A Survey of Colchester Sculptures

Colchester Civic Society

Feb 2024

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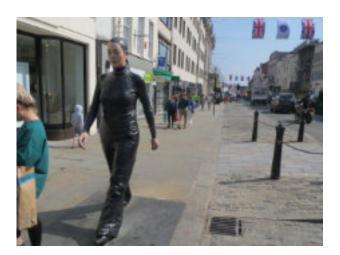
Fenwick's store, High Street.

"Walking Women" by Sean Henry. The 7ft tall bronze sculpture was unveiled on 15th March 2017 by Hugo Fenwick.

Sean Henry (1965 in Woking) is a widely exhibited sculptor in the U.K., the U.S.A and Scandinavia. His painted figures have helped to revive the long tradition of polychrome sculpture and his work is regarded as fusing the disciplines of ceramics with those of sculpture to create a fresh, innovative approach to representing the human figure. The National Portrait Gallery regards him as the greatest living sculptor of "real people" working in the U.K today

West facing. Location 599517 225206





Fenwick's store, side wall, High Street.

"Man with Cup" by Sean Henry. The 4ft 6" high sculpture is installed on a shelf, four metres high above street level and is possibly best seen from the first floor of Fenwick's in Café Nero. . Unveiled on 15th March 2017 by Hugh Fenwick.

East Facing. Location 599510 225208





Colchester Town Hall, High Street.

The Town Hall was built to a design by the architect John Belcher during the years 1897-1902 in an Edwardian Baroque style to replace the earlier 1848 Town Hall which was discovered to be unstable.

The style features heavy decoration and a liberal use of six life-size statues on the façade. These were made by L.J.Watts, the local stone masons. These feature Eudo Dapifer, Lord Audley, Sir William Gilberd and Archbishop Harsnett on the High Street frontage and Boudica and Edward the Elder on the Stockwell Street side.

The east end of the building is dominated by the grandeur of the 192ft tower which was largely funded by a contribution from James Paxman, the founder of the engineering company ,Davey Paxman & Co and commemorates the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign. The tower is surmounted by a bronze statue of St Helena, the patron saint of Colchester holding the True Cross. Cllr Arthur Jarmin travelled as far as Italy to locate a suitable statue of the saint but could only find one of the Virgin Mary which had to be modified locally.

Just below the statue four bronze ravens were placed to represent the position of Port Reeve. These were sculpted by F. Carruthers Gould. The upper section of the tower supports four seated representations of figures for "Fishery", "Military Defence", "Engineering" and "Agriculture". These again are the work of L.J.Watts.

South facing. Location 599584 225234























The interior features a marble staircase with a fine statue of Queen Victoria c.1890's on the first landing (South facing.)





In nearby alcoves are marble busts of Samuel Turner MP of Colchester 1727-1735 and Sir George Henry Smythe MP Colchester 1826-1830.



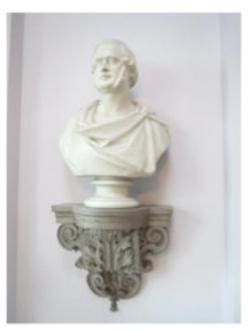


The second landing holds a marble bust of C.P Spurgeon, a bronze bust of Edward VII and the marble Memorial to the Protestant Martyrs.













Also displayed are an unattributed marble bust and a pair of painted wooden school figures originally from the Old Bluecoat School in



The Old Library building, West Stockwell Street.

The Old Library in West Stockwell Street was built in 1893 to designs by Brightwen Binyon, an architect based in Ipswich and was opened in 1894 and is Grade II listed.

The ground floor Library room contains a large bas relief by Count Giuseppe Oldfredi of Milan, an Italian Academician and gold medal winner in Paris . This depicts Queen Victoria and Prince Albert opening the Great Exhibition of 1851 at Crystal Palace. This was commissioned and donated by James Paxman who is shown as a young man in the crowd on the far right, peering over the shoulders of foreign princes. The exhibition had made a singular impression on Paxman who was 19 yrs old at the time and Prince Albert remained his hero. The plaque which weighs six tons and measures 11 ft x 8ft carved from pure white Carrara marble is built onto the rear wall of the room.

East facing. Location 599584 225262









High Street, outside Tesco's

"TWINKLE TWINKLE Little Star "statue of the Taylor sisters.

