



Registered Charity  
No 288042

# Newsletter of the Friends of Suffolk Record Office

August 2012

## Chairman's Letter

You'll find a lot of interesting material in this issue and I hope that you enjoy reading it. The Lord Tollemache as Lord Lieutenant is *ex officio* our President as his official role includes being *custos rotulorum*, the keeper of the County's records, which has been vested in that office since 1836. In practice the records were kept by the Clerk of the Peace who was appointed by the *custos rotulorum* until 1888 with the passing of the Local Government Act in that year. Clerks of the Peace disappeared in 1971 with the Courts Act.

As Chairman of the Friends, I was invited by the Lord Lieutenant's Office to the Civic Service in St Edmundsbury Cathedral to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of HM The Queen on 27<sup>th</sup> May which I attended, and to the Sandringham Garden Party on 12 June. I was delighted that Kate Chantry and Margaret Statham were able to take up that invitation and we are all grateful to Lord Tollemache for remembering FOSRO.

We were sorry to hear that Beryl Sims had been unwell and had decided that she must cut down her workload so we are in need of a treasurer again. Beryl has done marvellous work on the committee and with the accounts in the short time she was with us and we shall miss her much. If you feel that you could help us, please get in touch with the Secretary to discuss the commitment.

You will read elsewhere of our successes in the sale room, and also the fact that the committee had to turn down opportunities because of limited funds. We always need donations toward purchases and I have no compunction in writing to members and parish councils who are in areas relating to possible acquisitions to beg for money. That local involvement really engages with our work for the county. Please be generous if you can!

*Paul Simmons*  
Chairman

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## Suffolk Record Office Update

### Starters and Leavers

All three branches are currently going through the process of recruitment, mainly to ensure that the Record Office has a sufficiently large and well-trained pool of staff to cover holidays and absences. Details of the new members of staff will be included in the next newsletter.

However, we were sorry to say goodbye to Brenda Gower, a Searchroom Assistant at the Lowestoft branch. Brenda retired at the end of June, having worked at Lowestoft for over twelve years. Fortunately she has chosen to stay on as a relief member of staff. We were also very happy to be able to appoint Helen Band as her permanent replacement. Helen started work as a relief Searchroom Assistant in December.

### Outreach

Once again all three branches have had a very busy six months of outreach events, reaching new audiences as well as existing users. Ipswich Record Office held a very successful Open Day on 14 April. Over 140 people attended, 24 of whom were new to the office. Margaret Hancock of Ipswich Building Society led guided walks for adults and children wishing to learn more about the development of the streets around the Record Office, including the Bramford and Norwich Road areas. The Friends held another book sale which raised £178. One of the highlights of the day was a film show 'Just for a Laugh' compiled from footage held at the East Anglian Film Archive (EAFA). A successful HLF bid allowed the EAFA to digitise a number of their films and enable greater access by providing partners with laptops and projectors. The laptop is preloaded and allows us to compile our own film shows. The autumn outreach programme includes 3 free film shows at the Ipswich and Lowestoft branches - see our website for further details.

Staff from the Bury and Lowestoft offices were at the *Great British Story* event at Ickworth House on Sunday 19 May. Over 2000 people attended the event. Themes on the day included Family names, Place names, Hidden landscapes, Local history and Archaeology. The Record Office created a game where members of the public had to match the modern place name to the older, more unknown name. This was very popular and tested everyone's knowledge, including the staff.

### Roy Hudd Music Hall Archive

Ipswich Record Office is supporting a group of volunteers based at Suffolk New College to organise, catalogue, and preserve the unique collection of Music Hall and Variety song sheets, acts, programmes, posters and associated audio and video materials owned by the Suffolk based actor, performer and historian Roy Hudd. This project is funded by an HLF grant, led by Oakmere Solutions Ltd and directed by Suffolk New College. It will use the archive to show how people found comfort and solidarity in laughter, story and music before the age of television and create a programme of community, educational and performance activities and an exhibition.

The record office has already provided appraisal advice and training in handling, basic listing, numbering and packing and is ordering conservation grade packaging materials for the collection.

