

Ongar Millennium History Society Newsletter

February 2017

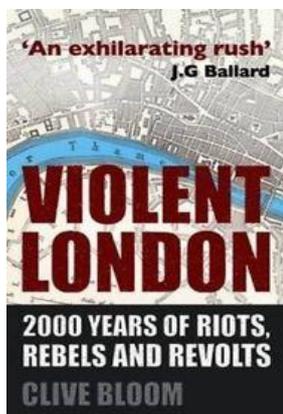
Well a rather belated Happy New Year to you all but better late than never!

I hope you are all looking forward to 2017 and all the interesting articles provided by the authors in this issue. We are always looking for interesting topics to feature in the newsletter, so get your thinking hats on, and if you haven't submitted an article before, then there is always a first time for us all!

We have the trip to the National Arboretum to look forward to, and of course our own Marion Slade Lecture too which will be delivered by Clive Bloom in March

Jenny Main, Editor

This year's Marion Slade Lecture will soon be here!



Author Clive Bloom will be discussing his fascinating book 'Violent London'. The book describes London's underground world of radicals and subversives from Boudica and Wat Tyler to the anti-globalization riots via the Chartists, Suffragettes and IRA.

Almost as soon as it was built, London suffered the first of many acts of violent protest, when Boudica and her followers set fire to the city in AD60. Ever since, the capital's streets have been a forum for popular insurrection. Covering nearly 2,000 years of political protest, this is a riveting alternative history of past and present conflict

Professor Clive Bloom

Described by The Times as a "polymath", Clive Bloom is Emeritus Professor of English and American Studies at Middlesex University, best-selling author and publisher. When Professor Bloom isn't writing, and researching he divides his time between New York University and the University of Notre Dame.

Committee members

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The Painting in St. Martin's

On the north wall of the nave is a large oil painting, mounted in a gold frame, showing Mary and baby Jesus with the inscription "And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made man." It bears no clues as to its identity and it is not known when the painting first appeared in the Church.

The inscription is taken from the Nicene Creed which is a statement of faith accepted by the [Roman Catholic](#), [Eastern Orthodox](#), [Anglican](#), and most [Protestant](#) churches. The name originates from the [First Council of Nicaea](#) (325 A.D.) at which it was initially adopted.

The painting on which it is based is found in the Galleria Palatina (Palazzo Pitti) in Florence. It is entitled *Madonna and Child* and is by the Spanish artist Bartolomé Esteban Murillo and dated around 1650-55.



Bartolomé Esteban Murillo's parents were Gaspar Esteban, a barber and surgeon, and María Pérez Murillo. He was born in either Seville or in Pilas, a smaller Andalusian town in 1617 and was baptized in Seville in 1618, the youngest son in a family of fourteen. His parents died when Bartolomé was still very young, and he was brought up by his aunt and uncle.

His early career is not well documented, but he was influenced by Francisco Zurbarán to paint with predominantly dark tones. After making his reputation with a series of eleven paintings on the lives of Franciscan saints for the Franciscan monastery in Seville (1645-46), he displaced Zurbarán as the city's leading painter and was unrivalled for the rest of his life.

Most of his paintings are of religious subjects, the most acclaimed being his *Immaculate Conception*. A self portrait, painted between 1668 and 1670, is in the National Gallery, London and is shown below.

In 1660, with the collaboration of Valdes Leal and Francisco Herrera, Murillo founded an academy of painting at Seville and became its first president. Murillo died on 3rd April 1682 after falling from a platform during the painting of an altarpiece in the Capuchin Church in Cadiz.

He had many assistants and followers and was one of the few Spanish painters widely known outside his own country.

It is interesting to note that another copy of *Madonna and Child* can be found in Upper Hardres Church in Canterbury. A variation on the painting, *Madonna with Child*, hangs in St. Hubert's Church, Corfe Mullen in Dorset.

Two large oil paintings (*The adoration of the shepherds* and *St. Thomas of Villanueva distributing alms*) in [St. Peters Church](#), Goldhanger, Maldon, Essex have recently been assessed as 19th century copies of works by Murillo.

It seems that over the centuries Murillo's work has been much admired and in demand and hence his paintings have been copied by many artists. All that we can say is that the St. Martin's painting is a copy of Murillo's *Madonna and Child* by an anonymous artist of unknown date.