The statue of the sisters Jane and Ann was unveiled on May 4th 2024 outside the Tesco store and opposite the Town Hall and West Stockwell Street. The poem "The Star" was written in 1806 by Jane Taylor when the family were living in West Stockwell Street. They resided in Colchester from 1796-1810.

The poem was set to music later and became widely famous as the well known "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star "

Sir Bob Russell, the former M.P. was determined to raise the £90,000 to pay for the statue and installation without Council assistance, which he ultimately achieved.

The artist was the well known Ardleigh sculptor, Mandy Pratt.

West Facing 599620 225207





Sainsbury's, Priory Walk.

Stanley Bragg Associates were appointed architects by Sainsbury's for their new build store in Colchester Town Centre at the Kingsway Precinct in 1969. Originally planned as an all window frontage, it soon became apparent that this would not be permitted and Stanley Bragg had the splendid idea to call on Henry Collins and his wife Joyce Pallot to create a mural in concrete that would be Colchester relevant.

They were both locally born artists and were involved with teaching at the Colchester Art College as well as creating pieces for exhibitions like the Festival of Britain. They designed a wall created out of precast concrete panels incorporating motifs relating to the Roman and tribal past. The method was developed in conjunction with Hutton's Builders of Birch using a lost mould technique of polystyrene to create the panels and poured concrete.

The resulting design was constructed of 24 panels in high relief which not only provides strong surface interest but renders it unattractive to graffiti artists.

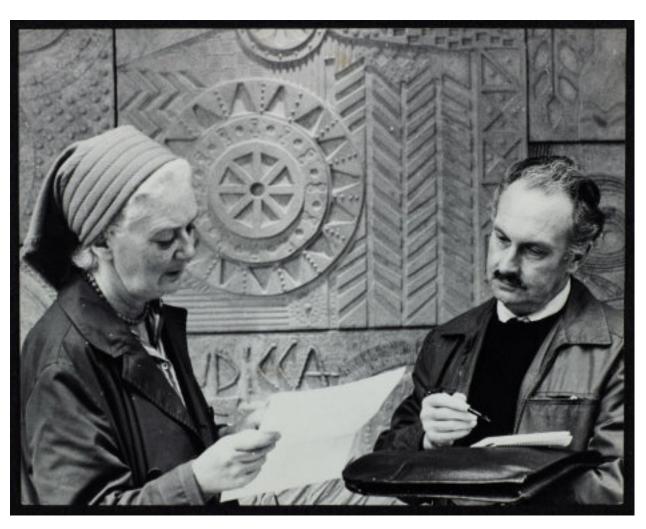
Sainsbury's were delighted with the mural and as projects arose were quick to commission new murals for those stores. Collins and Pallot soon created an additional element of coloured mosaic and this Kingsway design remains the only mono coloured mural.

Not only Sainsbury's commissioned more work but they were joined by similar commissions from BHS stores as well as a Southway underpass project for Colchester Borough Council (who had been awarded a Certificate for the Best New Building in Colchester for the Sainsbury's store in 1970).

The mural is locally listed.

South Facing. Location









Colchester War Memorial, Cowdray Crescent, High Street

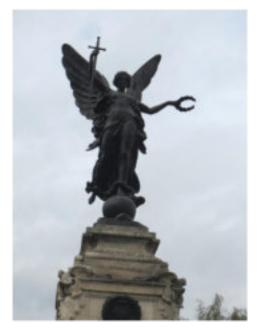
Grade II Listed. The War Memorial includes the lamp columns, wall, gates, piers, railings and posts. Erected in 1923 by the Borough of Colchester. Architect: Duncan W Clark of Colchester. The War Memorial and the bronze sculpture are by Henry Charles Fehr (1867-1940). The War Memorial was paid for by public subscription. The decorative carving on the pedestal was carried out by the Italian sculptor Carlo Magnoni from Fehr's London studio. Messrs L JWatts of Colchester were the stone masons and the ironwork was by H H Martyn & Co of Cheltenham.

The Memorial stands at the centre of the crescent and consists of a tall classical Portland stone pedestal on a three tired granite base surmounted by a bronze statue of Winged Victory standing on a globe, holding an inverted sword and a laurel wreath.

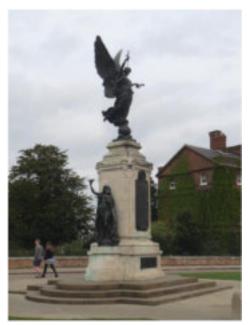
Curved projections on the east and west sides of the pedestal support, respectively, bronze statues of St George with sword and shield and Peace holding a dove.

