

SUFFOLK ROOTS

Vol. 50 : No. 2 : September 2024



THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF SUFFOLK FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

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VOLUME 50 : NUMBER 2 : SEPTEMBER 2024



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Theme of this Issue

All at Sea

Shipwrecks and Lifeboats, Mariners and Shipbuilders

Cover Picture

Gorleston Yawl rescuing the crew from a wreck off Yarmouth.

Illustration from Pen and Pencil: An Illustrated Family Newspaper, 3 March 1855.

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Suffolk Roots

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SUFFOLK ROOTS

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TRUSTEES' MESSAGE

Hopefully everyone has had a good summer (in the northern hemisphere anyway), although while writing this it seems we are still waiting for it to start, and with rain on St Swithin's Day, things don't bode well.

We are focussed on getting ready for our AGM (see papers at the centre of this issue) on 1 October, and our Fair in Ipswich on 19 October. We hold the AGM by Zoom so that, time differences permitting, it can be joined by all members wherever based. Whilst some would see an AGM as a bureaucratic necessity (and of course it is), it is also an opportunity to participate in the governance of the Society. No one is 'volunteered' for roles at the AGM, so please do not fear that, although volunteers are always welcome. This year we will be putting forward a motion about membership fees, and will take the opportunity to recognise some of those who work for the Society, which is always a delight and usually a surprise to those concerned.

We were shocked and disappointed by the announcement that not only are the Lowestoft and Bury branches of Suffolk Archives to shut at the end of August, but also the Archives service at the Hold in Ipswich is to be closed from October through to the New Year. This is to allow the records shipped from Lowestoft and Bury to be incorporated into storage at the Hold and catalogued. Note that this affects the Archives and search rooms and the John Blatchly Local Studies Library – all the areas used by researchers, but thankfully not the exhibition area, auditorium or café, which are the areas important for our Fair.

We are still looking for help running social media, but with our current limited resources have decided to focus on Facebook and X (formerly Twitter), together with Groups.io, rather than spreading ourselves too thinly. We would love to do more, especially to use the media more often used by younger genealogists, but cannot resource this at the moment.

We were saddened to hear of the death of long-standing member and volunteer, **Judy Brodie**. **Patricia Bridges** has kindly written a few words about Judy. I came into contact with Judy as she set up and ran Ancestorian, a bit of a competitor to Facebook, without the cat pictures!

You will see elsewhere in this issue my article about the Ipswich vaccination birth and death registers, which are an amazing resource, especially for those with Ipswich interests. I found one of my relatives who we knew had died aged 21, and the cause of death was not TB as family memory had related, but peritonitis – perhaps this was confusion with another relative, but I would not have bought a death certificate.

So, we hope to see as many of you as possible at our AGM and our Fair.

Andy Kerridge, Chair
chair@suffolkfhs.co.uk

JUDY BRODIE (1961–2024)

It was with sadness we learnt that, in May, Judy Brodie passed away following further surgery for Crohn's disease. She will be known to members as an enthusiastic transcriber for Suffolk FHS, and as an advocate of the many CDs of parish records. She would always know which deanery you would need for which village's parish records.

The Facebook group she created for family history in Suffolk and Cambridgeshire had members worldwide. Her knowledge of those large parishes in the north-west of the county was second to none.

A proud Australian, Judy was always so happy to visit the homelands of her ancestors. Her many visits bore testament to her love of the UK, especially Suffolk.

Our condolences go to her husband **Neil**, her children **Kurt** and **Sheridan**, and her two little grandchildren.

Patricia Bridges Mb 6373

patriciahelenbridges7@gmail.com

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NEW MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Below are the interests of our newest members who joined between 27 April and 1 August 2024. If you see a name you are interested in, take a note of the member's number and visit the **Members' Interests** section of our website (on the Resources tab) to find out more using the number to search with – you will see any other surnames they are interested in and be able to contact them. If you cannot use the website, please write to the Membership Secretary (details at the end of this journal) briefly outlining your interest, and your contact details, and he will forward to the relevant member.

Surname	Cnty	Place	Dates	Member #
Avey	SFK	Pakenham	All	13070
Bacon	SFK	Cratfield	Pre-18th C	13036
Baldry	SFK	Yoxford	All	13026
Balory	SFK	Redisham	1600-1900	13037
Bare	SFK	Belton	All	13023
Bareham	SFK	Clare	Pre-1810	13076
Barker	SFK	Great Wenham	1765-1888	13046
Barrell	SFK	Wickham Skeith	All	13015
Beaumont	SFK	Hadleigh, Layham, Bildestone, Harkstead	1400 on	13018
Beckett	SFK	Any	All	13048
Beer	SFK	Copdock, Lt Waldingfield, Hadleigh, Chattisham, Waldringfield, Shingle St	1700-1950s	13046
Bentley	SFK	Tuddenham, Mildenhall	1835-1858	13072

Surname	Cnty	Place	Dates	Member #
Biggs	SFK	Glemsford	Late 1620s on	13039
Blaxhall	SFK	Lowestoft	All	13019
Bridges	SFK	Woodbridge, Wickham Market, Melton	1770-1850	13068
Bridges	SFK	Hoxne	1819-1940	13022
Brown	SFK	Wickham Skeith	All	13015
Bueren	SFK	Hadleigh, Acton	1800's	13046
Burgess	SFK	Southwold	1600-1900	13037
Canham	ANY	Any	All	13063
Cason	SFK	Eye	1700-1800	13020
Cattermole	SFK	Badingham	Pre-18th C	13036
Chapman	SFK	Wetheringsett, Stowmarket	All	13019
Clarey	SFK	Great Saxham	1000-1880	13018
Clarke	SFK	Bury St Edmunds, Hawstead	Up to early 19th C	13036
Clary	SFK	Great Saxham	1000-1880	13018
Claxton	SFK	Bungay	All	13059
Clow	SFK	Stratford St Andrew	1769-1844	13071
Coates	SFK	Brandeston, Woodbridge, Wickham Market	1790-1850	13068
Cobbold	SFK	Ipswich	All	13050
Cobbold	SFK	Rattlesden	All	13050
Cobbold	SFK	Rougham	All	13050
Collins	SFK	Cowlinge	1600-1800	13056
Cook	SFK	Leiston, Peasenhall, Monk Soham	1843-1910	13075
Cope	ANY		All	13021
Cracknell	SFK	Any	All	13048
Crane	SFK	Marlesford	1750-1900	13020
Crask	SFK	Tuddenham, Mildenhall	1835-1858	13072
Cream	SFK	Hunston	1700-1800	13028
Creasy	SFK	Framsden	All	13062
Creswell	SFK	Assington, Long Melford	All	13031
Crisell	SFK	Assington, Long Melford	All	13031
Cullingford	SFK	Wenhaston	All	13061
Dawson	SFK	Blything	All	13019
Day	SFK	Lavenham, Acton	1600-1700s	13046
Day	ANY	Any	1820-1890	13039
Dersley	ANY	Any	All	13048
Docking	ANY	Any	All	13024
Durrant	SFK	Pettaugh	All	13062
Dyson	SFK	Dalham	1750-1850	13068
Eacock	SFK	Bacton, Any	Up to early 19th C	13036
Easy	SFK	Laxfield, Mettingham	Before 1899	13057
Eaves	SFK	Dunwich	Before 1800	13041
Elliott	SFK	Monk Soham, Hemingstone	All	13064
Elliott	SFK	Monk Soham, Homersfield, Harleston, Occold	Before 1848	13057
Fleming	ANY	Any	All	13047
Gant	SFK	Kersey	All	13013
Garbett	SFK	Any	1741-1802	13071
Godfrey	SFK	Mildenhall	All	13024
Goodwin	SFK	Framsden	All	13062
Griggs	SFK	Rattlesden	All	13045
Grimsey	SFK	Polstead	All	13067

Surname	Cnty	Place	Dates	Member #
Hales	SFK	Newmarket, Bury St Edmunds	1878-2000	13039
Harding	SFK	Lowestoft, Dennington, Badingham	Up to mid-19th C	13036
Harrison	NFK	Any	All	13047
Harrison	SFK	Any	All	13047
Harvey	SFK	Debenham	1700-1830	13020
Hayward	SFK	Wickham Skeith, Cotton	All	13015
Hill	SFK	Worlingworth	1700-1830	13020
Hogger	SFK	Brent Eleigh, Grundisburgh, Ipswich	All	13064
Howe	ANY	Any	All	13063
Howe	SFK	Ipswich	All	13043
Humphery	SFK	Polstead	All	13013
Hunt	SFK	Debenham	1790-1880	13075
Ife	SFK	Wangford	All	13019
Ives	CAM	Ashley	All	13024
Jacob	ANY	Ipswich, Woodbridge	1814-1866	13029
Jacob	ANY		All	13027
Keable	SFK	Blything, Cratfield, Laxfield	1820-1860	13016
Kersey	SFK	Any	All	13064
Kettle	SFK	Butley	1700-1880	13020
Larter	SFK	Parham	1700s on	13064
Last	SFK	Westleton, Dunwich	Before 1800	13041
Lawes	SFK	Bungay	Early 1800s	13059
Lingley	SFK	Newton, Sudbury	1500-1950	13069
Lister	SFK	Preston St Mary	All	13052
Lister	SFK	Thorpe Morieux	All	13052
Lister	YKS	Wakefield	All	13032
Lloyd	SFK	Cosford, Semer	1800s	13046
Lorking	SFK	Ipswich	All	13043
Mann	SFK	Edwardstone	All	13013
Mannall	SFK	Fritton	All	13023
Marjoram	SFK	Hoxne, Hartismere, Denham	Before 1864	13057
Marjoram	SFK	Laxfield, Mettingham	Before 1899	13057
Marshall	SFK	Ipswich	All	13048
Mason	SFK	Hoxne, Dunwich	Before 1800	13041
Matcham	SFK	Snapes	1764-1855	13071
Mayzes	SFK	Barnardiston	Pre-1810	13076
Meadows	SFK	North Suffolk	1600-1900	13037
Milsom	WIL	Any	All	13032
Milsom	YKS	Any	All	13032
Morgan	ANY	Any	All	13043
Moutle	SFK	Great Wenham	1780-1869	13046
Mudd	SFK	Chelmondiston, Ipswich	1827-1850	13074
Munnings	SFK	Yoxford	All	13026
Muttitt	SFK	Blythburgh	All	13061
Newark	SFK	Burgh Castle	1748-1796	13071
Norman	SFK	Bury	1700-1880	13018
Oakes	SFK	Yoxford	All	13026
Oakes	SFK	Stradbroke, Hoxne	Before 1866	13057
Osborn	SFK	Dedham, Ipswich	All	13064
Parker	SFK	Westleton, Dunwich	Before 1800	13041

