

**Friends  
of the**

*Suffolk  
Record  
Office*

Registered Charity  
No 288042

# Newsletter of the Friends of the Suffolk Record Office

September 2009

## Ipswich Building Society Archive Comes to the Ipswich Record Office



L-R: Margaret Hancock (IBS), Bridget Hanley, Paul Winter (IBS), Louise Clarke and Kate Chantry

Ipswich Building Society Archive and Suffolk Record Office marked a very special occasion on 23 April with the transfer of the Society's extensive historical archive to Suffolk Record Office. The collection is being transferred on a permanent loan basis to make the archives more accessible to the public.

The Ipswich and Suffolk Freehold Land Society was formed in 1849, to become the Ipswich Building Society of today. Paul Winter, Chief Executive, explains "We have an extensive archive containing many items of local interest, which reflect the 160 years the Society has been providing the people of Suffolk and beyond with a safe place to invest their money and the opportunity to buy their own land and property. The transfer to the Record Office means the collection will be accessible to the people of Suffolk".

Most of the material in the archive was rescued in 1988 from two mysterious trunks, which had lain abandoned in the basement of the Society's former head office and branch in Upper Brook Street. The Society is the only one that employs an Archivist to look after what is

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believed to be the best Building Society collection in the country.

The archive features estate plans, ballots, minute books, passbooks, mortgage deeds and many more items, with the majority relating to Ipswich but also land in Felixstowe, Walton, Beccles, Hadleigh, Diss, Stowmarket, Wickham Market, Woodbridge, Framlingham and Lowestoft. In addition, whilst 95% of documents relate to Suffolk, there are references to places as far afield as Barbados. The collection also contains local deeds back to the 17th century.

Record Office staff have worked closely with the Society's Archivist and a volunteer to make this collection more accessible to local people. Once the archive is fully catalogued on the record office computer system visitors will be able to access the wealth of information contained within it on the development of the local area.

The collection is held at the Ipswich branch under the reference GF419. For further details please contact Louise Clarke, the archivist at the Ipswich Record Office.

## Suffolk Record Office Update

### Starters

Angela Houghton joined the cataloguing backlog project team as Cataloguing Archivist in March and is currently working on the Henniker and Cross, Ram and Co. collections. Before coming to Suffolk, she worked on a cataloguing project at Lincoln College, Oxford. Angela is originally from Macclesfield in Cheshire, although at the moment she is enjoying living in sunny Felixstowe.

Stella Colwell also joined the project team in March as the Volunteer Co-ordinator. Her career started as genealogist to Richmond Herald (Norroy and Ulster King) of Arms at the College of Arms, and ended as the first Specialist Reader Advisor in Family and Local History at the National Archives, Kew. In addition to writing 11 books and organising national and international conferences and courses on family history and genealogy Stella also lectures and teaches the subject both here and abroad. Her current special writing and research interests include bigamy in 19<sup>th</sup> century England and Wales and the social and community history of Grasmere in the Lake District.

Steve Harvey joined the Ipswich team of Searchroom Assistants in April. Steve has kindly provided us with a brief resume...

*I took early retirement from EON, formerly Eastern Electricity, in 2004, having worked there since 1971. After 5 years of retirement, my wife decided that she had had enough of me being 'under her feet' and decided that I ought to return to work! As a keen genealogist, when I saw the advertisement for a part-time Searchroom Assistant at the Ipswich Record Office, I knew the job was for me. I have now been here 3 months and am really enjoying the role and the company of my colleagues. Outside of work, and genealogy, my main hobbies/interests include Hadleigh Baptist Church (I am currently Church Treasurer), bird watching, watching the Ipswich Witches (speedway) and watching Hadleigh United (local football). After 26 years of happy married life, I find myself still married, even though my wife had the audacity to send me back to work! Wendy and myself have 2 grown up offspring. My daughter is a Social Worker with Suffolk County Council and my son is currently working as a Carer in a nursing home.*



The January to June season saw another very busy programme of outreach with 28 talks, 2 walks, 6 courses and 25 'find out about' sessions. 577 people attended the series of talks, which included:

*Black Death* by Clive Paine

*The Great Rising of 1381—The Peasants' Revolt* by Dr John Ridgard

*Anatomists and Body Snatchers* by Dr Pat Murrell

*Creating Theatre from Local Sources* by Ivan Cutting

Led by Ivan Bunn, the two walks in Lowestoft and Oulton Broad were very popular. *Rise and Fall of Lowestoft Harbour* on 26 April explored the enthralling history of the growth and decline of Lowestoft harbour, culminating with a visit to the *Lydia Eva* for a guided tour.