## A Sporting Chance

### A survey of sports records in Suffolk during the Olympic Year

We are delighted to have the support of Professor Bill Tancred MBE, Chair of Suffolk Sport and a double Olympian, in encouraging local sporting organisations to let the record office know what archives they hold and to deposit them so everyone can “look back at the sporting landscape of Suffolk and see how it has developed and evolved over the years” and ensure they are “preserved for generations to come”. The objectives of the survey are to:

- further our knowledge of the records of sports clubs and organisations across Suffolk
- direct the record office outreach policy to an area not previously explored, reaching people of all ages and from all backgrounds
- make links with sports communities and raise these groups’ awareness of their records, the importance of recording and preserving these unique and irreplaceable archives and sharing them with others
- make sports groups more aware of the services the record office can provide
- enable the record office to extend its services to sports communities in Suffolk

The survey has resulted in several interesting deposits including: Sudbury Rowing Club, 1883-2009; Suffolk Cricket League, 1969-2003 and Ipswich and District Table Tennis League, 1958-2012.

We are also hoping local organisations, communities and individuals will send in programmes, leaflets, posters, photographs etc of events and activities held in the county as part of the Olympics, Paralympic and Cultural Olympiad to create a Suffolk Olympic Legacy Archive.

For further details please contact Hilary Ritchie, the Project Archivist at [Hilary.Ritchie@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Hilary.Ritchie@suffolk.gov.uk).

## Royal Jubilee Celebrations

As the country prepared to celebrate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, we were able to look back at how Suffolk marked past royal events using the archives preserved in the record office. The celebration of the Sovereign's jubilee began in the reign of King George III. All branches of the Suffolk Record Office had small displays of archives showing how previous royal jubilees were celebrated. The archives show how these celebrations have evolved as society changed – better public transport, cars, radio and television have all had an impact. There was a great deal of interest in the Jubilee material, including a two page article in the *Lowestoft Journal*.

We are therefore planning to add to the existing archives by collecting photographs, programmes etc from across the county of this year's celebrations for the use of future generations. Information on how local people can help the Record Office to capture a contemporary archive on how Suffolk celebrated the Diamond Jubilee is now available on our website <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/libraries-and-culture/culture-and-heritage/suffolk-record-office/diamond-jubilee-celebrations/>

### Manorial Documents Register - project update and appeal for volunteers

The MDR Project for Suffolk has been awarded an extension to April 2014, enabling the next tranche of work to be completed, for which further volunteer assistance will be required. Work will now focus on verifying and expanding catalogue descriptions of documents. Volunteers have already started work on listing the contents of bundles of stewards' papers. The next task will be to investigate runs of manorial court records to ensure that they do not contain chronological gaps. Records in some catalogues are described in terms of a chronological run of records (eg court books, 1700-1920); the revision of the MDR requires these documents to be searched for gaps of longer than five years.

By right a lord of the manor could hold a court for his local tenants. This was the court baron which was held every three or four weeks by the late medieval period. The court baron was primarily concerned with upholding the customs of the particular manor by regulating land tenure and enforcing payment of dues and performance of services owed by the tenants to the lord. Many manorial lords also had the right to hold a court leet which was usually held every six months and had a judicial function, although in practice the functions of the court baron and court leet were not always distinct.

During the early sixteenth century the court baron and court leet were still thriving institutions, but the gradual decline of copyhold tenure and the appropriation of many of the judicial responsibilities of the court leet by other authorities rendered manorial courts less distinctive and useful, and meetings were held more intermittently as a result. Paul Harvey suggests that, after the late sixteenth century, manorial courts either ceased to meet or 'degenerated into mere jollifications or antiquarian play-acting'. By the nineteenth century it may have been the case that much of the business that should have been dealt with by the court baron was transacted by solicitors. That is not to say that the records which survive for the latter period do not yield important information; the court baron continued to record land transactions which are valuable for researching the local history of landholding patterns and migration.



Tudor rose, taken from a Haverhill court roll, 1600  
SROB/E7/26/1

Historians require a complete run of records in order to undertake comparative studies between manors and regions, and will use the MDR to identify unbroken series of records. For the medieval period the main concern is to detect missing membranes from court rolls which have not been noted on the record office catalogue entry; for the later period the main task will be to identify the intervals between courts.

If you would like to volunteer to undertake date checking of court rolls/books the MDR Project Officer would be pleased to hear from you. The documents were written in Latin up to 1733, so we would be particularly grateful for assistance from anyone with some Latin and palaeography skills.

Gemma Field MDR Project Officer (Suffolk)  
[Gemma.Field@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Gemma.Field@suffolk.gov.uk) 01284 741205

### Queen's Diamond Jubilee Garden Party



It was a great honour for Kate and I to represent the Friends at the Diamond Jubilee Garden Party on 12 June and it proved to be a very enjoyable occasion. It was raining as we left Bury St Edmunds, with a quantity of alternative clothing to enable us to cope with whatever the weather might throw at us. Fortunately the rain soon stopped, and we even saw the sun!