Surname	Cnty	Place	Dates	Member #
Pearmain	SFK	Long Melford	1633-1812	13065
Petch	SFK	Lackford	1700-1900	13040
Playford	ANY	Any	All	13024
Potter	SFK	Wickham Skeith	All	13015
Prick	SFK	Barrow	1500-1750	13056
Ralf	SFK	Preston St Mary	All	13052
Ransome	SFK	Ipswich	All	13043
Rayner	SFK	Stradbroke	1750-1885	13049
Riches	SFK	Fressingfield	1730-1835	13040
Riches	SFK	Metfield	1820-1890	13040
Roberts	SFK	Ipswich	1840-1920	13029
Rogers	SFK	Coddenham, Barham, Ipswich	1870s on	13064
Root	CAM	Castle Camps, Shudy Camps	1740-1890	13039
Root	SFK	Glemsford	Late 1600s-1760	13039
Root	CAM	Horseheath	Late 1800s	13039
Ruffles	SFK	Shotley	Pre-1770	13074
Ruse	SFK	Stradbroke	1750-1885	13049
Ruthen	SFK	Blything	All	13019
Ruthven	SFK	Blything	All	13019
Salter	SFK	Lothingland Deanery	Before 1800	13041
Sargent	SFK	Any	1600-1900	13056
Selby	ANY		All	13021
Selsby	ANY		All	13021
Shave	SFK	Hunston	1650-1800	13028
Silburn	SFK	Ipswich, Henley	1850-1902	13029
Skinner	SFK	Woodbridge	All	13063
Smith	SFK	Belton	All	13023
Smith	SFK	Layham and Shelley	All	13027
Smith	SFK	Mildenhall, Freckenham	All	13024
Southgate	SFK	Any	1600-1900	13056
Sparrow	SFK	Ipswich	All	13048
Spence	SFK	Southwold	All	13037
Stannard	SFK	Reydon, Southwold	1750-1900	13037
Steward	ANY	Any	All	13025
Stokes	SFK	Any	All	13048
Stringer	SFK	Cotton, Wickham Skeith, Thorndon	All	13015
Styward	ANY	Any	All	13025
Summers	SFK	Debenham	1700-1830	13020
Syrett	SFK	Bury St Edmunds, Cotton	Up to mid-19th C	13036
Thompson	SFK	Middleton, Southwold	All	13037
Thurlow	SFK	Pettaugh	All	13062
Tills	ANY	Any	All	13024
Watts, Kezia	ANY	Any	All	13030
Whiting	SFK	Kenton, Monk Soham	1800-1910	13075
Wilby	SFK	Any	All	13012
Woodcock	SFK	Walsham le Willows	All	13019
Woods	SFK	Westleton, Dunwich	Before 1800	13041

BAPTISM INDEX NEWS

For many of our Suffolk ancestors this would have been the time for bringing in the harvest, and we're pleased to be bringing you yet more 'crops' of their baptisms, including some from pastures, or rather chapels, new. And just as their harvests could be challenged by pests and the 'gods', so too are ours!

New release

Our latest phase 3 (1650-1753) release is for the deanery area of Sudbury East, with some 33 parishes stretching from Bures St Mary on the border with Essex up to Hitcham, near Stowmarket, in the north and on to Hadleigh in the east.

This completes our coverage of all phase 3 Anglican baptisms in the west of the county and is also our 49th compilation of baptisms.

Our thanks for this go to our dedicated team of volunteers working mainly at Suffolk Archives' Bury St Edmunds branch, but also some from outside the county and one on the other side of the world:

Christine Palmer (leader)

Jan Broderick

Angela Cowling

Maggie Driver

Sue Kentish

Nicky Lewis

Barbara Linton-Clowes

Jane Marjoram

Mike Newstead

Sheila Piper

Jane Porter

Kevin Prior

Kevin Pulford

Janet Robinson

David Taylor

Sue Tearne

Giles Youngs

Suffolk Baptism Index

East of Sudbury Deanery

1650* - 1753*

Aldham (1667-), Assington, Bildeston, Boxford, Brent Eleigh, Brettenham, Bures St Mary (1660-), Chelsworth, Edwardstone, Elmsett (1686-), Groton, Hadleigh, Hitcham, Kersey, Kettlebaston, Layham, Lindsey (1652-), Milden, Monks Eleigh, Naughton, Nayland, Nedging, Newton, Polstead, Preston, Semer, Stoke by Nayland (1653-), Thorpe Morieux, Waldingfield Gt, Waldingfield Lt, Wattisham (1680-), Whatfield, Wissington.



SFK-BPI-04/P3
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All releases of CDs & downloads are available from our shop at <https://suffolkfhs.co.uk/shop/index.php/> and CDs from our Publications Manager: **Jean Licence**, 60 Oldfield Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP8 3SE. Cheques payable to SFHS Publications Ltd.

All members can get a 20% discount (excluding any postage) on the Society's publications using the code available in the Members' Area of the website.

Entries from this, and all our other completed parish files, published or not, are also available from our Baptism Search Service, details at the back of the journal.

Progress

- Our team at Bury, you will recall, were put under notice by the County Council's decision to close this branch. The disruption has been compounded by the unexpected decision of Suffolk Archives to bring the closure forward to the end of August, so that they would have three, yes three, months to move all the records to their new home at The Hold in Ipswich. So, by the time you read this the branch will have closed, but work on Clare deanery phase 4, the earliest registers, is continuing using all available resources.
- Our team at Ipswich have been affected by another Suffolk Archives decision, namely to stop all research at The Hold for three months from the end of September while they take in the records from Bury. As if this wasn't bad enough, many of the registers being used for Dunwich deanery phases 3 and 4 were recently quarantined when 'bugs' were found in them!
- Our Home team are continuing both on the final phase 3 deanery area, Lothingland, and also another phase 4 deanery area...

We also have some surprise news of a special **50th** release we are about to bring you:

A large collection, and our first, of baptisms from Nonconformist and workhouse registers, which our dedicated helpers have been transcribing over many years at both Bury and Ipswich Record Offices. It contains well over 50,000 entries from over 100 chapels and churches across the county, ranging in date between 1650 and 1964.

Full details will accompany the release, which is expected ahead of the Society's Family History Show on 19 October and also its 50th anniversary in January. Watch our website or read our newsletter for more details nearer the big day.

We hope this bountiful crop of baptism entries will help you break down a few more of those proverbial 'brick walls'. They are brought to you thanks to the good work of our dedicated teams of helpers, including **Arthur Bird** and **Derek Wright** who have formatted and presented the data for *all 50 releases*!

Alan Bumpstead

Baptism Index Co-ordinator

baptisms@suffolkfhs.org.uk

Suffolk Baptism Index Non-Conformist & Workhouses 1650* - 1964*



SFK-BPI- NC
PDF



MARRIAGE INDEX NEWS

'The Registers from 1658-1747 inclusive are missing. I have been informed that the Parish Clerk of the name of [blank] destroyed them all as well as other papers in a fit of insanity'

Quote taken from Little Glemham parish register.

Not quite 'abandon hope all ye who enter here', but hardly what you would like to find in your family history research!

However, the good news is that Loes and Orford Deanery phases 3 and 4, comprising 40 parishes from 1538-1754, is progressing well towards completion and the eventual release of two new CDs. Work on Carlford and Wilford Deanery phases 3 and 4, another 29 parishes from 1539-1754, is now under way.

As ever, the parish registers continue to deliver unexpected insights into our ancestors' lives; some funny, quite a few tragic, some recounting historical events, and many indicative of the cleric's attitude towards his wayward parishioners! It's surprising how often the serendipitous juxtaposition of brides' and grooms' surnames occur:

Eyke, 1542 – **William Wilde** and **Rose Free**

Stoke by Nayland, 1611 – **Myles Hedge** and **Alice Bush**

Sternfield, 1744 – **Thomas Fish** and **Mary Herring** (from Great Glemham)

Finally, my special thanks to **Pamela Palgrave** and her helpers over many years who produced much of what I am now working on and checking. Also, my thanks are due to **Diane Kirby** and **Adrian Howlett** who have generously added their help and expertise in checking obscure and difficult-to-read entries from the registers at The Hold, and to Arthur Bird and **Alan Bumpstead** for their ongoing support and encouragement. In addition, my thanks to Arthur Bird and Derek Wright for their work in bringing this all to fruition with the final production of the CDs.

Yvonne Hesketh

Marriages Index Co-ordinator

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WELCOME FROM THE EDITORS

We write this in the middle of an engrossing summer of sport, with Wimbledon and the Euros just over, the British Open under way (in dismal conditions), and the pizzazz of the Olympics about to start. So, for the sports-minded among us, there's plenty to tempt one away from the dogged pursuit of family history research. But even if you are avoiding the quiet of the archive room at present, whatever the reason, please spare time to read the great collection of articles making up this issue – which are thanks entirely to the efforts of you, the members.

Judging from the feedback, the ‘Animals’ theme of the previous issue was well-received. This time, we leave *terra firma* altogether with the theme ‘All at Sea’. The articles bring to life both the routine working lives of the seamen who plied their trade carrying goods up and down the East Coast, and the dangers encountered by anyone who goes to sea, whether due to bad weather, natural hazards or enemy action. It turns out there’s a lot to be said after all for the agricultural way of life!

The articles even bring you some stories of good, old-fashioned heroism. By coincidence, the July 2024 newsletter of Alde Valley Suffolk Family History Group featured one **Joshua Chard** (1812-1875), an unlicensed pilot (of the sea-going variety) who saved many lives working off Thorpe beach. A remembrance service was held for him at the end of July. Anyone interested can read more about Joshua at <http://www.thorpenessandaldringhamheritagegroup.co.uk/articles/joshua-chard-a-hero>.

In December, we will shift focus again to the theme of ‘Poverty and the Workhouse’. We thought of making it ‘Wealth and Riches’, but feared that if our ancestors are typical, this might make for a very thin volume! Many members will have ancestors who were poor or fell on hard times, and perhaps had to enter the workhouse. This is an opportunity to share their experiences. For further inspiration, we have put some prompts in the Future Themes section later in this issue. It doesn’t matter if you haven’t submitted an article before – it’s the story that counts, and our readers would really like to hear it.

If your ancestors were fortunate to live comfortably all their lives, don’t despair – we welcome articles on any aspect of family history, not necessarily with a Suffolk focus. If you’d like to test out an idea or enquire about the process, please just drop us a line.

Lesley Hall and Rob Ward
Co-editors, Suffolk Roots

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SPORLE AT SEA

My three grandsons want to be pirates when they grow up. There may not (yet) be a pirate in the family, but there is nautical blood. My 2x great-grandfather, **George Sporle**, sailed on small ships bringing coal down from the Durham coalfield to Ipswich. He was also 2x great-grandfather to new Suffolk FHS member **Kathy Przeniczny**. I am descended from George’s youngest daughter, **Emma Beaden** (1876-1962), Kathy from his eldest daughter **Louisa Jane** (1857-1940).

George was born on 6 July 1831, the son of another **George** (c. 1808-1872), a shoemaker in Bell Lane, Over Stoke, Ipswich. This looked down on the seaport, and the younger George was lured away to sea before he even reached 16. It seems likely that **Samuel Sporle** (1786-1866), first mate and then acting master of the *Orwell*, a ferry from Ipswich to London, was an uncle, so Samuel may have influenced young George.



*George Sporle in the centre, behind him his daughter Emma Beaden Stechmann née Sporle.
In the front row l-to-r, her children **Doris**, **Marie** (my paternal grandmother) and **Ethel** c.1903.*

When I first researched George's maritime history, it involved consulting microfilm of the relevant registers and schedules at the Public Record Office (now The National Archives) at Kew. The schedules only took me to the level of port and year. I would then have to order all the boxes containing the original crew lists for Ipswich for that year; thankfully, Ipswich was a small enough port to only require four boxes per year. Most years were missing, and the handwriting was terrible. I rather got the impression that people didn't like filling in the paperwork! From these crew lists I managed to discover some of George's earlier voyages.

