



COLCHESTER RECALLED

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Colchester North Station

Picture courtesy of Jess Jephcott

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Who Do You Think They Are? No.9

From the Archive No.3 and Letters to the Editor



Colchester Recalled Oral History Society 2021-2022

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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.

Meetings are normally held each month, but have been curtailed due to the Corona Virus. Admission is £2 per member, £3 for non-members, including refreshments.

The Annual Subscription is £7 per member or £12 for a couple residing at the same address.

Wanted:

Volunteers to make summaries of our recordings.

If you are interested please contact Andrew Phillips on 01206 546775.

WELCOME TO ISSUE 35

Not surprisingly there has been much change recently due to the Corona Virus, no doubt we may see many more changes too over the next few months.

For the older generation, perhaps some happy memories of the days of steam trains will be evoked by the photographs and article accompanying them, while younger readers may be fascinated to see what was every day travel for their parents and grandparents in previous years..

We also feature a story of Second World War evacuation, it being 75 years since peace was established and 80 years since The Battle of Britain. Again, many memories of loved ones may be recalled.

The 'Walk Down North Hill' will also evoke memories of the days when there were less vehicles on our roads and life was much more peaceful and the air less polluted.

Recently Covid has affected many peoples' lives and it may be some time before 'normality' returns, assuming that it will. In the meantime, it is hoped that all readers will abide by the seemingly ever changing Governmental instructions and hopefully, all of us will stay safe and in good health.

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OUR NEXT ISSUE

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OUR PROGRAMME

During the pandemic we have not met at Roman Circus House and are holding zoom meetings instead as follows:

November 11th
'Margaret Thatcher's Colchester Years'
by David Grocott.

December 16th
'New findings on Roman Colchester'
by Howard Brooks.



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Evacuation in 1939

I was still at school when war started in 1939 and within a few days my schooling was cut in half. This was because a school from Leytonstone had been evacuated to Colchester and we had to share our school buildings. We attended in the mornings and the London school in the afternoons.

Two of the London boys, brothers, were billeted at our house, but the arrangement didn't last long. No shots were being fired and after a few months of 'Phoney War', as it was called, the Leytonstone school departed.

However, after Dunkirk, it was decided that our school should be evacuated away from the East coast. It was on a voluntary basis and less than half the school went. My friend Mac and I thought that it would be great to get away from home, away from parental control, and that's how we arrived in Burton-Upon-Trent.

We could smell Burton even before we stepped off the train. It reeked of malt from the many breweries. It was neither pleasant nor unpleasant, but it was always there day and night.

Mac and I were taken to a large three storied house on the main road leading into town, where we were not welcomed with open arms, quite the reverse. The householder, a manager of one of the breweries, had resisted taking in evacuees, but eventually had to give way and decided that he would have two grammar school boys, thus avoiding the common herd.

It was obvious from the start that he was bitterly

disappointed with his choice. Especially on the first night when Mac broke a plate which was claimed to be part of a valuable dinner service.

Although this house had five or six bedrooms, the only people that slept upstairs were our host and his wife, their five or six year old son and the maid. Mac and I slept on camp beds in a scullery. Also, another strange thing was that the wife's mother, who did most of the

apple pies, but her main meals left a lot to be desired, especially with the few ingredients rationing made available, whereas our host was getting food from somewhere and it certainly wasn't obtained with his ration books. Of course, we never dined with the family, we always ate with Grandma in the kitchen.

During the day we attended Burton-Upon-Trent Grammar School which to us was also an



A group of boys from Wilson Marriage School taken at their Stoke on Trent school

cooking, slept on a camp bed in the kitchen. What she had done to deserve this, I never knew, but it was obvious that she was also unacceptable.

We were only allowed to go upstairs once a week for a bath, otherwise it was out of bounds. I always imagined that he kept the family silver up there and didn't trust either of us or his mother-in-law. It was an upstairs-downstairs situation, although the maid had graduated to the upstairs.

The one redeeming feature about this house was that the food was excellent. My mother was great at baking cakes and

unfriendly place. We never fitted in anywhere, neither at school nor at our place of abode and after a couple of months we decided to go home. Our parents sent us money for the fare with strict instructions to travel across country to Cambridge, and then down to Colchester, thus avoiding London, which was being heavily bombed at the time.