Built in 1930 and based in Great Yarmouth, the *Lydia Eva* fished along the East Coast and North Sea for nine years. The Royal Air Force bought her in 1939, using her in a variety of roles until she was laid up in 1969. In 1989 the *Lydia Eva* and Mincarolo Trust was founded to return the *Lydia Eva* to East Anglia and display her in Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft as a museum and memorial to the herring fishery. More information about the *Lydia Eva* and the *Mincarolo* can be found on the Trust's website [http://www.lydiaeva.org.uk/lydia\\_eva\\_history.htm](http://www.lydiaeva.org.uk/lydia_eva_history.htm)

Staff from all branches have attended a number of fairs since March, including the East Anglian Family History Fair, Suffolk Show, Melford Hall Family and Local History Fair, St Edmundsbury Historic Homes Show, Heveningham Hall Craft Fair and the George Ewart Evans celebration event at Blaxhall. Events still to come include the Newmarket Family Fun day on 12 September and the Family History Fair at Debenham on 3 October.

There are 35 talks and walks and 24 'Hands on History' sessions planned for the Autumn season of outreach. Topics for the talks include:

*Ipswich Freehold Land Society*

*Bury's Georgian Assembly House* by Dr Pat Murrell

*Henslow of Hitcham: the Life, Legacy and Influence of Darwin's Tutor* by Edward Martin

*St Edmund*, by Clive Paine

*Royal Naval Patrol Service* by Leo Whisstock

We will also be running a number of 5 and 10 week courses at the Bury and Ipswich Offices. These include:

*Medieval Suffolk Part 2* - Clive Paine

*Elizabethan Suffolk* - Clive Paine

*Medieval Latin Palaeography* (beginners/intermediate and advanced) - Dr John Ridgard

*Suffolk's Landscape History and Society* - Dr Margaret Thomas

*A Gardening Pot-Pourri: 1630-1830* - Dr Pat Murrell

Full details of times, costs and venues are available on the record office website - [www.suffolk.gov.uk/sro](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/sro)



## Cataloguing Backlog Project Report

We are now nearly three months into the Cataloguing Backlog Project that you read about in the last newsletter and so here is an update of what has been happening at the three branches of the Suffolk Record Office.

Angela Haighton was appointed as our new cataloguing archivist, based in Ipswich, and has been in post since 23<sup>rd</sup> March. The initial slip listing of the Henniker collection (HA116) is now complete. With the help of some staff and volunteers a good start has been made at entering the slips into CALM, which is the next stage of the process. Once this has been completed, the collection will be rearranged, renumbered, and then be ready for use. Most of the items in the Henniker collection have also been repackaged to archival standards. This process will also be completed soon with the help of volunteers. Angela has now begun her next collection: Cross Ram Solicitors of Halesworth. She has spent some quality time in the strong rooms checking which parts of the collection have been listed and reboxed and has planned how to tackle the collection. Much of it has already been catalogued on paper slips and the Ipswich searchroom team will be entering these into CALM while Angela tackles the unlisted accessions at Ipswich and Lowestoft.

Stella Colwell, our new volunteer co-ordinator, began on 30<sup>th</sup> March and has been working hard getting volunteers started at all three branches. At Ipswich a group of 5 volunteers have been meeting as a group in the Education Room on Wednesday afternoons since 6 May. They are working on HC479 – the Compair Reavell business collection. All identifiable documents have been sorted. Those in boxes remain to be rearranged under appropriate catalogue sections and series, and catalogued. Where appropriate these documents have been placed in folders and sections remarked in pencil. These and other sorted documents have been described on catalogue slips, but have not yet received catalogue references. Using an existing template, almost every document has been catalogued using the catalogue structure devised by the archivist. At least 220 items have now been cleaned, and assigned their catalogue references. Of these, 2 series have been entered by 2 of the volunteers into CALM. The catalogue slips remain to be fed into the template and work will continue with cleaning and marking up, and CALM inputting.

Two of the volunteers are working on the 19<sup>th</sup> century Henry Miller collection of maps and plans, mainly relating to Suffolk, sorting, and describing them on catalogue slips prior to assigning catalogue numbers and entering them onto CALM.

