

Chairman's Message

Our sister charity the Suffolk Archives Foundation (SAF) is well underway and our Treasurer has been invited to be an observer at its meetings. Our remits are very different as we are primarily focussed on purchasing items when suitable material comes up for sale, recommended by the Record Office senior staff. You'll see a recent success story inside.

We are working with SAF on raising funds for the new facility -The Hold. We have committed to raise £100,000 towards the provision of a library for the Local Studies collection, incorporating the collection of Dr John Blatchly. 2,000 leaflets have been sent out (or will be in the next mailings) to our own members, Suffolk Record Society, Suffolk Family History Society, Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History and the Suffolk Local History Council. A new leaflet will go out to a wider circulation and will include 'mydonate' details of SAF to aid online donations.

We have had 40 donations totalling £1720. Our membership is around 200 so we would like to ask those who have not donated to help us raise more. If everyone were to give £10, we would double that sum immediately! See the downloadable form on the front page of our new website <http://www.fosro.org.uk/>

Paul Simmons, Chairman.

Recent purchases

We are delighted that the Friends were successful in the auction bid in June to secure Letters Patent to Arthur Hopton. This is a Grant to Arthur Hopton of the manor and priory of Blythburgh and Holton, Wenhaston, Thorington with its messuages, and tenements and relating to John Harrington of Kelston in Somerset, two membranes in Latin dated 17 February 1620. Sir Arthur Hopton 1588-1650 was a diplomat and ambassador to Spain. The Hopton family have been well connected with Blythburgh, Wenhaston and Yoxford and district for many years and the massive tomb of John Hopton (died 1478) dominates the NE chancel in Holy Trinity Blythburgh church. John Harrington 1588/89 – 1654 was a lawyer and diarist.

The document is still being deciphered ready for formal accession. Hammer price £800, with buyer's premium and vat making a total of £1,040.

The fine initial letter in grey wash is reproduced below.



Update on 'The Hold' project

A Summer of Pilot Projects – by Amy Rushton

As reported in 'The Hold' newsletter recently, the project team have 'piloted' several exciting activities over the summer months, particularly across the school holidays. This was to test ideas from the Activity Plan. The events and activities were designed to engage existing and new audiences with archives and are just as important as the new building itself. Our principal supporter, the Heritage Lottery Fund, is supporting us in the trial of a variety of things to evaluate how effective they are.

The pilots included:

1. A **touring mini-exhibition** exploring the story of the Red Barn Murder at Polstead. This was used as a springboard to explore other themes, called 'Moles, Cherries and Murder'. It was around Suffolk at: Newmarket Library; John Peel Centre, Stowmarket; Stowmarket Library; Haverhill Arts Centre; Lowestoft Marina Theatre and Ipswich Multicultural Festival (Alexandra Park).
2. A **'TED-style talk'** – students from the University of Suffolk are writing, producing and performing a filmed, inspirational talk on the theme of Fake News. This explores the nature of trust in archives. If you would like to be in the live audience (filming in September) please email: archives@suffolk.gov.uk
3. A **play based on the Red Barn Murder** by a local Bury youth theatre group 'Bring Out Your Dead' productions (BOYD). They performed the play in Polstead itself, the site of the original murder and at Moyses Hall, Bury St Edmunds; Quay Place, Ipswich.
4. An **oral history event** took place at the Waterfront, by the site of The Hold, in July. We wanted to capture people's memories of the area close to where The Hold will be built. We used the session to train new volunteers in the art of gathering oral histories, and a local creative digital company (Chronicle Storytelling) were on hand to help. For selected participants, Chronicle created a unique postcard, linked to a digital version of the participant's story online, illustrated with appropriate images.

A series of travelling 'mantelpieces' inspired oral history events. These record family stories, based on the treasured objects and images on the mantelpiece or mantelpiece equivalent. The dates and venues for these will appear on the SRO website.

If you are interested in participating in either oral history projects, please email archives@suffolk.gov.uk

We are also running pilot projects on the Mapping Suffolk's Stories strand of the Activity Plan, including:

Northgate School – 13 male pupils will be exploring (with the help of the SRO team, their teachers and the University of Suffolk) the stories of their parents'/grandparents' experiences in coming to Ipswich.

Headway (the brain injury association) – two groups from Headway at Bury and Haverhill will be using our wonderful collections to explore memories and create archives-inspired artwork.

