



Registered Charity  
No 288042

# Newsletter of the Friends of Suffolk Record Office

April 2013

## Chairman's Letter

It's been a busy few months. The question of how to provide for the Record Office in the new era at the County Council is starting to take form as a Suffolk Heritage Strategic Forum debates the way forward for the whole of the Heritage sector. Vic Gray, a committee member, and I are attending this as representatives according to our other commitments and are impressed with the enthusiasm of some of the other partner organisations, all of whom value the contribution of the Record Office as a bedrock of any heritage offering in the county. There is still the basic assumption that one 'high tech' heritage centre housing the three branches is the way to present the multitude of archival material the Record Office holds but this will depend on costs of the project and a firm commitment to ensure that local access to the holdings across the county will be provided in some sensible form. We are lucky that Vic Gray is serving FOSRO in this way, with his experience of a related scheme in his previous role as County Archivist in Essex.

Elsewhere you will see evidence of the committee's work in reaching out to those in Suffolk who have items that may be of interest to the Record Office unbeknown to their relations and executors, and also the encouragement of the 'last gift' to the Friends by way of a legacy. The presentation of this material has highlighted to me the need for someone with expertise in publicity to join the committee, or at least be willing to advise on specific projects.

Other committee members are spearheading a campaign to make many of the leaders and high profile figures in the county aware of the wonders in the Record Office and to encourage them to support our work in FOSRO in a variety of ways. For those who have joined FOSRO as a result of this campaign, a warm welcome!

We continue to seek to purchase items that come onto the market which will enhance the collections, whilst being aware that same market in written artefacts is to a certain extent fuelled by this. We have kept clear of purchases of court rolls in particular and are disappointed too in some vendors splitting up archives to obtain a better price overall. But we have had some good acquisitions and some of these are featured in the newsletter. A very new addition is some papers relating to the Stonham Brewery which still have to be assessed by Record Office staff. Thank you for your support which makes this all possible.

*Paul Simmons  
Chairman*

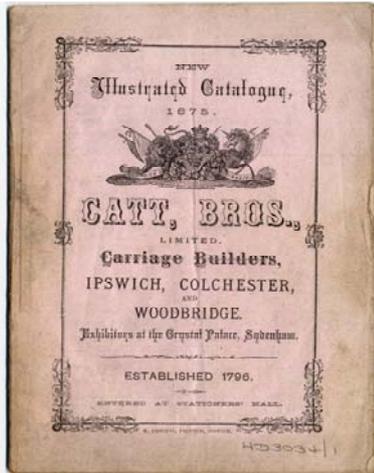
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## Recent Purchases

### Catt Bros. Ltd. Trade Catalogue (Ipswich Record Office)

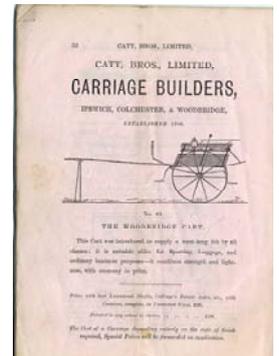
In January FOSRO purchased a trade catalogue for Catt Bros. Ltd, Carriage Builders of Ipswich, Colchester and Woodbridge. The 'New Illustrated Catalogue for 1875' neatly fills a gap in the holdings of Ipswich Record Office, complementing two other carriage builder catalogues of later dates, Bennett & Sons 1886 and W. T. & S. E. Botwood, post 1896.



Background research into the firm of Catt Bros. has revealed a link between these three firms and the story of their development running parallel with the rise of the motor car and the decline of the horse drawn carriage.

The Catt Bros. catalogue proudly states the firm was established in 1796. White's directory of 1844 lists 10 coach builders in Ipswich, including William Catt based in St Matthews Street and Henry Bennett in St Clements Street. The catalogue also tells us that the firm were 'exhibitors at Crystal Palace, Sydenham'. This does not appear to have been at the Great Exhibition of 1851 (they are not listed in the official catalogue) but a lesser trade event which would still hopefully sound impressive to potential customers in Suffolk and Essex.

William Samuel Robert Catt, son of William senior, married Annie Elizabeth, the daughter of Henry Frederick Leverett, gent, in 1865 and the couple quickly started a family with 4 children being present in the Burlington Road household on census night in 1871. However the 1881 census listings show Annie Elizabeth living in Walton (not listed as a widow) with eight children and two servants but no William. It transpires that the business had been in trouble and William had taken chances to try and stave off bankruptcy. A report in the *Ipswich Journal* on the 4<sup>th</sup> January 1881 reported that:



*William Samuel Robert Catt coachbuilder was charged with stealing £53 4s 6d the monies of Rev. S R Carter of Brantham....he was induced to receive this money he having urgent necessities for his wife and family....The Bench sentenced prisoner to three months' imprisonment with hard labour.....*

Catt Bros. as a business was wound up by March 1882 with their large carriage works covering 47-51 St Matthews Street being taken over by a Mr Botwood.