The upper angles of the pedestal are carved with festoons and cherub heads with elongated wings.

South Facing. Location 599930 225243.











St James the Great Church, East Hill

In the west end of the North Aisle is positioned the monument to Arthur Winsley who died in 1727. The monument is a large standing marble effigy of the philanthropist by Richard van Spangen (1689-1757) that was erected in 1740 to his memory. He is chiefly remembered for his foundation of twelve charity houses and a chapel for Colchester men over 60 yrs old "that had lived well and fallen into decay .Since then other benefactors have also left money to the Charity which now provides 80 almshouses, a Chapel and a club room which also houses the Office to the Charity in Old Heath Road.

Arthur Winsley had left much of his property (Brick house Farm at Old Heath in the parish of St Botolph's) to the Charity.

His effigy portrays him "meditating, wearing a cloak and holding a book which reads "Go and do likewise "

The monument was originally erected at the east end of the Lady Chapel but was moved to the present position when the south aisle was restored.

East facing. Location 600154 225235



15 Queen Street.

On the south facing wall of 15 Queen Street are positioned three concrete sculptural panels by Collins and Pallot. These were originally commissioned by BHSin 1976 for the entrance at the store where they remained for the next thirty years until BHSceased trading.

On their removal in 2009 for re-development, they were rescued by Firstsite and restored. They were then placed on the Fifteen Queen Street wall, at the time an artistic community centre in 2012. They represent the main products of BHSat the time of opening: weaving for clothes, agriculture of food and a basket of groceries and are signed as Henry and Joyce Collins. The success of these panels led to a number of commissions for other BHS stores.

South Facing. Location











The "Way finding "sculpture at the junction of Short Wyre Street and Queen Street.

This artwork was installed on Short Wyre Street as a "wayfinding" piece as part of Our Colchester Business Improvement Discrict's (BID) support for the independent sector. The artwork of stainless steel "lanterns" spelling out the names of the two streets is shaped to be visible from all angles with coloured perpex letters that will glow at night. Above is a Colchester streetscape of building outlines.

Nicola Burrell (!966-) ,the local artist, hand built the artwork ,working wwith local steel fabricator Wesbroom Engineering and Gala Lighting and supported by the local architecture practice ,HAT Projects. Installed in June 2022 and financed by Colchester Borough Council.

East and west facing . 5999894 225032







The "Way finding "sculpture in Sir Isaac's Walk by Ben Coode-Adams.

The wall sculpture is placed on the side wall of the toilet block and faces toward Head Street and the rear of Rebow House. The artwork features historical figures from Colchester.

"These characters are not selected to represent the great and the good of Colchester – famous people who came from Colchester but because they represent the depth of history of the town and qualities that are intriguing."

The sculpture draws on Celtic, Roman, Anglo Saxon, and Norman Imagery in the collections of Colchester Castle and is made from painted galvanized steel.

The work was designed and built by Ben Coode-Adams with Nicol Wilson and was commissioned by Our Colchester BID and Colchester City Council.

Ben Coode-Adams, born 1965, studied for a B.A in Fine Art at the University Of Edinburgh and an M.A. in Art in Architecture ,University of East London.

He is Chairman of the Victor Batte- Lay Foundation.

West facing, Position 599467 225007







The "Mercury" statue positioned on the front of the Mercury Theatre. Balkerne Gate.

The Mercury Theatre was designed by the architect Norman Downie for the Colchester New Theatre Trust and was opened on May 10th 1972. The Trust had evolved from the Colchester Repertory Company formed in 1937 which had been based in the Albert Hall in the High Street

The statue was purchased in 1971 by Bernard Mason, the local philanthropist and David Forder, the first Director of the theatre at auction for £710 for the original Mercury Theatre. It is a copy of one created by the Renaissance artist, Giambologna. It has now been re-installed on the recently rebuilt Theatre.

North Facing Location 599259 225179





Giambologna original sculpture of Mercury



St Mary's at the Walls (Colchester Arts Centre), Church Street.

This repurposed church still contains a striking sculptural memorial, positioned under the tower at some height, in the entrance of the main West Door.

The white marble effigy is of a figure in a fine wig. The Rebow crest is above and underneath is a carved inscription which states that John Rebow, merchant, died on the 13th April 1699, aged 72 and that Sir Isaac Rebow erected the monument in memory of his father and mother.

