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# BILLERICAY

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*A TOWN WITH A SURPRISING  
STORY TO TELL*



David A. Bremner C. Eng.  
Billericay Society.



# BILLERICAY

Map labels and features include:  
- Street names: HILGHT STREET, TOWN STREET, CHEQUER'S INN, BAPTIST CHAPEL, COACH & HORSES, TOWN HALL, BULL INN, HOLLOWAY, HILGHT STREET, CHEQUER'S INN, BAPTIST CHAPEL, COACH & HORSES, TOWN HALL, BULL INN, HOLLOWAY.  
- Landmarks: Harrowlocks, Crescent House, Chequer's Inn, St Mary Magdalene's Church (Parsonage), Baptist Chapel, Coach & Horses (P.H.), Town Hall, Bull Inn.  
- Numerical identifiers: 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 749, 785, 91, 92, 93, 117, 112, 113, 114, 115, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500.  
- Other labels: B.M. 302.1, B.M. 308, B.M. 319.10, B.M. 318.4, B.M. 315, B.M. 314, B.M. 313, B.M. 312, B.M. 311, B.M. 310, B.M. 309, B.M. 308, B.M. 307, B.M. 306, B.M. 305, B.M. 304, B.M. 303, B.M. 302, B.M. 301, B.M. 300, B.M. 299, B.M. 298, B.M. 297, B.M. 296, B.M. 295, B.M. 294, B.M. 293, B.M. 292, B.M. 291, B.M. 290, B.M. 289, B.M. 288, B.M. 287, B.M. 286, B.M. 285, B.M. 284, B.M. 283, B.M. 282, B.M. 281, B.M. 280, B.M. 279, B.M. 278, B.M. 277, B.M. 276, B.M. 275, B.M. 274, B.M. 273, B.M. 272, B.M. 271, B.M. 270, B.M. 269, B.M. 268, B.M. 267, B.M. 266, B.M. 265, B.M. 264, B.M. 263, B.M. 262, B.M. 261, B.M. 260, B.M. 259, B.M. 258, B.M. 257, B.M. 256, B.M. 255, B.M. 254, B.M. 253, B.M. 252, B.M. 251, B.M. 250, B.M. 249, B.M. 248, B.M. 247, B.M. 246, B.M. 245, B.M. 244, B.M. 243, B.M. 242, B.M. 241, B.M. 240, B.M. 239, B.M. 238, B.M. 237, B.M. 236, B.M. 235, B.M. 234, B.M. 233, B.M. 232, B.M. 231, B.M. 230, B.M. 229, B.M. 228, B.M. 227, B.M. 226, B.M. 225, B.M. 224, B.M. 223, B.M. 222, B.M. 221, B.M. 220, B.M. 219, B.M. 218, B.M. 217, B.M. 216, B.M. 215, B.M. 214, B.M. 213, B.M. 212, B.M. 211, B.M. 210, B.M. 209, B.M. 208, B.M. 207, B.M. 206, B.M. 205, B.M. 204, B.M. 203, B.M. 202, B.M. 201, B.M. 200, B.M. 199, B.M. 198, B.M. 197, B.M. 196, B.M. 195, B.M. 194, B.M. 193, B.M. 192, B.M. 191, B.M. 190, B.M. 189, B.M. 188, B.M. 187, B.M. 186, B.M. 185, B.M. 184, B.M. 183, B.M. 182, B.M. 181, B.M. 180, B.M. 179, B.M. 178, B.M. 177, B.M. 176, B.M. 175, B.M. 174, B.M. 173, B.M. 172, B.M. 171, B.M. 170, B.M. 169, B.M. 168, B.M. 167, B.M. 166, B.M. 165, B.M. 164, B.M. 163, B.M. 162, B.M. 161, B.M. 160, B.M. 159, B.M. 158, B.M. 157, B.M. 156, B.M. 155, B.M. 154, B.M. 153, B.M. 152, B.M. 151, B.M. 150, B.M. 149, B.M. 148, B.M. 147, B.M. 146, B.M. 145, B.M. 144, B.M. 143, B.M. 142, B.M. 141, B.M. 140, B.M. 139, B.M. 138, B.M. 137, B.M. 136, B.M. 135, B.M. 134, B.M. 133, B.M. 132, B.M. 131, B.M. 130, B.M. 129, B.M. 128, B.M. 127, B.M. 126, B.M. 125, B.M. 124, B.M. 123, B.M. 122, B.M. 121, B.M. 120, B.M. 119, B.M. 118, B.M. 117, B.M. 116, B.M. 115, B.M. 114, B.M. 113, B.M. 112, B.M. 111, B.M. 110, B.M. 109, B.M. 108, B.M. 107, B.M. 106, B.M. 105, B.M. 104, B.M. 103, B.M. 102, B.M. 101, B.M. 100, B.M. 99, B.M. 98, B.M. 97, B.M. 96, B.M. 95, B.M. 94, B.M. 93, B.M. 92, B.M. 91, B.M. 90, B.M. 89, B.M. 88, B.M. 87, B.M. 86, B.M. 85, B.M. 84, B.M. 83, B.M. 82, B.M. 81, B.M. 80, B.M. 79, B.M. 78, B.M. 77, B.M. 76, B.M. 75, B.M. 74, B.M. 73, B.M. 72, B.M. 71, B.M. 70, B.M. 69, B.M. 68, B.M. 67, B.M. 66, B.M. 65, B.M. 64, B.M. 63, B.M. 62, B.M. 61, B.M. 60, B.M. 59, B.M. 58, B.M. 57, B.M. 56, B.M. 55, B.M. 54, B.M. 53, B.M. 52, B.M. 51, B.M. 50, B.M. 49, B.M. 48, B.M. 47, B.M. 46, B.M. 45, B.M. 44, B.M. 43, B.M. 42, B.M. 41, B.M. 40, B.M. 39, B.M. 38, B.M. 37, B.M. 36, B.M. 35, B.M. 34, B.M. 33, B.M. 32, B.M. 31, B.M. 30, B.M. 29, B.M. 28, B.M. 27, B.M. 26, B.M. 25, B.M. 24, B.M. 23, B.M. 22, B.M. 21, B.M. 20, B.M. 19, B.M. 18, B.M. 17, B.M. 16, B.M. 15, B.M. 14, B.M. 13, B.M. 12, B.M. 11, B.M. 10, B.M. 9, B.M. 8, B.M. 7, B.M. 6, B.M. 5, B.M. 4, B.M. 3, B.M. 2, B.M. 1.

*Introduction to the interesting story of  
The Urban Town of BILLERICAY  
In the Barstable Hundred  
Of Essex*

**BILLERICAY  
A TOWN WITH A SURPRISING  
STORY TO TELL**

In memorium  
The Billericay Society  
1935 ~ 2021

David A. Bremner C. Eng.  
Billericay Society.

Thanks to Doug and Julie Smith who suggested  
making this guide available to local schools  
approved by the Billericay Society committee.



No 1 Chapel St.  
(16th Cent.)

The Chequers Inn, 42 High St.  
(16th Cent.)

No 3 Chapel St.  
(16th Cent.)



Billericay Sign  
Perry Green  
London Rd.



Reading Room  
73 High St.  
(19th Cent.)



Nos 74a, 74, 74b High St.  
(18th Cent.)



No 12 High St.  
(16th Cent.)



Nos 38 & 40 High St.  
(16/17th Cents.)

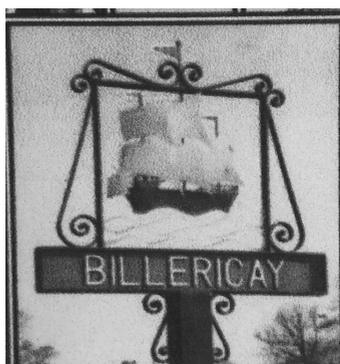
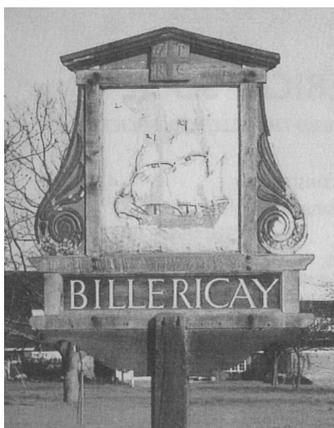


No 61 High St.  
(16th Cent.)

BILLERICAY SOCIETY

WE START OUR TOUR of the town at the Billericay railway station. The station is easily found at the north end of the High Street. My town walk went from the station up the hill [Stock Rd] to the traffic lights and turned right to Grey Lady Place, GLP. After circular tour of GLP back to Norsey Road turn right towards bridge and find gun site on west side embankment. Walk towards the high Street pause at junction and see outline of houses removed when junction made. The pictures and data for the High Street shows on the left hand side the even numbered buildings on the east side and the odd numbers west side on the right hand side.

Suggested walk routes are given in the appendix.



## LOCATION OF BILLERICAY

**B**ILLERICAY IS located at a significant crossroad junction of two ancient routes. These were: a major military route from Tilbury to Roman towns; a route Pilgrims took going to Canterbury and stage-coaching routes.

Billericay is a north - south ribbon development, at a mean height of 310 feet.

Geographically, Billericay is at longitude 0.25 degree east of the prime meridian, some 24 train miles east from London, Liverpool Street and at latitude 51 degrees north.

## SOCIO-POLITICAL OVERVIEW of BILLERICAY

**I**n 1832 Billericay was a Parliamentary Polling District. In 1844 the ecclesiastical Parish of Billericay was formed. District Councils were formed in 1894. They were originally named Sanitary Boards from 1875 -1894 whose purpose was to improve the public health of areas.

Billericay was made a RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL in 1894 and became an URBAN DISTRICT in 1934.

The Billericay Society was formed in June 1935!

In 1944 The Society published "A Plan for Billericay".

1949 Basildon was incorporated as a new town - it had been a village.

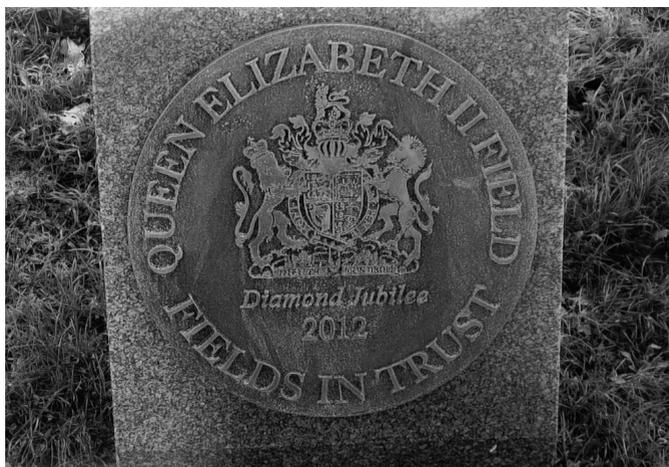
1955 Billericay Urban District became Basildon Urban District.