In addition, **Jill Scott** (who wrote about her maritime Button ancestors in *Suffolk Roots*, March 2017, Vol. 42 No. 4, pp. 297-303) gave me information on later voyages when George sailed with her 2x great-grandfather **James Cottingham Mullett Button**.

In theory, Findmypast offers Merchant Navy crew lists online, but the indexing is not easy to use, and I only found one of George's voyages listed there. The Suffolk Archives catalogue also lists a register of all ships of over 1000 tons that entered Ipswich dock, but the ships I'm interested in were smaller than that.

The late **John White** of the Society for Sailing Barge Research gave me information about the actual ships. I had been under the impression, from both my father and books on maritime Ipswich, that the ships there had been much like Thames sailing

barges, but in fact they were mostly similar sized ships called 'brigs', albeit at the smallest end of their size range. A brig was square-rigged (i.e. the sails were arranged as on *HMS Victory* and the *Cutty Sark*) but had only two masts. To my inexpert eye they look like 1/3 scale models of the *Cutty Sark*. It surprised me that they could be run by crews of typically only six people. A 'snow' seems to be a variant of a 'brig'; I don't understand the difference, but a snow was faster (and the ship of choice for a pirate!).

The 1850 crew lists for Ipswich-registered ships show him as a seaman on the:

Port Packet, registered 1847(?), burden (i.e. how much it could carry) 117 tons; master **Philip Balaam**, aged 41; total crew 8; coal trade. George was recorded as aged 19, ticket 354713, paid £2 10s per voyage, joined 17 October, remained at end of year, previous ship the same.

The 1856 crew lists for Ipswich report the *Port Packet* voyaging between Ipswich and Sunderland or Seaham, with master **Theodore Hadcraft** and a total crew of 5. The *Port Packet* was a square stern snow, 71.4' x 18.0' x 11.1', c[onstructed?] 1795 at Ipswich, owned by **William Bayley** of Ipswich in 1846, **George Johnson** and Philip Ballam of Ipswich in 1847, William Bayley of Ipswich in 1851, and last seen on 20 January 1863.

The 1851 crew lists for Ipswich-registered ships list George as a seaman on the *Visitor* and the *Agile*:

On the *Visitor* (registered 1850, burden 151 tons, mate **Charles Plant**, total crew 5), George was 19, paid £1 15s per month or voyage, making coasting voyages to Sunderland and back (30 January-10 February), West Hartlepool and back (3-17 March, 21 March-7 April, and 19 April-3 May), all with coal. The ship also voyaged without him to West Hartlepool and back 14 May-2 June and 13 June-5 July. The *Visitor* was a square stern schooner, 77.7' x 19.7' x 12.1', with a man's bust figurehead, c[onstructed?] April 1840 by William Bayley at Ipswich for himself. On 1 November 1888 it 'Left Seaham for Ipswich and not since heard of, reported lost'.

On the *Agile* (registered 1841, burden 152 tons, master **John Elwood**, total crew 6), George was 20, paid £2 per month or voyage, making voyages on 22 March-3 April, 17-24 April and 7-27 May for the coal trade; he was paid £2 10s per month or voyage, for a voyage leaving Ipswich 9 July, arriving Hartlepool 13 July, back in Ipswich 22 July, and leaving this ship 28 July. The *Agile* was a square stern brig, 85.6' x 20.5' x 12.0', with a female bust figurehead, c[onstructed?] July 1841 by William Bayley at Ipswich for himself. Lost Sept 1875.

George married **Louisa Taylor** on 8 February 1854 at St Clement's Church, Ipswich. Louisa's family had run sailors' pubs, with suitably nautical names, in the St Clement's area for many generations. These included the *Noah's Ark*, renamed the *Lord Nelson* after **Nelson** became a viscount following the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801, and the

Safe Harbour. Louisa's parents weren't actually publicans but ran a tobacconist's next to the *Safe Harbour*. The *Lord Nelson* is still frequented by people visiting the marina in leisure craft, but the site of the *Safe Harbour* is now just the patch of grass in front of Goals Ipswich in Grimwade Street.

Family legend has it that Louisa had said that she would only marry George if he gave up sailing. Her concerns were justified, as all four of his first known ships were lost at sea (thankfully without him aboard!). George did try to find a job away from the sea – he had a brief but unsuccessful period as a police constable in 1861, and in later years worked on the railways – but in the meantime he still went to sea, probably due to financial necessity. Losses of ships didn't noticeably reduce until after the introduction in 1876 of the Plimsoll line, a mark on the side of a ship to prevent overloading, but by that time the railways had taken most of the coal trade anyway.

The Register of Seamen 1853-1857 lists George as age 25, on a voyage on the:

Countess, of Ipswich on 21 August 1856. The *Countess* was a square stern brig, 70.4' x 17.9' x 11.3', c[onstructed?] March 1839 by **Ambrose Reeve Palmer** at Yarmouth for **Charles Kersey Coe**, **Charles Pretyman** and **William Pretyman** of Ipswich, owned by **James Cuckow** and **Joseph Mayhew** in 1848, and by James Cuckow of Ipswich in 1853. Lost off Aldeborough [*sic*] 2 December 1859, when it ran aground on Sizewell Bank. The Aldeburgh lifeboat was launched the next day but had a wasted trip as the crew had already made their own way to shore on the ship's boat.

The crew lists from 4 July 1863-20 January 1864 for the port of Ipswich list George as a seaman on the:

Rapid (registered in Ipswich in 1848; tonnage 144; managing owner **Thomas Brereton** of St Helens, Ipswich; master **Isaac Bonsfield** of St Helens, Ipswich; sailed from Ipswich 28 November, arrived at Sunderland 30 November, sailed from Sunderland 6 December, arrived Ipswich 11 December).

George was listed as aged 30 (actually 32), born Ipswich. His previous ship was the *Alert* of Ipswich, from which he was discharged on 18 November 1863 at Ipswich. He joined this ship (the *Rapid*) on 24 November 1863 at Ipswich, and was discharged on 13 December 1863.

The crew lists from 1 January 1866-30 June 1866 for Seaham, port of Sunderland, record him as an 'AB' on the:

Zephyr (registered in Ipswich in 1855; tonnage 89; managing owner and master **W Beaumont** of Saloon[?] Street, Ipswich; sailed from Ipswich 28 May 1866, from Seaham on 7 June 1866, from Ipswich on 20 June 1866, and from Blyth on 27 June 1866).

George was listed as aged 38 (actually 34), born Ipswich. His previous ship was the *William Parker* of Ipswich, from which he was discharged on 12 May 1866 in Ipswich. He joined this ship (the *Zephyr*) on 26 May 1866, and remained on it on 30 June 1866. (In 1861 William Beaumont was at 42 Silone Place, Duke Street. Saloon Street/Silone Place was probably what the 1927 map calls Siloam Place, on the east side of Duke Street, where the Travelodge now stands. In 1871 Beaumont was master aboard the *Zephyr* in the harbour.)

Family legend also had it that George had been first mate on the paddle steamer *Orwell*, but there is probably confusion with Samuel Sporle, George's uncle, and between multiple vessels named *Orwell*. The paddle steamer *Orwell* operated between Harwich and Ipswich from 1873 until 1890, when it suffered a collision and was afterwards scrapped rather than repaired.

When ashore, George lived at various addresses in the poor St Clement's area of Ipswich: Princes Street (the one later renamed Dorkin Street, not the current one) in 1854, Victoria Street in 1855, 12 Upper Gibson Street in 1857, 2 Mill Street in 1861, 3 Mill Street in 1871, and Hamilton Street (a renaming of Mill Street) in 1874. The area was subject to slum clearance in 1935-1938, a college of further education was built there in the 1950s, and much of the site is now occupied by the University of Suffolk.

From 1874 George worked on the railways, but that's another story. He died in 1916.

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THE SINKING OF THE WINGRAVE

My maternal Boxshall ancestors were originally from Wotton, Surrey and the surrounding villages. Whilst my 2x great-grandmother **Jane Isabella Boxshall** followed her sister and moved to the Southwark area of London, never far from the Thames, their brother **Thomas** headed for the sea and ended up establishing a Boxshall dynasty up North, in Tynemouth. He had obtained his Mate's certificate by 1852.

What has this to do with Suffolk, you might ask? Well, several of Thomas' sons also became seafarers, and his daughters married men who were also connected to ships and the sea.

Many of those ships the family were working on plied the coal trade from Newcastle to London. This meant they were up and down the East Coast from the Tyne, past several counties, including Suffolk, to offload the coal in the Thames dockyards. This trade must have been so regular that Thomas was able to be a witness, alongside his sister Jane Isabella, at his niece **Jane Isabella Thorne's** marriage to **William Gough** in

Bermondsey in the spring of 1867. William's mother **Charlotte Cooper** was a Suffolk lass who had been born in Yoxford.

Thomas Boxshall's second son was also named **Thomas** after his father and grandfather. Born in 1842, he was indentured as a seaman aged 12 on 9 March 1855 in South Shields. Sadly, he was not destined to have a long career like his father and brothers. According to the Registers of Deaths at Sea, 1844-1890, Thomas died when his vessel, the *Wingrave*, was lost in 'Aldbrough Bay' on 13 October 1858. It took several years of searching to even work out where 'Aldbrough Bay' was. Eventually an article was found in the *Halesworth Times* of 26 October 1858 that shed some light on the sad incident. It seems the night was dark and the weather murky. Was it foggy or stormy? The *Wingrave*, a laden coal brig,⁽¹⁾ was heading for London when it was hit by the *Kangaroo*, a screw steamer en route from London to Inverness. The *Kangaroo* limped into Lowestoft with a damaged bow, but the *Wingrave* sank with the crew of 13 all drowning.⁽²⁾⁽³⁾

One can only imagine the sadness of the family. Were some of the other family members also out at sea at the time? How long did it take for the information to filter back to Northumberland and Thomas' parents? The disaster was widely reported in the regional press over the following days. It is likely that the tiny sum of wages owing to Thomas would have been paid to his family many months later.

Were the drowned men washed ashore and if so, where would they have been buried? Perhaps they are in a corner of some graveyard near Aldeburgh. Maybe they were never identified, but their story is registered somewhere. If anyone has a clue about this, the author would love to know.



A coal brig, the Mary of South Shields, painted in 1855 by John Scott (1802-1885). Image courtesy of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums

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1. The Appropriation Books listed the *Wingrave*, with a tonnage of 268, as having been registered in Newcastle on 11 April 1835: <https://www.crewlist.org.uk/about/appropriationbooks>. A note in the margin dated 31 January 1878 says it was lost with a registration certificate pending. The vessel's official number was 24480 in a list that included many lost, wrecked or stranded vessels. Although registered in Newcastle, the *Wingrave* had been built in Sunderland.
2. A list naming deceased sailors included Thomas Boxshall and only eight others who were on the *Wingrave* at the date of the sinking: *Registers of Wages & Effects of Deceased Seamen*; Class: BT 153; Piece: 3, The National Archives, Kew (images available on subscription sites). The list states that the *Wingrave* was 'lost Aldbrough Bay' 13 October 1858. These sailors were paid (presumably their families received the money) on 13 June 1859 in Shields. Thomas Boxshall had been engaged on the ship since 2 March 1855.
3. The *Kangaroo* was herself lost in the Irish Sea in 1862: <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/~cmi/books/earlySS/kangaroo.html> (accessed 1 August 2024).