Suffolk Mind groups based at Quay Place, Ipswich will be researching and illustrating the stories from a WWI memorial plaque in church, and layering them on maps to display digitally. They will also be crocheting poppies to use in a display featuring the WWI plaque in November.

The Hold is a partnership project between the Suffolk Record Office and the University of Suffolk, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. For more information, visit www.thehold.org.uk

Sixty not out! - Vic Gray MBE

Chairman, Suffolk Records Society

Despite the confusing similarity in names, the link between the Suffolk Record Office and the Suffolk Records Society (SRS) is one of spirit rather than structure. But that shared spirit has been there since the Society, which this year celebrates its 60th anniversary, was formed. Back in those days there were of course two separate Record Offices, one for the then East Suffolk and another for West Suffolk, merged in 1974. But from those early days much of the impetus for the birth and development of the Society came from the County Archivists of the day, and in the years since, Record Office staff have contributed in so many ways to the life and publications of the Society.

Over those sixty years, the Suffolk Records Society has been responsible for publishing sixty volumes of historical documents relating to the history of our county, together with another nineteen volumes of mediaeval Suffolk charters. Thousands of documents – some from the collections of the Suffolk Record Office, others from archives all across the country and beyond - have been made widely available in easily readable printed form, with comprehensive indexes of names and places. They range from a 13th century survey of Framlingham to the World War II diaries of a Bury St Edmunds' resident. They include parish and manor records, diaries and letters. In one field alone, the contents of over 6,000 Suffolk wills are now there for the reading, thanks to SRS.

All this is owed to the diligent work of the Society's volunteer team and the support of SRS members whose annual subscriptions

have made possible this remarkable achievement. They continue to receive a new book each year for £12.50, volumes which otherwise sell for upwards of £25.

We at the SRS would like FOSRO members to join us in celebrating our 60th birthday. You could do this in one of two ways.

Firstly you could come along and join us at our Anniversary Event. This will take place at the Waterfront Building of the University of Suffolk, Ipswich, IP14 1QJ, starting at 3pm. on Saturday 7 October. There will be an address by Dr Harvey Osborne of the University of Suffolk entitled 'One Suffolk, Many Histories', which will look at the focus of historical studies, the perception of what history is, and its shift over the lifespan of the Society. There will be displays, which will include a showing of all sixty volumes produced by the Society since its inception. Refreshments will be served and admission is free to all. We'd love to see you there.

Secondly, you could choose to join us for our next sixty years and become a Suffolk Records Society member: £12.50 a year and a new handsome book on Suffolk to add to your shelves. **If you'd like to know more, please contact Tanya Christian, our Membership Secretary** at tcachristian@gmail.com or our Secretary, Claire Barker at claire@ejbarker.co.uk. Or pick up a membership form at your nearest Suffolk Record Office branch.

Or you could do both. We'd love to have you on board! After all, we're all working for the same end: the preservation and availability of Suffolk's documentary history.

Lowestoft Branch News - Helen Band, Archivist, Lowestoft Record Office

Re-organisation of Local Studies Books

In Lowestoft we have been busy in a re-organisation of our Local Studies storeroom also known as 'The Stack'. The aim is to maximise space, to keep the public holdings relevant and interesting and to make uncatalogued material available to the public by adding it to our local studies database on Spydus. Katie Angus has been in charge and has been making use of our FOSRO iPad to work 'on the go' in stack. The iPad has enabled us to work online with the local studies catalogue on Spydus with maximum efficiency making the project swift and effective.

1940s Festival Weekend

On 27 and 28 May Lowestoft town centre was in full 'War Time Spirit' with Lowestoft Vision's 1940s Festival Weekend. Businesses in the town, including the Record Office, came outside, dressed up and put on a 'War Time Extravaganza' for the people of Lowestoft. We went armed with a fascinating display of war time archives, a soldier's back pack and evacuee suitcases. We helped children dress up in our 1940s hats, clothes and gas masks. We also had a go at cutting out and colouring-in 1940s paper dolls. We met over 300 people over the two days and we loved hearing reminiscences from people who lived through

the 1940s. We were glad to have the FOSRO iPad on hand to check our holdings and show off the 1939 census on FindMyPast.com. Staff from all three branches chipped in to make our 'Pop-up' Record Office stall a huge success.



