



In praise of Essex Timber and Brick Vernacular Buildings

- 10.00 **Introduction** – Martin Bridge
- 10.10 ***The Cressing Temple farmyard and its 13th to 19th century buildings*** – David Andrews
This talk will look at the range of buildings in the farmyard at Cressing Temple, Essex ranging from the two 13th century barns, to the 16th century granary, the 16th-19th century farmhouse, the 18th century aisled barn and the Tudor garden.
- 10.50 ***Essex houses of the 14th century*** - John Walker
Twenty-nine Essex buildings have been tree-ring dated to the 14th century. This talk will explore these buildings to see what trends they reveal in plans, house forms, appearance and carpentry, and will compare the six built before the Black Death with the twenty built after. The other three houses have dates spanning either side of 1350.
- 11-30 tea break
- 11.50 ***4 Silver Street, Maldon, Essex –its medieval modernisation & later partial destruction***
– Tim Howson
Recent study of this timber-framed house in advance of refurbishment has transformed our understanding of it. This talk will describe the building's evolution; its origins as a 15th-century hall house, its radical modernisation in the late-16th century, and its partial demolition and extension in the mid-18th century. Special features include an excavated medieval hearth, fixings for medieval textile wall hangings, exquisitely carved Elizabethan fireplaces, 17th-century painted decoration, and the most extensive complex of cellars in Maldon.
- 12.30 lunch break
- 14.00 ***Essex Anchor needled beam houses – an East Anglian Mystery*** – John Walker
In central north Essex and central south Suffolk there are a number of houses dating from the 15th to 17th centuries with anchor beams where, unlike those in Denmark and a number of north European countries, the protruding end is not reduced to a tenon that goes through a post, but passes through the wall undiminished with a long wedge, called here a needle, through their protruding end. This talk will discuss their distribution which, strangely, the information from the Historic England National Heritage List for England suggests that, apart from a few outliers, these needled beams are confined to north Essex and south Suffolk.
- 14.25 ***Harwich: “The inhabitants seem warm in their nests.”*** – Elphin & Brenda Watkin
This talk will consider the adaptation of existing buildings and the development of new plan forms that are flexible and can cope with a rising population during the 18th and 19th centuries.
- 15.05 tea break
- 15.20 ***18th and 19th century farmsteads in Essex*** - Anne Padfield
As a county of early enclosure, the Parliamentary Enclosure Acts of the 18th century and beyond had far less impact on Essex farming than elsewhere. The high price of corn during the French Wars, however, had much more influence, resulting in more and larger timber ‘Napoleonic’ barns. The next boom was in the mid-19th century, when High Farming meant that there was hardly a farm which did not see major building improvements, new farmstead designs, increased use of brick and slate, and even concrete and corrugated iron. The subsequent slump of the Agricultural Depression meant that after 1880 there were few new farm buildings apart from cowsheds. This talk will illustrate the range from expensively-built planned farmsteads to poor-quality utilitarian sheds, and how farm buildings were often adapted to new uses.
- 16.00 ***Discussion & Finish***