

Message from the Chairman

This has been another busy year for FOSRO, with changes to our committee and new challenges ahead, as we seek to support the record office with its ambitious plans for the future. Last year's AGM saw the resignation of our chairman, Dr Paul Simmons and Mr Vic Gray. Both have given generously of their time in promoting FOSRO and the Suffolk Record Office, and we thank them for their many years of loyal service. We are delighted that they have agreed to continue with the organisation of the Appeal to raise funds for the John Blatchly Local Studies Library at the proposed new Heritage and Archives centre in Ipswich, THE HOLD.

We are pleased to welcome Robin Burnett, Stephen Dart and Ray Whitehand as new members of the committee. Each of them brings new skills and experience to the team. We are keen to continue the involvement of new people in the work of the committee, and currently have a vacancy. If you would like to join us, or know of someone you would like to nominate, please use the enclosed form to do so.

Your committee has been working on a funding proposal to be submitted to the Garfield Weston Foundation, for an Exhibition Room at THE HOLD. If successful, this will enable a valuable display space to be included in the new building, and extend the scope for special displays by the record office and heritage organisations across the county. A decision is expected at the end of May. Financial contributions to the work of the record office this year included a donation of £1000 for cataloguing, and £500 to purchase an iPad to be used by record office staff in Ipswich for their outreach work.



Emma Sealy, Manager of Ipswich RO receiving an iPad from Frances Gander, FOSRO Treasurer

Our record on purchasing **new acquisitions** has been disappointing as we seek to adapt to rising prices in this field. Despite revising upwards our calculations on how far to bid above the guide price, we have been thwarted on a number of occasions. For example, our most recent attempt for a 'small leather covered mid-19th century notebook containing copies of the minutes and letters written in relation to The Bungay Races for 1848 / 1849 / 1850 and 1851' went for double the upper limit we had agreed to set.

However it has not been all bad news, as we have managed to acquire digital copies of some important documents. For example; the Lidgate Manorial Court Roll Roll 1392 -1397 was offered by a London bookseller, at a price that we felt unable to afford. Kate Chantry's research revealed that this was the missing piece of a larger collection of manorial rolls deposited in Bury Record Office, in November 1940.

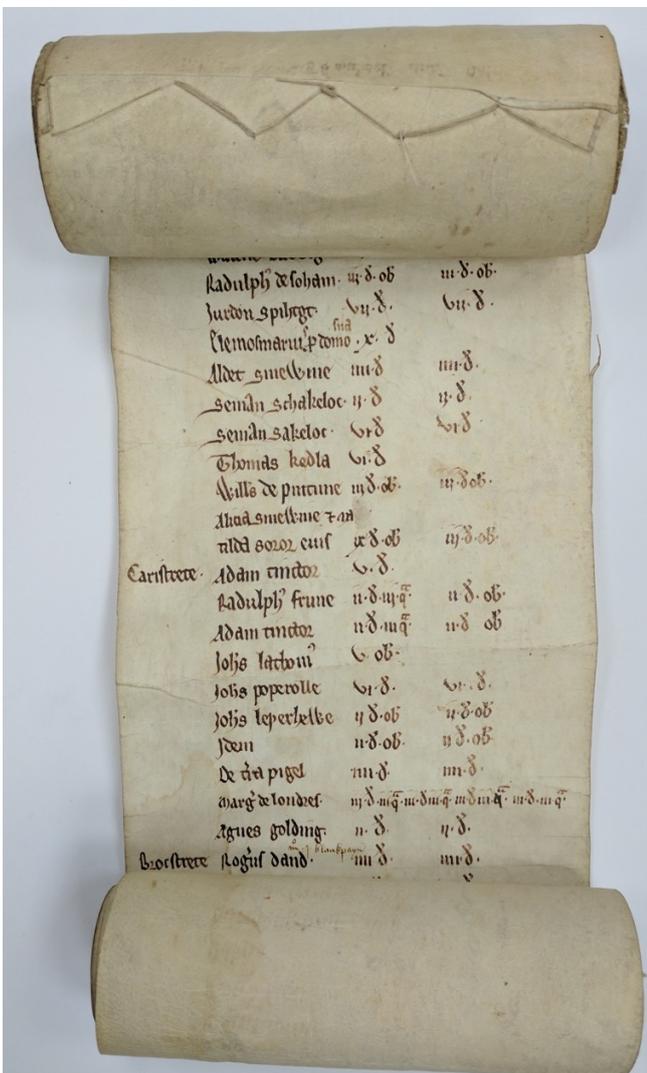
We were delighted that the seller responded positively to our request for digital copies. These are now deposited in Bury St Edmunds Record Office.

