

Newsletter of the Friends of the Suffolk Record Office

September 2006

Corder Appeal Reception at Endeavour House



Following the success of the appeal to raise £72,000 to purchase Joan Corder's collection of heraldic manuscripts, a reception was held at Endeavour House to thank all those who contributed. The above photograph was taken at the event and shows Margaret Stattham, Chairman of the Friends of Suffolk Record Office, Gwyn Thomas, Senior Archivist, Dr John Blatchly and County Councillor Jeremy Pembroke, Leader of Suffolk County Council.

Various items from the collection were available for contributors to examine and all agreed that it was a most interesting collection.

The collection, reference HD2418, is now housed in the Ipswich branch of the Suffolk Record Office. A typed catalogue compiled by Dr Blatchly is available in the searchroom, and will shortly be made more widely accessible through the Access to Archives website, <http://www.a2a.org.uk>.

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Suffolk Record Office News

Starters and Leavers

There have been two new arrivals at Suffolk Record Office since the last newsletter. Emma Sealy joined the Lowestoft branch as the Public Service Manager in June 2006 and has kindly provided us with a brief resume...

I have trained as an archaeologist through the University of Cape Town. I also have an MPhil in educational archaeology, which means that I specialised in sharing knowledge of the past with school pupils and teachers by designing and running archaeology programmes for them. I found it exciting explaining excavation methods to children and then observing them put them into practice. They made sure that their peers did exactly what they were supposed to do! This is why I was attracted to the position at the Record Office; I enjoy working with the public and providing them with information about our heritage. To me it is important to encourage an interest in the past and in the preservation of artefactual, documentary or oral sources of information. I hope to do this in a small way through my work.

We are also very happy to announce that Jayne Austin, the Heritage Information Manager, and her husband, Danny, have had a little boy. Troy was born on 13.10pm on Wednesday 14th June, weighing in at 7.5lbs. He has already visited the Ipswich branch and we hope to see Jayne back in the New Year.

Chloe Veale, formerly Public Service Manager at the Lowestoft branch, left on 28 February after a busy eleven months during which she oversaw an intensive programme of outreach work, notably the Sea Heroes exhibition and Archive Awareness Campaign, and new income generation projects, as well as supervising the busy Searchroom. She made many new friends and contacts for the Record Office among the heritage community and media in the region. She has returned to her former post at the History of Advertising Trust, Raveningham, where she is currently organising the move to a new repository.

Outreach and other activities

The three branches of the Suffolk Record Office have been very busy over the last six months running workshops, successful lecture series and preparing activities for the autumn. Further details about talks, workshops, walks and exhibitions can be found on pages 4 and 5.

Once again Suffolk Record Office has been involved in filming the new *Who Do You Think You Are* series and there will be several record office events to tie in with the broadcasting of the series in the autumn. See pages 4 and 5 for further details.



Interesting new accessions

Ipswich

As many of you may know Ipswich Borough Council will soon be moving from its offices in Civic Centre to Grafton House, a new building opposite Endeavour House. This has resulted in a number of new accessions being received at the Ipswich branch. These records include Building control plans and registers 1912-1980s; valuation lists; evidences of title to Borough properties; sewerage, bridge and highway plans 18th - 20th century; plans and photographs of various developments in Ipswich in the 20th century; street numbering books 1880s onwards. The volume of material received means that it may take some time to list all the documents and make them available to the public.

Bury St Edmunds

The archive of the Suffolk Regiment, which is held on deposit at the Bury St Edmunds office from the Trustees of the Regimental Museum, is perhaps the single most popular collection at the branch. It is surprising how many of our users had relations or earlier ancestors who served in the '12th of Foot', either in the World Wars or in smaller campaigns like the Boer War and the Malayan emergency of the 1950s.

In August an important addition to the collection was received. The Ministry of Defence has distributed to regimental museums runs of the relevant 'Army Book 358'; these are registers of all the men who joined the Regiment from the introduction of Army Numbers in 1919 to the end of World War 2. In addition the first two volumes contain details of many men who had served in the regiment during the Great War - information which is not easy to find elsewhere. The volumes have been catalogued, under the reference GB554/A16/52/1-33 - and each volume has an index.

Lowestoft

An interesting collection was recently deposited by Halesworth Rural District Council. It includes tuberculosis records for the period 1921-1973 which will show the former prevalence of the disease and the impact of penicillin. However, these records are closed for 100 years so we will have to wait to find out what new information they can tell us about the disease. The office also received a recipe book compiled by the members of Lowestoft parish church in 1906, reference number 1745.