Our hosts bid us goodbye without much reluctance and we departed, with our cases to the railway station where we found out that there was no immediate possibility of getting a train that would connect with

immediate possibility of getting a train that would connect with one to Cambridge and so we decided that we would travel through London. We were confident that we would be well clear of the metropolis before the nightly blitz began.

All trains were delayed and it was some time before we could get on one and when we did get moving there were many stops and starts. I believe the train stopped at every station and village halt. Then somewhere north of London there was a bang followed by a great deal of noise and shouting. The train stopped for a few minutes and then pulled forward into a small station. Someone came into our carriage and said that the train had been machine gunned. I still find it hard to believe as neither Mac nor me had heard any aircraft or gunfire.

However, ambulances arrived and a number of people were taken out of the rear carriages on stretchers and taken away. After a long delay the last two coaches were detached and we continued on our journey.

By the time we arrived at our London station, I believe it was St. Pancras, it was getting dark. We made our way down to the underground to get a train to Liverpool Street. Men, women and children, were pouring down the escalators and the platforms were filling up with blanketed figures that we stumbled over to get to the trains.

We changed trains once and realised that we had gone in the wrong direction, when we were approached by a man who asked us if we were Colchester Grammar School boys. We were wearing the very

distinctive mauve caps and blazers adorned with gold crowns. Having confirmed that we were, he said, "I'm going to Colchester, follow me, I'll get you over to Liverpool Street."

We still had to change a couple of times, but eventually we emerged into the night at Liverpool Street station, only it was dark. The station was illuminated by a ring of fire and there was a cacophony of sound. Our guide suggested that we should go back down into the underground until morning, but we decided that we wanted to go on and get home.

Our new found friend went off to find out about trains whilst we sheltered in a subterranean sandbag-protected gents lavatory. The camp beds we left behind in the scullery at Burton-Upon-Trent now seemed very attractive.

Within a few minutes our acquaintance came hurrying back to say that there was an express leaving within a few minutes and we hurried after him to the platform. The train was packed, mainly with service men and women. Airmen travelling back to air bases in East Anglia, sailors off to Harwich and Lowestoft and soldiers going all over the place. We squeezed into an already over full carriage.

It was some time before we moved off, but what a relief as we picked up speed, and then the train stopped, somewhere about Mile End and next to a huge fire. It was probably a factory blaze and we could feel the heat. Someone shouted out, "For Christ sake get a move on." It was then that we heard the bombs falling. Mac and I were pretty nimble in those

days and we hit the deck first with the other occupants of the carriage piling on top of us. The bombs exploded some way away and the carriage rocked a bit. However, it seemed to have an effect on the engine driver, because in seconds we were off again and we never stopped until we were well clear of the East End. We found out later that this was the night of one of the biggest raids on the capital.

The train stopped at Colchester some time after midnight and our Good Samaritan offered to walk us through the blackout to my home. As we crossed the bridge over the River Colne the 'all clear' sounded.

My parents were very relieved to see us, but when they realised that we had come through London they were pretty annoyed. My mother was deaf, so there was no way that she could listen to our excuses even if she had wanted to and she gave us an earful. "How could you be so stupid. We told you not to go through London. Haven't you got the sense that you were born with?, etc, etc." My father took Mac home, where undoubtedly he received a further wiggling, so he got a double dose.

My mother was so grateful to our fellow traveller who had seen us home safely, that she made him tea and sacrificed our egg and bacon ration to make him a meal. I never knew his name and I never saw him again. A ship, or should I say a train, that passed in the night.

I have never felt any urge to return to Burton-Upon-Trent, but I am happy to enjoy an occasional glass of its best brew.

Mick Wright

Doing the Forms - Electoral Registration

In 1974, I was offered the role of a Deputy Acting Registration Officer by the Borough Council. This is the process that registers your right to vote. Every year, even during the pandemic, the existing list has to be checked and updated - people are born, come of age, move, die, marry and the register must reflect this.