During the parliamentary elections of 1955, 1959 and 1964

Billericay was the first returning district to announce the results of the general election on the radio. Our main claim to fame for a lot of people.

1960 Mrs Cater [1900 – 1962] President of the Billericay Society opened the CATER MUSEUM the Billericay Society Headquarters at 74 High Street in memory of her husband William Alexander Cater, [1870 – 1944], a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

November 2012 “Sun Corner” made a QUEEN ELIZABETH II FIELD, now protected for Billericay in perpetuity.



To welcome visitors to Billericay, the Billericay Society erected wooden signs on the cardinal routes into town.

## RETURNING TO THOSE CROSSROADS

**T**he first major west to east road [now the A129], linked Roman Londinium to Prittlewell, a major Anglo-Saxon town in south-east Essex, home of the east Saxons called the Trinovantes, our local tribal name.

The modern city of Southend is actually the south-end-of-Prittlewell.

Prittlewell was the home of Sabert, an Anglo-Saxon king of the east-Saxons who lived circa 600 AD, His now famous burial site was uncovered in autumn 2003 by the Museum of London Archaeology Service.

The quality of the artefacts in this archaeological site is second only to Sutton Hoo. Sabert was the nephew of Ethelbert King of Kent.

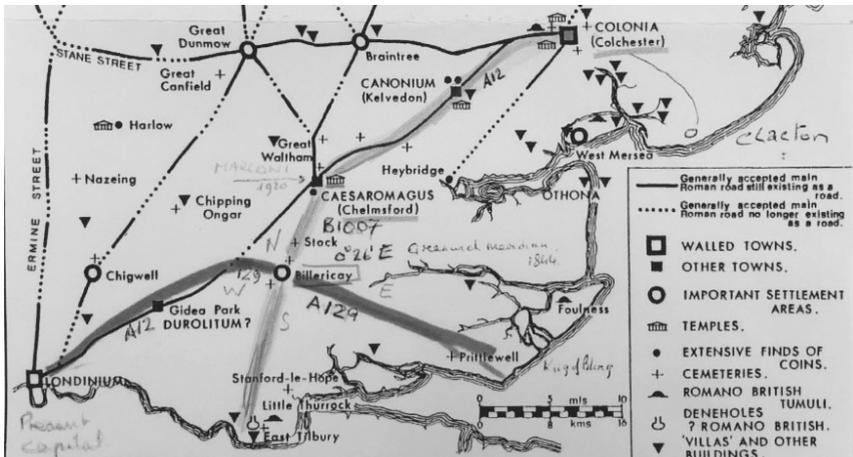
Due to the many gold and other artefacts found by archaeologists, the press labelled him the “King of Bling”.

The second major route going south to north, goes from the Roman fort and harbour of Londinium, TILBURY-on-Thames to CAMULODUNUM, {Colchester}, and CAESAROMAGUS {Chelmsford},] via BILLERICAY a Romano military settlement.

The route from Tilbury to Chelmsford was in constant use by the Roman Legions. It was a regular pilgrim route to Canterbury.

Our north – south High Street is some 830 yards long in imperial measurement. [252 metres]

Both of these roads, crossing at Billericay were major military marching, pilgrimage and passenger stage-coaching routes. Billericay was suitably positioned for an overnight stop between the major settlements, thus avoiding the danger of highway men etc. on stage-coaching journeys.



From Billericay there were regular stage-coaches to London and local large towns around Billericay. In 1561 the Great Burstead road was called “a great trade way”.

Later Billericay grew due to the wool trade and providing overnight stage-coaching accommodation. The 18 early stage-coaching inns increased to 29 spread along the High Street.

The oldest remaining, functioning inn, still on the same site is the RED LION, [93 High Street] dating from c 1593. The original timber framed building, before it was converted into an Inn dates from the 1400s. [15th century for historians]. The Red-Lion-pub-sign is for James I (James VI of Scotland).

The lion is from the red lion on the BANNER OF SCOTLAND, [c 1165 AD]

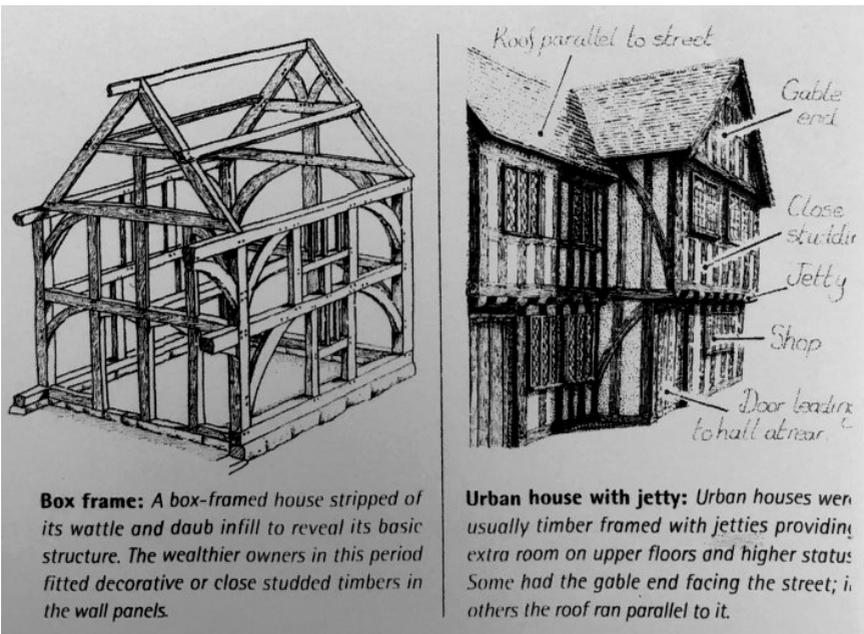
Scotland's White Saltire Cross on a Blue field was combined with St George's Red Cross on a White field in 1606. This design became our Union Jack. This happened when the crowns of Scotland and England united, following the death of Queen Elizabeth I.

This union became Great Britain, nothing to do with the Industrial Revolution.

The original, often timber-frame buildings and inns of the High Street are now hidden behind 1960s brick facings.

Some of the original roofing timber frames have dates marked on them. I.e.: Norsey Rd timber clad houses have roof timbers dated 1593 - they are on the Petre estate land map.

These timber framed houses were the first examples of prefabrication.



Their architecture was chosen from a master design book of prefabricated timbers which were ordered and assembled on site. There was a choice of room size, the addition of one or two cross wings and different types of roofing for straw or tiles etc.

One can see many examples of different roof styles in the High Street. Even Mansard and hipped plus examples of English & Flemish brick bonding on the walls.

The Billericay Society had the more interesting buildings numbered with plaques to ease identification when using the Town Walk Chart annotating the building and their story.

Copies of the Town Walk Chart can be obtained in the library in the High Street or from the Billericay Town Council offices.



## EARLY GEOLOGY OF BILLERICAY

I would like you to take a mental geological leap back to the Stone Age some 450,000 years ago, to a time known as the Palaeolithic period. During this last Ice Age an approaching Anglian glacial ice sheet, some 300 metres thick is slowly approaching the mound, later to be called Billericay in the otherwise flat landscape of Essex.

This glacial advance forced the River Thames from its previous river path emerging at an estuary near Clacton to its present location with an estuary at Southend.

In the process of the river passing over our mound, the mound scraped the clay and the ground fine yellow sand from the bottom of the glacier and deposited them as it crawled past the area now known as Billericay. These Clay gate beds on Bag shot sand deposited on the London clay bed trapped water so the people were able to drill wells from their homes for the houses on the High Street. The clay made fine red bricks.

## BILLERICAY'S BRICKWORKS

The Harris Brick Makers and Builders transported this fine sand to the Midlands for making “casting” moulds used in forming “cast-iron” objects, such as machine and structural parts, which required some degree of precision in their manufacture.

The escarpment to the north of Radford way, formed by the extraction of this fine sand, was used as a rifle range to train the military in World War I.

The fine ground sand was particularly suited to iron casting. Packing damp sand around a wooden pattern makes a shape in the sand that has the shape of the finished casting.

“Patterns” are wooden replicas of pieces of machinery and other objects required to be made in metal.

The two halves of the sand shapes are held in a metal mould into which the metal for the casting is poured from a ladle.

Removing the wooden pattern leaves an impression in the sand. Molten metal poured into this impression forms the shape required. This is known as cast iron.

[Darby used cast iron shapes to make the world's first Iron Bridge in Coalbrookdale, Shropshire in 1779.]

## HARRIS BRICK MAKERS & BUILDERS

The area to the north of Radford Way parallel to the railway line, was known as Charity Farm. This used to be the site of the Harris Brickworks, The local clay proved suitable for making good quality red bricks.

[There is a picture of the small brick drying sheds in Ted Wright's "Billericay Times" plate number 134].

There were several brickworks in Billericay. Other sites were where Chestnut Avenue is now located and at the lower end of Western Road.

Owners of houses have a clause in their deeds that they cannot make bricks! Lord Petre, of Ingatestone Hall retains the mineral rights to the land.

The brickworks employed 40 workers making good quality handmade bricks. It was reported that "Billericay area" red bricks were very special and of very good quality. Examples of these bricks can be seen at 11 Stock Road.

Mr. Harris owned the Sandpits & the brickfields. A railway spur line ran from the goods yard at Billericay station to the brick works for distributing the sand and bricks. When the goods yard, fed by two extra railway lines, was no longer required the area became the present Billericay station car park. When the Goods Yard closed there was no need for the signal box, so that was also removed.

## CAMBRAI

**M**r. Harris, the original owner of the brickworks lived in a large house opposite the station, on the site where the BP garage is today. The house was called “Cambrai”. Cambrai is a town in N E France: scene of the first battle site that used massed tanks for the first time and broke through the German lines in the Somme in November 1917. Harris: father & son served in the tank regiments, one in each World War.

[There are excellent pictures of the early area of the station in Billericay: A Historical Tour in pictures. Roger Green].

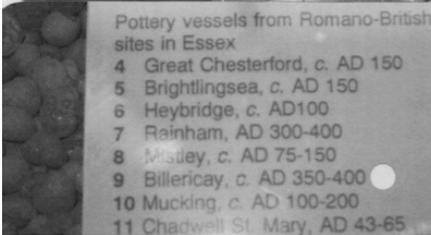
[Billericay: A Pictorial History has maps of the area before and after the railway came to Billericay. Roger Green].

In the 1960s this area was developed into the Radford Way Industrial estate.

# NORSEY WOOD

Evidence of early man and continuous habitation of Billericay has been found in Norsey Wood.

The Billericay Society explored and wrote the story of the 160 acres of Norsey Wood. For example a Mesolithic hand axe from c 10,000 years ago has been found.



The many coppiced trees are evidence of Bronze Age woodland management in Norsey Wood, now a designated Ancient Woodland and a Sight of Special Scientific Interest, SSSI.

Bronze Age farmers cleared many areas of trees in England for agricultural land when they changed from being hunter-gatherers to farmers.