Bartolomé Esteban Murillo

(1617-1682)



By Keith Snow and Stan Ball

Partial Persons in the Neighbourhood of Chipping Ongar

The following notice appeared in the *Chelmsford Chronicle* of 17 May 1765:

'Mr Sutton continues to conduct his inoculating Scheme with the greatest Safety, Ease and Expedition, free from all other infectious Complaints, notwithstanding what has been said to the Contrary by partial Persons in the Neighbourhood of Chipping Ongar; therefore he humbly hopes that such infamous Reports will be paid no Regard to, not doubting but what they are undeservedly calculated to depreciate his laudable Reputation, as well as a Scandalous Report relative to Miss Sally H---n which was undoubtedly spread merely from Spleen...'

The background to this is the increasing rivalry between surgeons and their lay imitators, all of whom were offering inoculation against smallpox. Daniel Sutton of Ingatestone was one of a number of Essex surgeons who had been practicing this new – and much safer – form of smallpox protection since December 1763. John Lenham, a Chipping Ongar apothecary, took up this profitable activity in January 1765, publicizing his services by notices making generous claims in the *Chelmsford Chronicle*. Sutton must have felt threatened by Lenham's practice, based nearby in a house at Kelvedon Common. Nothing is yet known about the 'scandalous report relative to Miss Sally H---n', presumably a patient who had been upset or injured by Sutton's treatment. The part that Lenham played in this spat is also obscure, but in the eighteenth century disputes of this sort were often played out between professional men with no holds barred, both in the press and with privately printed pamphlets. In the following year both Lenham and Sutton were blamed for the authorship of a do-it-yourself manual on smallpox inoculation, with Sutton roundly denouncing this 'catchpenny Treatise' in the *Chelmsford Chronicle* on 30 May 1766. Though inoculation would still be regarded as an effective preventative, contemporary practitioners, including Sutton, increased the mystique (and possibly the profit) with additional medications intended to ameliorate the unpleasant side effects (including the painful popular eruptions) which occurred after seven days.

Sutton was undoubtedly a good self publicist and was later to claim over 40,000 successful treatments without a single death. However, unlike some of his contemporaries, he did not acknowledge that inoculated patients were infectious to non-immune individuals, and had to face trial at the Chelmsford assizes in July 1766, accused of starting a major smallpox outbreak in the county town earlier in the year. Though acquitted on the grounds that it was impossible to attribute the blame to him, it was undoubtedly a serious challenge to his professional career which Sutton himself blamed on the malevolence of his rivals.

Lenham's part in all this is unknown, though it would appear that his use of an isolation house in Kelvedon Common shows that he recognized the risks of the spread of smallpox from freshly inoculated patients. Other aspects of his career in Ongar are obscure. It is possible that he was the John Lenham who had been apprenticed to Jonas Malden, apothecary and surgeon of Maldon, though the dates do not match well. By the time of his death in 1791, he was described as a surgeon, though whether this was by qualification or self promotion is not clear. His Ongar home may have been at what is now Holmlea, 114 High Street, but the whereabouts of his isolation house for inoculated patients at Kelvedon Common is unlikely ever to be identified.

Michael Leach

Sources:

