

Ongar Millennium History Society Newsletter

April/May 2015

First of all, I am very sorry for the non-appearance of the February newsletter. This was due to my illness over a number of months. I am now trying to get back to my newsletter schedule. Please let me have any items that you may want to submit for the next newsletter in August as I am running out of items to include. Thank you

We thank John Winslow and acknowledge publicly the enormous amount that he contributed to OMHS over 17 years as our treasurer. He has left a big hole, but we are very lucky to welcome Kathleen Jenkins, who has taken over the role of treasurer. We also welcome new committee members who have put themselves forward to help us keep OMHS alive and kicking.

Jenny Main

Spring/Summer Outings and Walks

Please book asap. Names to Jenny Main please

- **17th May - Visit to Copped Hall** to see the latest progress. Entrance via Crown Hill Road between 10-11am £7.00 per head.
- **13th June – Visit to Pleshey Castle.** Meet at Pleshey at 2pm. Booking essential.
- **1st July at 7.00pm - Visit to Chelmsford Museum –** Overview of the archaeology of the Chelmsford area. £5.00 per head including a tour with the museum manager.

Committee members

Chair	Felicite Barnes	Vice Chair + Newsletter	Jenny Main
Treasurer	Kathleen Jenkins	Venues Sec.	Wendy Thomas
Secretary	Sandra Dear	Membership+Speaker Sec.	Lorna Vaux
Archive	Ron Huish/Derek Birch	Publicity	Cheryl Griffiths

Saint Martin of Tours

Although much has been written about St. Martin, most of it relies on the work of his hagiographer (biographer of the lives of saints), Sulpicius Severus who was a friend and close acquaintance. It portrays a man of extremely deep faith in God and in the power of prayer; also a person unafraid of anyone or any situation. In the south wall of St. Martin's Church in Ongar there is a beautiful stained window installed soon after 1918, depicting the saint as a young Roman soldier with his sword held lifting his cloak (see below). This window is dedicated: "In memory of 2nd lieu^t Henry Austin Noble the Essex Reg^t who in the Great War gave his life for his country on 8th Oct 1918". The motifs at the top of the window are those of the Essex Regiment and the Essex coat of arms.

On the north side of the Chancel is a wooden statue of St. Martin, above which is a small gold coloured canopy bearing the initials S M. There is a dedication beneath the figure, "Pray for the souls of Frederick and Anna M. Barker 1945 1946".

It is possible that in his teens Martin was like this handsome young soldier but this sanitised version does not reflect the monk in his 40s who we are told had long hair, an unkempt appearance in the extreme and scruffy clothes, not bothered about his personal appearance and yet wholly dedicated to carrying out the work that God had planned for him. This was mainly to convert as many people as possible from pagan worship to Christianity. This meant travelling, destroying heretic idols and erecting churches in their place.

As a young soldier he is associated with halving his cloak to cover a beggar and protect him from the extreme cold of winter. The story continues that, in a vision the same night, he saw Jesus wearing the half cloak. A miracle is said to have occurred when Martin was going to cut down a gigantic pine tree dedicated to a Gallic dryad and was challenged to remain beneath it as it fell. As it came down he raised his hand as if to hold off the enormous trunk and made the sign of the cross. The tree suddenly reversed direction and fell in the direction of the pagans. It is also recorded that he bought two men and a child back to life.

Martin was born in 316 or 317AD in what is now [Szombathely, Hungary](#). He spent much of his childhood in [Pavia, Italy](#) and lived most of his adult life in France. When he was about 10 years of age he entered the Christian Church as a catechumen (new convert) and as a son of a veteran was conscripted for military service as a soldier in the Roman army at the age of 15. He left the army when about 25 years old and, wishing to be a monk, lived first as a hermit on the Island of Gallinara (now Isola d'Albenga, Italy) in the Ligurian Sea. Here he lived on roots, leaves and berries, and unfortunately ate the poisonous roots of a hellebore but, when close to death, prayed and the sickness passed from him instantly.

Without contact with Christian culture, pagan superstition flourished throughout France and so Martin took the word of God to the people. He had great powers of persuasion; his moral life, even temper, patience and his arguments usually won the day. Sulpicius Severus tells of his miracles of healing which accompanied his teaching.

Against his wishes, and reluctantly, he was made the Bishop of Tours in 371 AD by popular acclaim, regardless of his shaggy appearance. A few critics were silenced by the people of Tours who replied: "To be better combed, he only needs a hairdresser. But to be more holy and mortified, the rest of you would need to taste his poverty. It is for his poverty that we are taking him" The people knew their man and got him. He still continued his destruction of pagan altars, statues and their sacred symbols. By the end of the 1800s, in France alone, it has been reported that 3600 churches had been established bearing the Saint's name. He was the first to found Parishes each with a priest and dioceses as we know the church structure today.