Building Works

Ipswich

Unfortunately we are not in a position to provide exact dates for the project but we think the work will take place in the Autumn/Winter. The project has a number of different elements. When the Ipswich Record Office opened in 1990 it was a state of the art facility, but changes in national standards and experience gained from the Norwich Fire mean we need to improve our premises to keep up with current best practise. We plan to install an automatic Nitrogen Argon gaseous fire suppression and extinguishing system in both strong rooms, a CCTV monitoring system, and improved flood prevention measures. A new air-conditioning system will also be installed in the strongroom. We aim to keep service disruption to a minimum, but there may be times when we are unable to produce documents from one strongroom, or part of a strongroom. We will keep customers informed of developments and introduce, where possible, a system for advanced ordering of documents and local studies books. If customers have any particular requirements, i.e. a tight publication deadline they should contact Pauline Taylor, Public Service Manager on 01473 584542 to discuss them.

Bury St Edmunds

The cupola on the top of the building will be replaced during the autumn. There will probably be one day of disrupted service at the beginning of September while scaffolders rig a platform over the stairwell so that the upstairs searchroom and offices can be used during the removal and reconstruction of the cupola. The actual work will be done from scaffolding on the roof of the building, so apart from some noise the project should not impact too greatly on the running of the office. Until work gets underway to remove the existing structure we will not know how long the project will last. At the end of the project there will be another day of disruption while the scaffolding is removed.

If you are planning to visit either branch at any point during the next six months we do suggest that you contact the branch to see what the situation is. Contact details for the branches are available on page 6. Details of any planned disruption will also be made available through the Suffolk Record Office website: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/sro>

Optelec Magnifying Machines

The Suffolk Record Office has recently purchased three magnifying machines. These have the ability to magnify text and images by fifty times the original size. Although these are primarily designed for the visually impaired, there are many benefits for those of us using older documents. The Friends very kindly contributed £600 to allow the record office to buy the advanced version of the machine. This has a number of useful features, including the ability to use guidelines and blinds so that a specific line can be concentrated on, and the technology to allow a computer to be linked to the viewer. The machines have been available for use for some months now and have been incredibly useful for both staff and the public.



The Ipswich Caribbean Experience and Suffolk Record Office

The ICE Project was created in order to provide Ipswich and the local area with a greater understanding of its own multicultural aspects. Through capturing personal accounts of 25 individuals who experienced migration from the Caribbean to Suffolk, the ICE Project provides a valuable and lasting insight into the feelings, thoughts and memories of those people who took the first step. Suffolk Record Office was involved with the project from the start as we were very keen that this important part of Ipswich's History is captured and preserved for future generations. The archive of the project will be housed at Ipswich Record Office and will include voice recorded interviews on CD, transcripts of the unedited filmed interview, transcripts of the filmed interview (offline edit), the above transcripts on CD or floppy disc, 25 edited filmed interviews on DVD, project documentation including photos on CD.



Photograph of reminiscence session at Ipswich Record Office.
Reproduced with kind permission of the Ipswich Caribbean Association

Some of the elders who have been interviewed visited the Ipswich Record Office for a very enjoyable reminiscence session. They looked at directories, photographs and local newspapers, which all helped to get the memories flooding back. The staff who captured the memories on film had training sessions in digitising and workshops looking at the local history sources available to provide background information for the interviewers and to illustrate the interviews. Among these is the recently deposited Crane business archive; Crane's employed many of the early immigrants during the 1950s and 1960s. The researchers have also used Oral History Tapes, newspapers and newspaper cuttings, maps, directories, parish magazines and photographs to build up a picture of life in Ipswich when the immigrants arrived.

As part of the dissemination of the projects findings there are interactive touch screen kiosks. These show the viewer the 25 edited interviews on DVD. One of these is housed at Ipswich Record Office during the project and beyond.

Bridget Hanley, Public Service Archivist



Forthcoming Events

Coffee and Cake Lectures

All coffee and cake lectures cost £5 and should be booked in advance by telephoning the relevant branch, see page 8 for contact details.