At Bury St Edmunds a group of 7 volunteers had their first meeting in the Education Room on Tuesday 19 May. They have continued to meet on a weekly basis with support from Stella and Stuart Tyler, the Bury archivist. They are working on GF512, the West Suffolk Oddfellows collection and are currently weeding out duplicates and sorting the records into the individual lodges, which is how the catalogue will be arranged.

At Lowestoft Record Office we have one volunteer so far who began working on 1<sup>st</sup> June on collection 1312, the Board of Trade Marine Maps. She has completed inputting the existing catalogue for part of the collection onto CALM and is now examining the originals to see if she can add details to the description fields.



We have also had three successful parties, one at Bury with 6 of our backlog project volunteers, a tea party at Lowestoft and a lunch party at Ipswich with 16 volunteers, some who work on the backlog project and others who work either in other groups or as individuals.

Bridget Hanley  
Collections Manager

Volunteers at work and at play – John, Judy and Kate at work on the Compair Reavell collection and some Ipswich volunteers and Stella Colwell enjoying the party



*When I saw in the Suffolk Family History Society Suffolk Roots magazine that volunteers were sought, how could I not apply? There must be so much that has been, thankfully, donated to the Record Office and the fact that we are helping make some of this information available to a wider public gives me a great deal of satisfaction.*

*'I find the maps very interesting – totally different to transcribing gravestones for Suffolk Family History Society, but equally mucky!'*

*Project Volunteer*



**The Project Team**

Left to right: Stella Colwell, Bridget Hanley and Angela Haighton



Tea party at Lowestoft with Ruth Silburn, Bill Wexler and the project volunteers



## NADFAS Project at Bury Record Office

Since April 2008, a group of volunteers from the Bury St Edmunds Decorative and Fine Arts Society have been helping to catalogue and care for the Cullum Library held at the Bury Record Office. The Cullum Library is a “gentleman’s library” – a collection of 4000 books on a diverse range of topics including heraldry, botany, theology, palm-reading and paper-making. It has been somewhat underused, as some volumes can only be searched through a card index in the Record Office, and many of the books have experienced a century or more of wear-and-tear.

The first part of the project is to create a new, electronic catalogue of the collection, which can be searched more quickly and easily than the old card index. The group are working to achieve this by recording information about each book on cataloguing template sheets. The information from these sheets can then be inputted into CALM, our electronic collections management system. The second part of the project is the physical conservation of the books. With the guidance of the Record Office Conservator, the group are carrying out a range of preservation treatments: cleaning with an eraser, brush and vacuum, leather dressing and polishing. They are also engaged in repair work – most commonly of the damaged corners of the book covers, and also of torn pages.

There are eight volunteers working on conservation and cataloguing, and a ninth volunteer has recently joined to help with inputting the catalogue sheets into CALM. Altogether the volunteers have put in more than 900 hours of work to date. We now have just over 400 books entered into CALM, and well over a thousand books have received preservation and repair treatment. This is a fantastic achievement which will help ensure the library remains accessible for future generations.

Stuart Tyler  
Archivist, Bury St Edmunds

## Treasurer’s Message

This is a brief summary of the financial position, made before the end of our financial year at the end of July, for those members who will not be able to attend the AGM. We now have 199 members of the Friends, an increase of 76 in 5 years. Our income from subscriptions has increased again and was £2200 by the end of June. Over £1600 has been received in donations, and total income this year is more than £4400. A budget of £1000 was assigned to communicating with members mostly through the newsletters, and the rest of the funds are devoted to the purchase of documents and special projects.

As you know the main item of expenditure this year has been £3855 for the purchase of the Shrubland Collection. Another £300 has been spent on cataloguing the Tayler & Green archive and balances at the bank at the end of June were £7280. The continuing sharp rises in prices of documents makes it vital to build up a fund, so that we can compete at auction. Part of our funds are already committed, for example to the Oral History project, but we now have a fund of about £5000 available for future document purchases.

Anyone who wishes to receive the full financial report following the AGM in September should contact the Treasurer. Email communication will be preferred for cost reasons (email: [julie.craven@btopenworld.com](mailto:julie.craven@btopenworld.com)), but my postal address can be found on the back page.