Book Scanner - We are so excited and grateful to have received the extraordinary top of the line book scanner for our Lowestoft Branch. The generosity of our County Councillor and FOSRO mean we are working at the cutting edge of digital technology. We were literally overwhelmed on the scanner's arrival as the shipping crate was too big to fit through the doors of the library! With a bit of help from our staff and volunteers everything is now in place for our inaugural switch on. Our plans are to begin our scanning adventures with Collection 23: Lowestoft Crew Lists and Ships Logs which span the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries revealing the names, birth places and careers of Lowestoft sailors; an invaluable resource for local and family historians alike.

The Lowestoft Branch of the Record Office is to be found on the upper floor of Lowestoft Library. (Accessible by Lift). It is close to Lowestoft Railway Station.

Parking: There is no car parking on site but a long and short-stay car park is located across the road.

Address: Lowestoft Central Library, Clapham Rd S, Lowestoft NR32 1DR

Hours: 9:30am–4:30pm (Monday to Saturday – **Closed Wednesday**)

Phone: 01502 674680

All Things Great and Small - Louise Kennedy, Archivist, Ipswich Record

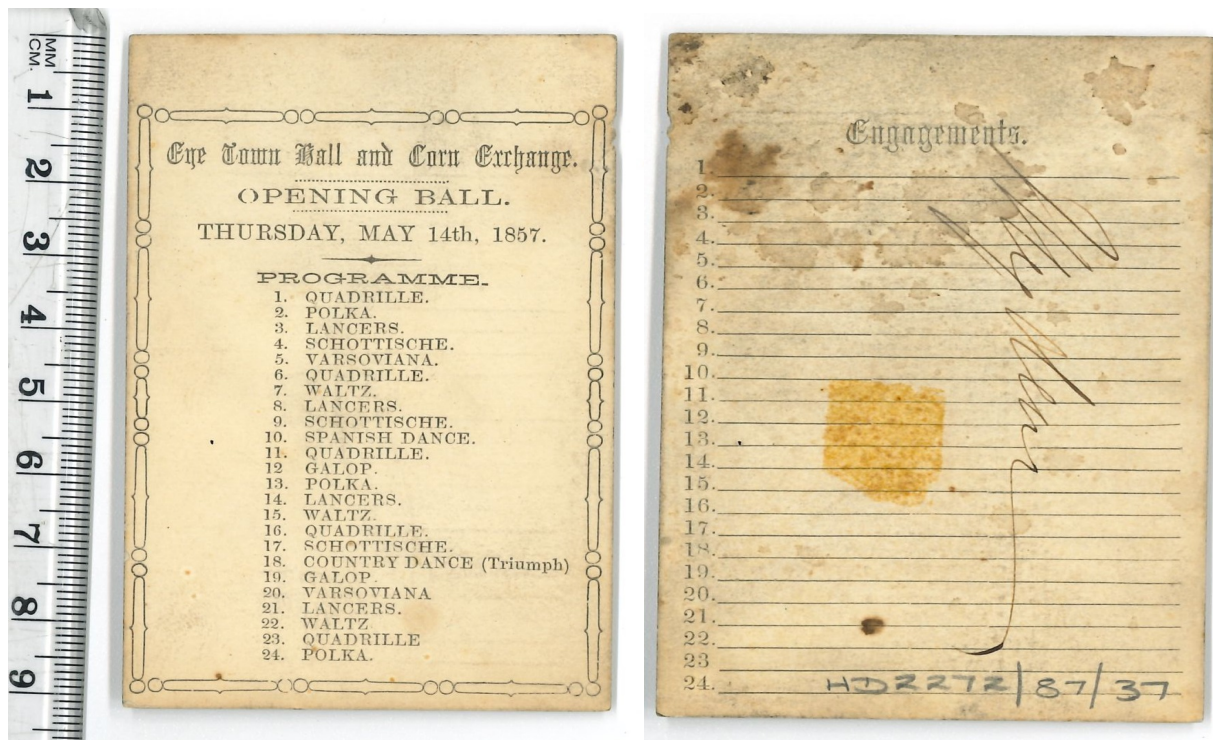
Office

I was asked if I would like to write a piece for the newsletter about one of the more interesting archival deposits brought in to IRO over the past year. I could perhaps tell you more about the oldest item received; a deed of gift of Thomas Deneys of (Gippwico) Ipswich and others, in Latin and with 4 seals, dated 1457. Perhaps I could expand on the largest deposit, which was of 20th century magistrate court records and which sits on 120 metres of shelves within our strongrooms.