EDWARD WEST 'LADDIE' WOODS: GORLESTON'S LIFEBOAT HERO

Edward West Woods (better known as 'Laddie' Woods) was born at Gorleston during the last quarter of 1841, the son of **Edward West Woods** (1809-1866) and **Mary Ann Woods née Warrant** (1810-1885). Gorleston is today a suburb of neighbouring Great Yarmouth, the Norfolk coastal town, but in Laddie's time it was considered to be an ancient Suffolk parish and had been for hundreds of years. Laddie's father was a shipwright, but was also a member of one of the companies of boatmen that collectively owned and crewed private lifeboats. In the mid-19th century, there were three companies of Gorleston boatmen: the Rangers, the Storm Company and the Young Flies. The *Illustrated London News* of 14 December 1867 described Gorleston as follows:

'This place is inhabited entirely by fishermen, boatmen and other seafaring people. Three yawl lifeboats are kept there, by companies of men who obtain a livelihood by affording help to ships in distress, supplying them, as occasion may require, with cables or stores of any kind, assisting them to reach a place of safety, or saving the wrecked property of the underwriters, hence they are often called "salvage boats". The earnings of these men depend upon the value of the property they save; but it often happens that they entirely fail in saving property that would reward them for their daring venture among the terrible breakers that lash the sands which form the roadstead at Yarmouth; and they sometimes return with the crew of a wrecked ship, whose lives they have saved, but for which service they get next to nothing. It should be observed that these boats are in no way connected with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution but rely on their own earnings for the means of maintaining themselves, their families and their boats'.

At that time, the majority of United Kingdom shipwrecks occurred off the Norfolk and Suffolk coasts. When the weather was stormy the Gorleston boatmen kept a watchful eye on the sea from their elevated lookouts, and if a vessel got into difficulties a lifeboat crew would be formed and put to sea to rescue the crewmen of the stricken vessel and to salvage the ship and its cargo. On 1 May 1860, Laddie Woods was a young crew member of the Ranger Company's lifeboat, *Rescuer*, when they saved the lives of seven crewmen of the ship *Ann*, of Torquay, and the crew of a brig that had collided with the *Ann*. On Christmas Day 1862 Laddie married **Maria Ann Eliza Webb** (1840-1904) at Great Yarmouth parish church. From the marriage register it is plain to see that neither Laddie nor Maria was literate, as both signed the entry with a cross.

Laddie's own description of a disaster at sea was recorded by **Arthur Patterson** in his book *Man and Nature on Tidal Waters* (1909):

'On the 13th January 1866 it was a Saturday, we see signals of distress, and put off to sea in the lifeboat Rescuer. The wind was offshore, and we didn't feel much of it while we were

going along in the Lee of the pier; in fact, it fared right calm at the pier end. It was an ebb tide. We'd got the mainsail up but hadn't got the jib up, when the wind struck her, filled the sail and hove her down, the sea breakin' in to her, and capsized her. None of us had got our life belts on; and in the rough seas each had to look after hisself. There was twelve on us strugglin' in the sea, and eight was drowned. The wurst on it was, there wor eight widows left, and thirty youngsters with 'em; and one of us as who was seft [saved] lived only forty hours, and then pegged out.'



Edward 'Laddie' Woods at Yarmouth

Laddie Woods appears to have been a man of few words and had typically underplayed the seriousness of this tragic event in the verbal account that he gave some 40 years later. In reality he had lost his father, a brother-in-law and four cousins in the disaster. Laddie was found clinging to the keel of the upturned *Rescuer* and was himself rescued by the crew of the *Friend of All Nations*, another private lifeboat owned by the rival Young Flies Company, that had put to sea at the same time as *Rescuer*. It was in this same year, 1866, that the RNLI established a lifeboat station at Gorleston with its boat *Leicester*, and later the *Mark Lane*. Laddie Woods became Coxswain of the *Mark Lane* and by 1893 he had saved 172 lives during his service with the RNLI. In 1891 he was awarded a Silver Medal by the Institution. However, it is of a different aspect of Laddie's life that I would like to tell the story.

My great-grandmother, **Edith Annie Woods**, was born out of wedlock on 6 June 1873 at Oulton Workhouse. Her birth certificate does not record her father's name, but her mother was **Rebecca Warnes Woods** (1850-1927), Laddie's youngest sister. On 31 December 1878 Rebecca married **James Samuel Read** (1858-1925), a Gorleston 'Sail Maker', and went on to have more children with him.

For reasons that today are unknown, Edith's care and welfare passed into the hands of her uncle Laddie Woods and his wife Maria Ann, who had no children of their

own. The 1881 census records my great-grandmother Edith Woods, a '*Scholar*' aged 7, living with Edward Woods, a '*Fisherman*' aged 39, and his wife Maria, aged 40, on Cliff Hill, Gorleston. Edith had been a pupil at the Stradbroke School and it is believed that Laddie and Maria financed her education. It is not known how long she was with Laddie and Maria, but 10 years later the 1891 census shows Edith Woods, now aged 17, as a servant in the home of **Alfred Brown**, fish merchant, of 69 King Street, Great Yarmouth, his wife **Mary Ann** and her niece **Alice George**, aged 14.

Alice George was the daughter of **Samuel** and **Sarah (née Woods) George**. Samuel had been a member of the crew of the Storm Company lifeboat *Refuge* who on 10 November 1888 had lost his life by drowning near Gorleston Pier along with three others. Sarah George was another of Laddie Woods' sisters, and the *Refuge* disaster had a devastating effect on her family, with most of her children being put into the care of others. Her son **Henry Edward George** (1881-1956) was also placed in the home of Laddie and Maria Woods. The 1891 census shows Henry George, aged 10, living with his uncle Edward W Woods, a '*Boatman*', and his aunt Maria Woods at 10 Neptune Terrace, Gorleston. Ten years later, the 1901 census records Henry as a member of the crew of the *Trincomalee*, a training ship based at the time at Cowes, on the Isle of Wight.

Laddie Woods retired from the service of the RNLI in May 1903 and sadly, on 26 November 1904, his wife Maria died at their home on Boundary Road, Gorleston. My great-grandmother Edith offered a grieving Uncle Laddie a home with her, her husband **Edward Arthur Graystone** and four children, at 23 Victoria Road, Great Yarmouth. This was a three-bedroom property that was also a fruit and vegetable shop trading as E A Graystone. Uncle Laddie accepted her offer and was given the use of the front bedroom. The rest of the family squeezed up to make room for their distinguished guest, with Edward and Edith in the middle bedroom and the children in the back bedroom.

It is believed among the family today that Edith must have felt a huge debt of gratitude towards Laddie and Maria Woods for taking her into their home when she was a child, and that she was simply looking after him as a daughter would look after a widowed father. Edward West Woods died on 12 October 1911 at 23 Victoria Road, Great Yarmouth. A guard of honour of lifeboatmen escorted his coffin from the house to St Andrew's Church in Gorleston, where his funeral service was conducted by the **Rev Forbes Phillips**. Edward West Woods was a brave and fearless lifeboatman, but he was also a kind, thoughtful and caring man who treated Edith Woods and Henry George as if they were his own children.

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FISHING FAMILY'S FATALITIES

This is the story of two sons of **Alfred Scriven** and **Mary Ann (née Everson)** of Wrentham.

The first, **Alfred William**, was born on 5 May 1875 and was reported '*missing presumed drowned*' on 5 May 1914 from the steam drifter *Nelson* (registered at Grimsby), on which he was the 3rd hand. The wheelhouse and the bell of the vessel were picked up on 5 September following a number of incidents in which fishing vessels were destroyed by mines. The vessel's registration was closed on 9 November 1914 with her being reported '*Blown up by enemy*'.⁽¹⁾

The second son was **George**, born on 9 October 1890. He later settled in Milford Haven (presumably having moved round with the Lowestoft fleet) and lived there for 25 years. On 8 December 1920 he married **Victoria May Davies** at Milford Haven.

While he was trawling off Fastnet on 1 June 1915 on the *Victoria* (built 1890 in Hull, registered with Brand & Co.) the vessel was attacked by U-boat U-34 off the Isles of Scilly. While attempting to escape, the skipper and five crew were killed and the vessel was badly damaged. Four of the crew survived and were taken on board the submarine, where they were well-treated. The U-boat Captain's log contains the following account:⁽²⁾

'01.06.1915

Ordered the trawler to stop by firing a warning shot, but it was ignored. After the first hit from our gun the steamer tried to escape at maximum speed. Finally the vessel caught fire ... after having been hit by 10-12 direct shots.

Afterwards I directed the boat to the steamer which was named VIKTORIA (sic) with port of registry Fleetwood and sank the vessel with an explosive charge. 4 survivors of the crew of which 3 were in the sea and 1 on board of the steamer were taken onto our boat. The captain and 5 crewmen were killed by gunfire. The survivors stated that after the first warning shot they asked the captain on their knees to stop. He rejected having the opinion that he could manage to escape.

I think it is most probable that only the captain knew the purpose that the vessel was acting as a guard vessel. The whole behaviour in any case makes it obvious that it was a guard vessel which also fulfilled fishing duties. It is very remarkable that although the steamer received a lot of hits with inner and head ammunition it didn't sink. It was obvious that the effect on the steamer was extremely devastating. ...

02.06.1915

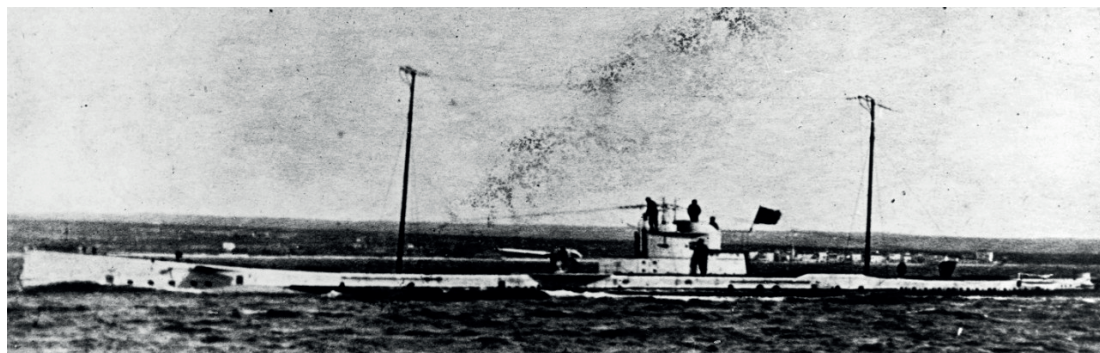
South of St George channel, cloudily, good sight. Emerged. On the horizon a couple of trawlers came into sight which are apparently doing fishing work.

A trawler comes close to us so that he can be reached by gun. It was ordered to stop. Also on this occasion the steamer stops only after he receives the first hit from our gun. The crew and 4 crew members from VIKTORIA were placed into the dingy to send to the closest fishing vessel. The steamer which was named HIROSE from Cardiff was sunk by explosive charge. ...'

The incident was widely reported in the press, which had a very different take on how the crews of the *Victoria* and *Hirose* came to reach safety. Far from being put into a dinghy and making their way to a nearby trawler, it was reported that they were set adrift in a small boat with half-a-dozen biscuits to serve between the 14 of them, after which they rowed about in the wind and drenching rain for 24 hours until picked up by the Cardiff steamer *Ballater*.⁽³⁾ The accounts are impossible to reconcile. Somebody was clearly not telling the whole truth, though whether this was the U-boat captain, the (anti-German) press or the rescued seamen may never be known.