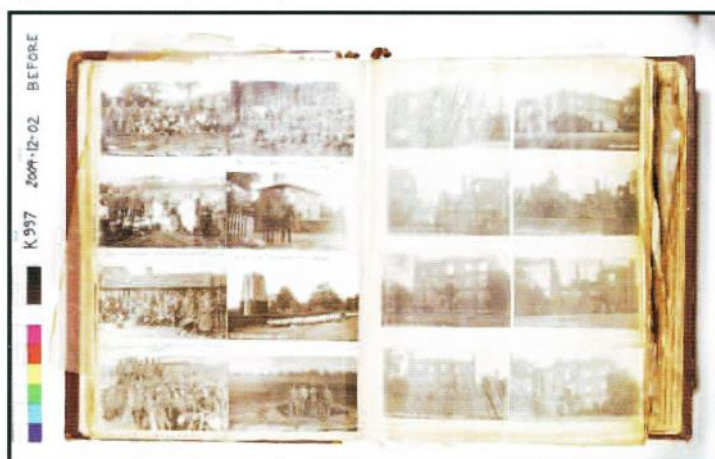
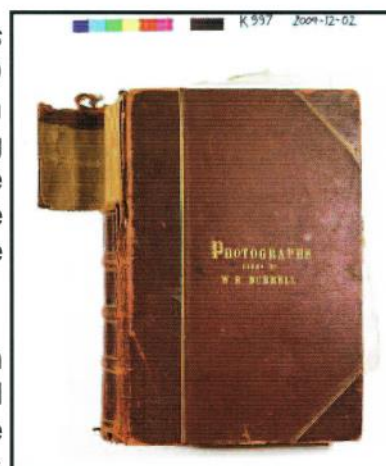
Julie Craven, Hon. Treasurer



## Walton Burrell Photographic Album

The conservation work on photograph album K997 "*Photographs taken by W. R. Burrell*" deposited at the Record Office by FOSRO in 2000 was completed this Spring. Damaged on purchase in 2000, the album was disbound in late 2004 and catalogued during 2005. During the cataloguing process many images from the album were scanned for reproduction - the main reason for the disbinding. In 2008 conservation work started to re-assemble the pages into album form.

There are slightly more than 130 album leaves or 260 pages with photographs adhered. The photographs are closely-packed and on most pages extend almost to the edges; most pages have extensive annotations. The book presented a number of problems and stretched our skills encouraging exploration of new techniques. All pages had many micro-cracks around the edges, resulting from the handling of pages that had embrittled with age. The album has been re-bound as two bindings (it was clearly originally assembled from two or even three separate albums) following its earlier pattern and colour scheme.



A full report detailing the conservation techniques used can be found on the FOSRO pages of the record office website:  
[www.suffolk.gov.uk/LeisureAndCulture/LocalHistoryAndHeritage/SuffolkRecordOffice/Friends/](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/LeisureAndCulture/LocalHistoryAndHeritage/SuffolkRecordOffice/Friends/)

Dominic Wall ACR  
Conservator

### FOSRO Goes Green!

The Friends are looking at ways of becoming more environmentally friendly and would be interested in knowing if any members would be happy to receive newsletters and AGM papers by email, rather than paper copies. Moving to email correspondence would also have a positive impact on our budget as it would reduce printing and postage costs, therefore allowing more money to be spent on purchases and projects. If any member is interested please contact the Secretary by email - [Judith.Stephenson@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Judith.Stephenson@suffolk.gov.uk)



## Suffolk Record Office Contact Details

For any queries or comments about the Friends please contact the secretary or treasurer.

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Website address: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/sro>

## FOSRO Purchases

With the exception of the Shrubland Hall Photographic Collection the Friends have not purchased any documents over the last year. Over the last few years the committee has placed bids for various documents at auctions but has not been successful, despite an agreement to offer more than the guide price. One example that came up for auction in the spring was a Landgirl's photograph album. This had a guide price of £70 but actually sold for £300.

The Suffolk Record Office is notified of auction lots by The National Archives but is aware from anecdotal evidence that material is sold on eBay. It has been agreed by the Friends committee that it would be useful if the site could be monitored. We are therefore appealing to any Friends who are eBay users to see if they would be interested in monitoring the material available and letting the committee know of any exciting lots!

If anyone is interested please get in touch with the Secretary for an initial discussion.

## Membership and Subscriptions

Members are reminded that subscriptions fall due each year on 1<sup>st</sup> January and must be paid by the end of the calendar year. The minimum subscription is £12 for Individual/Family membership and £20 for Corporate membership. Cheques should be made payable to the *Friends of the Suffolk Record Office* and sent to either the Secretary or the Treasurer, whose address details are above.