When I first started, the first stage was somewhat of 'Blue Peter' operation. We each looked after a Council electoral ward and were issued with a suitable number of blank 'Forms A' and had to prepare a form for each property (and later for reminders as well), then deliver them with an envelope for return. I still have a box of street name stamps - like a date stamp which we used with an ink pad to speed up the preparation of the forms. After some time this was done automatically, and the names of existing registered voters were printed, so these could be amended.

Of course, to start with people didn't understand and would say that the form wasn't meant for them and gave the address of the former residents. Wrong - it was who lived there now.

Delivery was or should have been easy. Some houses were down a passage and round the corner. Some courts - such as Charles Place on Hythe Hill can be missed. I remember finding a new bungalow in Brook Street. It was like a gingerbread house, very attractive, but unfortunately guarded by a large Alsatian dog, which bounded after me as



Peter Evans

I approached with my form A. I bolted, fearing the dog would get me. However, it was very well trained and stopped at the end of the path and ignored me. The owner apologised, explaining about prowlers. I staggered home, my heart thundering for some time after.

The hand delivery is important, in case any properties appear or disappear or change their use. In theory this cannot happen now, as planning changes are passed on. On one occasion I was delivering in the rain, (to be avoided if possible,) to Port Lane, which I had done many times before, I could not find number 12. I found 11 and 13, but 12 should be between them. No! It had turned into 12a, 12b and 12c - basement, ground and first floors, with doors round the back. All in about four months since my last visit.

There are certain 'rules' - home owners return forms better than tenants, council tenants better than private tenants, the occupiers of almshouses and sheltered

houses. (I had several in my patch) better than the occupiers of houses, but the occupiers of flats were not so good and bedsits terrible.

Some people never voluntarily returned forms but happily would do so when asked. I became familiar to these people. I was chasing up one address and was nearing the door when a woman came up behind me saying, "Oh, it is that time again. It is still just me, Dolly Smith," and disappeared. She could not have read the form - she had recognised me!

Similarly, in a nearby road, I was dealing with one address when a mini was driving gently along. The driver spotted me, speeded down the street, shot inside her house and was standing at the door, panting hard, but clutching her completed form A, claiming she had been meaning to post it for days.

There were a number of foreigners, especially as more student flats were built. I met many commonwealth residents - Aussies, Kiwis, Canadians, but people from Trinidad, Mauritius, Ceylon/Sri Lanka - all of whom were entitled to vote.

We always had Europeans but entry to EU brought people from Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and other countries that had not existed when I started the job. Many spoke good English, almost all much more polite than the natives. My favourites were the Poles - warm and friendly - and the Phillipinoes - always pretty and smiling often saying "We from

Phillipines, we cannot vote” and the Nepalese, of which Colchester has many, equally polite but not able to vote either.

In one case, we went through the usual conversation when the Nepalese householder joyfully produced recently received naturalisation papers. There were Syrian, Afghans, Russians, Saudis. I could not believe that there were so many nationalities in one part of the town. I was fascinated to meet a Luxembourgers, with impeccable English

I was really pleased for him and it made up for the more common “I never vote. They are all the (insert expletive) same etc.” This really annoyed me, as people have fought for the right to vote. To set against replies like that was what happens at a response

I moved on to a property converted for a disabled couple. The husband, who had learning difficulties and had to limp to the door. “My wife will help you with that”, he said. There was a pause and she came to the door. She was on more of a day bed than a wheelchair, painfully thin but gave me beautiful smile. With great difficulty she completed it, refusing my help politely. I left, feeling deeply humbled, thinking what a brave couple and that it was a privilege to have been there. Sadly, the wife died only a year or so later. I felt the same meeting a very cheery blind lady, and these balanced the others.

There was the front door that opened to reveal the most dreadful stench. I realised exactly what had caused it and will leave it to your imagination. I pitied the neighbours. I was

supposed to get a signature but there was no way I was going to take anything from that house into my hand. I nearly threw up.

Some people were rude and some doors were slammed. On the other hand, some joked and we had a laugh. Once I was asked to help pick up an elderly Mum who had fallen, by her daughter who had just arrived.

My favourite story was trying to get a form from a house in Military Road, which I was visiting on the way to my Aunt's house. As I approached, I realised a fire engine was actually putting out a fire there, I moved on and left the reminder a few days later. About three weeks later on the way to my Aunt again, I found the fire engine was back. The neighbour, (not a happy man), later told me that the occupier had returned to the house to

pick up something. He could find it and as the electricity had not been restored, he lit a match....and dropped it, setting the house alight again.