OMHP, 1999 *Aspects of the History of Ongar*

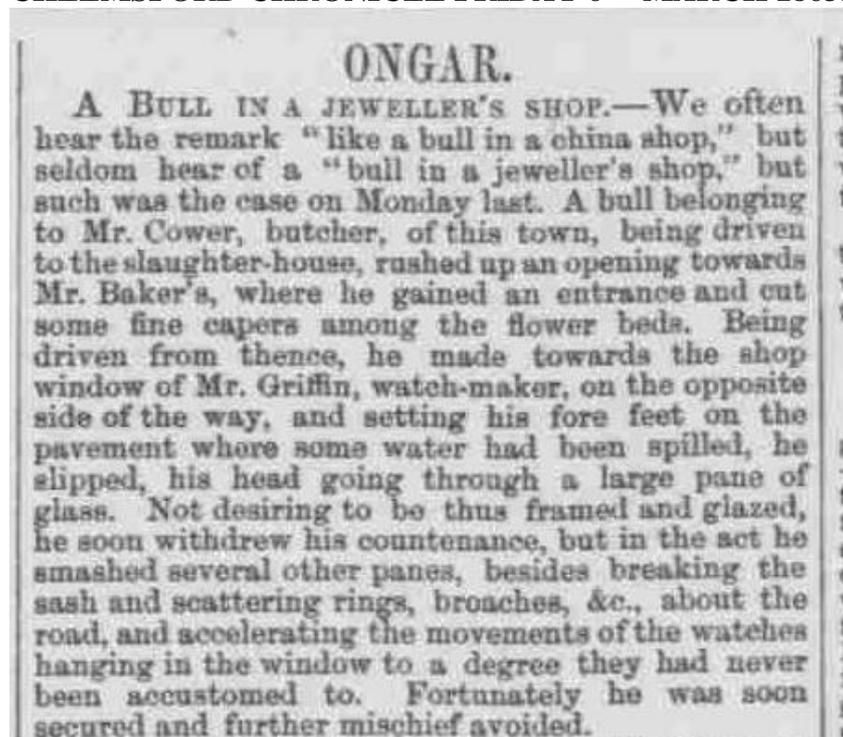
Smith J R, 1987 *The Speckled Monster*

Wilde, E E, 1913 *Inagtestone and the Great Essex Road*

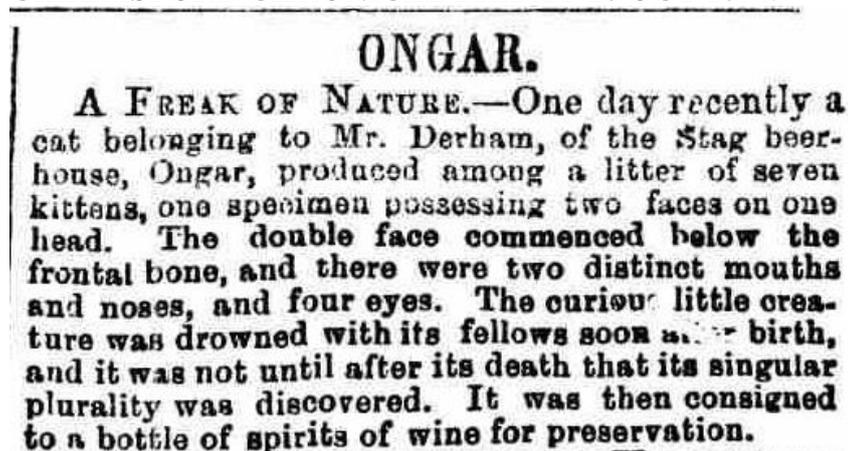
www.colchesterscaringpast.weebly.com

Interesting Cat and Bull cuttings from the past

CHELMSFORD CHRONICLE FRIDAY 6TH MARCH 1863.



CHELMSFORD CHRONICLE FRIDAY 16 OCT 1874.



Kathy Wenborne

The archaeology of Bansons's Yard

The report of the 2013 excavation behind Central House, prior to new housing development of the vacant plot, makes intriguing reading. The area is just outside and to the north of the medieval town enclosure and therefore might be expected to reveal only signs of agricultural activity before the nineteenth and twentieth century developments which are shown on old Ordnance Survey maps. Such evidence as there is suggests that in the early modern period Ongar grew principally to the south of the medieval town, down the hill from the bottleneck towards the Cripsey Brook. The 2013 excavation revealed that there was growth to the north as well, and this can be divided into a number of different periods. Though a few fragments of Roman brick and tile were found, stratification indicated that they had been dumped from elsewhere at a much later date. Interpretation of this complex site is tentative, as each new phase of development cut through and partly destroyed the underlying ones, but an approximate sequence of use is as follows.

Phase 1 was dated to the 12th and early 13th centuries by pottery finds. Fragments of charcoal, a number of post holes and beam trenches indicating buildings, as well as several hearths, together with areas paved with compacted gravel and cobbles, suggested an occupation layer. A backfilled ditch was rich in pottery and fragments of fish, fowl and animal bones, some of the last showing signs of butchery. Other rubbish pits, and a possible cess pit were also identified.

Phase 2 of early/mid 13th century date showed similar but newly constructed features, including more hearths and a wide scatter of charcoal fragments. A broken quern and abundant soil evidence of fragments of bread wheat suggested bread production in the vicinity. Apart from a few post holes there was no evidence of buildings from this period.

Phase 3 covered the mid/late 13th century and is marked by the abandonment of the hearths, the construction of boundary ditches across the site, probable robber trenches to salvage the paving materials, and further rubbish pits. Post holes and beam slots suggest a timber framed building of some sort, with a compacted floor incorporating fragments of charcoal, pottery and animal bone. Pieces of oyster shell show that sea food was being consumed.

Phase 4 from the 14th century showed reduced activity with some new ditches, a few post holes but little else.

Phase 5 from the later 14th to 16th centuries was marked by backfilling of some of the ditches, levelling of areas of subsidence over earlier backfills. A line of post holes could suggest a fence line or perhaps part of a building with earth fast timbers.