On either side of the figure, plaques memorialise John Rebow's many descendants.

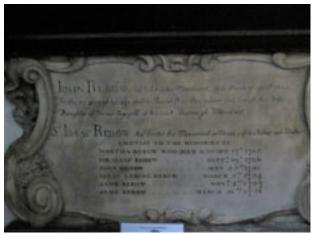
John Rebow was of Dutch origin and was a clothier as well as a merchant, professions followed with considerable success by his son, Isaac (1655-1726). He, John, had married Sarah, the daughter of the Colchester bay maker and merchant Francis Tayspill. He received a grant of arms in April 1685.

His son Isaac became enormously wealthy and successful in trade and business, being elected M.P. of Colchester for several Parliaments from 1689-1722. The 1689 Convention Parliament was instrumental in voting to offer the Crown to William III and Mary II and his personal friendship with William is regarded as the reason for his knighthood in 1693. His home was Rebow House on the corner of Head Street and Sir Isaac's Walk.

South Facing. Location 599253 225073









St Mary's Car Park entrance. Balkerne Hill.

St Mary's car park entrance, slipway from Balkerne Hill. A stone pair of figures representing ancient and modern agriculture (the Greek Goddess "Demeter" or "Ceres" to the Romans. Originally this pair were incorporated into niches on the frontage of the High Street Corn Exchange built in 1845 but when it was converted into a school, the niches were opened up as windows in 1885. They were relocated into the car park in 1991.

East Facing. Location 599201 225154







St Mary's Car Park Entrance, slipway from Balkerne Hill.

St Mary's Car Park entrance, slipway from Balkerne Hill. East Facing. A specially created "Mother and Child "statue by the local artist Shirley Morrison in the 1980's. The inspiration is most probably the St Mary's Work House and then Hospital that previously occupied the car park site. The ironwork "grotto" was created shortly after the installation.





Sovereign Crescent, Lexden Road

"Maternity "by Shirley Morrison of West Mersea. The sculpture of a mother holding a baby reflects its position on the site of the former Colchester Maternity Hospital (1934-1997). Commissioned by Classic New Homes Ltd. Bronze.

South Facing. Location 598176 224936





Turnstile Square, Layer Road

A bronze statue of Peter Wright (1934-2012), voted Colchester United's player of the century after 427 appearances and scoring 90 goals (1951-1964) and erected on the site of the Layer Road pitch. Sculptor Mandy Pratt of Ardleigh and a joint funding by Abbey Developments, Colchester Borough Council and the Hunnaball Family Funeral Group. Installed 5th February 2015.

East Facing. Location 598525 223742









Colchester Institute, Sheepen Road. Adjacent to the entrance.

A concrete sculpture by Franta Belsky.

The piece by Belsky, titled "Constellation" is listed in his works from 1953 and was originally placed in front of the entrance. It is now badly positioned as the entrance block has been remodelled. It is in poor condition and sadly is not being given the respect and care such an artist is due. The material used is concrete, trowelled onto to a welded steel armature and then partly carved and rasped. Finally it was coated with plastic metal and polished to acquire a dull silver colour. Sadly on the eve of the statue unveiling and the opening of the College, the statue was vandalised by students with paint and the subsequent rush to clean the piece must surely have removed much of the original finish. Since then the concrete has suffered damage in several places and is in urgent need of stabilising and restoration.

Franta Belsky (1921-2000) was born in Brno in Czechoslovakia and fled to England with his family after the German invasion of his homeland. He returned after the War to find many of his relations had perished. He fled again to England to escape the Communist takeover of 1948. He had studied at Prague Academy of Fine Arts, followed by Central School of Arts and Crafts, London (1939) and the Royal College of Art in 1950 after Army service from 1940 -1945. He then pursued a career in portrait sculpture and monuments and became a major force in British sculpture. A Fellow of the RBSand President of the SPS he was a great believer in the value of public art.

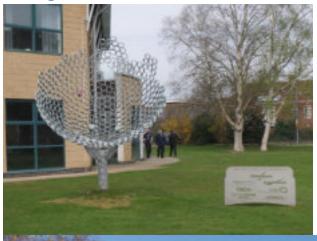
He had taught part time at Colchester School of Art in the 1950's. North Facing. Location 598892 225660.





Colchester Institute, Sheepen Road frontage.