By 1600s AD many plantations were having to be planted to replace the lost supply of timber, for house building and naval ships. HMS Victory needed 4,000 trees in its construction.

[Coppicing can be recognised by multiple tree trunks growing from a basic tree stump.]



The Billericay Society also found two Bronze Age burial tumuli. Further evidence of occupation in the BRONZE AGE. One tumulus had to be given up to be buried under a row of large houses along Norsey Road when the Billericay Society claimed the ancient woodland for Billericay.

There is also evidence that Roman military light engineering and coin making has been carried out together with charcoal making. This was required to obtain the higher temperatures needed for metal-working. Wood and coal burning would not enable a high enough temperature to be reached to form the iron from the ore.

[Quick reminder the Stone Age was divided into three main epochs:

Palaeolithic, 65,000 – 10,500 BC; and Mesolithic 10,500 – 5,500 BC. These people were hunter gatherers, & lastly the Neolithic period 4,000 – 2,500 BC with the start of farming and settled land owners. Reminder of the early Ages: Stone, Bronze, Iron / Celtic, Roman, Saxon, Viking, and Norman etc.]

[Incidentally, it was during the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic period that England was joined to mainland Europe by a land-bridge area called Doggerland. This land has since become flooded by a Norwegian tsunami and is the reason that the North Sea is a shallow waterway.]

The Society also located an Iron Age burial site with burial urns at the road junction at the top of Lake Ave. This site was in 1840 the women's entrance to the work house. A few houses down Stock Road at 39 Stock Road – a timber framed farm house building, one can see in the window the Scottish saltire flag from the days when Lord Petre encouraged Scottish farmers

to come to England to work on his farms.

There are many artefacts visible in the Colchester Museum of finds made in Billericay.

Our local tribe the Trinovantes used Norsey Wood for smelting and production of pottery before the Romans used it.

The medieval deer bank can still be seen from Norsey Road.

There is evidence that during World War II training in digging trenches was carried out in Norsey Wood. It was part of the Outer Greater London Defence Ring.

At the west end of Norsey Rd Bridge one can see the site for a 29 mm spigot mortar. The gun was mounted on a stainless steel pin allowing the gun to face any direction to guard the railway. There were six mortar sites in Billericay.



**REMINDER:**

Just as today is the SPACE AGE, but it is unlikely that any of us will travel into space. Stone Age, Bronze Age, & Iron Age refer to time when such technology was available. Initially these artefacts were a high status symbol, before becoming more generally available. A Danish museum curator Christian THOMSEN, suggested, in 1836 the 3 Age System of Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age.

Before his definition of these Ages, there was just a vague classification of stone, pottery & metal.

STONE AGE: Use of flint for tools. Chert: translucent with dull luster. Crystalline quartz, found in chalk cliffs. Easily chipped forming sharp edges.	3 periods: PALAEOLOTHIC 650,000 TO 10500 BP MESOLITHIC: 10500 TO 5500 BP NEOLITHIC: C4000 TO 2500 BC. Hunter-gatherers.
BRONZE AGE: Copper & tin alloy, smelted at 1150 c malachite, mined at Great Orme, Llandudno.	Circa 2500 BC TO 700 BC. Agrarian culture. Development of Celtic designs.
IRON AGE hill forts due to competition for Resources. Iron processing developed by Hittites 2500 BC.	700 BC TO 43 AD. IRON provided a sharper and a more durable edge to tools & weapons.
ROMAN: Civitas Roman name for a native tribal division, i.e. Trinovantes in Essex.	43 AD TO 410 AD. Roman Emperor Claudius visited Britain in 43AD Visited CAMULODUNUM, (Colchester).

## ROMANO - BRITISH AND SAXON SETTLEMENTS AT BILLERICAY

**D**ue to the town's elevated position at > 300 foot it was suitable as a Roman military settlement with views over the Thames, Crouch and Black Water Rivers. The land only supported a few farms at this time. The route from Tilbury to Chelmsford was in constant use by the Roman Legions. It was a regular pilgrim route to Canterbury.

A late Iron Age - Romano-British site occupation [covering the first to fourth century AD] was the subject of a successful archaeological excavation made during the summer of 1987 by the Archaeological offshoot of the Billericay Society.

There is evidence of roman light engineering sites in Norsey Wood, with charcoal, to get the required temperature - needed for metal- working for military use and many coins have been found along the eastern escarpment of the town.

There was a major, 4 acre Roman fortified post construction at Blunts Wall farm area that was later associated with Thoby Priory, Mountnessing.

*[Artefacts from Blunts Wall can be seen in the Fitzwilliam Museum.]*

The later SAXONS who occupied the area when the Romans left in 410 AD - preferred to develop the flat lands at the bottom of Billericay hill, which was more suitable for farming becoming Burstead Magna. For more detail see "A history and Guide to the church of St Mary Magdelene, Great Burstead".

The father of King Harold (he of the arrow in the eye), Earl Godwin owned land at Little Burstead. The church, built at Great Burstead was the church mentioned in Domesday Book, 1086. <Burstead means fortified place in Saxon>

## RELIGIOUS CONFUSION

The Normans - after the battle of Hastings William I gave land around Billericay and Great Burstead to Bishop Odo his half-brother c 1066. When Odo fell out of favour with William I, he was banished and William redistributed the land.

There were seven Norman manors of Billericay: Burstead, Buttsbury, Buckwyns, Crondon, Fristling, Imphy, Ramsey Tyrell and White Tyrell.

By 1145 the lordship of Great Burstead belonged to the Cistercian monks of Stratford Langthorne Abbey on The Border of Essex and London.

[That is why a block of flats at the top of Radford Way is called Langthorne.]



In 1253 Henry II granted the Abbey at Burstead a Fair and Market, thought to have been held on Billericay High Street.

The first documented reference to Billericay was in 1291. Despite several theories we do not know the derivation of the name Billericay. Ancient records have many spellings. For examples see our Billericay History Series No. 3 “Billericay and the Mayflower + Place names of Billericay”.

THE “Church” in the High Street, once St John’s later St Mary Magdalen is really a Chantry Chapel or A Chapel-of-Ease.

The Chantry is located at the junction of the High Street and Chapel Street.

In medieval time’s people by law, had to go to church on Sundays. It must have been difficult going the 2 miles down Noak Hill in the mud to Great Burstead church. So permission was given for Billericay residents to have a Chantry Chapel in 1342 AD. [Middle Ages] This chantry chapel was subordinate to the prime Saxon Parish church of St Mary Magdalene [Circa 975 AD] at Burstead Magna. Built by Thane Earl Godwin.

[A CHANTRY is an endowment for the singing of masses for the souls of the local people who cannot easily get to a parish church.]

*Note the different spellings:*

Magdelene, Burstead and Magdalen, Billericay, why, another naming mystery?

The Chantry Chapel, Billericay was built in 1342 of wattle and daub and called St Johns. It was rebuilt as a Chapel of Ease in brick in the late 1400s with a unique north apse. The bell tower

was built in 1490.

After the Act of Supremacy against the Roman Catholic Church by Henry VIII in 1534 there was much religious unrest and uncertainty in Britain.

The Lollards preaching of “Skill and work was the way to heaven” was liked by the Billericay farmers which encouraged them to become non-conformists.

Today Billericay has many different non-conformist chapels for Methodist, Baptist, Quakers, Congregational and The United Reform Church etc.

The Bible was also available in English for the first time - Thanks to the invention of the printing press by the German inventor Gutenberg 1430 and Caxton 1476 in the U.K.

Chantries were later suppressed by Edward VI in 1547.

The Church at Billericay was given to W. Farre of Billericay in 1551 who had purchased Buckwyns manor from Sir Richard Rich, secretary to Cardinal Wolsey.

Walter Farre later sold the chantry to the Tyrell family, whose ancestor had shot William II in the new Forest – at the site of the Rufus Stone.

Later Tyrell sold the church back to the citizens of Billericay but kept the land, meant for feeding the priest - for himself.

During the reign of Mary I [Bloody Mary] in c 1553 - six people from Billericay were martyred for being non-conformists: Margaret Ellis, Jane Potter, Joan Hornes, T. Watts, Elizabeth Thackwell and James Harris under Bishop Bonner in 1556.

In 1620 the “Pilgrim Fathers”, met Protestants from Leiden, Netherlands at the Chantry, [57 – 61] in the High Street before going to the ship at Leigh-on Sea then Rotherhithe to join the “Mayflower”, a ship of 180 tones captained by Thomas Jones of Harwich.

Christopher Martin, a Billericay miller provided flour and was purser “victualler” for the trip. Martin was not a popular man. None of the four people from Billericay: Martin and wife Marie, Solomon Power and John Langerman survived that first harsh winter.

[Billerica was founded by later emigrants in Massachusetts]. The towns around Billerica have Essex town names, but in the wrong orientation to each other compared to the British towns. Billerica, USA had a narrow gauge railway line before Billericay U.K.

50 years later in April 1672 Billericay residents were licensed to worship with liberty of conscience.

There is a commemorative plaque outside The ASK restaurant, [93 – 95 High Street] which had been The Hare and Hounds PH.

The plaque states:

“This house was the original meeting place of the Billericay independent protestant dissenters who were licensed to worship here on 28th April 1672 with liberty of conscience”.

The church was rededicated in 1693 as St Mary Magdalene. The nave was rebuilt in the late 1700s. It was authorised for marriages in 1844 when it became a parish church.

93 - 95 High Street was later the offices of the Gas Light and Coke Company c 1930, with a manufacturing site in Laindon Rd on the site of the first Work House c 1725.  
Billericay High Street had gas lighting installed.

Billericay had two windmills at Bell Hill. The last one, a post mill, built in 1563 was blown down during a storm in 1928. There are two local existing windmills at Mountnessing and Stock. Both worth a visit and inside tour.

The story of the Ghastly Miller of Billericay:

In 1767 the local miller called Thomas Wood, was 25 stone and had to find a way to reduce his weight. He was the first recorded person to go on a strict diet.

I won't mention the special tiles above the west door.

Later in the 1790s this tower was used in the triangulation of England for the Ordnance Survey maps in preparation for a possible Napoleonic invasion.

There is a Plaque for Queen Victoria's jubilee 1897.

At this time, the lozenge shaped clock on the front of the tower was replaced by one protruding at right angles, so that it could be seen along the High Street.

The front of the church was altered to a symmetrical front in Georgian times. The outside spiral staircase was removed.

See the pictures on the covers of the front of the church in booklet "St Mary Magdalen, Billericay, The church in the High Street", for more details.

## HANOVARIAN COAT-OF-ARMS

In 1992 when the church was relocating to Emmanuel Church in Laindon Rd the Hanoverian coat of arms on the west balcony in the building was stolen.

As it was in the Conservation Zone so it had to be replaced.

[Picture 165 T. Wright]

So both the Red Lion public house and the church had royalist support insignia installed. Red lion for support of James I and the Hanoverian coat of Arms for George I.