George Scriven was later chief engineer on the *Surmount*. Following a bicycle accident in Milford Haven during WWII, he was admitted to the local hospital where he died a few hours later. He was buried in the cemetery there on 22 May 1942, aged 50.

His son, also **George Scriven**, 3rd hand on the fishing vessel *Charmouth*, was blown up after pulling a mine in her nets on 14 November 1946. He was 21 years old and is commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial. He was the nephew of the skipper (**William Reid**) and had only been fishing for 18 months.



*A grainy image of the U-34, which sank 119 ships before disappearing without trace in October 1918.⁽⁴⁾
Image courtesy of the Naval History and Heritage Command website*

Paul Scriven MBE Mb 16

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2. <http://www.fleetwood-trawlers.info/index.php/2009/01/st-victoria-fd37/>; http://www.llangibby.eclipse.co.uk/accidents%20&%20incidents/victoria_fd_37.htm (accessed 18 July 2024)
3. See e.g. *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, Friday 4 June 1915; *Shields Daily News*, Saturday 5 June 1915.
4. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SM_U-34_\(Germany\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SM_U-34_(Germany)) (accessed 18 July 2024)

MAN THE LIFEBOATS!

While researching my husband **Brian**'s family history I discovered a connection to a family of Cromer fishermen. This was a surprise, as most of his relations seemed to have lived to the west of London. However, his 2x great-grandfather, **Joseph Pledger** (1823-1870), had married **Sarah Ann Mayes** (1821-1890), the daughter of **Thomas** and **Ann Mayes**, who brought up a large family in various cottages in Cromer, Norfolk. Thomas was a fisherman, and his two eldest sons, **William**, nicknamed 'Blimber', and **James**, known as Jimmy, formed his crew. The two boys were also part of the crew of the second Cromer lifeboat. The *Benjamin Bond Cabbell* was a 10-oared, 34-foot, self-righting lifeboat, built by Woolf at Shadwell at a cost of £300, and launched in 1868. She launched nine times and saved 31 lives. She was replaced in 1884 by another boat also named after **Benjamin Cabbell**, as he had paid for them.

A lifeboat had been launched from Cromer beach since 1804, funded by local subscription, but the service fell into disrepair and the RNLI took it over in 1851, together with other Norfolk Association stations. A new slipway was built across the beach, and a new lifeboat house was constructed, which was also financed by Cabbell. The lifeboat house was reached down a steep road called the Gangway, and the Mayes brothers, who had now inherited their father's fishing boat, lived next door to each other, with their families, at the top of the road on the corner of Church Street.

From a document in Cromer Museum, it appears that the Mayes brothers had something of a reputation in the town. The railway had been extended to Cromer in 1859, and the middle classes had begun to take seaside holidays by train. The fishing community of Cromer quickly saw an opportunity to increase their income by renting bedrooms to the visitors. The Mayes boys were the first people in the town to take ladies out in their boat and teach them to swim! Whether they did this by throwing them overboard, the account does not say. One of their regular lodgers was a London solicitor who enjoyed going out fishing with the brothers. He had an ambition to sail round the coast of Britain, and had a boat built at Sheringham which the Mayes brothers crewed for him. The Museum account says that '*after many adventures*' they arrived back in Cromer and the solicitor gave the brothers the boat, which they used for fishing for the rest of their working lives.

William's grandson, **Gilbert 'Gilly' Mayes** (1871-1934), was also a fisherman and part of the lifeboat crew during WWI. He sailed under the most famous of the RNLI coxswains, **Henry Blogg**, to whom the Cromer RNLI Museum is dedicated.

The lifeboat *Louisa Heartwell* came into service in 1902. She carried 14 oars and was in use until 1931. In January 1917 she rescued 11 men from the *SS Fernebo*, earning coxswain Henry Blogg the first of his Gold Medals. All the crew, including Gilly Mayes, were awarded Bronze Medals. Gilly married the sister of another of the lifeboat crew and they used to go out in his brother-in-law's boat. In July 1934 they

were out fishing when the weather deteriorated and the boat, the *White Heather*, sank. Both men drowned, Gilly's body washing up 12 days later.



Gilbert Mayes is the small man, 3rd from left, front row. Photo by author, of display at Cromer RNLI Museum.



The Louisa Heartwell lifeboat, from an old postcard, Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons

Henry Blogg continued as coxswain through WWII, and the motorised lifeboat in use at this time is on display in the museum. On the wall above the boat is a photograph of the WWI crew, including our ancestor, Gilly Mayes. There are 28 members of the Mayes family buried in Cromer Old Cemetery. We feel very proud to have these brave men and their relatives in our family history.

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THAMES SAILING BARGES & MY HARDEN, PASSIFUL & BRANCH SEAFARING ANCESTORS

I do not seem to have inherited the seafarer genes of my Harden ancestors, as I suffer from seasickness as soon as I set foot off dry land. My Harden ancestors were clearly more suited to the sea, with several generations following a nautical way of life.

The earliest of my ancestors to take to the sea was my 4x great-grandfather **William Harden** (b. 1767), whose occupation was given as sailor on the marriage certificate of his son, my 3x great-grandfather **John Harden** (1811-1885), who was a bargeman.

My 2x great-grandfather, **Henry Harden** (1854-1912) was a Master Mariner and skippered a number of Thames sailing barges, including the *Iota*, *New Trader*, *James*, *Consul*, and *Alderman*, after first acting as mate on the barge *Shorne* in 1871. His home port was Harwich and he used to sail north to the Humber, as far as Dover in the south and also across the Channel, usually to Dunkirk, carrying general cargo. Often, he would be accompanied by his wife, my 2x great-grandmother **Emma Harden (née Alexander)** (1858-1927). In 1885, while he was skipper of the barge *James*, he was involved in an incident off Margate when he had to slip an anchor whilst riding out a northerly gale, resulting in some considerable damage to sails and gear. It is interesting to note that the value of the *James* in her damaged state was only £150, whereas the cargo of seed she was carrying was valued at £859!

Like most people undertaking family history research, I have come across occasions when I have not been able to trace my seafaring ancestors. It was then that I discovered that there are different census forms for those away from their land-based homes on the day of the census. This was the case with Henry Harden and his family, who at the time of the 1891 census I found on board the barge *New Trader*, loading at Tilbury. From the census I can see that Henry was travelling with his wife Emma Harden, their sons **William Henry ('Harry') Harden** (1876–1954) and **John Harden** (1880-1955), and another crew member. Interestingly, whilst Emma was designated as a passenger, her sons William and John were recorded as crew, with the duties of cook and barge boy respectively.

John, my great-grandfather, sailed for a time with his father as mate in the *Consul* and the *Alderman*, but after obtaining his Master Mariner Certificate he became skipper of the barges *Aline* and then the *Colonia*. The *Colonia* was owned by Grooms of Harwich before being sold to Cranfield's, the local flour millers at Ipswich; my great-grandfather went with her. His main cargoes then became flour to London and Rochester, and wheat from London back. He sailed this barge for some 32 years until his retirement in 1945.

During the two World Wars my great-grandfather continued sailing barges and was involved in many hair-raising incidents, including being machine-gunned by enemy

aircraft. When World War II broke-out he was issued with a 0.303 rifle with which to defend himself and the barge. It has been suggested that the only thing he ever shot at was an occasional seagull! Early in 1945, when the war in Europe had finished, he was bound for London with a cargo of flour and off Sheerness was 'buzzed' by a Royal Navy Motor Torpedo Boat, which eventually ran into him causing considerable damage to the barge. After some hurried temporary repairs, he managed to reach his destination and discharge his cargo; but the barge had to spend six months in the shipyard undergoing repairs. You can imagine that the commander of the MTB was not very popular!



Henry and John Harden jnr. on board the barge Alderman at Colchester

It is thought that my great-grandmother, **Eliza Harden (née Branch)** (1883-1973), often accompanied my great-grandfather on the barge, sometimes taking three or four children as well. When the barge was sailing light, that is without cargo, the hold made an excellent playground, and with the ladder removed it was also the safest place to be. I understand that the bosun's chair would sometimes be rigged up in the hold so that the children could use it as a swing.

When the *Colonia* was built, she had a stateroom complete with bed so that there was plenty of accommodation on board, but this was removed and the hold made larger so that bigger cargoes could be loaded.

The owners, Cranfield's, later sold the *Colonia* to Daniel Bros. of Whitstable, and it eventually foundered in a gale off Whitstable in November 1956. The story of her loss was told in the Society for Sailing Barge Research's Summer 1973 Bulletin, which reported that the crew of two plus their pet dog and budgerigar were all saved by the

Southend lifeboat before *Colonia* dipped beneath the waves.

It has always been customary for barges, or any vessel for that matter, to be named after people, but in our family the reverse applied and no fewer than three Hardens were named after barges: **James ('Jim') Maurice Harden** (1920-2011), my great-uncle, was probably named after the sailing barge *James* sailed by my 2x great-grandfather Henry Harden; **John Henry Passiful Harden** (1907-1990), James's brother and another great-uncle, is thought to have been named after a spritsail barge named *John*, built at Findsbury in Kent; and my paternal grandmother, **Malvina Rosabella Last (née Harden)** (1908-1981), was not very happy at being named after the sailing barge *Malvina*.



Barge Colonia at Ipswich Docks

My 2x great-uncle Harry Harden, my great-grandfather's brother, was also in barges all his working life. For many years he was mate with my great-grandfather on the *Colonia* and he then skippered the *Harcourt* and, in later years, the *Kimberley*.

Other ancestors who had a nautical background included another 4x great-grandfather, **Edward Passiful** (b. 1794), who lived at Felixstowe Ferry and was not only a mariner but also the landlord of the *Ferryboat Inn*. It is thought that he may have skippered the schooner *Bernard Barton* after its launch in 1840. I also can't forget my 3x great-grandfather **Benjamin Branch** (1812-1855), who according to one Harwich directory traded as a privateer / mariner from King's Quay Street in Harwich St Nicholas, or his son, also named **Benjamin Branch** (1840-1891), who followed his father to become a Master Mariner.

Finally, life on the sea may not always be plain sailing and it must be remembered that it can be a dangerous place, as illustrated by the loss of my 2x great-grandfather **Passiful George Branch** (1853-1898), who drowned when he took two people out at night in an unlit boat, which was against regulations, to see the 'continental boats' leave Harwich Harbour, and his rowing boat was hit by the *SS Cambridge*, which did not see the smaller vessel in its path.

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FROM WINGFIELD TO ROSSER: A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF ROBERT LEFLEY 1837-1918

My 2x great-grandfather **Robert Lefley**, son of **Cyrus** and **Priscilla (née Mortimer) Lefley**, was born on 6 August 1837 in Wingfield, Suffolk. He died in Rosser, Manitoba, Canada on 7 February 1918 and was buried at St Michael's Anglican Cemetery, Grosse Isle, Rosser. Robert married **Ann 'Annie' Elizabeth Watson** on 22 April 1863 in Long Riston, Yorkshire. Annie, who was born on 30 October 1843 in Cottingham, Yorkshire, to **John** and **Mary-Ann (née Reed) Watson**, died in Rosser on 28 February 1917, and was also buried at St Michael's Anglican Cemetery, Grosse Isle.