A steel sculpture designed by Shane Steward, Head of Engineering as a project for his students in welding and fabrication to mark the centenary of the end of First World War . Fabricated in steel and galvanised by South East Galvanisers of Witham. Originally this was decorated with poppies which were later removed to allow for alternative uses in the future. Unveiled in November 2108 and sponsored by a number of companies including FlaktWoods . North Facing .Location 598854 225694.





North Station, Turner Rise roundabout.

Cast aluminium bust of Boudica by Jonathan Clarke of Suffolk and installed in 1999. Commissioned by the newly opened local Asda store and City and Council Developments. The 5.2mt high figure was sand cast in aluminium and initially carved in polystyrene. The casting process relies on the destruction of the original mould as it is vaporised by the molten aluminium. As a consequence the statue is a unique piece.

Jonathan was born in Suffolk and is still based there. He started by being apprenticed to Geoffrey Clarke R.A, his father.

South Facing. Location 599254 226449





Seatrade House, 42 North Station Road

A two tonne Anchor from the TSColne Lightship. This was built in 1951 by Phillip and Son of Dartmouth as Lightship 16. She was stationed at many locations around the British Isles warning of dangers to maritime traffic. She finished at the Hythe as the Head Quarters of Colchester Sea Cadets and one of her twin 2 tonne close haul anchors was presented to the Seatrade Organisation by the Colchester Sea Cadets. The Seatrade Organisation previously published maritime news and journals from this site. Now it is converted to residential use.

East Facing. Location 599327 225867.





Culver Square, the Water Fountain.

The bronze and cast aluminium sculpture was originally designed to be a water fountain and was sculpted by the local artist, Tim Holding. The design incorporates Oysters and Sea Holly or Erynigium Marititimun, the emblem of the Colchester Art Society. Tim Holding (1940-2018) was born in Birmingham and trained at the University of Durham. He became a lecturer at Colchester Art College in 1964 and then Senior Lecturer I/ C of Sculpture and 3D Design until 1993. He was a member of the Colchester Art Society and lived at Spring Lane, Lexden. The sculpture has a round stone temple type structure and is surrounded by an upraised wall to retain the water. Around this is wooden seating. The fountain is now redundant and is filled with a variety of structures throughout the year. Installation 1987. Facing to all directions. Location 599472 225069.







Willow structures installed as a part of Mental Awareness Week . A mystery ?

Wetzler Garden, Hollytrees ,High Street.

The Wetzler Garden was opened on the 17th June 1979 to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the town twinning with Wetzler. The garden is located at the east side of Hollytrees House with a boundary wall to the High Street and the entry is from the Castle Park which leads into the more formally designed garden with a centre piece of a bronze water fountain. This was commissioned by Kings Coel's Kittens from a design by Tim Holding of Lexden in 2012 and incorporates a bronze sphere being supported by kittens with water flowing over it from inside a crown.

Kings Coel's Kittens are a local charity involved with people and groups with special needs living in the community.

North facing. Location 599981 225267



Colchester Town Station forecourt, adjacent to St Botolph's Roundabout.

On the forecourt of the station entrance is placed a crankshaft mounted on a plinth. This commemorates the nearby site of the Britannia Works which was originally a nail manufactory in 1811, later expanding with the addition of an iron foundry before eventually becoming a sewing machine factory in 1866. Then it became the Britannia Engineering Co. enjoying a fairly short lived period of making motor cars before eventually producing engineering lathes which made its reputation. It closed in the 1930's, only to be reopened to produce the TP diesel engine for wartime needs for the Davey Paxman & Co. The most important engine produced by Paxman's there was the diesel engine for the Tank Landing craft, so vital for the D Day landings in the Normandy invasion. So important was this need that heavy bombing damage in 1944 was repaired and the factory reopened in 6 months.

After the War Paxman's incorporated the works into their overall manufacturing scheme, primarily moving their Research and Development Department there. This continued until the factory was closed in 1982 and demolished in 1987. The site is now a car park at the north of the station.

The crank shaft mounted at the station is one of those made for the engines that powered all Tank Landing Craft built in Britain 1939-1945. This was presented to the Borough by the Colchester Engineering Society and was unveiled 9th May 1995.

Originally it was installed on the corner of St Botolph's Street and Britannia Way but was moved to the Station as a more suitable site.