## PEASANTS' REVOLT 1381

The Black Death [1384 – 1350] killed many agricultural workers. So the remaining agricultural workers had to cover the extra work and were also heavily taxed to pay for the existing wars.

This led to the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 which involved local residents of many Essex towns. Fobbing and Brentwood have special memorials to the event.

At Brentwood they burnt the tax records [manorial roles] then went on to London to be met by teenager King Richard II, Richard II had promised to meet their demands and sent them home, only to send the cavalry after them.

It is reported that 500 peasants were massacred in Norsey Wood to be later buried at Great Burstead church burial ground.

It was probably this incident that was remembered during the English Civil war [1642 – 1649] that caused the Protestant Billicicay residents to cheer the 5,000 troops of the Roundhead New Model Army led by General Thomas Lord Fairfax as they marched through the town on their way from Tilbury to besiege Colchester held by the Royalist Cavaliers in June 1648.

The diarist Daniel Defoe recorded this event in his "Account of the Siege and Blockage of Colchester".

## BILLERICAY WORKHOUSE

**T**he first work house had been built in Laindon Road circa 1725. In a site opposite School Road.

Billericay's second work house, established for the poor of the local 26 parishes was designed by George Gilbert Scott in 1840. Located between Stock Road and Norsey Road. It was designed in the Elizabethan style as one can see from the stonework around the doors and windows.

You may also notice that the white quoins positioned at the corners of the building are actually white bricks, rather than stone as was used in the building of large houses. Observe that the black lozenge diapering of the 1840 building could not be fully copied by the later builders' c 1960 who upgraded the site after the hospital had closed. One can also note the lack of chimney breastworks as used in 1840 on the new buildings, since central heating is used today.

The site had buildings added to make it into modern desirable residences. The site is now called "Grey Lady place", after our local ghost. So if you visit the site you might be joined by an extra visitor.

The original St. Andrews chapel can still be seen with the saltire flag in the window.

The men's entrance was in Norsey Road, one can still see the gate lodge in the trees, the womans entrance was in Stock Road.

The Union House is Charles House, and the site is now Grey Lady Place. Named for the ghost who allegedly haunted the hospital? The Workhouse is now renovated as modern homes.

Note the absence of chimneys on the new buildings.

Later Queen Victoria appointed George Gilbert Scott to design the Albert Memorial 1863. In 1865 he designed St Pancras Station.

Scott renovated St David's Cathedral in Pembrokeshire and the church at Dover castle to name just two of the many churches he renovated.

*[His son Gills Gilbert Scott designed the iconic phone kiosk.]*

## THE RAILWAY

**T**he Ancient Physical Prospect from Billericay Station: The OS map edition of 1879 details orchards and sloping fields rising to an altitude of 302 foot above sea level for this immediate station site.

Where the Stock Road Bridge now stands, that was once rising ground, leading towards the High Street. Here was situated the Dog & Partridge Beer House.

The Dog & Partridge beer-house opened after the 1830 Beer Act.

It was located in the area where the Stock Road railway bridge is now and its outbuildings and orchards extended toward the present site of the station.

The beer-house was demolished in 1885 to make way for the 54 feet deep railway cutting, and was replaced by the: Railway Hotel, 1885 on the south side of the track.

## BILLERICAY TANNERY

**I**n the area behind the Railway public house and bounded by Back lane, now called Western Road, to Tanfield Drive was the site of the Billericay Tannery recorded in 1593. It was operational until 1803.

The present Crown public house built in 1889 is opposite the Railway public house [1885].

This is the fourth pub named the Crown. “Crown” Inns have been at various locations in the High Street, Billericay since the 1500s.

For more fascinating details, please

See: Billericay History Series N0.4: The Inns of Billericay.

## WORKHOUSE’S 120 FOOT CHIMNEY

**L**OOKING up the hillside to the right, had you been standing at Billericay station before 1997, you would have seen the 120 foot high chimney of the Workhouse. This chimney had dominated the Billericay skyline for 157 years since 1840. It was demolished brick by brick; during 1997, the individual bricks being valued at 45p each.

Joseph Wildman reported that the chimney used 3,500 bricks. {£1,575} in 1840.

The site foreman had hoped to get Fred Dibnah MBE to topple the chimney as a publicity stunt, for Laing Homes, the site developer.

## PROPOSED CANAL SCHEME

There had been a proposal put forward in 1825 to connect via a canal link Billericay to the Thames and thence the sea.

In 1797 a canal was built between the towns of Chelmsford & Heybridge called the Chelmer-Blackwater Navigation.

The River Crouch rises in Billericay, in the golf course, and flows toward Battlesbridge. The plan was to connect Battlesbridge to the Thames with a branch canal link to Billericay via some 13 locks at South Green.

The idea was to be able to transport bricks, tiles, wood, and leather goods from the tannery to the ports.

The plan was to have two large docking basins in the South Green area. At that time the population was about 1000.

However, in 1829 the first locomotives were undergoing trials at Rainhill, when the Rocket won. This was the death knell for the canals.

## THE RAILWAY SYSTEM

The “other line” to Southend-on Sea; the London, Tilbury & Southend Railway opened in 1856.

The “Billericay Line”: London, Shenfield to Southend Central started construction in 1884.

The Parliamentary Act passed in July 1883 authorizing the new railway line via Billericay. Construction of the line started in 1884.

Labourers, called navvies, {from the building of the canal days} used manual and later mechanical steam shovels to dig the 54 feet deep cutting through the Billericay hillside. This was in order to create an acceptable gradient {< 1 in 100} for the trains running between Shenfield & Wickford stations. Trains work best on flat ground.

Originally, there were 4 tracks laid at this station with a goods yard, located in what is now the station car park. Crossover points allowed access to these freight sidings from either the London or Southend direction. To London is known as the “up line” & “down” line goes to Southend. Great Eastern Railway opened in 1888 for goods trains, and on 1st January 1889 for Passenger traffic.

## THE NEXT STATION IS BILLERICAY

**W**ith the coming of the railway, historic and picturesque Billericay has grown into a commuter town from its initial status as a market town.

After the granting of a market charter in 1253 to Burstead, Billericay developed as a market town, although the name of Billericay was not specifically mentioned in official documents until 1291 when it was spelt as Byllyrica and later documents it was spelt in many variants. None of which enable us to find the derivation of the towns name.

So how did the railway come to Billericay?

Today people take for granted the fact that they can step onto a train and go nearly anywhere they want to. But the building of the railway tracks in Victorian Britain was an engineering feat as great if not greater than, the building of the pyramids or the construction of the Great Wall of China.

Our railway system covers the whole of the United Kingdom.

However, in the beginning, getting permission from parliament to lay the necessary railway track was a significant challenge.

The next major challenge was getting the powerful landowners to sell the land needed on which to build the railway system. It was the start of the “not-in-my-backyard”, NIMBY syndrome.

There were also serious medical concerns raised by doctors who feared that people moving at speed would be severely affected by the motion, due to a lack of air to breathe.

The first trial railway system: the Stockton to Darlington was opened in 1825.

Following the successful 1829 Rainhill Trials to prove the viability of a practical and efficient steam locomotive, which the Rocket won, people could commit to setting up the railway networks.

The received wisdom from historians has been that people did not move around very far from their place of origin until modern times.

However a recent study of the 1901 census by the Billericay Historical & Archaeological Society has indicated that 22% of the 1,115 people living in Billericay in 1901 came from outside of Essex and 1% from outside of the UK, so clearly people did move around.

This is further supported by the fact that Billericay had three stagecoaches a day taking passengers to London and to Southend until the railway arrived.

Billericay has to thank the Rev. J. H. Harris for persuading the Great Eastern Railway Company to route the railway through Billericay on its way to Southend.

This route, Shenfield to Southend-Victoria was to become Southend's "other railway line".

Achieving this route was no mean feat for the planning and construction engineers. Billericay's High Street is 315 feet above sea level and railways work best over flat land. To achieve an acceptable gradient for the train between Shenfield & Billericay a very deep cutting was dug through Billericay's hillside. This 54 foot deep cutting was mainly dug by hand although later steam shovels were used to help the navvies.

To align the track coming from Shenfield with the track coming from Wickford, on the other side of Billericay's hill, a mariner's compass and sighting posts used to guide the diggers.

1884 saw the start of the laying of the metal track between Shenfield & Billericay.

The Railway Tavern in Billericay is dated from 1885.

On the 19 November 1888 the double track section from Shenfield to Wickford was opened for goods traffic.

The first train carrying passengers stopped at Billericay on 1st January 1889.

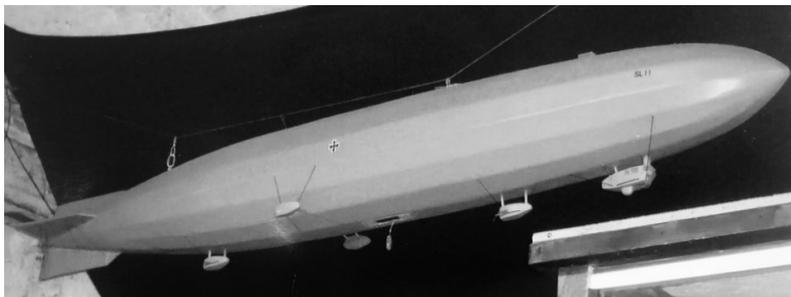
A newspaper report of this occasion can be seen in the Cater Museum at 74 High Street, The Billericay Society's Headquarters.

The original station at Billericay had public goods sidings. These have now gone, but photographs of the station at this time, & at various times in the past, can be seen in Roger Green's book: "Billericay, A Pictorial History". Roger was Membership Secretary of the Billericay Society and a local lawyer.

Billericay is unique as being the only station on the Southend Line in a cutting.

Restaurant cars were introduced to the Liverpool Street – Southend Line in May 1911.

## CRASH OF ZEPPELIN L32 and the BLITZ



**G**reat Eastern Railway ran excursions to Billericay to view the Zeppelin {L32} that had crashed at Snail Farm, South Green after being shot down on the night of 23 / 24th September 1916, by Lieutenant Sowrey in his BE2c aircraft.

The zeppelin had followed the moonlight silver path provided by the Thames to attack London.

Before 1916 aircraft attacking Zeppelins had not had much success as their bullets had little effect. The aircraft engines also had an altitude limitation.

During 1916 our aircraft were issued with incendiary bullets that could ignite the gas in the Zeppelin, so these Zeppelin attacks were reduced.

Similarly during World War II attacking German bomber aircraft used the moonlight Thames during the blitz on London.

However when RAF spitfires appeared, diving on the bombers, pre-warned by our original RDF [Radio Detection and Finding] equipment {Later called radar by the Americans} some pilots would turn off from the attack, to return to Germany and would discharge their bombs to lighten the load on the plane. That is why Billericay had about 4,000 bombs dropped in its vicinity.

You can read more about Zeppelins in our booklet by C.E. Wright, one time curator of the Cater museum: “The fate of the Zeppelin L 32”.