I never bothered “Door knocking” on Halloween - I didn't want to get involved with trick or treats, and often residents would not open doors that night.

On Guy Fawkes night, your knock could not be heard because of fireworks or people might be at a firework display. Main roads were always difficult when traffic was busy and blocks of flats were only accessible at certain times, usually before 12 noon.

Door knocking could be difficult but I always enjoyed the delivery.

Peter Evans



New to the electoral roll, a first-time voter casts his ballot in the 1979 General Election in Alderman Blaxill School



A Walk from the Top of North Hill to North Bridge

This is the return journey of our walk taken in issue No.34, but on the other side of the road.

Number 70 North Hill was the premises of Oliver & Parker the popular grocers, later taken over by Budgens, and then the Belfast Linen Shop. More recently it became the Post Office, when 'The General', in Head Street was closed. These premises also closed in 2019 and at present are vacant.

Back in 1955, the property next door facing down the centre of High Street, was Money's wool shop, which some time later moved to a site on North Hill, almost opposite the *Marquis of Granby* public house. I also recall Grimwade's existed here, but I do not recall what they sold, nor some of their neighbours.

I do recall No.67 - the offices of the Prudential Insurance Company, the Colchester & District Chamber of Trade &

Commerce and John Donnelly, a solicitor, who restored several properties in the Dutch Quarter. Then on the corner of Balcerne Passage was No.66, the *Waggon and Horses* public house, today it is the *Centurion*.

On the opposite corner was furnishers W R Simkin Ltd, whose depository was in North Station Road, at the north end of HSBC bank. Wallace Kings succeeded Simkins, but at the

ABOVE:

The top of North Hill in 1979 with The Belfast Linen shop, the Fabric Factory and opticians Bethell and Clark

BELOW:

The Waggon and Horses public house, now the Centurion, followed by Balcerne Lane and Connells Estate Agency





Elegant Georgian buildings including St Peter's Vicarage, followed by the Cock and Pye, the Gilbert School drive, the Peveril Hotel and Martin and Parnell Ltd

time of writing is vacant, like so many others in the town, but had recently been occupied by both estate agents and ladies' hairdressers. Next door was the Tudor Confectionery shop, selling sweets, chocolates and cigarettes, with the lovely detached Tudor Cafe next door at No.63, where each day, my colleagues and I working at Geo Loyd and Son, the high class shoe shop in Head Street, would enjoy our morning coffee break. This property became the Army Recruiting Office and some years later, the local office of Age Concern.

Number 62 were the offices of Goody, Bentley and Son, the solicitors, with the Eagle Star Insurance Company next door. At No.60 were the offices of Cyril Page and Co, solicitors, with St Peter's Vicarage, home of former Welsh international rugby player, the Rev Tom Hollingdale, next door. I used to see Rev Hollingdale very

regularly when I attended St Peter's Sunday School and while he was active at events at the North East Essex County Technical School, (later renamed the Gilbert School), a little further downhill.

Number 58 was a large property housing the Abbey National Building Society, two dentists, Mr L A Clifton and Mr J D Sellars, and Mr R G Porter, a partner of Thompson, Smith and Puxon, solicitors, based on the opposite side of the road, while No.57 housed the Registrar of Colchester Births and Deaths and the Law Society. The next property was formerly an old public house, the *Cock and Pye*, currently Cock and Pye Court.

In my early days at the Gilbert, this building was an annexe of the Technical College, and the home of the School's modest Sixth Form. When the College moved to purpose-built premises in

Sheepen Road along with the School of Art in 1959, to what was the Gilbert's playing fields, it became the office of Miss Alice Twyman, headmistress of the girls of the School, with caretaker, Mr Lee, occupying No.55 next door.

In this area on Mondays and Thursdays at about 9am during term-time, a group of masters, guided about 800 scholars across North Hill from the School to St Peter's Church and back again afterwards, for the twice weekly School Assembly. Without police presence, they performed brilliantly, guiding pupils across the busy road, without any mishap. Health and Safety would not allow that happen today!