Early life in Suffolk

Born into an agricultural labouring family, Robert's boyhood in Suffolk was likely one of hard work with periods of want and plenty. His parish of birth, Wingfield, was described in **William White's** 1844 Gazetteer as '*a pleasant but widely scattered village, with several neat houses ... [and] 668 souls*'.⁽¹⁾ In comparison with the rest of the county, this area of Suffolk had a large proportion of arable land: between 71% and 80%, mostly made up of wheat and barley crops.⁽²⁾

Therefore, the majority of people made their living off the land, either as farmers or agricultural labourers. The latter lived a precarious existence with periods of low wages and high outgoings and also of unemployment, especially during the winter months. As **Ian Waller** notes:

'The agricultural revolution, particularly field enclosure, meant there was a shift from the self-sufficient open field system to tenant farmers employing labourers. Hiring on a casual basis was introduced which meant that there was no pay if there was no work. Since enclosure, it was the norm for labourers to be paid by the day and to be employed for short periods doing specific jobs such as ditching, harvesting, threshing and so on. The inevitable result was a surplus of labour which effectively became permanent as a result of the further development of agricultural technologies. Job security was non-existent for the majority.'⁽³⁾

Robert and his family were no exception to this situation. By the time of the 1841 census, the family had moved two miles north from Wingfield to Syleham, described in a contemporary account as '*a scattered village on the south side of the river Waveney ... Its parish contains 399 souls, and 1603 acres of fertile and well-wooded land*'.⁽⁴⁾

At the time of this census, Robert was living with his mother Priscilla and three siblings. Her occupation, struck through, was recorded as '*Ag Lab's wife*'. The family had obviously fallen on hard times. On 16 December 1840, Robert's father Cyrus was arrested for stealing three bushels of wheat and a sack from **Rev Augustus Cooper** of Syleham.⁽⁵⁾ This was not an uncommon activity among agricultural labourers. In her analysis of Suffolk prison registers, **Rosalind Crone** notes that '*the great majority*

[of prisoners] *were arrested for ... petty thefts ... a crime which could often be described as a strategy to supplement meagre incomes or to cope with periods of unemployment*'.⁽⁶⁾

At the Ipswich Quarter Sessions on 8 January 1841, Cyrus was sentenced to six months incarceration at the Suffolk County Gaol, where he was enumerated on 6 June 1841. Cyrus' entry in the Ipswich Gaol Receiving Book notes that while he was in jail Priscilla was receiving parish relief,⁽⁷⁾ which consisted of either money, food or clothing or a combination of all three. She and the children were spared time in the Union Workhouse at Stradbroke, however, thanks to an Order of the Poor Law Commissioners which exempted *'every able-bodied person ... together with such of the family ... as may be resident with him ... where such person shall be confined in any gaol or place of safe custody*'.⁽⁸⁾

Ten years later the family was still living in Syleham, and Robert was enumerated in the 1851 census as an *'Ag Lab's son'*. As a 14-year-old boy he would have graduated to heavier work, but from the age of six or seven he would likely have been engaged in *'weeding, corn-dropping, pulling turnips, crow-keeping, and assist[ing] in stone-picking*'.⁽⁹⁾ It seems probable that Rev Cooper, from whom Cyrus had stolen 10 years before, had forgiven him, as the family was most likely living on the grounds of, or very near, Syleham Hall, Cooper's residence.⁽¹⁰⁾

Migration to Yorkshire

Most likely drawn by the prospect of regular employment, better wages and improved living conditions, by 1861 Robert had migrated to Long Riston in the East Riding of Yorkshire, approximately 170 miles north of Syleham. Yorkshire at that time had become far more industrialized than Suffolk: *'Inventions and improvements to manufacturing processes, together with certain benefits of geology and geography and the presence or otherwise of established practices and traditions, determined the progress of industrial change*'.⁽¹¹⁾ Mechanization of the textile industry, including the introduction of the power loom, as well as the expansion of large coal mines *'were important in establishing ... Yorkshire as one of the main industrial areas in the country*'.⁽¹²⁾

To reach Long Riston, Robert probably travelled by train. By 1849, Ipswich was linked with Bury St Edmunds and Norwich, and within the next 20 years, most of the main towns in Suffolk were linked together and with London.⁽¹³⁾ The line from London to Yorkshire had opened in 1850.⁽¹⁴⁾

The 1861 census recorded Robert's occupation as a carrier⁽¹⁵⁾ and that he was living alone. Two years later, on 22 April 1863, he married Ann 'Annie' Elizabeth Watson at the parish church of St Margaret's, Long Riston. Annie was working as a house servant for farmer **Francis Bilton** in 1861 and was possibly still in his employ at the time of her marriage.

By 1864, Robert and Annie had moved 11 miles south to Kingston upon Hull where

their first child, **Martha Ann**, was born on 11 January. A second daughter, **Mary Ann**, was born on 1 January 1866 in Brightside-Bierlow, on the outskirts of Sheffield, 65 miles southwest of Hull in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Sadly, she died of pneumonia three months later on 6 March 1866. The couple next had two sons: **John**, b. 8 May 1867, and **Charles**, b. 22 July 1869. In 1871 the family of five was living on Hunsley Street, Brightside-Bierlow, where Robert worked as a greengrocer.

In the following 11 years Robert and Annie had six more children, all of whom survived into adulthood: **Mary Jane**, b. 1 September 1871, **Margaret**, b. 18 January 1874, **Robert**, b. 24 December 1875, **Elizabeth Ann**, b. 8 December 1877, **Eliza**, b. 18 February 1880 and **Thomas**, b. 4 May 1882. The family remained in the West Riding where Robert worked primarily as a greengrocer / fishmonger, with brief periods as a labourer at a coal wharf and a miner. It is unknown why he took on these other occupations. The family also made frequent moves of short distances,⁽¹⁶⁾ perhaps indicating that at times the grocery trade was not sufficient to support them.

In April 1881, Robert, Annie, and six of their children were living in Mere Lane, Armthorpe, shortly after which they moved to White Lee Road in Swinton, Yorkshire, where son Thomas was born and daughters Mary Jane and Margaret were enrolled in the Swinton Bridge Infants School.

A new beginning in Canada

It is unknown why Robert decided to emigrate to Canada and, specifically, to the province of Manitoba. He may have been attracted by *'newspaper and government publicity, by organized colonization companies, or perhaps by word of mouth and the prospect of adventure.'*⁽¹⁷⁾

Originally part of Rupert's Land, a territory in British North America, Manitoba became Canada's fifth province on 15 July 1870. Settlement was encouraged by the Dominion Lands Act of 1872 which enabled anyone who was over 21 or the head of a family to settle on a 160-acre homestead and eventually obtain title to the land. *'The homestead was not entirely free, for the settler had to pay a \$10 fee to register and had to fulfill rather strict conditions of living on and cultivating the land to gain ownership of it, but it was, even with these provisions, an inexpensive way to settle.'*⁽¹⁸⁾

Thus, Robert may have been attracted by the prospect of owning his own farm, something that had not been possible for his father in Suffolk. Family recollections noted that his grocery business was heavily in debt,⁽¹⁹⁾ and contemporary newspapers reported thefts⁽²⁰⁾ and unscrupulous strangers who took advantage of his generous nature.⁽²¹⁾ On at least one occasion Annie pursued a local woman for money owed and was allegedly sworn at and knocked down.⁽²²⁾

Whatever the reasons, by 1883 the decision was made and on 20 April Robert sailed from Liverpool to Quebec City aboard the *Lake Champlain*, arriving 13 days later on

3 May 1883. A year later, on 24 April 1884, Annie and eight of their children followed. Their eldest daughter Martha and her husband **Thomas Lindley** were the last to arrive, landing at Halifax on 23 January 1885.

Robert and his family first settled in Winnipeg where he took odd jobs, including as a cook for the Canadian Pacific Railway, while Annie *'went out scrubbing and cleaning as well as practical nursing'*.⁽²³⁾ The family probably travelled by railway or steamship to reach Winnipeg from Quebec City, a journey that took four days.⁽²⁴⁾

The quest for land of his own was likely front of mind for Robert and on 9 December 1884 he applied for a homestead grant, paying the \$10 fee.⁽²⁵⁾ All the lands designated for homesteads had been surveyed 13 years earlier in 1871, largely based on the American system:

'The basic unit of landholding was the section – one mile square or 640 acres – which was divided into quarter-sections of 160 acres – one-half mile square. Thirty-six sections, six miles square, would compose a township. The townships were numbered northward from the American boundary; the ranges were numbered west or east from the "first" meridian and, as settlement moved west, from the second and third and fifth meridians.'⁽²⁶⁾

Robert was granted 160 acres in the southeastern quarter of Section 18, Township 15, Range 3, west of the principal meridian.⁽²⁷⁾ The farm was located at Lake Francis, approximately 47 miles north of Winnipeg. First surveyed in 1872, the area was described in an 1884 Gazetteer as *'a post settlement in Tp. 15. ... Nearest railway station, Raeburn, distant 14 miles. Mail weekly; has a public school.'*⁽²⁸⁾

Manitoba must have presented a dramatic change for Robert, Annie and their children. Although Yorkshire was the largest county in England, covering 6,066 square miles, Manitoba was vastly larger, measuring 250,000 square miles. In Yorkshire, the family had lived in towns and villages close to major railways and industrial cities with readily available access to goods, services and mail. By contrast, the first railway connecting Manitoba to eastern Canada was completed in 1878 and used American lines until the Canadian Pacific Railway, which ran across Manitoba to British Columbia, was completed in 1885. Early settlers in Manitoba also travelled long distances to obtain provisions across rough and often muddy roads. Robert and Annie's eldest daughter Martha recollected that *'we had only horses and wagons for transportation at Lake Francis. We used to walk the two miles to Raeburn for our mail.'*⁽²⁹⁾

More significantly, the climate was a dramatic change from England with temperatures dropping to -20°C in the winter months. Indeed, information about the harsher climate in western Canada was often downplayed for prospective settlers:

'Those with an interest in promoting settlement, principally the railway companies and the Dominion government, generally tried to present a positive spin on their descriptions of the prairie climate. Wherever possible, vague descriptions were given. The winters were

simply labelled cold, or “bracing”, the summers hot, the rainfall adequate, or well suited for grain growing.⁽³⁰⁾

This conclusion is borne out in a pamphlet published in 1883 which stated that:

‘Very mistaken ideas prevail in the Old County as to the climate of the Canadian North-West. ... Nothing is further from the fact. ... The thermometer will sometime range 90 in the shade in Summer and 30 below zero in Winter. But these extremes will continue for only a few days at a time out of 365. The dry and bracing atmosphere moderates all extremes.⁽³¹⁾

In spite of these challenges, Robert’s early years working on farms in Suffolk likely ensured that he had knowledge of planting and harvesting various crops. Their daughter Annie Elizabeth later remembered that at Lake Francis:

*‘[Robert and Annie] took their cow from Winnipeg and bought two pigs and another ox. With the team of oxen, Robert plowed a garden after hauling twenty loads of stones off one or two acres. Robert had thought he was going to be a grain farmer but the largest grain field was ten to fourteen acres owned by the postmaster, **Mr. Hoard** ... Robert cut Mr. Hoard’s grain with a scythe, then cradled and tied it into bundles. The first thresher was run by horses hitched to a pole.*⁽³²⁾

In the 1891 census, Robert, Annie, four of their younger children, eldest daughter Martha Ann, her husband Thomas and their four daughters were living at the Lake Francis farm in a wood house of one and a half stories with four rooms. This must have presented crowded conditions for two families of 12 people. Nevertheless, the farm prospered and Robert finally received the land patent (i.e. title) on 19 December 1893. A year earlier, however, the family had already moved to another farm which he was renting in Rosser, 29 miles south of Lake Francis, and in 1898 Robert bought a nearby farm where he and Annie resided until his death.