The Great Eastern Railway became part of the London & North Eastern Railway, the LNER, on 1st January 1923 under the Railway Act of 1921,  
These initials became used jocularly as the: late-never-early-railway.

Colour light automatic signalling lights introduced to the Billericay section of the line in May 1938.

On 1st January 1948, the LNER became part of British Railway, Eastern Region.

During the severe storms of January 1953 the Liverpool Street Line was not affected, but the Fenchurch Street line was damaged over 3 miles of its track.

Electrification of the “Billericay line” came in 1954. The electrification of the Tilbury to Southend Line happened in 1961.

Langthorne’s flat complex {After Cistercian monks of Stratford Langthorne Abbey}

The site of Langthorne’s flat complex, 1980s, was once Arthur’s Garage one of the town’s earliest motor repair businesses.

In 1959 a gallon of petrol cost 1/9d.

Behind this garage area was the first Billericay Cricket ground. In earlier times, the Workhouse Master had used this area of land for keeping his ducks and chickens.

## FESTIVAL GARDENS

**S**ituated at the corner of Norsey Road/Crown Road. The narrow unmade track from the railway bridge, Norsey Road down into Crown Road was called “Slut’s Hole” with a footbridge over the stream to Jackson’s Lane.

The ground where the market was located was called Crown Gardens Parade.

The “Gardens” used to be the site of the Billericay market that closed in 1939.

This site was controlled by Messrs Layland and Thorne’s and known as Billericay’s market. Not a very salubrious place, stalls had corrugated iron awnings where rabbits, chickens, eggs and butter etc. were sold.

Closed down under the emergency regulations at the beginning of the War.

The site was purchased in 1946 for the future British Legion Hall but as Rose Hall was purchased instead, it was not used.

In 1951 this piece of land was gifted by Mrs. Gentry to the Billericay Urban District Council who laid out the gardens to commemorate the Festival of Britain with its fine view towards Southend. See plinth and compass in the gardens.

# NORTH END of the HIGH STREET

Station end of the High Street.

## WEATHERBOARD Cottages - Norsey Road [Previously known as Rochford Road].

[Listed] Numbers: 1-5 Norsey Road are a terrace of three 1700s brick cottages, each with casement (hollow moulding found in windows) windows and fine chimneystacks. They have no pavement outside their front doors. Their roofs are in the gabled mansard style.

[Listed] Numbers 6, 8, 10 Norsey Rd these three-weatherboard timber framed cottages were formerly one property that is shown on the Lord Petre's Estate map of 1593.

{An architectural feature in the roof of one of the cottages is a crown post supporting the roof.

This crown post is reported to be “in the carpentry style of 1385”}.

The cottages, having been built so long ago, were not built on foundations, so they could actually move a few centimetres with any serious impact!

Wooden frame houses were prefabricated from standard types of: floor frames, cross frames, wall frames and roof frames.

Due to different roof loading: straw, slates, tiles, etc only the roof frames had dateable development for determining the age of the building.

Today dendrochronology can be used to date timber. Dendrochronology, comparing seasonal tree ring patterns against know “dated sequences”.

*COMMENT:*

These ancient buildings are part of the historic fabric of our town. They help to give the town its character- that is after all why we chose to live here, which is why the character of the town must be preserved.

We do not want Billericay to be just another drab clone of other towns. Modern architectural designs are welcomed and encouraged outside the Conservation Zone.

Elizabeth Cottage No 4 High Street.

Formerly site of the Society of Friends, the Quakers, meeting house. Their burial ground is said to have been at the rear, and under Prezzo cafe. Prezzo, the ex Kitt site, was previously occupied by Churchill Johnson, Engineers, during the 1930's.

Outside, opposite Elizabeth Cottage the outline of the removed cottages to make way for the cross roads above Jim Shield's garden on the opposite of the road.

## TANNERY

Situated on the west side of the High Street. In the area behind the Railway public house and bounded by Western Road, {then called Back lane} to where Tanfield Drive is now was the site of the Billericay Tannery first documented in 1593 and operating at least until 1803.

In the 1300s Billericay grew in importance and was the only town in the Barstable Hundred.

The population was about 1200, with many prosperous wool merchants.

Agriculture and the provision of hides (leather) flourished. The “Tanne House” was later renamed “Norsey View” (Used to be on the site the B. J Camping shop, now 2006 Thai Concept.)

Norsey View is where the local Doctor Waldron, lived during the 1890s before going to the Boer War and after returning between the years 1909 to 1910 when Catholic services were held there. The RC church in Laindon Rd was not built until 1924.

Troops were billeted at “Norsey View” during the First World War. 1914 – 1918. The local Roman Catholic priest lived there until 1924. The doctor’s old out building, waiting room & surgery, roughly on the site of “Stewart’s Tapas & Lounge Bar”, became The Hiker’s Halt. c: 1937

Twolyns Tool Hire was the site of the Billericay Times newspaper from 1931.

The High Street is a broad thoroughfare, averaging 75 feet for most of its length between the shop fronts.

The railway station and industrial complex is located at the north end of town.

Plaque numbers of the High Street's Listed buildings:

See Billericay Town Trail leaflet

Memorial Gardens

Jim Shields memorial gardens: 2004, on the site of two houses 17 & 19 Hi St. Jim provided and maintained wheel chairs etc for the physically incapacitated.

Died aged 83 July 2004.

Notice the outline of the demolished cottage removed to make this road junction.

2021 the Pilgrim Fathers sculpture was added.



No 12 High Street Billericay 16-17C  
(Grade II, plaque 5)

Gabled south cross wing of a former 16-17C timber-framed house. The upper storey has a shallow jetty and exposed timber framing, and a window with 3-light casements having 20C lattice leaded lights. The shop front is 20C. Occupied as business premises in the 1920s by Essex Homes Co Ltd responsible for local housing development including Crown Road, and in the 1950s by estate agent H O Iles, responsible for restoration of this building, still trading at No 86. Now Woodward's Carpets.



No 41 High Street Billericay 18C  
(Grade II, plaque 39)

Originally built in 17C but re-fronted in red brick in Georgian times. The building was formerly Jasmine Cottage, in use as a residence until 1951 when it became the offices of solicitors Harvey & Collins. Westminster Bank acquired the property later, rebuilding the interior but restoring all the features of the street elevation.



No 22 High Street Billericay 18C  
(Grade II, plaque 7)

Originally a 16C timber farmhouse (“Cleerhall”), encased in brick in 18C. Parapet and raised brick band. Windows double-hung sashes with stuccoed reveals and flat arches. 6-panel door with semi-circular fanlight with fan glazing bars, wood doorcase with panelled reveals, fluted columns and an open pediment. George Fitz-George, illegitimate son of George IV, drowned in the pond at back in 1819 while at the boys academy. Known as “Sheredays”, Dr Frederick Carter lived and practiced here in the late 19C to be succeeded in the 20C by Dr J D Wells. Now used as business premises.



## No 43 High Street Billericay 18C (Grade II, plaque 38)

Originally Sheridays (not Sheredays), but more recently Jubilee House, built as a timber framed house, re-fronted in red brick in 18C. The central window has rusticated surround. The doorway has shouldered architrave and dentilled pediment. The Mansard style roof is tiled and has flat headed dormers. The building was completely reconstructed as offices in 1961 but the original brick front was retained and restored. The property was acquired by the Spitty family in the mid-19 C and retained until the 1917 sale. Former tenants include Miss Leah (1830); Ann Oates (1867), sometime proprietor of a Ladies Boarding Academy and probably a relative Thomas Oates who owned land in the Tanfield Drive area and is believed to have had the tanning operation in that area; W Mathews, last master of the Billericay Grammar School (c.1900), R W Clark (1928); local historian H H Statham; and A T Maguire (d.1960) who had a dental practice here. Following the rebuilding, a dentist called Pearl continued with the dental practise, sharing the premises with Estate Agents Bairstow Eves, but they have now been succeeded by the a Chinese restaurant.



No 24 High Street (Hill House) Billerica  
19C (Grade II, plaque 8)

A mid-18C timber framed house re-fronted c.1800 in brick in the “Grecian” style. Wine cellar and well under kitchen floor. In 1867, the residence of Henry Collin, attorney and agent for Sparrow and Co’s Bank. Now office of Peter Robins, architect.



## No 51 (Crescent House) High Street 18C (Grade II, plaque 37)

A mid-18C Georgian red brick house with rusticated quoins. The central front projection is surmounted by a modillion pediment and has a Tuscan portico with plain columns. A window opening above is blocked. The tiled roof is constructed to a mansard design with two flat roofed dormer windows. The interior contains a fine Georgian style staircase. The building is situated some distance back from the street, and is visible through the archway between two shops constructed in 1960. During the 19C the house was a Girls Academy and later a Boys Academy under the Rev F S Sparks who had about 20 pupils mainly 16-18 years of age who played an annual cricket match against a Billericay XI. Some of the pupils lodged at No 42 High Street, now part of the Chequers Inn. In 1864 Rachel Mead, spinster of Crescent House, bequeathed £511 for the education of children of poorer members of the Congregational Church, a charity which later sent six boys to Mr Price's Burstead House Academy, then at No 117 High Street. Early in 20thC the Ladbrook family were resident, followed in 1920 by a family named Griffiths from whom it passed to Dr Hermann Taylor. From 1945 till his death in 1959 Dr H G Gunter had a practice here. Later it was a dentist's surgery, followed by various commercial firms.



Nos 38 & 40 High Street Billericay 16-17C  
(Grade II, plaques 9 & 10)

No 38, to the left, is a 16C timber-framed weather-boarded house with 18C alterations and additions. The ground floor bay windows, although 18C in style, are 20C alterations as is the shop front. The tiled roof has a moulded wood eaves cornice. The interior has a beam inscribed with the date 1577. Formerly the Magpie and Horseshoe Inn, from 1831 until around 1980 it was the business premises and residence of members of the Bassom family, who were builders and decorators. A collection of their business papers relating to work carried out on local buildings is in the Essex Record Office archives. It is now a shop called the Emporium.

No 40, to the right, is a 17C timber-framed weather-boarded house with its half-hipped gable end facing the street. The upper floor was originally jettied but was under-built in the 19C and now has a 20C shop front. Originally, with No 38, the building was part of the Magpie and Horseshoe Inn. In the latter part of the 19C the occupants were Frederick Wade, coachman and gardener to Major Spitty. Mrs Wade and their daughter Clara ran a general village store here until 1950. Later it became a sweet and tobacconists and is at present a bakers shop.



## Nos 57, 59 & 61 High Street 16C (Grade II, plaques 35A & 36)

The priest's house for the 14C chapel or chantry on the opposite side of the High Street may have occupied this site, but if so the original building would have undergone significant rebuilding after the suppression of the chantries in 15C. The present building is a timber framed house of the central hall type with gabled two storey cross wings on the north (to the right) and south (to the left), built in the early part of the 16C. An extension on the south, (to the left, part of No 61), was added at the end of the 16C or early in the 17C. Nos 57 & 59 have 18C and 19C windows with double hung sashes with glazing bars. Recent additions and alterations include the insertion of an attic room within the roof of the central hall, and the addition of a kitchen at the rear of the south wing in 20C, the old kitchen being incorporated into the café tea room. The butchers shop front was altered when Nos 57 & 59 were converted to become a bookshop, "Storyteller", in the 1980s. The butchers shop was founded in 1901 by Mr H Smith, a native of Sible Hedingham, who was succeeded by his nephew Mr R L Clarke.