William Botwood had briefly been in partnership with Henry Bennett in the 1860s in the firm of Bennett & Botwood. As an engineer he had 'considerable talent having invented and patented more improvements in carriages than any other manufacturer'.

By 1875 he had set up on his own and in 1893 he moved from the showrooms in St Matthews Street to purpose built ones in Carr Street. His first and third sons continued the business after his death in 1896 and saw it become 'one of the earliest companies in Suffolk to be involved in motoring, and also one of the largest'.



At the beginning of the new century the Botwoods joined forces with one Reggie Egerton to form Botwood & Egerton. Reggie's brother Hubert joined forces in Norwich with another coachbuilder called Gerard Mann to form the successful company of Mann Egerton.

Louise Kennedy, Ipswich Archivist

*We are grateful to Dr John Blatchly for bringing this item to our attention.*

### Other Purchases

The committee have considered a number of other items since the last newsletter. Some of the material has reached amounts beyond the reserve deemed suitable by the committee but they have been successful with four collections , including :

Beeden family of Marlesford (HC490/16544, Ipswich Record Office)

This is a comprehensive and unprecedented archive of a family firm of builders spanning the period 1795-1928. The daily work books, commercial diaries, estimate books, note books, accounts and poor rate collection books offer an invaluable source of information about the progress and advancement of the building trade and the local history of Marlesford and the surrounding area. Several FOSRO members and the Wickham Market Local History Society generously contributed towards the purchase of this collection.

Diary of Sarah French (HD3232/15283, Bury Record Office)

Sarah was the daughter of Thomas Eagle, wife of Robert Blanch French, school-master, sister-in-law of William French, schoolmaster and artist. It covers the period 1833 to 1885 and records local events at Woolpit, Little Thurlow, Bury, Lowestoft, Sturmer in Essex and travel to London, the West Country and Wales.

Suffolk Yeomanry volume (HD3421/15354, Bury Record Office)

This relates to the 1st Troop of Suffolk Loyal Yeomanry Cavalry commanded by Capt Philip Bennet of Rougham and covers the period 1831 to 1868. It includes registers of officers and privates, lists of numbers of days exercised whilst not on permanent duty and the numbers of arms in the possession of the troop including swords, new swords, carbines, cloaks etc.

Stonham Brewery papers (awaiting accessioning)

This collection includes cashbook, documents, letters and receipts, 1835-1860 as well as a bundle of 1860s documents including letters to tenants, accounts and legal correspondence.

The August newsletter will include articles on the Suffolk Yeomanry volume and the Stonham Brewery collection.

### Membership and Subscriptions

Members are reminded that subscriptions fall due each year on 1<sup>st</sup> January. 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 the Secretary at the Bury St Edmunds branch.

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

One-stop gateway to Suffolk Record Office catalogues and Suffolk's heritage collections - [www.suffolkheritagedirect.org.uk](http://www.suffolkheritagedirect.org.uk)

For any queries or comments about the Friends please contact the secretary at the Bury Record Office or by email at [judith.stephenson@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:judith.stephenson@suffolk.gov.uk)

### Appeal for Volunteers - Cautley and Barefoot Architects' Collection

Suffolk Record Office has received a grant from the *National Cataloguing Grants Programme for Archives* to catalogue this large collection of donated architects' papers, plans, specifications, photographs, brochures etc. It records the work of the partnerships of Cautley and Barefoot and Peter Barefoot and Partners from 1898-1994 and is crucial to understanding the architectural character of Suffolk in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The cataloguing is now underway and Hilary, the project archivist is making excellent progress. We are looking for a volunteer or volunteers to help with inputting her cataloguing slips into the CALM database, for which full training will be given. If you are interested please contact Bridget Hanley, Collections Manager on 01473 263914 or by email [Bridget.Hanley@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Bridget.Hanley@suffolk.gov.uk)

### Christmas Tree Festival, St Mary le Tower Church, Ipswich

Once again the Friends exhibited a tree at the St Mary le Tower festival at the end of November. The decorations for the 2012 tree were created by record office volunteers and showed images and documents portraying the local events and celebrations for the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II and The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.



Over 600 people paid to visit the festival, plus another 600 were present at the other special events. Bridget Hanley, Collections Manager, was asked to speak at the Festival Songs of Praise (a similar format to the TV programme) about the work of the record office, including FOSRO.

Thank you to the volunteers for creating the decorations.