Kate had booked a table for us at Congham Hall County Hotel where we had an excellent lunch in pleasant surroundings. The hotel, in normal times, is only about ten minutes drive away from Sandringham, but as we found ourselves in a queue as soon as we left the hotel, it took longer that day.

Eventually we parked and walked through a lot of the park into the gardens - very good exercise for us. Tea was served from two marquees, in front of which there were some tables and chairs. Guests had been asked to vacate chairs when they had finished tea but that didn't happen and neither of us got a chance to sit down! Though there were 4,000 guests, 2,000 from Norfolk and 2,000 from Suffolk, there was never any sense of being crowded. I discovered afterwards that a number of people I knew were there although I didn't spot them. Kate met her brother and his friend to whom we chatted from time to time.



The tea was very good, especially some tiny tartlets with chocolate and a raspberry on top. We explored the gardens until at about four o'clock the Union flag came down and the Royal Standard took its place. I did see the Queen's hat as she came down the steps. We found a place in one of the 'avenues' which formed themselves, hoping that the Queen would come our way. She did not, but we had a splendid view of the Duke of York.

The afternoon ended with the Royal Marines beating the retreat on the terrace, after which the Queen and the Duke left, and we made our way back to the car. Kate had a flask of coffee and some deliciously chocolaty confection which helped to warm us up before we set off back to Suffolk. We both thought it was a very enjoyable event, and came home feeling very British. We would like to thank Lord Tollemache, our President, for giving us the opportunity to attend such a special event.

Margaret Statham  
FOSRO Committee



There then follows an account of the first few months for the family in Australia with the account finishing in March 1840 and transcripts of letters to his "dear Father, Mother, Brothers and Sisters". Although the family left Melton back in August they would appear to have originated from Hollesley. A look at the parish registers uncovers the following events

Marriage	13 October 1829 of George Head and Mary Ann Wolton
Baptism	3 Apr 1831 of Elsa daughter of George and Mary Ann Head, servant
Baptism	26 May 1833 of Mary Ann daughter, as above, labourer
Baptism	19 Apr 1836 of Eliza daughter, as above, servant
Baptism	9 May 1837 of William son, as above, servant
Baptism	3 Jun 1838 of Ellen daughter, as above, servant
Burial	17 Sep 1838 of William son, as above.

George talks about the Commissioners allowance of food they were given for the journey so it is probable the family were assisted in their passage by the Poor Law Commissioners from Melton Workhouse.

Louise Kennedy  
Archivist, Ipswich Record Office

### Recent Purchases

The committee have considered a number of purchases this year, including the following:

- Copy of legal proceedings between Sir Thomas Cobham and Anne his wife relating to the manor of Fakenham, 1468
- Thorney Hall Manor, Stowmarket, Court Book 1709-1758
- Survey of an Estate in Stonham Aspal belonging to Revd C Jeafferson 1784 by J Spurling Junior
- Title deeds of 15 Trinity Street, Manor of Bungay Priory
- Hamlet Watling paintings of images of the Southwold Rood Screen
- Wyverston court roll 1660-1690/1663-1687

In all six cases the committee felt that the eventual price would be higher than the Friends could afford. Where possible copies of the documents have been obtained for use in the appropriate branch.

The committee did successfully purchase four documents relating to Barnham.

- Rents received for Sir Roger Palmer Knt for his lands at Barnham, Suffolk Michaelmas 1646-Lady Day 1652
- Receipts Lady Day 1664-Lady Day 1665 and Disbursements 1st June 1664-8th May 1665
- Receipts 10 May 1668-Michaelmas 1669 and Disbursements 11 May 1668-Christmas 1669
- Receipts for Sir Henry Palmer, Bart 1671 and Disbursements 10 Mar 1671-Feb 1672

These documents have been deposited at the Bury branch under accession number B/15236.

### Suffolk Record Office Contact Details

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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)

### 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.

### ***Fruitful Endeavours: 16th-century refinement in a Suffolk gentry household***

Thanks to help from Record Office staff Moira Coleman has completed her book on 16th-century domestic life at Helmingham Hall, which Phillimore & Co are publishing later this summer. Dominic Wall, the Conservator repaired a Tollemache family "shopping list" or household account book, 1587-89. This volume formed a significant part of the primary source material used in her book.

Friends can buy the book directly from Moira at a discounted price of £13.00, plus postage and packing. The Ipswich Record Office will be hosting a talk by Moira on Saturday 27 April 2013, when discounted copies of the book will be available at £15.99. Please contact Judith Stephenson for further details about this offer.