There is evidence that either Ingelric, Earl of Essex, who held the Manor of Ongar between 1068 and 1075, or one of the Counts of Boulogne (Eustace II [1075-87] or possibly even Eustace III [1087-1125] commissioned the church in Ongar. The Counts of Boulogne were patrons of St Martin

le Grand in London which suggests why they adopted the name St. Martin, a favourite saint of Christian Britain, for their church in Ongar.

St. Martin's Le Grand is now the name of a street but was once a Collegiate Church and Sanctuary that stood in the City of London. The precinct was within the City, but was not subject to its jurisdiction, constituting a liberty with the privilege of sanctuary, offering asylum to accused felons. It also allowed immigrant craftsmen to work and sell within its bounds despite London's strict restrictions on alien labour. The church is thought to date back to the 7th or 8th century and was rebuilt about 1056 by two brothers, Ingelric (see above) and Girard, in the reign of Edward the Confessor and confirmed by a charter of William the Conqueror, dated 1068. The church was responsible for the sounding of the curfew bell in the evenings, which announced the closing of the City's gates. It was dissolved by Henry VIII and demolished in 1548.

St. Martin died on 8th November 397 AD and his feast day is 11th November.

Stan Ball and Keith Snow

The St. Martin window



The St. Martin statue



Pray for the souls
of Frederick and
Anna M. Barker.
1945 - 1946

Isaac Taylor's Engraving Machine or following the Trail to William Tipping

Isaac Taylor of Stanford Rivers, the eldest surviving son of the Revd Isaac Taylor, was, among his many other accomplishments as engraver, philosopher and theologian, an inventor. His first, and most successful, invention was a beer tap that remained in widespread use for many decades. Much less successful, at least financially, was an engraving machine that sought to automate the complex and delicate tasks traditionally painstakingly achieved with graver and burin. As partner in the development of this idea, he recruited his nephew Josiah Gilbert, who moved to Marden Ash in 1843, chiefly to be near enough to the Taylor household in Stanford Rivers to make such co-operation feasible. Precisely what role Gilbert played in the enterprise is unclear, but, since he was a professional portrait painter, it may have been his artistic talent that was judged potentially useful.

The first application of the machine was to provide the plates for a sumptuous edition, with notes by Isaac Taylor, of a translation from the Latin by a certain Dr Robert Traill of Josephus's *The Jewish War*. Traill was rector of Schull, County Cork, from 1832 until his death and a Calvinist not popular with the locals. However, he worked hard for the relief of victims of the potato famine before himself falling victim to famine fever in 1847. As well as being the translator, he was the principal financial backer of the project, and his death brought Isaac Taylor almost to bankruptcy. There is evidence in the diaries of Thomas Green*, Josiah Gilbert's first wife's brother and a wealthy man, that in the late 1840s he was urged by his brother-in-law to invest in the machine, though whether he did so is unclear. Isaac Taylor survived the crisis, and the Josephus was eventually published in 1862. And a handsome volume it is, the engraved illustrations being especially fine. Meanwhile, the engraving machine had a new lease of life, developed by Josiah's brother, James Montgomery Gilbert, for the calico printing industry in Manchester.

My acquisition in 2011 of a copy of Traill's Josephus enabled me to solve a minor, but long-standing, puzzle. In Susan Gilbert's diaries, there are many references to someone invariably styled "Mr Tipping", with some indications that, like Josiah, he was an artist; he was a quite frequent visitor to their house in Marden Ash. I had previously managed to identify him with William Tipping (1816-1897), in due course a wealthy man, who later became an MP and the owner of Brasted Park in Kent (of which a previous occupant had been Louis Napoleon); according to an unsourced article in Wikipedia, his father was a Liverpool merchant and he himself made a great deal of money through investment in the railways. Although there are one or two entries in Susan's diaries that seem to suggest he was a Roman Catholic - for instance, on one occasion he gave Susan a present of a rosary - surprisingly to me, he married on 26 June 1844 "according to the usages of the Society of Friends". Although he seems in the early diaries to have been a close friend of the Gilberts, he fades out of the picture towards the end of that decade. None of the references to him I had unearthed outside the diaries made any mention of his having been an artist. However, looking further into the Traill/Josephus story, I came upon an advertisement for the book in *The Universalist and Ladies' Repository*, Volume 7 (July 1847), which included "...the Illustrations taken from designs executed by William Tipping who spent ten months in Palestine for the purpose of sketching from nature for this work..." I then found from a Google search that in November 2011 Bonhams the auctioneers had sold for £2,000 a collection of the "Papers of William Tipping, comprising a series of approximately one hundred letters written on tours of Europe and the Middle East in the late 1830s and early 1840s, from Cairo, Beirut, Smyrna, Syria, Alexandria, Constantinople, Amsterdam, and elsewhere, some illustrated, many with postal markings; together with a run of some 120 retained drafts of letters to Isaac Taylor, the publishers Houlston & Wright, Dr [Robert] Traill, the painter [Josiah] Gilbert and others, concerning publication of plates after drawings made on his tours; plus a good deal of other family material, *in a suitcase and box*", with a note indicating that Tipping's family were indeed Quakers. And in the book itself the illustrations are indeed ascribed to William Tipping.