The motive for the move to Rosser may have been a desire to be closer to Winnipeg and the railway line.⁽¹⁰⁾ The family history noted that the trip from Lake Francis to Winnipeg was a lengthy one:

‘Stories were often told of those long trips with oxen to Winnipeg to sell butter, eggs, etc., in order to get necessary provisions. On these trips, when the travellers sighted St. Michael’s Church at Grosse Isle, they knew that food, rest and shelter were not far away – they were at the “stopping place” at Smith’s. ... Here the oxen were fed and cared for at a charge of ten cents.⁽³⁴⁾

The property at Rosser was much larger than the Lake Francis farm, and in 1901 included 480 acres with two barns and a wood house of seven rooms. A 1904 newspaper article described it as:

‘one of the best farms in Rosser. 480 acres of excellent land, only one mile from Grosse Isle

station on the C.N.R. [Canadian National Railway], with a fine dwelling house and good outbuildings. They threshed some 4,000 bushels of grain this fall and sold by auction over 50 head of cattle, besides what stock they have kept on the farm, there are also ten splendid horses, with pigs and chickens innumerable.⁽³⁵⁾

The 1906 Northwest Provinces census reflected this description and listed the property as having 12 horses, 10 milk cows, 16 horned cattle and 30 hogs and pigs.

Robert was well known for helping English immigrants settle into farming life in Manitoba: *'Many a young man from England came to learn farming at Lefley's.'*⁽³⁶⁾ The *Winnipeg Tribune* reported that emigrants such as **Richard Lloyd**, originally from Wales, left Liverpool in 1897 *'landed in Halifax, came to Winnipeg and thence to the farm of Robert Lefley at Rosser.'*⁽³⁷⁾ Census records also listed English emigrants working on Robert's farm as agricultural labourers: **Will Heath**, aged 19, and **Ernest Bassingthwaite**, aged 13, in 1901 and **Edward Corney**, aged 22, in 1906. A lengthy article in the Lancashire newspaper *The Haslingden Gazette* noted that the author was well acquainted with Robert and had sent over young men to learn farming from him in 1902.⁽³⁸⁾

By 1911, Robert and Annie were living alone on the farm next to their youngest son Thomas' farm. Five years later it appears that they had moved into Thomas' house.

By all accounts, they were a popular couple who were well known and liked by their neighbours and community. A dance they held at the Rosser farm in February 1900 was well attended, in spite of the cold weather, and included guests from Winnipeg and Stonewall, who enjoyed *'a sumptuous supper ... and dancing [which] ... continued unflaggingly till the small hours of the morning.'*⁽³⁹⁾ When Robert and Annie left for a trip to England in 1904, the *Morning Telegram* reported that:

'There was a large concourse of relatives and friends at the station seeing this genial couple off on their well-earned holiday. Mr. Lefley is an enthusiast as regards the advantage Manitoba holds out to the hard-working class in the British Isles, and will do a considerable amount of advertising of her advantages.'⁽⁴⁰⁾

Robert and Annie celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on 22 April 1913, an event which was reported in the newspaper with accompanying photos. At ages 76 and 70 respectively, white-haired Robert and Annie were no doubt dressed in their 'Sunday best' clothes to celebrate the occasion with relatives and friends.⁽⁴¹⁾

Four years later Annie died at Rosser on 28 February 1917, followed by Robert on 7 February 1918. Both were buried in St Michael's Anglican Cemetery.⁽⁴²⁾

At the time of his death, Robert's estate was worth \$22,597.50 and consisted of half interests in property, livestock, farm implements and crops. He left all of his property to his son Thomas, whom he also appointed as his executor.



Robert and Annie Lefley, on the occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary, 1913

Although he signed his will, there is some uncertainty regarding Robert's literacy. According to one family history, before Annie arrived in Manitoba he wrote letters back to her *'in sign writing which Annie hung on the store wall to puzzle out little by little in her spare time.'*⁽⁴³⁾ Growing up in an agricultural labourer's family, he may have been educated at a local Sunday school in Suffolk, though evidence for this has not been found. On his marriage certificate there is an 'X' beside his name, indicating that he could not write his signature. When working in Yorkshire as a grocer and fishmonger he would most likely have needed some basic numeracy skills to weigh the various goods that he sold, and there is evidence that he used those skills improperly when he was fined in March 1867 for using an *'unjust wooden measure.'*⁽⁴⁴⁾ Rosalind Crone notes that *'Suffolk's literacy rate was lower than the national average'*, concluding that:

"The skills of reading and writing were taught sequentially in most schools at least before the 1840s. After this date, many types of educational institutions (such as Sunday schools) continued to instruct pupils only in the reading skill. As a consequence, there existed a large number of partial literates, men and women who could read but not write."⁽⁴⁵⁾

The three Canadian federal censuses of 1891, 1901 and 1911 and the 1916 census of the Prairie Provinces all indicated that Robert could read and write. As the informants for these sources are unknown, it is difficult to determine the accuracy of the information. Nevertheless, by the time he wrote his will Robert could sign his name, so it is probable that he learned how to write after he emigrated to Manitoba.

From humble beginnings in Suffolk to greengrocer in the north of England and, finally,

to successful and popular farmer in Manitoba, Robert Lefley led a life full of changes, challenges and opportunities, leaving a lasting legacy of farming in Manitoba to this day.⁽⁴⁶⁾

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- 41 'Celebrate Golden Wedding', *Free Press Prairie Farmer*, 7 May 1913, p.5, cols. 3-4. *Newspapers.com*.
- 42 *Find a Grave.com*, memorial 212694397, Robert Lefley (1835-1918), and memorial 212694123, Ann Elizabeth Lefley (1843-1917); memorials and gravestone photographs by **Donald Schmidt**.
- 43 'Lefley, Robert and Annie', *Along the Mission Trail*, p.291.
- 44 'Unjust weights and measures', *Sheffield Independent*, 23 March 1867, p.10, col. 4. Findmypast.
- 45 Crone, 'Educating the labouring poor in nineteenth century Suffolk', *Social History*, p.12.
- 46 In 2001 descendants of Robert and Annie Lefley were presented with a Centennial Farm Award from the *Manitoba Historical Society*. 'Centennial Farm Awards', *Manitoba Historical Society Annual Report 2001*.

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HENRY NEVILLE SUMMERSETT (1774-?)

NOVELIST, POET, DRAMATIST & COMEDIAN FROM HADLEIGH, SUFFOLK

Establishing a literary life

I first came across **Henry Neville Summerset** when other research led me to one of his younger sisters, **Sarah Summerset** (1779-1869), about whom I wrote an earlier article for this journal.⁽¹⁾ Although what is known about Henry's life remains limited, I think I can clarify some apparently conflicting evidence, provide new insights and help guide future research into the life of this presently little-known, Suffolk-born novelist, poet, dramatist and comedian.

Henry was baptised on 23 June 1774 at Hadleigh St Mary, Suffolk.⁽²⁾ He was the only son of **Henry Summerset** and his wife **Hannah (née Nevell/Neville)** who were married in Hadleigh on 22 August 1770.⁽³⁾ At some stage the family seem to have moved from Hadleigh to live in Ipswich, and Henry's father is likely to have been the



St Mary's Church, Hadleigh (Wikipedia)

'Innkeeper, Dealer and Chapman' of the *King's Head* who faced bankruptcy in March 1792 when his son was 17 years old.⁽⁴⁾ Although it has been claimed that the teenaged Summersett '*decided to set out for London to try his hand at making a living from writing in order to support his parents*', no documentary evidence seems to be available of this specific motivation.⁽⁵⁾ Nevertheless, the young Summersett did leave Ipswich and sought his fortune elsewhere, initially, and most prominently, as a novelist writing in the Gothic genre whose works were published in London – a city that he later described as '*Proud London!*' with '*its wide, innumerable streets*'.⁽⁶⁾

Between 1794 and 1818, Summersett is credited with creating a range of imaginative work that includes 11 novels (the first and one other published anonymously, but attributed), two volumes of poetry and two stage plays that were performed in public theatres.⁽⁷⁾ Although the focus of this article is on biographical information rather than literary criticism, it should be noted that contemporary reviews of his work were mixed, but included some that were quite negative.⁽⁸⁾ Summersett himself noted in the preface to his 1804 novel, *The Worst of Stains*, that he had been accused of '*blasphemy*'.⁽⁹⁾ Recent re-considerations have tended to be more positive and forgiving, but this may be, at least in part, because these modern reviewers are often enthusiastic readers of Gothic literature.⁽¹⁰⁾

Representations of Suffolk in Summersett's writing

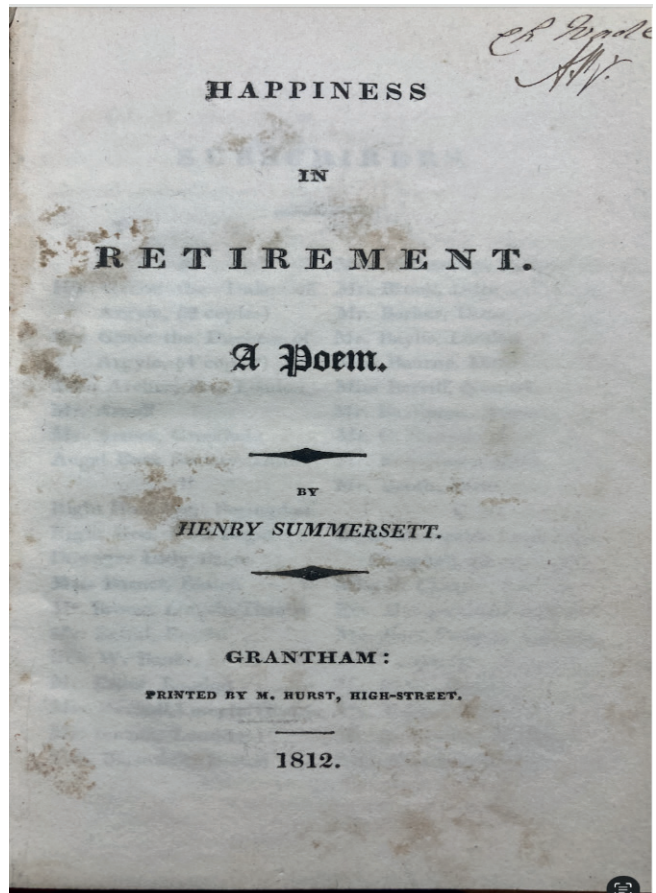
Only one of Summersett's published works, *Aberford, A Novel; Or What You Will*, seems to include material of particular Suffolk interest.⁽¹¹⁾ Unlike his other early fiction, this work is not composed in the Gothic style but is a picaresque novella that also contains a lot of his poetry. It follows the progress of a soldier returning to England from Hamburg who lands at Yarmouth after six years engaged in gruesome European wars, but who claims he '*never yet killed a man*' (p.2). He boards at an inn with fellow seafarers and then amazes everyone by declaring his intention of walking to London. As he rambles, he digresses into philosophy and literature, waxes poetic and records observations about people he encounters. Writing tongue-in-cheek as a former resident, Summersett has his protagonist declare that '*as I had never before been in the town*' of Ipswich he made enquiries of the hotel waiter, then, meditating on a perceived lack of memorable individuals raised there, he wonders whether: '*genius may have here bloomed without notice, and sent forth its inspirations without meeting the smile of patronage. Some minstrel, gifted by the muse, may have poured his notes and strains over the waves of the Orwell, yet gained only cold applause and temporary fame*' (p.89). Perhaps he is thinking of himself? Then he recalls **Thomas Wolsey**, but does not regard him at all positively. Next morning, he '*walked over the town, with which I was much pleased*', describes the River Orwell '*the beauty of which cannot be excelled*', and observes '*the wherries were coming in from Harwich*' (p.100-101). Then he comes across '*a circulating library, where hundreds of love-stories and tales of horror were ranged on the shelves*', and this provides an opportunity to discuss literature and the plight of under-appreciated contemporary authors, again perhaps thinking of himself.