Immediately past No.55 was the School drive, leading to the buildings erected in 1912, that when I first attended the School forty years later, also housed the Technical College, the School of Art and part of the Girls' High School. It was crowded, with the Gilbert having to use several off-site facilities in town, but it was all well organised. The School was unable to use the entire building until the College, (later re-named the Colchester Institute), had merged with the Art School, and in 1959 moved to Sheepen Road, the Girls High School having moved to new premises in Norman Way in 1957. When the Gilbert moved to a new site at High Woods, the buildings finally became the Sixth Form College in 1987.

Another drive, situated immediately on the left, was and still is, part of North Hill. At the end, was No.54, the premises of dental surgeon Mr Frost, with a barn next door

which was the School's Art Room when I first attended in 1952. Later when the Art Room was moved to Stockwell Street School, then to the Bungalow, behind the Old Canteen in the Lower Buildings, it became the Male Staff Room. Next door, at No.53 was Sanders House, the headquarters of the Young Conservatives, with No.52 being residential.

Back on North Hill proper, No.51 was the Peveril Hotel, with Martin and Parnell Ltd, engineers' merchants next door. These premises are now the North Hill Hotel and the Green Room Restaurant respectively.

There then followed four residential houses, but I only knew one of the families - the O'Shea's at No.46. Their son John joined the Navy. I have not seen him in years. There

then followed more houses and a few shops, of which Nos.44 and 43 were re-developed becoming the offices of Essex County Newspapers, publishers of the *Essex County Standard* and *The Gazette*. At No.42 is an Italian restaurant, and I recall Mr Godfrey, who ran a cycle shop at No.41 with Mr Piggott, a newsagent next door, who was succeeded by Mrs Boucher.

Two attractive old premises that formed the wonderful second-hand bookshop of Mr A B Doncaster, are each side of the entrance to Green's Yard, which consisted 14 cottages of which I knew five of the resident families - the Day's, the Squirrell's, the Gibson's, and two who had sons who played for Parkside Rangers Football Club while I was Honorary Secretary, namely Derek Harnwell and Dickie Bambrick.

Green's Yard also gave access to the Gilbert School's Lower Buildings, which included classrooms, the School canteen, the Old Canteen and the Bungalow.

Following on from Green's Yard were several residences and shops, including No.35 which used to be Elliot, Charles and Partners, estate agents, then Bishop's and later Money's, both wool shops, more recently specialist recruitment agencies and today a mortgage broker and a computer shop. There was then a drive - probably a parking facility for this building, but now Byron's Yard, featuring several recently built residences.

There is another drive a little further on, with a building over the top and a gate at the far left hand corner, which used to lead to the most northerly of the



The entrance to the former Cistern Yard, behind the parked vehicle, with Avery Scales, the Coach and Horses, Cattle Market and New Market Tavern in the 1930s



Cistern Yard, prior to being demolished in the 1930s

former Gilbert School classrooms. On the right was where the dilapidated cottages of Cistern Yard used to stand, which were demolished in the 1930s. The public well ceased being used in the Middle Ages.

Returning to North Hill, were Avery Scales, Prontaprint, (an early instant print-shop), a sandwich bar and the *Coach and Horses* public house, which was demolished at the time of the town centre re-development.

We are now at the bottom of the North Hill, where it joins Middleborough, with Balkerne Hill immediately to the left. On crossing the road was the Cattle Market - until 1985 - when it was moved to Wyncolls Road. The 'Octagon' building for the Royal London Insurance Company was erected on the site, with both the Lepra and Handelsbanken organisations in evidence today. Also demolished at that time were the *New Market Tavern*, a public house much frequented by those attending the market on Saturdays, and Archer's, (later Firmin's), the butchers, on the corner of Sheepen Road.