South Facing .Location 599972 225855





Colchester Garrison , Melville Barracks

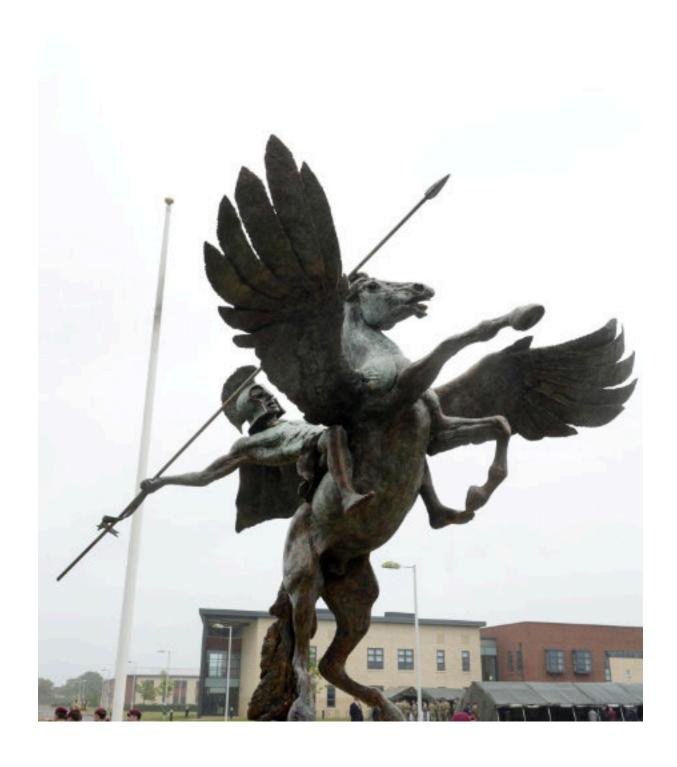
Outside the Headquarters building for the 16th Air Assault Brigade is positioned a statue of Bellerophon riding Pegasus (a winged horse in Greek mythology) which became synonymous with the Airborne troops during the Second World War. This had controversially been replaced by the "Swooping Eagle "as the device of 16 Air Assault, a statue of which was originally placed outside the HQ Building.

After reappraisal of the importance of the symbol it was re adopted and a new statue was commissioned from the sculptor Amy Goodman, based in Hampshire. The work was paid for by contributions from the soldiers themselves and the bronze casting was done by the Talos Art Foundry.

The two meter high statue was placed in front of the Headquarters Building and was unveiled on the 5th May 2017 by Prince Charles.

The original statue of the Swooping Eagle was then re-sited opposite and unveiled November 1st 2017.

Pegasus North Facing Location 599318 223348 and EagleSouth facing Location 599237 223461





Lexden Park pond, Church Lane.

"Four Geese "by Tim Holding.

Lexden Park Local Nature Reserve is looked after by Colchester Borough Council and apart from the large meadow adjacent to Church Lane is completed by an ornamental pond to the rear of the original Lexden Park House.

The house was originally built in the 1850's in the Italianate style for George Henry Errington of the Colchester bankers Mills, Errington ,Bawtree and Co which finally closed in 1891. The house passed through various owners in cluding Sir Percy Saunders before becoming Endsleigh School. At this point it passed into the ownership of Colchester Borough Council still as a school. Later the house was sold for development but the park was retained for resident's enjoyment.

In the corner of the pond nearest Church Lane is a sculpture group commissioned from the local artist Tim Holding for the Lexden History Group. This was installed to mark the Queen's Jubilee in 1972.

Tim Holding (1940-2018) was the Senior Lecture in Sculpture at Colchester Art College and was a local resident, living in Spring Lane at the Little Glebe where he had built his studio and foundry.

The sculpture consists of four geese in cast aluminum.

North Facing. Location 597196 225069







Lexden Village sign , junction of Lexden Road and Cymbeline Way

The Lexden History Group commissioned Tim Holding, the local artist, to design and cast a village sign. The content was the choice of a committee and the design comprises Lexden Church, the River Colne, a Watermill and a butterfly (papillon in French) to connect with the Lord of the Manor family name.

The sign is mounted on a plinth under which was placed a time capsule. The sign was unveiled on the 24th April 2008 and cost £4000 and the funding was raised through public subscriptions and a grant from Essex County Council.

