day.

Bruce Neville

A RECOLLECTION OF 'PUSSER' WADE

After 'Pusser' left *The Nelson's Head* public house, he moved to 74 Northgate Street, previously owned by Sally Herbert. The house had a sweet shop on the side and they came down steps to serve in the shop. Although legally separated from his second wife, who was Mrs Kate Harris, she still lived on the premises.

Mrs Harris had two sons of her own, one of them named Ernie, attended the Blue Coat



School when I did.

Bill Carter who owned the scrap iron yard next door and I

played crib on the counter with Pusser. Tuppence a game and a penny for every dozen you held.

One day I said to Pusser that he owed me tuppence, which caused him to storm about and saying "Don't mention bloody money, she will ring the police and say we are gambling."

After that we used matchsticks and squared up after the game.

Pusser's son Bill was in the Scouts with my brother Ernie.

Ted Cant

THINGS THAT TICK IN THE NIGHT...

Told by Dr Edgar Wirth (1894-1974) who was Honorary Surgeon at the Hospital and GP at 22 Crouch Street, where he built a house at the end its large garden, only for it to be demolished soon after when Southway was built.

In 1942 a stray bomb fell in Essex Street and demolished Hilda Dines's house. I was the first on the scene and with two

lads we started to dig her out from under the rubble in the pouring rain.

A constable came to warn us that a ticking time bomb had been heard only yards away. Edna entreated us to leave her and save ourselves but we persisted and soon freed her, only to discover that her mother, old Mrs Buckingham was also missing.

We found her, almost dead,

buried under the remains of the frontage. We also dug her out expecting to be all blown up at any moment. The Bomb Disposal Unit arrived and to our, and their relief, discovered that the time bomb was only the grandfather clock of the late Mr Buckingham, which had continued to tick unperturbed under the rubble!

Dr Fabrizio Casale

WHO DO YOU THINK THEY ARE?

The subject of our fifth article of the series in our previous issue featured Peter Evans, our Honorary Treasurer. In this issue we feature another Committee member, but who is it? His name will be revealed in the next Issue - Number 31.

What is your earliest memory?

I clearly remember being in my pram - a big one, with a beautiful canopy, green on the inside - being pushed along Mersea Road to the Cemetery to visit family graves. The Monkey Puzzle tree that we passed that day is still there in one of the front gardens!

Have you any unusual school memories?

Like Peter Evans, I also sang at the Colchester Schools Music Festival in a big choir in the Moot Hall, while attending North Street School. Again, the conductor was Dr Swinbourne. Also like Peter I attended The Gilberd on North Hill, only when I started there it was the North East Essex County Technical School. I remember feeling very proud on winning the Road Safety Poster competition for the School in 1956, and this helped to foster an ambition around that time to join the police, but, of course, I never did. It also brought about a friendship that developed between myself and the late Sgt. George White, head of the Traffic division who often used to give me hints about traffic control and other facets of police work at that time.

What brought you to Colchester?

Again, like Peter Evans, I have always lived here - other than being born in Kettering, when my mother and two brothers were evacuated there in the Second World War.

What is your favourite place in Colchester?

It must be the Dutch Quarter. Perhaps because my parents both lived there and married in St Martin's Church. Whenever I walk through this



Our mystery man. But who is he? Find out in the next issue No. 31

area of the town I feel a tremendous affinity with it, quite unlike anywhere else in the town.

What was the most scary event of your life?

I cannot really remember one. I have been very lucky that I have not really been exposed to much danger other than that shared by everyone else during

the Second World War and I hope that I never will.

What was the most famous event you attended?

Again, I cannot recall a very famous event, but on two occasions as a youngster I spent holidays with my parents visiting the in laws in Durham of one of my late brothers. One visit was at the time of the Annual Durham Miners' Gala, when every colliery in the county paraded through the city, with its brass band and colliery banners leading its miners to the parade ground at the former Racecourse. The pubs were open all day and the public bought drinks and placed the glasses in the gutter which the council collected over night, cleaned and distributed them back to all the pubs on the route. It was an excellent day, with political speeches, a fairground and all the razzmatazz. Sadly, with the closing of the collieries, the Gala no longer takes place.

The next morning we travelled home by rail and whilst waiting for the train I recognised three famous men and being at that time an avid autograph hunter, obtained the signatures of none other than Clement Attlee, Hugh Gaitskill and Hugh Dalton.

I very much regret that later I threw away my collection, as with the other signatures that I had including many famous people from the world of entertainment and sport, it might today have been worth some money. Oh, well... never mind - we all make mistakes!

READERS' LETTERS

Thank you for the back numbers of Colchester Recalled. I enjoyed reading the walk along North Station Road as I remember many who were mentioned. The auctioneers at the poultry market were Woodward and Friday, then Watsons, not Stanfords as quoted.