Robin Gilbert

continued on next page

* Previous articles in the Newsletter have referred to the diaries of Susan Gilbert (née Green), the first wife of Josiah Gilbert of Marden Ash, which are to be found in the Essex Record Office. These cover the period 1841 to 1866, with a number of years in between missing. In 2011, I learned of another set of diaries, those of Susan's brother Thomas Green, held in the Frome Museum in Somerset. The massive task of transcribing these is being undertaken by my distant cousin by marriage Ginny Owen, a great-granddaughter of Thomas's and Susan's sister Anna and her husband John Latham.

The Ongar Castle mound mausoleum

Sitting in his London house in July 1835, Robert Mitford, a former judge in the Bengal civil service, wrote his will. Most of this deeply embittered and recriminatory document, written in the most intemperate language, has no local significance. However, although the Mitfords did not live in the town, two generations of them had married into the Boodle family of Ongar, resulting in a strong connection with the town. Robert Mitford's mother, unrelated to the Ongar family, was interred in the Boodle vault in the churchyard. Also buried here were Mitford's father's first wife (who was a Boodle) and her daughter. These Mitfords are also commemorated on a wall tablet in the chancel of St Martin's.

Mitford's will was long and prolix, but it is clause eight which is of local interest. In this, he instructed his executors 'to purchase, ... for the ultimate deposit of my body, and also for ... the deposit of the remains of my parents and sister now interred in a Vault in Chipping Ongar churchyard, the Mount surrounded by a Moat ... the property of Mr Evans, on the summit of which they will be pleased to raise ... a suitable monument, planting the summit and sides of the Mount with Cedar or Cypress trees in a manner which may render it ornamental to the Town'. Mitford's memory was not entirely correct. Though his mother and half sister were in the Boodle vault, his father was not.

Mitford's will was to cause his executors an immense amount of trouble. In spite of his legal background, he later erased part of his will, and added no less than four unwitnessed codicils, three of which he attempted to dictate from his death bed in Paris in April 1836. After questioning the executors and obtaining witness statements to confirm that the amendments and the written codicil were in his handwriting, the probate court ruled in November 1837 (some 18 months after his death) that the will and two of the codicils were valid.

This was only the beginning of the problems facing his executors. In January 1839, Mitford's widow, from whom he had been legally separated before his death, went to court to contest the will on the grounds that the bequest for the intended mausoleum was not legal, and therefore could not be carried out. Her legal team further argued that, as clause eight was bound to fail, clause nine should also fail. This left the residue of his estate to the government of Bengal 'for charitable, beneficial and public works in the city of Dacca ... for the benefit of the native inhabitants in the manner that they and the government regard to be most conducive.' If clause nine failed, the residuary estate should be divided amongst the beneficiaries named in the first seven clauses.

The court was not persuaded by the argument that clause nine should fail on the grounds that clause eight could not be carried out. The widow's legal team then argued that there was no suitable body in Bengal to receive the residuary bequest and, even if there was, it was not clear how the benefits could be restricted to the 'native inhabitants'. Counsel suggested that the bequest might be used wholly inappropriately to 'erect a mosque, or a college for dervishes' or 'a pagan temple'. The legal wrangling went on through a number of appeals, and it was not until December 1842 (now well over six years after Mitford's death) that clauses eight and nine were both ruled valid.

This was still not the end of the executors' difficulties. In 1844 a claim was filed against Mitford's estate by his niece relating to a deed of settlement which he had drawn up in 1825, prior to her intended marriage. The marriage subsequently fell through, but she claimed that she was still entitled to receive about £2000 from this settlement. It was a further four years before the court decided that, though it was proper for her to bring the case, her suit failed.