West facing. Location 596712 225150

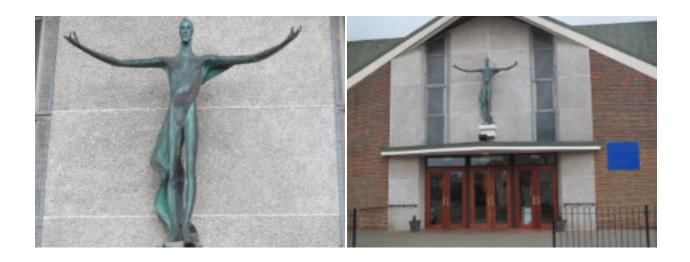


St Teresa of Lisieux Roman Catholic church, Clairmont Road.

The original church was built in 1937 and survives as the church hall at the back of the current church. A new church was built in 1970-71 to a design by J.H.Dabrowski and was opened on the 16th September 1971.

The entrance façade has a large gable and an entrance projecting canopy on which is positioned a bronze statue of the Risen Christ by Tita Madden, a local artist. This was installed in 1977.

North facing. Location 596361 224422



Mascot Square, off Elmstead Road. Lathe.

The Colchester Lathe Company was founded in the area of Mascot Square by John Ephraim Cohen in 1887 later winning a Gold Medal at the 1908 Franco – British Exhibition.

By 1968 the company was building 150 lathes a week at its Colchester site, winning the Queens Award to Industry for its export achievement in the same year.

The company continues to trade as a part of the 600 Group but not from Colchester, having closed the site in the early 1990's.

The Mascot lathe was among the company's best known and long standing models.

When the factory was closed, they donated this vintage lathe as a memorial for the square.

East Facing. Location 601974 224431









Colchester Lathe factory in the 1980's.

Winsley's Almshouses, Old Heath Road.

The Winsley charity was founded in 1728 following the provision in Arthur Winsley's will of Brick House Farm (and £500) to be the basis of the almshouses. The late 16th century farm building is of a half H shape and wings were added on the east and west extending north to form an open courtyard. The main block has a projecting central porch with a passage through on the ground floor. The space in the upper storey of the porch was fitted up as a chapel. A sermon is preached at an annual service held in the New Year.

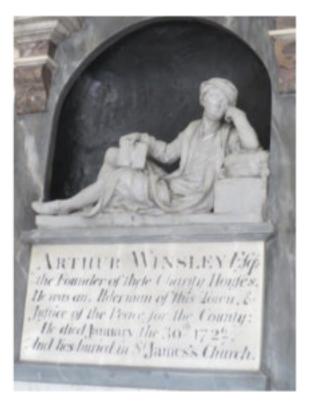
The chapel is a plain and simple room now but placed high up on the north wall is a marble niche containing a small statue of Arthur Winsley. This is made from terracotta and is the work of Richard van Spangen (1689-1757). It is certainly the artist's working maquette for the memorial statue of Arthur Winsley at St James the Great on East Hill The signed receipt of 17th May 1740 for £203 three shillings in full payment for the monument at St James and a small one at the Brick House in the St Botolph's Parish is held in the Essex Record Office.

I grateful for the assistance of David Beattie for his research for St James for both these records.

North facing 600855 223971











St Michael's Church, the Audley Chapel, Berechurch Hall Road.

St Michael's church and the estate of Berechurch were in the ownership of St John's Abbey until the Dissolution in 1536. Henry VIII granted Berechurch to Thomas, Lord Audley, his Lord Chancellor, who hailed from the Colchester area. He was also granted Walden End at Saffron Walden where he built his residence now known as Audley End. His brother, also Thomas, settled at Berechurch and became Lord of the Manor.

Around this time the Audley Chapel was added to the north of the church chancel as a memorial chapel for family members and their descendants who, presumably, are buried beneath it. The significant feature of this Tudor Chapel is the beautiful single hammer beam roof. However the monument to Sir Henry Audley dominates the interior. His date of death is unknown but he is known to have been alive in 1664, so this monument, erected in 1648 (during the English Civil War) took shape during his lifetime.

His armour clad effigy is explained by the period and he reclines on his side, flanked by flaming urns. Beneath are the figures of his five children, one of whom holds a skull, indicating that he had already died. Above is the Latin inscription, crowned by a curved pediment with a central cartouche where his coat of arms would have been painted.

The Chapel also contains a sculptural memorial of note. This is to Charlotte White, daughter of G.H Smythe of Berechurch Hall, who died in 1845. The memorial shows a reclining woman and two hovering figures. It is called "The Last Dream "and it was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1850. The sculptor was Joseph Edwards (1814-1883)

West Facing. Location 599295 221900