Phase 6 of the 16th to 18th centuries show that the site had been returned to agricultural use, and by the time of the 1840 tithe assessment it was divided between two meadows.

Phase 7 shows a late 19th building, modern surface metalling, and numerous intrusions from service trenches, a sewer, and an inspection pit. Documentary evidence suggests that the site was used for a sawmill, and later as a builder's yard and for motor vehicle maintenance.

In summary there is evidence of early medieval mix of residential and commercial occupation outside and to the north of the town enclosure. Finds suggest bread production and possible iron working was taking place. Rubbish disposal was always a problem before organized collections and this could explain the presence of numerous rubbish pits on the site. Rubbish seems to have been tipped anywhere convenient, and an earlier excavation nearby showed that the town ditch had accumulated considerable quantities before it was finally filled in. The collection of animal bones found in Banson's

Yard suggests that a wide range of food was being consumed. From the 14th century onwards, the activity dwindles and by the end of the Middle Ages the site had returned to agricultural use.

The gradual decline of activity on this site could reflect the downturn in Ongar's economy, perhaps as a result of a corresponding reduction in the political significance of the owners of Ongar Castle. Certainly by the 17th century, the market – in comparison to the neighbouring ones at Brentwood and Epping - had dwindled. By 1673 it was described as 'indifferent'. There is insufficient evidence to explain the intensity of activity in the early medieval period, or even provide definite details of what was going on here, but it is tempting to surmise that it might have been connected with the not infrequent royal visits when the king, accompanied by his entire court, treasury and associated officials, descended on Ongar, probably more than doubling its population for a few days. This is pure speculation on my part, but cooking for such a large number must have been well beyond the normal capabilities of the town's fireplaces.

Michael Leach

Source: CgMs Consulting, 2014 'Post Excavation Assessment: Banson's Yard, Chipping Ongar, CM5 9AA'

Chipping Ongar shambles – more evidence

In the May 2016 newsletter I discussed the finding, in September 1630, of an abandoned baby in 'ye shambles on Ongar faire day', and noted that this was the only evidence so far of an area in the town centre specifically devoted to the butchery trade.

Further proof of the existence (and, probably, the final demise) of the shambles in Ongar has now come to light. The *St James Evening Post* of 18 June 1745 carried the news that 'on Saturday Morning, about Six o'Clock, most part of the Butcher's Shops in Chipping Ongar fell down; if it had happened about two Hours later, several People must have been killed, all the said Shops being occupied, and it was Market-day.'

It seems unlikely that it was ever rebuilt. By this date the offensive nature of this form of trading, which left offal and waste piled up to rot, would have been coming unacceptable, and separate shops – with access to backland for slaughter and disposal of unwanted by-products – would have been greatly preferable.

A desirable residence in 1728

The *Daily Post* of 31 July 1728 carried the following notice:

'To be LETT: A New built Brick House, five Rooms of a Floor, Sash'd and Wainscotted, and very good Cellars, brick'd Stables and Coach-houses, a good Orchard and Garden with a good Fish-pond, and about four Acres of Meadow Land, well situat'd in a good Air, about half a mile of Chipping Ongar, Essex (a good Market Town) 20 Miles from London.

N.B. A Stage Coach goes three Times a Week to and from London. Enquire of Mr Charles Fowler, Apothecary at Islington; or Mr Luke Dore, Attorney at Law, Chipping Ongar, Essex.'

This was a substantial, and probably superior class of house, being built in brick when the vast majority of buildings of that period would have been timber framed and plastered. Sash windows, internal paneling, the provision of cellars, stables and coachhouses also suggests a relatively high status house.

It is far from clear where this house is (or was). Marden Ash House is a possibility, though it is generally dated to the late seventeenth century, with extensive improvements and modernisation in the mid eighteenth. Any suggestions about the identity of this house would be very welcome.

An army deserter

It was not unusual for absconding apprentices and army deserters to be sought with the aid of newspaper advertisements in the eighteenth century. One such notice appeared in the *London Evening Post* of 3 July 1738;

'Deserted out of Col. Hodge's Company in his Majesty's Coldstream Regiment of Foot Guards, commanded by the Rt. Hon. Richard, Earl of Scarborough.

John Brown, born in Chipping Ongar in the County of Essex, brown Hair, fresh Complexion, five feet and eight and a half Inches high, 24 Years of Age, by calling a Servant, has cut off his Hair, and enter'd himself on board the Princess Louisa, and absconded from thence.'