Thus it was not until 1848, 12 years after Mitford's death, that the final legal challenge was dismissed and the construction of the mausoleum on the Ongar castle mound could be addressed. The executors then ran into another intractable problem. The owner, Sir John Swinburne, was unwilling to sell under any

circumstances, so clause eight could not be put into effect. It then only remained for them to pay the residuary estate, amounting to about £18,000, to the Governor General of India and in due course this was used to construct a hospital in Dacca (now Dhaka in Bangladesh). The hospital still exists and bears Mitford's name – Ongar's loss was Dhaka's gain!

Why did Mitford, who had apparently only tenuous links with Ongar through his father's first wife, wish to erect a mausoleum for himself, his parents and his half sister, on top of the castle mound? It is clear that the Boodle family connection must be part of the answer. The other factor is that Mitford's mother had died soon after his birth, and his father, who was a ship's captain in the East India Company's service, did not remarry. It seems very probable that the two orphans (Mitford had an older brother) were brought up by the Boodle family, and that this would account for Mitford's attachment to the town and his familiarity with the castle mound which he would have known from childhood. In the absence of any surviving letters or diaries, this cannot be proved, but how else could Mitford have known about the mound?

Michael Leach

Note on sources: Apart from details in Mitford's will, most of the information in this article has been obtained from contemporary legal reports in *The Times* newspaper.

An enigma

On 3 August 1719 the marriage of Mr Barton Booth, widower, and Miss Hester Santlow, single woman, took place in St Martin's church, Chipping Ongar. This apparently normal event has some very curious and unexplained aspects.

Marriages recorded in the Ongar parish register in the early eighteenth century averaged about two a year, and almost all were between individuals who were parishioners, or from a nearby parish. The Booth/Santlow marriage stands out from the rest because both parties were resident in London parishes – the bride from St Paul's, Covent Garden, and the groom from St Giles in the Fields. This anomaly becomes even more surprising on looking more closely at the individuals concerned.

Barton Booth (1681-1733) was born in Lancashire and educated at Westminster school in London where he developed an interest in poetry and acting. His early acting experience was acquired in Dublin but he was appearing on the London stage by 1700. He was an ambitious and hardworking actor, and developed a reputation for tackling serious roles, including Shakespeare's King Lear, and Banquo from Macbeth. Contemporaries praised his voice, his articulation, his stage presence and his 'talent of discovering the passions where they lay hid'. In 1704 he married his first wife, the daughter of a baronet; she died in 1710. After his second marriage to Hester Santlow in 1719, his acting career continued to flourish until terminated by ill health in 1728, He died in 1733 and was buried at Cowley, near Uxbridge.

The origins of Hester Santlow (c.1690-1773) are not known. She was apprenticed to a London dancing master and first appeared as a dancer on the London stage in 1706. Some of her dances were recorded in notation. She subsequently expanded her career into acting and was 'universally admired for her beauty, matchless figure and the unusual elegance of her dancing and acting'. A long standing relationship with James Craggs, a diplomat and politician, ended in about 1717. She married Booth in 1719 and her successful stage career continued until her husband's death in 1733, though she continued to live in London until her death. She was buried in her husband's grave at Cowley.

Why were two well established London actors, neither of whom had any apparent connections with Essex, married in the relative obscurity of rural Chipping Ongar? Was there, for some reason, a need for this marriage to be out of the public gaze? Did either of the parties have a particular friend or patron in Ongar? At present there is no answer to any of these questions.

Michael Leach

Chipping Ongar schoolmasters

1637 - ?1643/4: Christopher Glascock. 4 children baptised at CO between 1639 & 1643. Son of Christopher of Gt Waltham. Matriculated St Catherine's Cambs 1631, BA 1634/5, MA 1638. Master of Ipswich grammar school 1644-50. Master of Felsted 1650-89. Died 1690

?1643/4-1662:

1662: John Crook in post and subscribing under the Act of Uniformity 11/8/1662. Not in Venn. Possibly a mistake for James Crook

1662- ?1670: James Crook bishop's licence as schoolmaster CO 20/8/1662. Son of James, weaver of Braintree. Admitted St John's Cambs Feb 1655/6. BA 1659/60. MA 1663. Rector of CO 1664-1670. Rector of Aythorpe Roding 1670-1706. Rector of Stondon Massey 1695-1706. Died 1706. MI at Stondon.

?1670-?1676:

?1676-?1679: Nathaniel Reeve admitted St Catherine's College, Cambs 1671, matriculation 1674, BA 1674/5. Licensed schoolmaster at CO (no date given, but on or after 1676). Rector of Twinstead 1679-1699. Died 1699.