FOSRO also considered bidding at auction for the Rental Roll for Christchurch Ecclesiastical estate 1291 - a wonderful document that includes a 13th c. roll call of all the tenants of Christchurch Ecclesiastical Estate in Ipswich. Again, this was beyond our budget, but we were pleased to learn that Cambridge University Library had purchased it.

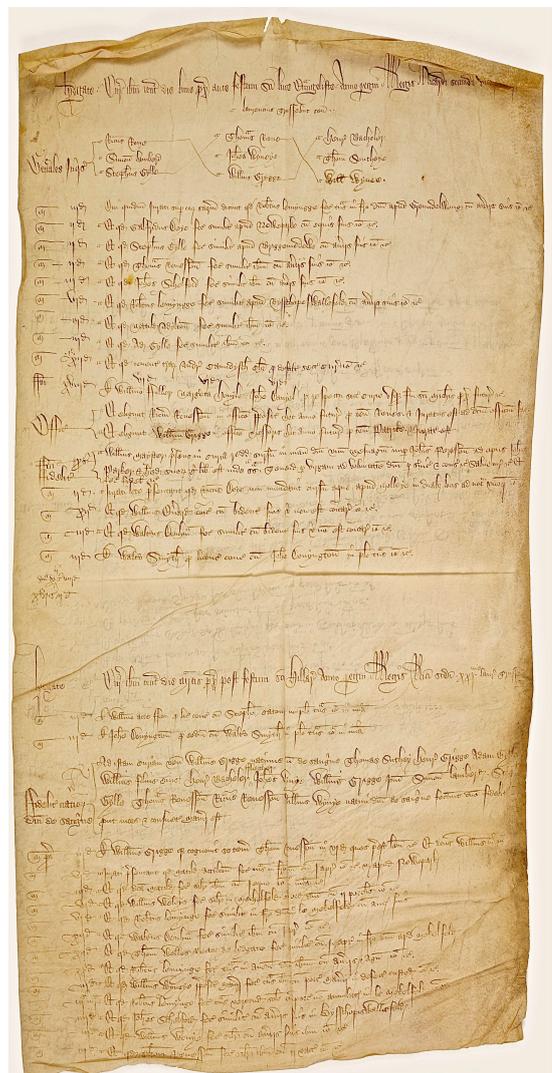
And, what is even more thrilling is that Dr Freeman, the Medieval Manuscript Specialist at Cambridge, has agreed to deliver an illustrated lecture at Christchurch Mansion following our **AGM on 23rd May**.

I do hope you will join us for this very special event.

Betty Milburn MBE - Chairman



Christchurch Ecclesiastical Estate Rental Roll 1291



The Lidgate Manorial Court Roll 1392 - 1397

Update on 'The Hold: A Suffolk Archives Service for the 21st Century' - Amy Rushton, Project Coordinator, Suffolk Record Office



2018 began with the wonderful news that **THE HOLD** has received full planning permission! The proposals for the new building (above) were considered by the County Council's planning committee on 16th January, and the scheme received approval.

Meanwhile, the Heritage Lottery Fund is assessing our second stage application to them for delivery funding (£10.3 million); a decision on this is expected in late March/early April. As we await this decision, we are preparing as much as we can so that the contractors should be able to start on site this Spring.

Further funding applications are currently with the Local Enterprise Partnership, the Foyle Foundation, and an application to the Garfield-Weston Foundation is planned imminently, with the FOSRO playing a key role. A grant has also been confirmed from the prestigious Wolfson Foundation, which is supporting the provision of the Education Room within the building. This room will host not just school groups, but groups of all ages undertaking learning activities. And of course, Vic Gray writes about the 'John Blatchly campaign' elsewhere in this newsletter, which is run in partnership by FOSRO and the Suffolk Archives Foundation (SAF). This will see a kitted-out local studies library within the building. A huge thanks to everyone who has supported this effort so far with generous donations!

This project is not just about a new building. An ambitious, 4-year programme of events and activities has been developed that will be delivered around the whole county. This programme - called an 'Activity Plan' - is a huge part of what the Heritage Lottery Fund would be investing in. It would see:

- *the Record Office rebuilding its links with schools*
- *new ways of working with communities to help them run their own heritage activities*
- *the delivery of a countywide oral history programme*
- *the development of high quality digital resources*
- *a countywide community-based programme called 'Sharing Suffolk Stories'*

- *new traineeships and student placements*
- *exhibitions in the new building and touring exhibitions around the county*
- *100 brand new volunteering opportunities*

as well as a whole host of formal and informal learning events, and family-based activities around all of Suffolk. A number of new posts, initially supported by the lottery funding, would help sustain these activities and new ways of working well after the project has concluded (in Spring 2022).