Cross here and Jim Lamb's gentlemen's hairdressers was on



The Cattle Market in the early 1900s, showing buildings on North Hill and in Cistern Yard, top right above the Roman Wall

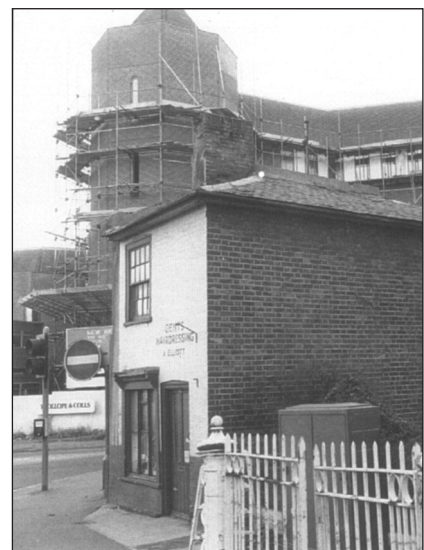


Middleborough, showing the former Coach and Horses, with the Cattle Market, New Market Tavern and Firmin's, prior to the Royal London 'Octagon' building being erected in the 1980s

the opposite corner, (it is now Trotter's wine bar), and to the left were a pair of houses running at a right angle to the road, that accommodated both the Studd and Potter families at Nos.21 and 20. Today these houses are part of the *Pavilion*, situated in Sheepen Road, with the rear of the premises on the the river bank.

Our walk is now complete, as we are standing on the historic North Bridge, built in 1843, on the site of a bridge mentioned wayback in the twelfth century.

Peter Constable



Jim Lamb's gentlemen's hairdressers, in the shadow of the Royal London building under construction

A Boy from 'Down the North'

Part 2 – continued from Issue No 31

Going back to the railways, in the 1940's, the engines were all steam-driven and the whole area was usually rather dirty and sooty, and whenever we ventured near to the Railway we always returned home grimy and dirty so our parents always knew where we had been. All the roads in our locality housed railway men of various trades and, of course, we boys new who they were and what they did.

Youngsters leaving school, and wishing to join the railways as footplate men usually started off as engine cleaners before progressing to firemen and then eventually, after many years, to becoming drivers. Drivers started as shunters, then moved on to local movements, before graduating to the mainline. Again, after many years they could qualify for express duties but all of these progressions took many years.

As I have said, the engine sheds were against the crossing at Clay Lane (Turner Road) and heading westwards from the sheds, towards the station, the next major item on the Mile End side of the track, was the turntable. This large construction, built into the ground, would enable an engine's direction to be reversed. When the turntable rails were in line with the track, the engine would slowly drive onto the turntable centre and stop. The driver and fireman would then get down from the footplate and walk to either end of the turntable track whereupon they could unlock the turntable, so that it could



Steam locomotive No. 61556 at Colchester Station in 1951

Photographed by G R Mortimer

move freely, then at either end they would each insert a large wooden lever into a special socket and the two men would then walk the turntable round by using foothold bars let into the surround until it was reversed. They would then lock the turntable and drive off

again.

A little further along were the coaling bunkers and a point where coal could be loaded onto coal merchants' trucks. Then right at the eastern end of the down platform was the high-water tank, with a large leather hose, about a foot in



The coaling bunkers about 1950, with coal being hoisted and loaded into a locomotive with the water hose far left. The engine shed was situated further up the line towards the station

Andrew Phillips Collection



The Railway Tavern pictured in 1908. In later years the pub was renamed the Colchester Arms

Patrick Denney Collection

diameter, which was sited so that an engine coming into the station could halt in a position that would enable water to be taken on board whilst the passengers were getting on and off the train. The 'down' platform, was on the Bergholt Road side of the station and stretched from the water tower along to the Lexden side of the station and comprised waiting rooms, parcels office and the railway transport office.

Also along the platform were the public toilets, a secondary ticket office, and various other parcel handling halls and it was here that bundles of newspapers arrived in the early morning, together with milk deliveries, on the paper train. The papers would be collected by various wholesalers for distribution about the town.

Whilst on the subject of papers, my cousin Olive's husband, Fred Miller, as well as working all day as a motor mechanic, had a second early morning job, delivering bundles of papers to shops in Bures, Sudbury station, Long Melford, Cavendish, and Clare, always

arriving back in time to start work at 8am. On Saturdays, I went with him which was great fun, as in those days traffic was minimal and sometimes we never met anyone at all until we reached Sudbury. It was quite common practice for members of the forces, coming home on leave, to hitch a free lift on the paper train, and I recall one time when we took a couple of sailors in the paper van all the way to Clare and then onto Great Yeldham to help them out.