?1679-1690: Benjamin Stebbing first to benefit from Joseph King Trust at CO, resigned in 1690. Curate of Berners Roding 1677-?. Rector of Stondon Massey 1690-1695. Died 1695. 9 children baptised in CO between 1670 and 1683. Not in Oxford/Cambridge list of graduates, but said to be MA. Ann Stebbing, widow of Benjamin Stebbing, late schoolmaster of CO, buried April 1711.

1690-?1692:

1692-?1693: Francis Foulke licensed schoolmaster at CO 24/3/1692. Curate at CO from 1691. Not in Cambridge list of graduates. Not in Newcourt.

1693-?1715: John Campe admitted Queens' College Cambs 1679. Of Essex. Matric 1680, BA 1682/3, MA 1686. Ordained priest 1692/3. Curate of CO 1691, rector of CO 1692. Licensed schoolmaster at CO 18/3/1693 Rector of Beauchamp Roding 1710.

1715-?1728 Godfrey Jones born in Ruthin. Admitted St John's College Cambs 1709. Ordained priest 1712 as "BA". Licensed as schoolmaster at CO 4/5/1715. Rector of CO 1720-1733. Died August 1733. (Dr Godfrey Jones in parish register)

1728- ? John Hale: licensed schoolmaster at CO 21/6/1728. Not in Oxford/Cambridge last of graduates.

Sources:

Church of England clergy database

Newcourt R, 1711 *Repertorium*

Salmon's *History of Essex*

Morant P, 1768 *History of Essex*, London

Venn

Foster

Crisp F A, 1886, *Parish Registers of Ongar, Essex*, published privately

Michael Leach

"Brains of Ongar" Triumph

Members will be delighted to learn that on 25th October 2015 our Quiz Team walked away with the top score at last year's competition. It will mean that a cash prize of the net proceeds of the evening will be awarded to OMHS. Following the rules of the competition 50% of that prize must be donated to the charity of the winners' choice which is the Harlow and West Essex branch of the Alzheimer's Society. Of course, our name will be engraved on the shield which is permanently on display in Ongar Library. The runner-up was High Ongar Geriatric Society (HOGS).

Thanks must go to Sandra Dear and her team of helpers for organising the event, which is no mean task.

After sixteen years, this was the Grand Finale of our sponsorship. Since its launch in 1999 numerous winning organisations have had their name engraved on the shield and selected their own charity choice. Somehow it seems quite fitting that the shield should come back home to us.

Since it started all those years ago, the annual BOO evening has become part of Ongar's Social Calendar. It will be missed, unless another group decides to relaunch.....?

The Clockmakers' Museum

Also last year several members visited the City of London Guildhall where The Clockmakers' Museum was situated. In case anyone is planning to make a return visit or planning to go for the first time, you should be aware that the museum is now closed for a while.

It will reopen in the summer of 2015 in the new *Time Gallery* in the Science Museum, Exhibition Road, South Kensington as part of their existing *Measuring Time* exhibition. Entry is free.

The Clockmakers' Museum, established 1814, is the oldest collection of clocks and watches in the world with the majority of items ranging from c1600 to c1850.

Just to whet your appetite...

Afternoon Tea at the Ongar Ritz

Over 40 members and friends gathered at the Ongar Ritz to commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of The Great War 1914-1918.

An exhibition of local photographs from the OMHS collection was on display together with members' own photographs and family mementoes and the sharing with us the handed down memories and stories behind these items from those not-so-far-off days.

Guest Florrie Cracknell spoke about how the Royal British Legion came to be formed in 1921 as a result of the large number of troops returning to civilian life facing hardship, poverty, injuries and traumatic battlefield memories.

Tea and cakes were enjoyed during the interval in the wonderful Ritz tradition.

An excellent video subtitled "**It will all be over by Christmas**" was then shown which brilliantly depicted the atmosphere, dangers, fears and dread encountered by the home population during the summer and early wartime days of 1914 and the first part of 1915 when it became alarmingly clear that it was going to be a long haul. Blackouts, aerial attack for the first time in history, attacks on coastal towns by German warships and the shortage of young men volunteering for the services and the eventual introduction of National Service were all dramatically depicted.

Although there was no intention to financially profit from this event it was due to the generosity of members, friends and those contributing, we were able to donate £86 to the forces charity COMBAT STRESS which specialises in those mentally damaged from their wartime experiences.

With thanks to David Welford for looking after the cables and connections.

John Winslow

Ed's note: John will be organising a second afternoon tea at the Ongar Ritz later in the year to celebrate the long reign of Queen Elizabeth II on Thursday September 17th 2015. Further details later.