Thanks to the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, we were able to ‘pilot’ some of these activities last year. Some of you may have caught the one-act play ‘Blood Red Barn’ performed by some brilliant young people, working with ‘Bring out Your Dead’ productions and playwright Danusia Iwaszko. We hope to deliver many more of these archives-inspired creative events throughout the project.



Blood Red Barn being performed at Moyses' Hall, Bury St Edmunds

This pilot work also included working with volunteers and students from the University of Suffolk to collect new oral histories from people around the county, based on the idea of ‘memories on the mantelpiece’ (in other words, treasured objects/heirlooms and the stories associated with them).

These were turned into ‘digital stories’ by one of our technology partners; Chronicle Digital Storytelling (www.chroniclestores.co.uk/the-hold).

On Thursday February 15th 2018 we said thank you to the storytellers with a special screening at Quay Place. If the project is successful, more of this work will follow, in which case we hope to capture and share more stories with you soon!



Some of the star 'Storytellers' at the screening at Quay Place



Bury Record Office Events 2018 - Frank Walker

Expectations often run high at the start of each New Year, and as manager of Bury St Edmunds Record Office this is often linked to a new events programme, service improvements or other personal ambition. However that feeling is more so this year, with my dedicated searchroom team we are planning a series of exciting events **(including open days for all ages, talks, courses, displays, online exhibitions, a school's debate and streamed events)** to explore two very significant anniversaries taking place in 2018. We commemorate the end of the Great War and its tremendous loss of life, as well as its lasting effects on the shaping of the 20th Century. We will be celebrating local life and stories, paying particular attention to what occurred between Armistice and the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles, the space before Peace, and the local responses to a global vacuum. In

contrast, we will also celebrate 100 years since some women were allowed to vote in a parliamentary election. We will be looking back at the events and arguments leading up to this significant change for women's rights, asking what changed, what it meant for subsequent generations and what challenges still face women now, and importantly, is activism still relevant today? As members we hope that you will see the important part your FOSRO membership plays in preserving archives that keep historic discourse like this alive in Suffolk. In that spirit, we also openly **invite you to come along to our public branch events and ask you to actively support our events online during 2018**. Bring your family and friends, meet our knowledgeable staff and distinguished guest speakers; share your enthusiasm and an enlivened world view through historical perspective and debate. Our doors are open and we are waiting, we hope you'll join us.

Walking Through History - Peter Hepple

This year the volunteers decided to look closer to home for one of the annual visits and we chose Bury St Edmunds. In the morning we attended the Suffolk Regiment Museum based at the Keep, Gibraltar Barracks, in Newmarket Road. Firstly, the Curator gave us a detailed talk on the history of the Regiment. It was founded in 1685 and finally amalgamated with the Royal Norfolk Regiment in 1959. Distinguished active service was displayed in many parts of the world during these centuries. Considered to be one of finest regimental collections in the country it displays uniforms, medals, weapons, badges, photographs, flags and personal memorabilia.

In the afternoon we visited the Ancient Library of St James in St Edmundsbury Cathedral. This is the oldest continuing parish library in England. Through the narrowest of doors we climbed a stone spiral staircase to the library room above the cathedral porch. Here the librarian, also a volunteer, described the collection of the theological and other works, both local and European. Some of the manuscripts in the books pre-date the invention of the printing press and the whole library attracts scholars and researchers. All in all, a fascinating day, and a timely reminder that what might be on your doorstep should not be overlooked on that account.

The Periodical Collections at Ipswich Record Office: Bruce Martin, Searchroom Assistant and Local Studies Champion – Ipswich RO

The Ipswich Record Office currently receives about 70 titles of periodicals and we hold just over 700 titles in total. Most of these are held within the Local Studies Collection. The term periodical is used to describe parish magazines, society newsletters, academic journals and bulletins – the list could be a very long one.

The finding aids for the periodicals can be challenging. There are many card indexes and slip lists to consult to find out whether the title is held at the branch. It can be a long process. It is because the branch has had quite a few Librarians over the years and they have all worked slightly differently.

Recently, the Searchroom Team with volunteer help has been creating new finding aids, bringing all the old card indexes and slip lists together, and we have created a searchable master spreadsheet. Although the target of over 700 titles templated is some way off, progress has been steady, and we are already reaping the benefits. We are more efficient in our day-to-day duties of periodical accessioning; our new templates are more user-friendly for members of the public and we are improving accessibility to these interesting collections.

THE JOHN BLATCHLY LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY APPEAL for THE HOLD - Vic Gray.