Nothing else is known about this young man who perhaps enlisted to escape poverty or provincial life, but found military life not to his liking. He was almost certainly the son of Joseph and Ann Brown, and baptized in Chipping Ongar on 12 December 1711. This would have made him 26 rather than 24 years old, but such a discrepancy would not have been unusual at that time. He had obviously cut off his hair in an attempt to make him less recognizable to those who were seeking to arrest him.

Michael Leach

James Crompton, money scrivener, and the White House, Chipping Ongar

The *London Gazette* of 26 January 1788 published a note on the bankruptcy of James Crompton, a money scrivener of Chipping Ongar. Late in February of the same year, the *Gazetteer & Daily Advertiser* carried a description of the pending auction of Crompton's house and its contents.

Nothing unusual about bankruptcy, of course, but these two announcements do raise a number of interesting points. **Firstly** what was a money scrivener? His principal function was to raise money for others, acting something like a cross between a bank and a building society, but purely as a private individual with no connection to a corporate structure, or any form of regulation – a potential recipe for either substantial profits or spectacular disaster.

Secondly, is it possible to identify his house? Though eighteenth century newspapers not infrequently carried notices of houses for sale in and around Ongar, there is rarely enough information to pinpoint the building with any certainty. In this case, however, the notice of the sale by auction shows that the house was large, very well furnished with extensive service buildings, and overlooked the surrounding countryside. It had gardens, a fish pond and a canal (i.e. a long narrow rectangular piece of water). The auction notice added that it would take place 'on Tuesday 4 March at Eleven o'Clock on the Premises, near the Church at Chipping Ongar.' These details, plus its proximity to the parish church, strongly suggest that the house in question was the White House which lies just to the east of the churchyard and a small piece of glebe which had mysteriously left the church's ownership by the nineteenth century. The identity of the building is further confirmed by a lease and release dated 21 October 1788 in the Essex Record Office (D/DU 418/82), listing the owners of an unnamed house. These included John and Richard Bull, father and son. We know from other sources that the Bulls had owned and lived in the White House, but that by 1788 Richard Bull had retired to the Isle of Wight and the house had been let to James Crompton.

Thirdly we are given a glimpse of an extremely affluent way of life – until his bankruptcy, the money scrivener had clearly done well financially, though it is possible that much had been acquired on credit. There was a coach house, stabling and a 'capital Saddle Gelding'. The internal furnishings included such luxury items as a spinet; two eight day clocks; pictures and prints including 'a Spanish masquerade ... esteemed a most valuable painting'; a sedan chair; lavishly equipped four poster beds; elegant japanned and mahogany chairs; sideboards and cellarets; dining, card and Pembroke

tables; a large pier scone and chimney glasses; and large Wilton and Axminster carpets (amongst much else). We do not know the extent of James Crompton's debts, or how much was raised by the sale of the house, but both sums must have been considerable. Little else is known about him. He was described as 'of this parish' when he was married in St Martin's church in 1782 and his four children were baptized here. Not surprisingly there are no Crompton parish register entries after 1788.

Fourthly it may throw a little light on what happened to the small area of glebe land lying between the churchyard and the grounds of the White House. The Rev. Ibbetson Porter, in his brief history of Chipping Ongar published in 1877 noted that this former piece of glebe land had been lost to the church without any surviving record of its disposal. When I first came to Ongar, the White House was owned by Herbert Simon and his ownership included this piece of ground. Had the eighteenth or early nineteenth century owners done a deal with the church to acquire this piece of land adjoining the White House?? And did it form one of the two 'rich meadow lands' listed in the 1788 auction particulars? We may never know for sure, but it certainly seems possible.

Michael Leach

Dates for the diary

24th March - Budworth Hall Marion Slade Lecture

- **Clive Bloom** Emeritus Professor and bestselling author will lecture on **Violent London**, tickets £10 including cheese & wine.

17th May - Visit to the National Memorial Arboretum

- Coach picks up from Two Brewers 9.00am and Budworth Hall 9.05am and returns 4.00pm. This is free for members or £16 for nonmembers [see poster](#)

June - Martyn Lockwood Talk

- Saucy Seaside Postcards

20th September – AGM and Talk

Future Events

Events will be announced in future newsletters and on the website. Have you looked at our website? The site is regularly updated with future events so this is where you will hear the news first. The address is <http://www.omhs.org.uk/> or just type OMHS into a search engine.

Newsletter Contributions

We always welcome articles for the newsletter. If you have anything that you would like to contribute, please submit to the editor or through the website before the end of April 2017 to be in time for included in the next edition of the newsletter