## The Chequers Inn 42-44 High Street Billericay (Grade II, plaque 11)

The Chequers was built in the 16thC with a central hall and projecting cross wings, that to the south now forming No 1 Chapel Street, at present Goodspeeds fishmongers shop. There are many later additions and alterations, particularly at the northern end, at the rear and internally. By its proximity to the Chantry Farm, or Chapel Lands, the inn is supposed to have been the original farmhouse, concerned with the management of the farm, while the Chantry House, now 61 High Street, was used for lodging visiting priests. These properties were originally vested in the parish of Great Burstead but were awarded to the Tyrell family by Edward VI in the 16th C when the chantries were closed down. The Tyrells kept the land but sold the Chapel to the local inhabitants. It is believed that by the mid 1700s the building became a public house possibly separate from the farm, early licensees being Sarah Peacock (c.1765), followed by John Gotteridge, Abraham Parker, and Elizabeth Dutton (c. 1839, when a Mr Brown, a carrier, left the Chequers every Tuesday and Friday for London), and John White (1862). He was followed by Samuel J Heard, carpenter and founder of the undertaker's business carried on by his son of the same name at Church House. Susannah Heard, his wife was a straw bonnet maker. The Heards were succeeded from 1883 till 1921 by Thomas Weston, then Frederick H Smith, and J Outten 1925-1937. Bernard Savigear then took over but died in 1960, his wife succeeding as licensee. The house at the northern end of the building on the corner of Chantry Chase, No 42 High Street, was built during the 17th C as part of the Chequers, but in the 19th C was used as a lodging house for the scholars of the Crescent House Boys' Academy on the opposite side of High Street.



## No 61 (Chantry House) High Street Billericay 16C (Grade II, plaques 35A & 36)

The south cross wing and extension of a 16C hall house incorporating Nos 57 & 59, having exposed timber framing, ceiling beams and floor joists. There are two original 2-light smaller windows in the gable, with diamond mullions. The other windows and the bays on the ground floor are modern. The chimney stack has been rebuilt. The ground and upper floors have 16C panelling with a 17C cornice, and the ground floor has panelled doorways leading into the old central hall and a 16C panelled cupboard by the fireplace. Historic interest is mainly the connection with the sailing of the Pilgrim Fathers in the “Mayflower” in 1620. Christopher Martin, responsible for arranging provisions for the voyage, was a resident of Billericay and copyholder of a tenement on the east side of the High Street just south of the Chapel, but is supposed to have lived at what is now No 61. The party from Billericay included Christopher’s wife Marie, stepson Solomon Prower and bondservant John Langerman. Owned by the Mead and Richardson families since c.1800, it became a restaurant in the 1950s.



## No 1 Chapel Street Billericay (Grade II, plaque 11)

This property was the south wing of the Chequers building as first erected but has been in use as a shop for many years, and is at present in use as a fishmongers, Goodspeeds. A notable feature is the scalloped barge board of the gable end, seen above. The interior has been modernised but it is believed that the roof timbers have been taken from old ships and some have Roman numerals on them. In 1862 William Henry Amos was baker here, and also ran a daily carrier service to Brentwood, his cart leaving the Chequers yard at 8.40 am. He died in 1895, aged 79, and is buried in the United Reformed churchyard in Chapel Street, with other members of his family many of whom were prominent in the town. A baker named Swayne was here until after the first World War, followed by Frederick Boyd. In the early 1930s the shop became for a brief period “Madame Florence’s Wool Shop” but was then taken over by the present owners.



No 63 High Street Billerica 18-19C  
(Grade II, plaque 35)

The main part of this structure was built in the late 16C or early 17C, a Georgian style red brick façade having been added in the late 18C or early 19C. The rear is gabled and weather boarded, a kitchen wing having a sashed bay window and pillared doorway. Over the last two centuries the building has been used as a shop. Members of the Barrell family in occupation early in the 19C described themselves as grocers, tallow chandlers, confectioners and wine and brandy merchants. A century later J E Morris, grocer, wine and spirit retailer lived and traded here, followed by Arthur Cooper's off-licence at which stage the shop front was re-built as above. The Papa Pizza restaurant which replaced it is now being refurbished and extended but will the faux-Georgian window be retained?



### No3 Chapel Street Billericay (Grade II, plaque 12)

Nos 3,5 & 7 Chapel Street were probably at some time a single building, though built at two dates. The first, constructed c.1450, included a gabled crosswing, No 3 above, having an overhanging upper storey supported on curved brackets, to the north of the main building, No5. Construction details of the windows, doors and roof indicate a structure of high value, such as would be associated with the wool trade, but related to commercial rather than domestic use. Following many years of neglect, the building was substantially restored in 1958, and a shop window inserted. The following year, a new owner, Mrs Newman, chose the name Woolpack when opening the premises as a wool shop, following a competition among customers at her previous shop to find the most suitable name, a prize of stockings being awarded to the winner. The shop is now a florists, Fleur de Lys



## No 5 Chapel Street Billericay – St Aubyn's (Grade II, plaque 12)

Originally part of a single building, Nos 3-7, No 5 was extended at the rear in the 17C-18C and refurbished c.1807 with Georgian design features both internally and externally, including the front door and windows. These were carried out by the owner Thomas Cross (d.1810) a corn dealer at the Market House. His daughters Sarah (d.1871) and Deborah (d.1875) retained ownership and managed a Girls Boarding Academy. They were succeeded as residents here by retired farmer Jonathan Tyler (d.1917) who owned Nos 3-13. Later residents include dressmakers Miss Rose and Miss Jay, Mr G Birch, organist at the parish church, and c.1948 Mr Gascoigne-Cecil used it as a residence and office for Billericay Farm Services Ltd. From 1951 various members of the Richman family lived here, including Harry Richman, historian, author and Curator of the Cater Museum until his death in 1971. Now the office of L G Strong, Insurance Broker.



## St Mary Magdalen Church Billericay 15-18C (Grade B, plaque 14)

Originally St John's Chapel subordinate to Gt Burstead.  
Dedicated to St Mary in 1693.  
Church rebuilt late 18C, 15C tower restored 1880. Interior  
refurbished 2007.



## Nos 75-79 High Street Billericay 18C (Grade II, plaque 34)

In the Cater Museum is a copy of a map dated 1681 by John Coffyn showing the lands of Joseph Fishpoole which indicates a building called the White Lion in his ownership on this site, with an estate of 70 acres to the west. The present 18C building is a two-storey timber framed house, the upper part faced with roughcast, the lower with weatherboarding, with a tiled roof. The central section is raised to accommodate a cart entrance. In 1706, the owner of the property, which included two orchards and a pigsty was Samuel Thresher, who was succeeded in 1768 by Benjamin Johnson, a maltster and tallow Chandler by trade. In 1832, the building, which had been divided into three sections, was offered for sale at the Crown Inn in two lots. Lot 1 comprised the 3-acre cherry orchard with cart sheds and stables with access to the High Street through Lot 2 which consisted of two dwellings, one occupied by Mr Isiah Murrell the other, No 79 to the left, by Mr Timothy Shipp. The Shipp family had been veterinary surgeons since about 1700 and had a surgery here until 1923, when Mr R C Shelley purchased Nos 75-79 for his automotive business. This is still being carried on by his son Michael, the fronts having been converted into a shop for ladies fashions. At No 75, the owner-occupier in 1867 was Dr William Carter followed in 1881 by Charles Carter.



## Church House 46 High Street Billericay (Grade II, plaque15)

The present main structure dates from the 18th C, but an iron rainwater head cast with the date 1804 indicates that the original brick façade was a later addition, which became unstable towards the end of the 20C. The Church authorities sold the building in 1996 to local builder C S Housden who completely restored the interior, demolished the façade, which was rebuilt to replicate the original design using the original bricks where possible, and built an extension to the rear. Exposure of the original timber structure indicated that the building was constructed at two dates, and probably first existed as two individual properties. The manorial records show that the copyholder of a building on this site in 1593 was Margery Peryman, a member of a family also owning land called Old Mill Hill opposite Lockers in Southend Road. In 1615 John Sweeting, who also owned another tenement on the opposite side of the High Street, was the copyholder. In 1885 the building became the home and workshop of carpenter and undertaker S J (Sammy) Heard, also some time licensee of the Chequers Inn, to be succeeded by his son of the same name until 1958 when the building became the office of solicitors Hatten Jewers and Mephram. It continues in office use.



## No 91 High Street Billericay 16-17C (Grade II, plaques 31 & 32)

A mid-16C timber framed and plastered building, weather boarded at the rear, formerly called “The Gables” due to the prominent gabled roof wings at each end, a characteristic of c.1580-1680 building. A plaque on the front states “This house was the meeting place of the Billericay Independent Protestants who were licensed to worship here on 28th April 1762 with liberty of conscience”. This is a reflection of the previous intolerance and oppression of religious dissent at that time, expressed with great strength locally, leading to the departure of The Pilgrim Fathers in 1620 to live in America. The plaque was affixed in 1972 by the owners, the North Thames Gas Board, to commemorate the tercentenary of the Billericay Congregational Church. The first record of ownership of the building is on John Coffyn’s map of 1681 indicating the occupier to be a Mr Finch, the family continuing to be resident until 1806 when Elizabeth, only heir and child of Thomas Finch, who had married Thomas Wood, the miller at the Bell Hill mill, became the owner. Two surgeons followed, John Martin (c.1830) and John Starling Day (1867). In the early 20th century T W Trimmell’s period of residence was followed in 1924 by F W Perry, but in 1930 the building was converted to offices and showrooms for the Gas Light and Coke Company Ltd. to a design drawn up by an architect called Tapper, respecting the local ambience. Gas lighting first appeared in the streets of Billericay in 1842, the source of gas supply being an iron foundry and gas works in Laindon Road. In 1913 local gas production ceased, supply being replaced by the Grays and Tilbury Gas Company, followed by the Gas Light & Coke Co., then North Thames Gas, then British Gas. In the 1990s Alexander’s Restaurant and Tea Rooms opened, followed by the “Ask” restaurant



No 72 High Street Billericay 17C  
(Grade II, plaque 16)

Remaining gable of a 17C timber-framed house. First floor is jettied with exposed joists. 20C shop front. Occupied by Aquila Optometrists, previously the Southend Standard, earlier the HQ of the Billericay Conservative and Liberal Unionist Assoc.