But for me personally looking back at the archive material deposited here, there is one item, which has made me smile, and which I just love. It is the smallest single item which has come in and at just over 9cm x 6cm is about the same size as the cover on a box of Swan matches.

The item in question is a Dance Card Programme printed for the Eye Town Hall and Corn Exchange Opening Ball which was held on Thursday 14 May 1857. On the front is a list of 24 dances to be played and the reverse provides space to record the person who has agreed to accompany you in the dance. Sadly, the reverse has not been completed only the words 'My dear' are written across it – why we will never know....

What images it invokes to think of couples dancing a polka or waltz, or four couples dancing the Quadrille and its variant the Lancers. I had not heard of the Schottische before but a quick look on-line tells me it is a partnered country-dance that originated in Bohemia.

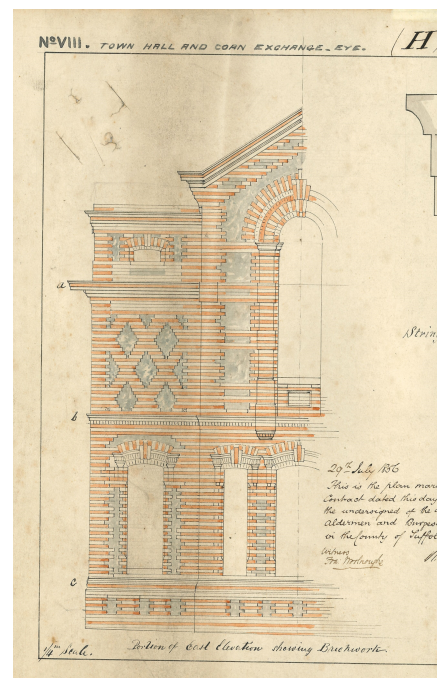
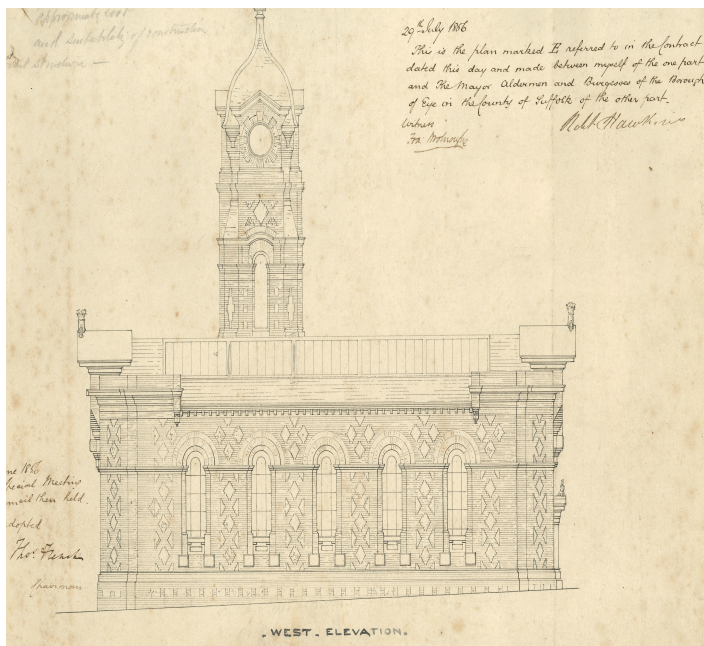


[Images of the front and back of the card] – Ref HD2272/87/37

The Suffolk Chronicle for 2 May 1857 carries an advert telling the public *they are respectfully informed that the Opening Ball will take place on Thursday 14th May in the Corn Exchange*. Ladies' tickets are 4s and gentlemen's 6s, which includes tea. Stewards listed for the event are Sir E Kerrison Bart MP and 7 others. On 16 May the paper carries a large account of the Opening Dinner for the building, which was

held two days before the Ball, with all the speeches reproduced across four dense columns of text, but no account of the Ball is given. Tickets for the Opening Dinner had cost 7s 6d but included wine!

