

VICTORIA C O U N T Y H I S T O R Y



ESSEX

THE VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY

The Victoria County History (VCH), founded in 1899 and originally dedicated to Queen Victoria, is the greatest concerted publishing project of English local history, researching England's places and people from the earliest times to the present day.

In 2012 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II graciously agreed to rededicate the series as part of her Diamond Jubilee year celebrations.

It has without doubt built an international reputation for scholarly standards. Based at the Institute of Historical Research in the University of London, the central VCH office co-ordinates historians working in counties across England and is responsible for planning the series, ensuring the volumes are published in collaboration with the VCH Essex Trust (Registered Charity No. 1038801) which manages the project locally and raises funds to support professional historians appointed as consultant editors to research and write the volumes.

The Trust also maintains an office and reference library for the VCH editors in accommodation provided by Essex County Council at the Essex Record Office.

To find out more about the national VCH project visit:

www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/

ESSEX VCH PUBLICATIONS

Red Books

The main VCH publication series comprises large red, hardback, reference books. Two volumes containing general articles on Essex history were published in 1903 and 1907, but work then lapsed until the project was re-launched in 1951. A third general volume on Roman Essex was published in 1963, but otherwise work has concentrated on producing topographically arranged volumes about particular Essex communities.

The series covers the whole of the historic county, including the five London Boroughs in Metropolitan Essex as well as the more recently created unitary authorities of Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock. The eight further volumes published so far cover much

of south-west Essex, Harlow and neighbouring parishes; the town of Colchester and many parishes in ‘Constable Country’; and the seaside resorts of Clacton, Walton and Frinton in north-east Essex.

Volume XII, dealing with the earlier history of parishes along the Tendring coastline from St Osyth to Walton’s Naze, was published in two parts in 2020 and 2022. In addition, three volumes of a County Bibliography have been produced in collaboration with Essex libraries that record all printed works up to the year 2000.

Paperback Shorts

The VCH now has a second form of publication, so-called ‘Shorts’, illustrated paperback studies of single places or particular themes. The first VCH Essex Short was a study of Newport in north-west Essex written by a group of highly qualified local historians and published in 2015. Further published Shorts include a study of Harwich, Dovercourt and Parkeston in the 19th century, and a collection of articles on the history of the Borough of Southend-on-Sea. Shorts are being designed so that they may ultimately form part of a larger ‘Red Book’ volume.

To find out more about the Essex VCH project visit: <https://vchessexhistory.org/>

VCH RESEARCH

VCH Essex is currently researching places in Tendring Hundred, but the opportunity to cover other parts of the county will be taken as finances allow. VCH Essex research increasingly depends on the assistance of volunteers. There are currently two volunteer groups in the Clacton and Southend areas working on particular projects. If you are interested in volunteering please contact the VCH Essex County Editor.

Volume XIII – Harwich and Dovercourt Harwich, a planned town, was first recorded in the 12th century and received a royal charter in 1318. It became a significant maritime trading community as well as playing an important role in the defence of the English coast, and its transport connections made it Eastern England’s ‘Gateway to the Continent’. The neighbouring parish of Dovercourt grew as a holiday destination, with a new planned resort in the 19th century and a holiday camp in the 20th century.

SUPPORT THE VCH ESSEX TRUST

You can help advance the completion of the VCH for Essex by joining the VCH Essex Trust which supports the work of the professional and volunteer historians researching and writing the history.

Membership is open to all individuals, to corporate bodies or other associations, making an annual donation to the Trust. The AGM of the Trust is held in different locations across the historic county of Essex often in a building of historic interest.

The formal AGM is followed by some form of entertainment, typically a lecture from a specially invited expert on some aspect of Essex history.

All members also receive the Trust’s newsletter (*Essex Past*) with updates on the VCH Essex project, national VCH developments, Essex volunteer projects, news of events and talks, articles based on VCH research and on Essex history in general.

If you are interested in leaving the VCH a bequest in your will, please ask for our Legacies leaflet.

To contact VCH Essex

For research, volunteering and general enquiries please contact:

Dr Herbert Eiden, BA, PhD

County Editor, VCH Essex, Essex Record Office, Wharf Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 6YT Email: herbert.eiden@sas.ac.uk

How to consult VCH Essex volumes

A complete list of volumes is available on the VCH Essex website, which also gives details of how to obtain the VCH Newport, Harwich and Southend paperbacks: vchessexhistory.org/research-and-publications/:

The VCH Red Books can be purchased from Boydell and Brewer Ltd:

www.boydellandbrewer.com

Complete sets of VCH volumes can also be consulted at the Essex Record Office and all major libraries. In addition, Volumes 4–10 and part of Volume 2 have been digitised and are available to view freely at British History Online: www.british-history.ac.uk/

Our latest drafts in preparation for VCH Essex Volume XIII on Harwich and Dovercourt are available: vchessexhistory.org/draft-histories/