Suffolk bricks and brickworks - an interesting heritage to discover, Roger Kennell
10am on Saturday 30th September at Ipswich Record Office

Carry on up the Stour, Clive Paine
10.30am on Saturday 7th October at Bury St Edmunds Record Office
2pm on Saturday 7th October at Bury St Edmunds Record Office
2pm on Friday 3rd November at Ipswich Record Office

Trees and Woodlands in 18th Century Suffolk, Margaret Thomas
10am on Saturday 7th October at Ipswich Record Office

Edible and Inedible Documents, Pat Murrell
10.30am on Saturday 14th October at Bury St Edmunds Record Office

Humphry Repton, Clive Paine
10.30am on Saturday 21st October at Bury St Edmunds Record Office

Champaign and Woodland - The Making of the Suffolk Landscape, Edward Martin
10.30am on Saturday 28th October at Bury St Edmunds Record Office

Nowton Country Park, Clive Paine
10.30am on Saturday 11 November at Bury St Edmunds Record Office

Who Do You Think You Are lecture, Clive Paine
2pm on Friday 10 November at Ipswich Record Office
10.30am on Saturday 18 November at Bury St Edmunds Record Office
10.30am on Saturday 2nd December at Bury St Edmunds Record Office

Neighbourhood and Community: Recovering the lives of the poor in Victorian Ipswich and re-constructing the urban environment, Frank Grace
10am on Saturday 18 November at Ipswich Record Office

Ickworth House and Park, Clive Paine
10.30am on Saturday 25th November at Bury St Edmunds Record Office

Hawstead Place and Hardwick House, Clive Paine
10.30am on Saturday 9th December at Bury St Edmunds Record Office

Woodland and Neighbourhood: Suffolk's medieval parks in context, Rosemary Hoppitt
10am on Saturday 16th December at Ipswich Record Office



Exhibitions

Exhibition on the history of the Angel Hotel

Saturday 9th September at the Angel Hotel, Bury St Edmunds

Boats and Boatbuilding : An exhibition of boat builders tools

10.30am to 12.30pm on Saturday 7th October at Lowestoft Record Office

Mini display looking at Humphry Repton's work at Livermere and the gardens and parklands at Nowton and Ickworth

October to December at Bury St Edmunds Record Office

Workshops

All workshops cost £10.00, except for the Internet workshops which cost £5.00. This year the following topics will be covered

- Family History, part 1 and 2
- Property History, part 1 and 2
- Palaeography, part 1 and 2
- Nonconformist Ancestors, part 1
- Tracing Military Ancestors in the Suffolk Regiment
- Family History on the Internet

For details about the workshops please contact any of the branches or have a look on the website, see page 8 for all contact details.

Lowestoft Record Office will be holding a "Paint your neighbourhood and share your drawings of your neighbourhood" family workshop and exhibition on Sunday 15 October from 11am to 1pm. For further details about the day please contact the Lowestoft Record Office.

Guided Walks

"Events, occupants and buildings in the Great Churchyard", Clive Paine

10am on Saturday 9 September at Bury St Edmunds Record Office

Includes refreshments at St Mary's Church

"Heritage on Your doorstep walks—exploring the cultural influence of the Freehold Land Society", Margaret Hancock

10am, 12pm and 2pm on Saturday 9 September at Ipswich Record Office

"From witches to schoolyards. An exploration of Lowestoft's historic buildings and their occupants", Ivan Bunn

1.30pm on Sunday 10 September at Lowestoft Record Office

1.30pm on Sunday 17 September at Lowestoft Record Office

All walks will cost £5 and will need to be booked in advance by telephoning the relevant branch.



Suffolk Record Office Contact Details

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

The Secretary

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Recently purchased manuscripts

The Friends recently bid on four lots of manorial records. Unfortunately one of the bids was not successful but they were able to purchase various documents relating to Sweffling Campsey, Westleton and Thelnetham. The Sweffling Campsey and Westleton documents have been deposited at the Ipswich branch and consist of two court books for the Manor of Sweffling Campsey with Snape Campsey, 1678-1739 and two court books for the Manor of Westleton cum Membris, 1695-1744. Their reference number is HD2435/14115.

The Manor of Thelnetham Rectory documents consist of court and minute books covering the period 1720-1920. They have been given the reference number HD2786/13419 and are deposited at the Bury St Edmunds branch. The Suffolk Record Office is very grateful to the Friends for purchasing these items and depositing them in Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds. There will be the opportunity to look at these records at the AGM in September.

Volunteering Opportunities at Suffolk Record Office

The Suffolk Record Office would like to take the opportunity to invite the Friends to participate more actively in the actual work of the Suffolk Record Office. This may involve assisting staff with repackaging documents, indexing archives, newspapers, fiche and film, inputting data into the computerised system... The list is almost endless!

If anyone would be interested in volunteering please contact the Secretary who will make any necessary arrangements.