Outside the ticket office, was a taxi rank, for three or four cars. Beyond the Lexden end of the station was a siding containing cattle pens. This was where cattle being sent to the market by train were unloaded and quite often these cattle would be herded along North Station Road to the market, on the hoof, by several drovers and assorted young boys. These pens would have been in the area now occupied by the car park.

Beyond these pens stood the railwayman's club, and the railway laundry which was

quite a large building, having a tall chimney and water tower. Quite a lot of women worked there and they did laundry not only for the railway but also any member of the public who requested their services, and they had their own delivery trucks.

Mr Rayner, who lived near to us in St Paul's Road was the chief engineer, who being an ex-naval man was a clever old chap who in his spare time made many scale model steam engines in his shed.

The 'Up' platform, was on the town side of the station, and was approached via the sloping roadway between the station and the Royal Eastern Counties Institution, a 'Peckover School', and home for what was then called mentally deficient females. Mentally deficient males were housed at Turner Village.

The main booking office was on this side of the station together with waiting rooms, toilets, refreshment rooms, (complete with chained up teaspoons), station master's office, W H Smith bookstall



A horse-drawn omnibus arriving at North Station in 1909

Patrick Denney Collection

and parcels' office, and I can just remember parcels being delivered to houses throughout the town by the railway carrier's horse and cart.

Returning to the other side of the station once again, immediately beyond the bridge was a large roundabout type of island, with roadways passing through it, this being the corporation bus stop and terminus. The approach road went off to the left, as it does now to provide access to that side of the station and the laundry. Bergholt Road went off to the far left and where its junction joined the lower end of Mile End Road was the *Railway Tavern*, a popular pub with a large garage to the rear.

On the right side, as you emerged from under the bridge, was a dirty old trackway leading up to the railway works and from this track local coal merchants could collect coal for resale. At one time, a small area on this corner, immediately beneath the water tower, there was a small yard where Doug Hunt started his motor repair business before moving to Mile

End Garage. Just past this track, was the large yard and garage workshops, known as Station Garage, and run by Mr Hayward and Mr Ellis, and outside this garage, on the edge of the path, was located one of the old horse troughs, which is still in use, and which was regularly used by farmers from outlying areas who came to market by horse and cart.

Immediately past the garage was Hayward's coal yard which was owned by Wright's haulage and coal yard from the Hythe. The rest of the area, forming the boundary with Turner Road, was occupied by allotments.

To the other side of Brick Kiln Lane was a large piece of farmland with the old farmhouse standing about a hundred yards back from the road. This was Poplar Hall Farm, owned by the Eastern Counties Institution, and used as Nurses' accommodation. The site boundary, on to North Station Road, was made by a four feet high brick wall and on the field side of the wall was a constantly running ditch. This

property joined Bunting's Nurseries which had many large glasshouses producing tomatoes etc, on a large site, and they had another entrance gate leading off Cowdray Avenue, about fifty yards past *The Albert* public house. Buntings also had a nice brick-built office, just inside the North Station Road gate and beside Tweed's the bakers and confectioner's shop, which had a function room or hall adjoining and a bakery to the rear. This hall was often used for dances and wedding receptions.

The Albert Hotel was a large wayside inn built in the 1930's along with the new Bypass and replaced the old *Albert* which was located just past the roundabout and Serpentine Walk, on the site of the present-day tyre and exhaust centre. I remember that in the early 1950s Mr Regan was the landlord and his daughter Joan Regan was a well-known singer at the time.

The roundabout in those days was just a single roundabout, smaller than the present one, with a tall lamp standard in the centre surrounded by large direction boards, forming a square, and with the various direction names marked in white lettering, and highlighted at night-time use by the addition of cats-eye type glass studs, for reflecting lights. The remainder of the roundabout was filled by four equal sized rose beds, which were a pleasant sight in summer.

Patrick Denney

Part of an article originally submitted by Peter's Rose's son, Ian, in 2014



Who Do You Think They Are? No.9

Another significant figure in Colchester Recalled: but who is he? Follow his answers.

What is your earliest memory?
More than one: A mobile fish and chip van near our home on a Saturday evening; cows being herded through the centre of the village where we lived; standing next to a “witch” at a Christmas bazaar; and there being no electricity or mains water in our home, with an earth closet in the back yard.