Mrs Queeny Windsor lived at No. 4 with her son. This was previously the old Hut fried fish and chip shop, known for its lovely scallops. Sid Oldman (No. 15 on the opposite side of the road), was a racing pigeon man and my grandmother, aunt and uncle lived at No. 23. I still have my uncle's Colchester and District Football League gold winners medal of 1902-3.

Also mentioned was Dorothy 'Dot' Cranfield, now Dot Davey, a relation by marriage who is still around.

The first landlord at the *Tramway Tavern*, referred to by those down the north as the *Pig and Whistle* that I recall was Doddy Finch. His great friend was Fred Harrington who kept the *Norfolk* at that same time.

The advertising hoardings between Stows bakery shop and Morten Road were put there after a row of houses were demolished.

There was a tale about an Irish bricklayer Paddy Burke who lived there, who sold his trowel for a pint of beer, but carried on working using a piece of slate!

Harry Hale, a railway man also lived there before moving to Defoe Crescent.

My friend Terry Jackman,

(brother of Ossie, Derek and Keith), lived at No. 93 and Terry married Joyce Felgate who worked for Benhams.

Ted Cant

Regarding an interesting article some years ago about the residents of North Station Road, I noted some uncertainty about the houses between Cymbeline Way and North Station. I can add a few helpful details.

No. 112 was occupied by a Miss Springett. I never met her but I seem to recall that she was a noted chess player.

No. 114 was occupied by my grandfather, Thomas Bather, died in 1938 and his widow, Elizabeth who lived there until she died in 1955. During this time she had been cared for by their unmarried daughter, Hilda Bather, who stayed on in the house alone, until she married a Mr Harper in 1961. Shortly after the couple moved. So this would seem to cover the period of your original article.

The Bather family had been quite numerous 'down the North' and had lived at various addresses in North Station Road and also in the Dutch Quarter since the early 1800's. Initially, they were shoe-makers but, when that trade declined, they became builders and decorators (this being my Grandad's occupation).

I have no knowledge about No. 116, but No. 118 was occupied by a Mrs Lloyd. She was always known as 'Marie' Lloyd after the music-hall star.

As an old family friend she came to our house for Christmas, along with Hilda, for some years during the 1960's. As I grew up and moved away I lost touch with her, so I cannot say when she ceased to live at No. 118. Her background was intriguing because she was in fact the wife of 'Gypsy Petulengro', who wrote articles about Gypsy lore and also an astrological column in a well-known women's magazine. She told me of travelling with a Gypsy Orchestra and putting on shows in various towns. Their son, Leon Petulengro, inherited his father's astrology column. Their second son, Billy Lloyd, ran the famous Trick Shop in Eld Lane - a place of fascination for boys who needed to keep topped up with stink bombs, conjuring tricks and similar necessities.

Finally, I well remember, the bakery you recall in your article. Visits to my family home at 114 were often marked by a visit across the road to Tweeds, to gaze at the splendid display of marzipan figures in their window. Sometimes, my brother and I were rewarded by a delicious sample to scoff later!

Charles Bather

OUR NEXT ISSUE

Please look out for
issue No.31
due for publication in 2017.

OUR PROGRAMME 2016-2017

NOVEMBER 17

MARKS HALL – THE STATELY HOME WHICH GOT AWAY

A virtual visit conducted by JANE PEARSON who has been involved in unravelling this story.

DECEMBER 15

OUR TRADITIONAL SEASONAL EVENING with the Local Landmarks Quiz, historic video, wine and mince pies.

2017

JANUARY 12

HENRY VIII AND THE LAST DAYS OF ST JOHN'S ABBEY
by JENNIE GUTHRIE STEVENS.

FEBRUARY 16

REVOLT OF THE FIELD
How the downtrodden farm worker of North Essex fought back during the Great Depression by TED WOODGATE.

MARCH 16

AN EVENING WITH ANTHONY ROBERTS, of the Colchester Arts Centre, who was parachuted in last year to rescue Firstsite Gallery. And did.

APRIL 13

THE FUTURE OF WILD ESSEX – DISASTER OR OPPORTUNITY?'

JOHN HALL who has just retired after 28 years running the Essex Wildlife Trust, one of the largest member-based organisation in Essex, goes on the record. Illustrated!

MAY 11

MEMBERS' EVENING
Three more members recount days from their earlier life.

JUNE 15

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and Guest speaker, COUNCILLOR JULIE YOUNG, LIFE BEING MAYOR OF COLCHESTER.

The Programme is featured on our website:
www.colchesterrecalled.co.uk

All will take place in the Lecture Theatre at Colchester Institute, Sheepen Road at 7pm.
Admission £2.

You are most welcome to join us.
The Annual Subscription
is £7 per person or £12 for a couple.

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The Colchester Recalled Oral History Society was set up in 1988 to record for future generations the memories of the people of Colchester and the surrounding area.

The Archive Group meets daily at the Museum Resource Centre, 14 Ryegate Road to access and index all new tapes.

Computer literate volunteers are needed to help with this work.

For further details please contact Andrew Phillips on 01206 546775.



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