A little further research tells us that within the Eye Borough Council Collection held here at IRO we have a Minute Book of the Committee set up to build the new Town Hall and Corn Exchange and copies of the original plans. The Victorians did love their committees with one set up for every aspect of small town life. This is a gem providing detailed information on all aspects of the build. We learn that George Skinner was paid *to take down the clock in the Old Town Hall and that he be paid his usual salary to do so as he will have no winding to do for the remainder of the Corporate year....* We are told that the *clerk of work is directed to write to Mr Rumsey and Mr Pike of Brome and ask them to do some carting on Tuesday from Scole Kiln.....* We are told that *'it is resolved that the Corn Hall and Town Hall be lighted with Gas'....* and so on.



[images from the plans] – Ref EE2/N/2

This little dance card illustrates how one very small archival item can inspire a plethora of research into the social life of a Suffolk market town, if one has the inclination and the time to follow it up. And as aside, the card was actually donated to us by someone living in America so (according to Google) it travelled over 4,515 miles to reach us.

A conservation project: List of subscriptions for rebuilding of Long Melford Church steeple - 1711 - Dominic Wall, Conservator - Strategic Development

This document was bought with FOSRO funds and arrived in a reasonable condition albeit with some losses and weakness. First impressions suggested that the principal conservation work would be strengthening, tear repairs and infilling the losses. However, because the item included iron-gall ink, which can cause 'ink corrosion', the ink itself also needed assessment of its current and future condition. This influenced the conservation choices.

Treatment.

Firstly the ink was visually assessed against the 4 'condition ratings' published by the Dutch collections institute (ICN) in 2000. This assessment matched the Condition Rating – "1 - Good Condition". After this, indicator paper was used to chemically test the ink for free Fe^{2+} iron ions, which as part of the corrosion process can cause damage to the underlying paper. This showed a positive result and therefore indicated that some ions would be usually found. However, given the condition of the item, it suggested that the extent of these was not very damaging at present.

On the basis of these assessments, and the fact that the document has survived more than 300 years and showed low levels of corrosion so far, it was decided that full treatment of the ink was not necessary. This process of washing and use of chemicals can carry some risks of damage and is sometime deemed not desirable if not entirely necessary.

The next stage was to repair the physical state of the sheet. However, if this work is done on inked items without firstly a full aqueous treatment then it becomes important to make sure that the chances of corrosion in the future are not increased; normally this means minimal moisture must be used. In this case the treatment described for a collection of logbooks in the National Archives in Paris¹ was followed. The paper was strengthened and repaired with a cellulose-based adhesive (hydroxypropyl cellulose). This can be applied with alcohol as a solvent instead of water. A weak (2%) solution of the adhesive was applied over the whole sheet for sizing (strengthening). The same concentration was used to adhere very thin tissue for joining tears, and also for adhering Japanese paper and tissue to make up losses. To ensure minimal effect on the ink, an application of the adhesive is practised first using test discs. A test repair using water-based adhesive was also carried out on the disc as a comparator in order to show how moisture allowed the iron Fe^{2+} ions to move and potentially cause future. These repairs took the work to completion.

Hopefully, these notes give an insight into decision-making around conservation of items with iron-gall ink and into conservation practice that has changed significantly over the last 10-15 years. Not all items in as good a condition as this will be checked so thoroughly, but from time to time practice needs to be validated, and the checking was also done because this was the first time this adhesive technique has been used for iron-gall ink at Suffolk Record Office. Testing and checking are done to provide assurance that conservation treatments will be as reliable in the future as they appear to be when first completed as some treatments of the profession have turned out in the past to be damaging instead of preservative.

¹ "Local Strengthening of Mould-Damaged Manuscripts", Aurélie Martin et al., Journal of Paper Conservation vol. 12 no. 1, pp.21-29. Online, free: <http://www.iada-home.org/en/journal-of-paperconservation/order.html> this article.

We need your help!

Our Committee is getting very West Suffolk/Bury-biased and we are looking for members from East Suffolk. Our four meetings a year rotate between the Ipswich and Bury Record Office branches. We are also looking for an editor of our newsletter which is published twice a year.

Please contact the Secretary, Robert Houlton-Hart at 2hhfrd60@gmail.com or phone 01284 764939

For Your Diary
FOSRO AGM FRIDAY 6th October 2017 at 6pm
The Edmund Room, St Edmundsbury Cathedral
Followed by Reception 6.30
and Guest Lecture at 7pm by Peter Goulding on
‘The Military History of the Brecks 1900 – 1949’
www.bresco.org/uk/projectsbreaking-new-ground

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The Editor wishes to thank all contributors and everyone who supplied photographs. Design by Mrs Frances Gander