## Nos 93 & 95 High Street Billericay 18C (Grade II, plaque 32)

The Listed Building Register dates this timber-framed and plastered house as 18C, but Richman considered it to be late 16C or early 17C. The roof is tiled, and the range of five windows on the upper floor are double-hung sashes with glazing bars. The cart entrance through the ground floor of No 93, to the right, suggests that in its early years it may have been the “The Hare and Hounds”, a coaching inn occupied by Weston Cokeham in 1765. In the 19C, when it became known as “The Grey House”, it was a private residence with bay windows and a shrub-filled garden. In 1855 it was purchased by John Barriff, a gentleman of Dovercourt who also owned of many acres of land between Western Road and Mountnessing Road, developed in the early 20C as the Town Building Estate, including Station Road, Beaufort Road, etc. John Frederick Emerson, described on a conveyance as a draper, who had previously been the tenant, purchased the house and land extending as far as Western Road in 1890. He was also a dealer in hay and corn, whose hay carts would assemble in Western Road, before departure for Whitechapel Market. J F Emerson died in 1924, his widow Gertrude Louise selling the Grey House to J F Burrell in 1935, at which time Lionel J Walford, Town Clerk of Holborn was the tenant. He was followed by Mr Christie who opened No 93 as a shoe shop and experimented with an “Arcade” through the centre of the building. Various retailers operated businesses in No 95, but in the post-war period the Christie family eventually combined the two shops as Mayflower Florist and Gardeners Corner, with a hairdressing establishment at the rear. In 1997 the ground floor was reconstructed as a “One-Stop” convenience store and post office.



Nos 74 (Cater Museum), 74a & 74b High  
Street Billericay 18C  
(Grade II, plaque 17)

A building on the site of the main block of a Tudor structure, of which No 72 was possibly the north crosswing, re-fronted in red brick in 18C. The roof is in the mansard style. The bowed shop window to the right is early 19C restored in 20C, the one to the left is 20C in 18/19C style. The building was bought by Mrs A M Cater to donate to a trust set up to manage the upper floors as a local folk museum in memory of her husband William Cater FAS, which was opened in 1960. Two rooms are furnished in the manner of a Victorian bedroom and sitting room, and in another, a fireplace, hob grate, side cupboards, iron fender and dogs, all originally in the ground floor sitting room, have been re-installed. Other exhibits include war-time memorabilia. For the previous 150 years, occupants had been saddlers and harness makers, and the last, Frederick J Eales, also operated a carriers business from here.



## READING ROOMS – 1886

Located at 73 High Street, the Reading Rooms are often now referred to as the Recreation Rooms. They were donated by Major Spitty an important figure in the town in those days. His house 39 High Street had a lantern structure on the roof. This can be seen in the pictures of the High Street model made by Harry Richman. From this room he could see the men he had employed to dig the lake in Lake Meadows. The Reading Rooms were opened as a Literary Institute to educate the citizens. To show how culturally advanced Billericay was the newspaper were made available to ladies between 15:30 and 16:30 on Wednesdays.



## 98-100 High Street Billericay (Grade II, plaques 19 & 20)

No 98 Barnsley House, to the left, was built in red brick in about 1750, whereas No 100 Foxcroft to the right was built in grey brick about 50 years later. The doorways are also in contrasting styles. Throughout their existence both buildings have been home to people of high local status. Barnsley House was occupied by a succession of medical practitioners including George White Raine, surgeon, from 1854 to 1870, Dr J C Cresswell from 1886, Dr R Holtby from 1910, and Dr W Shackleton 1919-1940. The local Home Guard used it as their HQ during the war period 1940-1945, followed by return to civilian use as offices for Billericay Urban District Council until the late 1950s when the authority changed its name to Basildon and moved its officials to Basildon town centre. At present Barnsley House is used as offices for insurance brokers established by the late Peter D J Murray.

Foxcroft was occupied by the Billericay Grammar School, schoolmaster Henry Fitch Robertson, from 1860-1863. In 1879, Rev.E G Darby, vicar of the parish church moved in and brought up his large family here, to be followed by Dr Frederick Carter on his retirement in 1904, remaining until his death in 1908. Later residents included Wellington Goodchild, formerly of Barleylands, and barrister Major J F Eastwood. In 1932 Essex County Council converted the building into a children's home and extended the building at the back. Currently the building is used as offices for solicitors Roger Green and Company.



## The Red Lion High Street Billericay 15,18 & 19C (GradeII, plaque 30)

This timber framed and plaster finished building dates from the 15th century but has seen many alterations at various stages during its long history. As a licensed inn “The Lion”, as it was originally known, has remained on its original site longer than any other in Billericay. In medieval times a manor comprised not only the land within the lord’s control but also existed as a social concept embracing the regulation by the courts of the affairs of the local community including the lord, his land and tenants. Archives containing records of the courts of the Manor of Great Burstead, which includes Billericay, show that the Red Lion was the meeting place for the courts, and was therefore, in a sense, the equivalent of today’s town hall. In 1769, Abraham Thresher “at the Red Lion Inn” advertised the availability of “a very neat and genteel Post Chariot” “with able Horses and a careful Driver” to take “Ladies and Gentlemen of the neighbourhood” to any part of England – the start of private hire? The Inn was also a place favoured by Londoners to party of a Saturday night and after one such event, according to a newspaper report of August 5th 1881, “their behaviour was not everything that might have been desired, for some of the inhabitants found their gardens entered, their fruit trees broken and robbed and their flowers stolen.” – sounds familiar? Perhaps equal but legalised destruction may have ensued from the Essex Union Hunt which met at the Red Lion in the 19th and early 20th centuries.



## No 106 High Street (Oak House) Billericay 18C (Grade II, plaque 22)

An 18C timber-framed and plastered house, rebuilt in 1960, but most of the original features, with the exception of the ground floor front, have been retained. The Upson family were here as saddlers and harness makers during most of the 19C, but in the first part of the 20C the shop was used as a greengrocers. In about 1924 it became the local office of the Southend Waterworks Company, C N Woolverton being the resident manager. The building then became used as office accommodation for staff of the Billericay Urban District Council, but in the latter half of the 20C became offices for estate agents Green and Deakin, to the left, and shops to the right. The shops were converted into a Wimpey Bar c. 1980.



## No 107 High Street Billericay 18C

The Register describes this as a two-storey 18C red brick house with a parapet and stucco dentilled cornice. Three-window range, double hung sashes with glazing bars, in plain reveals. Six panel door in a modern surround in 18th C style, with fluted pilasters and an open dentilled pediment on console brackets. Roof tiled (20C), with two flat headed dormers. Since this photo was taken a new shop front has radically changed its appearance.



## No 108 High Street Billericay (Grade II, plaque 23)

A 17thC timber framed and plastered house with north and south cross wings with a carriage entrance within the north wing. Despite its appearance there is no evidence that it was used as a coaching station. Earliest recorded owners were Mary Wood of Hornchurch (d.1832), followed by J H Machu who had a silk trimmings factory here, then selling the building to corn merchant George Cole (d.1882), also owner of Grimmeshill Farm at South Green. George bequeathed No 108 to his brother Philip, farmer of East Horndon. After Philip died in 1903 his son Edmund J Cole, dairy farmer of South Green became the owner. The first Mass said in Billericay since the Reformation was celebrated here in 1884. Billericay Rural District Council, later to become an Urban District, purchased No 108 for use as offices in around 1914, and continued in occupation until the late 1950s. An ownership dispute kept the building vacant for many years. It is presently business premises for Quirk's estate agency.



## Nos 131 & 133 High Street Billericay 18C

An 18C timber-framed and plastered house with a tiled mansard roof containing three hipped dormers. Other windows are double-hung sashes with glazing bars. The door-case has fluted pilasters, a frieze and a cornice hood on shaped brackets. It is believed that the land was the site of the former manor house of the manor of Cowbridge Grange which included land extending to the High Street between St Edith's Lane and London Road. The building dates from c. 1771 and in the early 1800s became a butchers house with a shop attached, to the right in the photograph, with a slaughterhouse behind. Former resident butchers include Daniel Richardson (1823), Charles Richardson (1874) and finally E Burgess Payne, a Trustee of the Reading Rooms who continued to live here after retirement but sold the business in the 1930s to Maurice Benjamin Clarke who transferred it to his own business at 92 High Street. After Mr Payne died in 1953 the property was purchased by Mrs A M Cater, who later also funded the acquisition of 74 High Street to create the Cater Museum. No 133 was converted into a hotel which was called "The Old Shambles". The stables were rebuilt in the form of an annex, not visible in the photograph, to the left of the entrance way, now an estate agents office. After the hotel closed, an extension was built at the rear, and an office block built in the grounds, the shop being occupied by a succession of retail businesses. The well and ancient hand pump which formerly supplied water to the house and butchers business still exists at the rear.



## Nos 137 & 139 High Street Billericay 18-19C (Grade II, plaque 27)

No 137 (extreme right) is a late 18C or early 19C 2-storey brick house. The 6-panel main door has a segmented hood on brackets. The ground floor has a 19C bay and a 20C shop window with 18C style glazing bars. The roof is tiled. No 139 (centre) is an 18C red brick house, with 2 storeys and an attic within a mansard style tiled roof containing three segmental headed dormers. Other floors have ranges of 3 windows with double-hung sashes in flush cased frames. The doorcase has a narrow architrave and a hood. It is believed that the front of the original building was constructed of lath and plaster on a timber frame but this was replaced with brick at some uncertain time. The property is described in the 18 C deeds as “ A Malt house and two cottages”, the malt house being No 139, and the cottages No 137, but these later became an alehouse. Although there are archive references to the existence of “The Three Horseshoes” in Billericay, whether or not this name referred to either or both these buildings seems uncertain, but licensees in 1770 were John Rumble and William Warren. For the latter part of 20C, and up to now, No 139 has been occupied by solicitors Edwards, Son and Noice, and no 135 is a sun tan parlour.



Burghstead Lodge No.143 High Street  
(Grade II\*, plaque 26)

Re-built in red brick in 18C style, probably by its owner in 1769, Smith Turner, Church Warden at Gt Burstead, Nikolaus Pevsner proclaims this “the best house in Billericay”. The wrought iron gates, recently restored, are also noteworthy. Owners and occupiers include J R Comyns of Hylands, Chelmsford (1797); Thomas Handley, farmer of Maldon (1798); Edmund Roberts of Lexden (1847); Rev John Staples Hand, Rector of Dunton (1801); Rev Thomas Hand of Bulphan (1835); J A Sparvel-Bayly (1870) – descendant of the D’Esperville family of Savoy, who lost their possessions in the French revolution; Major General Brydges Robinson Branfill, an enthusiastic amateur archaeologist (1884); Mr A Basil Brooks JP (1943-52). A cellar was discovered by Mr Sparvel-Bayly under the area in front of the house, believed to be an ice-house, although at the time containing only a single empty barrel. The cellar was used as an air raid shelter during World War II, then for Civil Defence purposes. Essex County Council purchased the building in 1954, after the grounds had been sold for the development of the Town Farm Estate. A public library was then built at the side and rear, with the old building accommodating offices for the library, the Registry of Births Marriages and Deaths, and the Citizens Advice Bureau.