Members will be aware that the Friends have chosen to support the development of **THE HOLD**, the Suffolk Record Office's new purpose-built headquarters in Ipswich, by raising funds for a very specific and important feature of the new building, a local studies library. This library will, in the words of the brochure the Friends have issued, *'bring together the printed history of the county in all its aspects, published across many centuries; a library open to all and housed within a comfortable and inviting space, welcoming learners of all ages navigating Suffolk's rich history.'*

The Friends see this library space as being not only a vital and attractive aspect of the facilities of the new building, but also a tribute to Suffolk's long gallery of historians, and, in particular, to John Blatchly, the Friends' founder and former Chairman, whose researches and publications have greatly enhanced our understanding of many facets of Suffolk history. **'The John Blatchly Local Studies Library'** will have, at its heart, space for the special collections he left, on his death, to Suffolk, including his stunning collections on bookplates and monumental brasses.

So far the campaign, launched last year, had been raised by mid-February, £15,665 towards its ambitious total of £100,000. Leaflets have been distributed to many of the societies and organisations in which Dr Blatchly played a part. These include FOSRO, the Suffolk Local History Council, the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, the Suffolk Records Society, the Suffolk Family History Society, the Ipswich Society and the Suffolk Heraldry Society. Others will follow. Nationally, the Monumental Brass Society and the Bookplate Society, with both of which he was heavily involved, have been keen to circulate members. Ipswich

School, of which he was headmaster for 21 years, has supported the campaign by distributing leaflets through the Old Ipswichian magazine. A display of items from the Blatchly donation is currently on display in the foyer of the Ipswich Record Office and the Friends have commissioned a banner to explain the campaign and solicit donations.

There have been many donations, small and large, to date and all are appreciated, but we have been particularly helped along and encouraged by a number of donations of £100 or more, including two of £1,000 and one of £5,000. Whatever the size of the contribution, we are hugely grateful to all who have felt moved to contribute. Funds received are being held by the Suffolk Archives Foundation, which was set up as account-holder for the various grants, large and small, which will together contribute to the completion of THE HOLD.

To further facilitate donations, FOSRO have now set up a means of on-line donation. It is by no means too late to receive contributions from FOSRO members or from anybody whose heart lies with Suffolk studies. We still have a long way to go to attain our target. The relatively small number of donations so far received from individual members of FOSRO leaves plenty of opportunity for others to follow suit.

If you'd still like to help, please pick up a leaflet in your nearest SRO branch or go to: www.mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/blatchlyappeal

LOWESTOFT RECORD OFFICE

We have received a number of comments from colleagues in the east of the county, expressing their understandable dismay at the news that Suffolk County Council has plans to replace the Lowestoft Record Office with an unmanned Access point. This proposed change is due to take place at the end of 2019. A number of reasons have been put forward, including concern for the safety and preservation of the archives, and decreased user numbers. The original announcement also cited budgetary constraints all across the council's service.

However, there is a strong belief that a record office presence should be preserved in the town and a series of engagement workshops are now being planned with local groups and stakeholders to discuss how this might be achieved. The workshops will develop options for a formal consultation to be held in late Spring/early Summer.

FOSRO will be represented at these initial engagement sessions, and would urge other invitees to attend, bringing their own experiences to the debate and helping shape the future of the record office service in the Lowestoft area. We would also encourage everyone to take part in the formal wider public consultation events and complete the online and paper surveys when they are available.

For those of you who have not seen it already there is a page on the Suffolk Record Office website <https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/about-suffolk-archives/future-recordoffice-service-in-lowestoft/> which provides links to some additional statistical and other information supplied in response to freedom of information requests.

And finally...

The FOSRO Committee would like to thank those of you who generously donated towards the cost of the purchase of the 'Letters Patent to John Hopton' document that featured in our last newsletter.

FOSRO Committee

Chairman:

Mrs Betty Milburn MBE chairman@fosro.org.uk

Vice-Chairman :

Mrs Sarah E Doig

Treasurer:

Mrs Frances Gander membershipsec@fosro.org.uk

Secretary:

Mr Robert Houlton-Hart secretary@fosro.org.uk

2 Cranesbill Drive, Bury St Edmunds, IP32 7JU.

Committee Members

Mrs Margaret Statham

Mr Gwyn Thomas

Mr Ray Whitehand

Mr Robin Burnett

Mr Stephen Dart

President

Clare, Countess of Euston, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Suffolk

Vice-Presidents

The Marquess of Bristol

Dr Jane Fiske

Miss Amanda Arrowsmith

Councillor Tony Goldson

www.fosro.org.uk

*The Editor wishes to thank all contributors and everyone who supplied photographs.
Designed by Frances Gander, FOSRO.*