Give us an unusual School memory? Stated more than once by our woodwork teacher: “I do wish you boys would measure twice and cut once.”

What brought you to Colchester?



My parents. Shortly before my 4th birthday.

What is your favourite place in Colchester? Castle Park.

What was the most scary event

of your life? Giving evidence at an inquest into the death of my first daughter who died after an accident.

What was the most famous event you have attended? Walking with my second daughter down the aisle at All Saints’ Church, Shrub End, at her wedding.

What is your most memorable Colchester cultural event? Watching Colchester Military Wives Choir perform at the Canadian International Military Tattoo in Hamilton, Ontario.

Who is this man?

Answer at the **BOTTOM** of the Back Cover.

Mystery man No.8, in Issue No.34, was our Technical Officer, Marcel Glover.



From the Archive No. 3 Paxman’s Recalled

“**You used to sit** on the corner of Victor Road and wait for them. A few of me old uncles worked in Paxmans and when the hooter went they used to come down Artillery Street, Port Lane and Barrack Street and it used to be like ants; there was over 2,000 people there then, and they used to come out like ants. They’d fly into the *Foundry Arms*, fly into the *Artilleryman*, they’d go into the *Barley Mow*, the *Bugle* and the *Duke of York*. The landlord would have 9 or ten pints, all on the bar pulled, and they used to come in and, in the doorway, they’d have their pint, put it down again, and they’d pay for them at the end of the week. There were hoards of them in those days, and the pubs thrived.”



Letters to the Editor

From Joan Hearsom

Thank you for locating the magazine back numbers. When we are 'let out of prison' I would like the others as well.

I used to collect newspaper cuttings and books on Colchester, to give our grandchildren a better idea of what the Colchester they live in, looked like when we were at school.

We have lived here most of our lives. Peter lived in West Mersea until he was 7, visiting granny in Errington Road, then subsequently living for many years in Ireton Road. I lived in Pownall Crescent just after the war, my dad having been stationed at Cavalry Barracks during the war. Mother nursed in St Mary's hospital and latterly at Brook Street and Villa Road Nurseries.

I then lived in Maldon Road, between Alexander and Burlington Roads in the 50's. From there I moved to Halstead Road, prior to Beacon End Estate being built. We married in the late 60's and lived in Sussex Road for years. My big regret was we lived near to the old Swiss chalet, and although it should have been preserved, it was demolished to make way for Orchard Court and in those days, it was not as easy to take photographs as it is now and it only lives in my memory! We moved again about 30 years ago to Byron Avenue, our house having been built on the old allotments behind London Road. The area having changed beyond all recognition from the days

as a teenager, when I worked in the Co-op, now a vets. Proving if a record is not made of changes, in the passing years, places and events pass without record.

Thank you once again.

From David Ricks

The photo of the old Arcade in the latest edition of *Colchester Recalled* took me back to my childhood. We lived in Kelvedon for a few years in the 1950s and Saturday mornings in Colchester were my mother's routine shopping. So I disappeared down the Arcade to the second-hand comic stall.

I also recall the noisy parrot squawking there! What a pity the Arcade couldn't have been preserved.

Perhaps you may be able to help with a memory I may have just imagined. On the corner of Lion Walk and Culver Street, just behind the rear entrances of Woolworths and Marks and Spencer was there once a public toilet block that included public baths? I haven't found anyone yet that remembers this. For some reason green tiling comes in to the picture!

Are you able to solve this?

Thank you for your letter, Mr Ricks, I can indeed. The public toilets and baths are not a figment of your imagination, for they are a real, factual memory.

I remember them well, due to use in my teenage years. My parents lived in North Station Road, in a semi-detached rented house that was built in 1875, hence it had no running hot water, no bathroom, but it did boast an outside flush toilet! From the age of about 15 when I started playing amateur football, I attended the public baths every Saturday evening, as there were very few football grounds then with bath or shower facilities. In fact, most houses did not have those facilities either, so the public baths were used every often in those days.

I cannot remember neither the green tiling nor the noisy parrot you mention, but that may be due to my advanced years.

However, I vividly recall the Arcade with T M Locke's furniture shop and John Collier, the men's outfitters.

The Editor



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