# APPENDIX



## APPENDIX - 1

### THE REASON FOR THE FORMATION OF THE BILLERICAY SOCIETY

BASICALLY Developers wanted to bulldoze the old architectural timber framed houses and inns in the High Street. To prevent this happening some residents contacted the Council for the Protection of Rural England, CPRE.

They became the “The Billericay Area Group of the Essex Branch of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, CPRE, in June 1935.

Later CPRE became more proactive the word Council changed to Campaign, and Preservation to Protection of the Countryside due to the greater challenges to the Green Belt by developers wanting to build on the Green Belt.

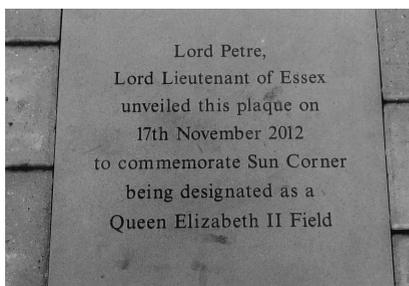
This Billericay Area Branch of CPRE etc. was later shortened to The BILLERICAY SOCIETY IN 1972. In the LATE 1960s the High Street made a Conservation Zone.

There are some 38 listed buildings in the High Street.

As chairman, [2004 – 2021] my primary aim was to get the grassland at the southern end of the High Street, in the vernacular “Sun corner” protected from future development attempts.

The SAGA of SUN CORNER's protection into A QUEEN ELIZABETH II FIELD. The Society led the first protests against developers wanting to build on the Sun Corner grassland in 1978. Working with Councilor J. Devlin of the Billericay Town Council we eventually achieved this protection in NOVEMBER 2012. This Sun Corner grassland area is now protected in perpetuity for the people of Billericay as a QUEEN ELIZABETH II FIELD. It only took 77 years. A bit like the UK winning Wimbledon!

[Thanks to Andy Murry]



*2 Benches donated by the Billericay Society.*

I also led local GREEN BELT and wider ranging countryside walks to keep the local footpaths open. I have recorded some 100 walks over 16 years. Landscapes have their own unique personalities often defined not just by their geology, topology and natural history, but by religious connections, church architecture and local legends.

We had damaged styles replaced with kissing gates. The Council would not let us play with the baby digger for repairing bridges.

If the footpaths become overgrown, how will people enjoy the countryside, when their batteries run out? I think the next conflict will be over access to water and Rare Earth Elements. These are the Lanthanide series of 15 rare metallic elements with atomic numbers from 57 – 71, used in the making of batteries, qv.

The Billericay Society was formed in 1935 with the Aim To “Protect Our Heritage”. To do this firstly we had to find out: “Was there any HERITAGE to PROTECT?”

1.0 INITIALLY it was to protect our range of varied timber framed architecture in the high street from destruction by developers, and to collect the story of their residents.

1.2 NEXT we had to find out: “how had the town developed over the centuries”? There is ample evidence of very early and continuous occupation of this 300 + foot high point of Essex now called Billericay.

1.3 Then we had to investigate if there were any significant past events that were associated with the development of the town?

1.4 To answer these questions, significant research had to be carried out and eventually recorded.

Hence the number of book written by the society on the development of Billericay:

## APPENDIX - 2

Some of the books published by the Billericay Society:

BILLERICAY and 1620.

Thomas M. MASON, 1919.

THE HISTORY of a LITTLE TOWN - The story of Billericay.

George Walker 1947

BILLERICAY and its HIGH STREET.

Harry RICHMAN 1953 (First curator of the Cater Museum)

BILLERICAY through the Ages.

W. G. HARPER. 1969

Christopher Martin - Great Burstead and Mayflower.

R.J. CARPENTER, 1982.

St ANDREW'A HOSPITAL,

Queenie M. JACKSON, 1983

THE HISTORY of NORSEY WOOD.

K. G. COOK, B.Sc. 1984.

BILLERICAY in old picture postcards.

Harvey PROCTOR M.P. and Vic MEECHAM. 1985.

Billericay Society published in 2001 the:

BILLERICAY HISTORY SERIES written by

Professor Wynford P. GRANT

- 1 The story of Billericay – from Stone Age to Roman Times, 1962
- 2 The Mills of Billericay, 1962
- 3 Billericay and the Mayflower and the Place Names of Billericay, 1963
- 4 The Inns of Billericay, 1963
- 5 Billericay's Markets and Fairs, 1964

The Fate of the ZEPPELIN L32.  
"Ted" WRIGHT, 1977.

BILLERICAY TIMES - Images of the 20th Century from CATER Museum.  
Ted WRIGHT, 1999.

BILLERICAY in 1900.  
BAHS. 1999.

Roger GREEN books:  
Billericay A Historical Tour in Pictures, 1997  
Billericay a Pictorial History, 2005.

St Mary Magdalen, Billericay - The church in the High Street,  
Sylvia KENT, Michael GINN. 2007.

Billericay Design Statement, 2010. BTC.

Billericay and AROUND, Kate J. COLE, 2016

John JAMES books:  
A History of Mill Meadows, Billericay.  
The lost farms of Billericay.  
Domesday Billericay.

## APPENDIX - 3

Some suggested walk routes around Billericay:

See local walk maps of:

BILLERICAY CIRCULAR WALKS

BILLERICAY Countryside walks series -1

BILLERICAY Countryside walks series – 2

NORSEY WOOD trail guide

MILL MEADOWS Local nature Reserve

BILLERICAY SHORT CUT MAP.

Queens Park Country Park

LITTLE BURSTEAD circular walks

Billericay Society Map of Footpaths and Bridleways

ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPS: 175, 177, 167

PATH FINDER 1142 BILLERICAY

## APPENDIX - 4

David A. BREMNER is a Chartered Engineer who moved to BILLERICAY in 1986. He had spent 2.5 years in the Netherlands leading an International Research Project at Philips Research. He was later employed at MARCONI RESEARCH CENTRE, Great Baddow as a digital design engineer involved with the development of High Data Rate (120Mb/s) microelectronic systems. He retired as the Design Resource Manager in 1998.

He is married to Suzanne with two children, a boy Ian and girl Claire.

By 2004 he was appointed Chairman of the Billericay Society from which he retired in 2021.



## APPENDIX - 5

### Billericay Footpaths

The Greek physician Hippocrates said: Walking is man's best medicine.

#### *Early history*

Modern footpaths are the narrow trodden paths that may have originated in antiquity. Once our hunter-gatherer ancestors had settled in one place & adopted farming, their regularly walked paths, were the basis for modern footpaths.

The routes that our ancestors drove their cattle to their cattle pens were called "drove roads" - now, on modern maps as "Green Lanes". These can be identified by roadways having a ditch on either side with hedgerows.

Another source of early routes, are the "salt roads", used to carry the salt from areas producing salt, such as Maldon to manor houses. The areas where the salt was evaporated from sea water are known as "red-hills".

#### *PRoW*

Today there are three categories of Public Rights of Way [PRoW] giving one access to the countryside - defined as:

- FOOTPATHS – a right to use the path on foot only - waymarking arrow sign is yellow.
- BRIDLEWAYS - a right to use the path on foot, horse-back & pedal cycle – waymarking sign is a blue arrow &
- BYWAYS - a right to use the way by all of the above modes, plus the right to drive horse-drawn & motorised vehicles along it – waymarking sign is a red arrow.
- There are also permitted paths that farmers allow one to use. These can be withdrawn by the farmer

Other types of country paths are identified by the initials: CRF; & RUPPs.

CRF – Combined Road & Footpath – replaced by: RUPPs = Roads Used As Public Paths. These were reclassified in 1971 as: BOAT – Byway Open To All Traffic.

In 2006 Rupp s were re-classified as restricted byways with a purple way marker.

This new class of way, is available to people on foot, horseback, pedal cycle & horse drawn carriage.

By law, all PRoWs should be signed where they leave a road.

Once a PRoW has come into existence it cannot be moved [“diverted”] or closed [“extinguished”] except by formal order.

<The farmer may allow walkers to cross their fields for free, but the bull charges!>

The first provisional Definitive Map for Essex was prepared in 1953. A review map was prepared in 1963 & published in 1970. The Definitive Map & Statements show all the Public Rights of Way {PRoW} in Essex & is a legal document maintained by Essex County Council, ECC. A copy of this map is held by the Town Clerk.

In 1966 the Billericay Society published a Billericay Footpath Map showing & listing all of the footpaths in the countryside & town. Foot paths in the listing: 1,3 – 21, 23, 25-28, 30-31, 33-52,54-65, 67, 69-72, 74, 79, 157, 160, 164, 166, 168, 187, 200, 202.

These are defined in six pages in: Basildon District Definitive Statement for: Billericay dated 01/07/02.

*David Bremner Chairman Billericay Society  
Group walk leader.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To The Billericay Society Committee

My thanks on behalf of the residents of Billericay go to the hardworking and conscientious members of the committee who have supported and helped me over a number of years.

IAN FULLER President, who used to edit the Society Newsletter and as an assistant curator of the Cater Museum introduced me to the potential story of Billericay.

DOUG SMITH Vice-chairman and Safety Marshall, who got things done by his effective communication skills.

JULIE SMITH, treasurer, who controlled our spending, and interfaced with the bank.

LESLEY AND JOHN HUMPHRIES, our membership officers who maintained our members' database  
JOHN also made our walk maps and some exhibition displays.

LYNNE BEARD, our minute secretary who made my committee meetings look organised and very effective at keeping us informed.

MARIAN THILO Social officer who organised our monthly talks programme and helped with the refreshments.

ROBERT REEVES our meet and greet officer who told jokes before the meetings. He also seconded me on some of my later Town Walks.

JANET AND PETER WARREN, JANET was publicity officer. PETER informed us of the names of the flowers in the

countryside and woodlands during our walks. Essential for us ex-townies.

NORMAN TURNER, VICE-PRESIDENT, Who when he was chairman used to lead us on walks through the countryside and woodlands which he called “God’s cathedrals”.

MICHAEL YATES our patient web-master.

My fortnightly walks programme was often attended by up to thirty members of pensionable age.

The ladies particularly appreciated being able to walk in safety in the countryside.

We strolled through the countryside enjoying the many fine views available in Essex, if you know where to find them. We learnt about church architecture and local events that had happened in the past and appreciated the formation of the landscapes. The social pub luncheons after the walks were readily appreciated.



# Lake Meadows

(Recreation Ground)



Public Assistance Institution  
(Essex County Council)  
652 3-121

# BILLERICA

ESTATE OFFICE  
687 4-156

683 Hall 2-270

684 Fire Eng. House 1-550

685 961

686 1-206

687 4-156

688 2-267

689 1-484

690 612

691 911

692 501

693 3-121

694 1-550

695 1-397

696 2-515

697 4-156

698 898

699 1-163

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701 1-080

702 3-197

703 1-298

704 1-087

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