Leaving Ipswich early, he meets an African 'fellow-man', which provides an opportunity to criticise slavery. He takes 10 indolent hours to cover the approximately 18 miles to Colchester, where he puts up for the night. Eventually, he nears London and reaches Whitechapel, meets up with friends and concludes with a poem that includes the story of Arthur, a country boy press-ganged into the navy, and reflections on Liberty. The prefatory 'List of Subscribers' to this work includes quite a few prominent citizens of the time, led by **Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Gloucester**, who subscribed to '4 copies'.⁽¹²⁾ It would be an interesting research task to review all of the subscribers.

A happy travelling comedian

Original editions of Summersett's published works are generally considered to survive only in rare book library collections. For example, it has been claimed that *Happiness in Retirement. A Poem*, published in Grantham, 1812, 'survives in just two copies worldwide', one in the University of California Library and the other in the Lincolnshire Records Office.⁽¹³⁾ However, I can report that this is no longer correct as I am the custodian of a third copy, purchased in Suffolk recently, which includes the poem *Soliloquy of a murderer*. This volume was formerly owned by a **Miss Wade** whose signature is inscribed on the title page and whose name is included among the prefatory list of more than 100 subscribers – she must have been an enthusiastic fan, as she purchased '3 copies'. This recent find suggests the possibility that there may be copies of his

other works yet to be rediscovered, particularly in geographical areas where listed subscribers lived (I would be interested to hear any such news). Along with quite a few others from among the aristocracy and gentry of the day, the **Dowager Countess of Suffolk** is listed as a subscriber.⁽¹⁴⁾



The title page of Happiness in Retirement. A Poem (1812), with Miss Wade's signature (author's own)

Among the other listed subscribers to *Happiness* is a 'Miss Birchall, Lincoln Theatre'. In the year following its publication, on 18 September 1813, Summersett (with his age recorded as 35 years) married this actress, **Ann Birchall**, aged 26, at St Mary and St Nicholas, Spalding, Lincolnshire.⁽¹⁵⁾ They subsequently became the parents of two children. In the baptismal record of their daughter, **Rebecca Neville Summersett**, on 28 January 1815 at Grantham, Lincolnshire, her father's occupation is recorded as 'comedian'.⁽¹⁶⁾ There is also an unusual record of a second baptism of Rebecca on 11 July 1817 at Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, the same day as the baptism of her young brother, **Henry Neville Summersett Jnr**.⁽¹⁷⁾ In each case, their father's occupation is recorded as a 'Travelling comedian' living at 'Bell's Yard'.

According to the title page of the published volume of Summersett's first known play, the comedy *Happy at Last* was performed at the Theatre-Royal, Kendal on 13 March 1805.⁽¹⁸⁾ It was also presented at Margate on 13 September the same year, although the author is recorded as being among the many 'unknown authors' of the period 1800-1850.⁽¹⁹⁾ This comedy was followed in 1818 by his only other known play, a tragedy, *Ferdinand, the Slave of Passion*. Summersett was at that time involved in the theatre as a colleague of **Joseph Smedley**, the prominent theatre manager and fellow actor who is the focus of a recently published study of a theatrical family.⁽²⁰⁾ Summersett wrote a grateful letter to Smedley on 8 January (probably 1819), from Southwell, Nottinghamshire, where he had been seriously ill for five weeks.⁽²¹⁾ A theatre was established there in 1816.⁽²²⁾ As evidence of their friendship, it seems likely that Smedley named one of his sons, **Henry Summersett Smedley**, after his colleague. The boy was baptised at Hedon, near Hull, on 4 December 1811, but died in Malton, Yorkshire, on 1 December 1823.⁽²³⁾ The Smedley children were born in several different locations, illustrating how contemporary theatre workers continuously travelled around.

A military career: father or son?

The thread of Summersett's activities can be followed with some degree of certainty up to 1819, but from that year onwards he seems to disappear from accessible records. To date, for example, it has not been possible to identify the year or place of his death, but some suggestions have been put forward regarding his life after 1819. One is that he enlisted in the Suffolk militia after his career as novelist and poet appeared to come to a conclusion in 1812.⁽²⁴⁾ However, this explanation not only overlooks recorded activities after that date, but also involves the mistaken attribution of military service records that relate to an older man with the same name. This other **Henry Summersett**, originally of Kersey, near Hadleigh, did not *enlist* but was finally *discharged* from military service in 1812. He had first enlisted in the Suffolk Militia on 4 March 1757 at the age of 14 years as a 'trump(eter) or drummer' and served in that role for 13 years until 6 March 1770. Later, he served as a sergeant in His Majesty's Loyal Suffolk Fencible Regiment of Infantry from 12 September 1795 to 13 October 1802 (when the regiment was disbanded), and again from 24 June 1806 to 23 June 1811,

in the Army Recruiting Staff centred on Bury St Edmunds, until finally discharged on 5 February 1812 at age 68 years.⁽²⁵⁾ Overall, his military service totalled 25 years and 34 days and by then, according to his military record, he had become '*unfit for further service*' and '*so infirm & nearly blind*' as to warrant being placed in '*that Class of Pensioner whose allowance is the greatest*'.

Another suggestion is that this old soldier was in fact the author Henry Summersett's father and that the book of poetry entitled *Happiness in Retirement* was written to mark his father's retirement from army service.⁽²⁶⁾ The periods of service noted above are certainly compatible with other key events in the life of Summersett's father, which include marrying in August 1770, fathering five children baptised in Hadleigh between 1771 and 1781, then moving to Ipswich where he became an innkeeper. That was his occupation described on his 18-year-old eldest daughter **Hannah Summersett's** marriage certificate, dated 5 February 1789, when she married **Alexander Pettigrew**, a Quartermaster in the 2nd Regiment of Dragoons, in the parish of St Mary Tower, Ipswich.⁽²⁷⁾ Following the previously mentioned 1792 bankruptcy, it seems that in 1795 he again enlisted to serve in the army until finally discharged in 1812.

So, overall, the most convincing scenario seems to be that Summersett's father was indeed the old soldier identified in military records, whereas the content of the poem *Happiness in retirement* suggests that work was written to mark the author's own, at least provisional, 'retirement' from creating '*the glowing sound*' of '*the noble lyre of Poetry*'. The poem (actual spelling and punctuation) concludes:

*'So, Poesy, in thy delightful vale,
Where wandering peasants hear the hermit's tale,
A friendless votary has dard'd to stray.
And pour'd in solitude his faulty lay.
In moon light bowers, in caverns wild and rude,
He'll swell the choral notes of gratitude,
And, at some future time, inspir'd by thee,
Sweep the bright harp of Truth and Liberty.'*

This ending probably reflects the author's decision to focus more specifically on his work in the theatre, an occupation which he shared from the following year (1813) with his newly-wed wife, the actress Ann Birchall.

Life in the theatre

I think there is reasonable evidence to support the view that Summersett continued working as a '*travelling comedian*' after 1819, but used the stage name '*Mr Neville*' (his mother's family name). Available reproductions and transcriptions of theatre playbills up to, at least, 1836 provide support for this conclusion and also suggest that his wife and daughter adopted the stage names '*Mrs Neville*' and '*Miss Neville*', respectively. For example, a Mr and Mrs Neville are listed in the cast on the playbill

of *The Vampire; or, the Bride of the Isles* (based on the story attributed to **Lord Byron** at that time) performed at the Southwell Theatre on 3 August 3 1822, and in the comedy *The Way to Get Married* on another playbill for a performance at the Southwell Theatre on 11 September 1828.⁽²⁸⁾ A Bradford Theatre playbill dated 4 July 1836 includes a 'Mr Neville' and 'Miss Neville'.⁽²⁹⁾

Furthermore, there is strong confirmatory textual evidence of the use by Summersett of this stage name from as early as 1805 in the epilogue of his play *Happy at Last*, wherein a character named 'Trick' addresses a 'Mr Neville' as the author of the play and there is an asterisked footnote (likely a theatrical 'in-joke') stating that '*This was, at first, supposed the author's name*'.⁽³⁰⁾ Finally, the dramatis personae listed in the text of the play include a character named Harry Thorpley, played by a 'Mr Neville'.

Later events

By 1849, Summersett's daughter, Rebecca Neville Summersett, had returned to Lincolnshire where she married **John Roberts** in Sleaford.⁽³¹⁾ In the 1851 census at New Sleaford she is recorded as being 33 years of age (which fits the date of her second baptism) and with a young daughter, **Mary Ann Roberts**, born in 1850. It seems that Rebecca died

The Last Night but Two.

BY DESIRE OF THE

Bachelors of Southwell

THEATRE, SOUTHWELL.

On Thursday Evening, September 11th, 1828,

Will be presented an admired COMEDY, called The

WAY TO GET MARRIED.

Written by T. Morton, Esq.; author of "Speed the Plough," &c.

Taught	Mr. SMEDLEY.	Canoe	Mr. MAJOR.
Mac Query	Mr. DITCHER.	Toby Allpice	Mr. O. PERRY.
Faulkner	Mr. NEVILLE.	Dashall	Mr. CHESTER.
Landlord	Mr. BOWER.	Shopsman	Mr. SHORT.
Ned	Mr. ROSE.	Bob	Mr. JACQUES.

Clementine Allpice... Miss SMEDLEY. Lady Survil... Mrs. NEVILLE.
Fanny... Mrs. CHESTER. Julia Faulkner... Miss A. SMEDLEY.

Miss Smedley will sing "THE LOST HEART."

MR. MAJOR WILL SING,

"A BACHELOR'S MISERIES."

And Miss A. SMEDLEY will sing

"Smart Young Bachelor's."

After which an entire new Farce (never acted here) called The

HAUNTED INN.

As now performing nightly at the Theatre-Royal Drury-Lane, with increased attraction and applause.

Captain Levant	Mr. CHESTER.	Corporal Trot	Mr. NEVILLE.
Grizzle	Mr. MAJOR.	Tommy Tailpole	Mr. O. PERRY.
Esiquette	Mr. DITCHER.	Sir Tomkin Probe	Mr. JACQUES.
Bluff	Mr. ROSE.	Coachman	Mr. SHORT.
Mrs. Grizzle	Mrs. NEVILLE.	Angellina	Mrs. CHESTER.
Jenny Talk	Miss A. SMEDLEY.		

BOXES 2s.—PIT 1s.—GALLERY 1s.

Doors to be opened at Half-past SIX o'Clock, and begin precisely at SEVEN.

Tickets to be had of Mr. SMEDLEY, at the Theatre, where places for the boxes may be taken every day, from Ten till 5 o'clock.

If the Inhabitants of Southwell, Malton, Edlingley, Farnfield, Hengrave, Kirklington, Winkbore, Hockerton, Normanton, Norwood, Upson, Kellington, Fiskerton, Morton, Bilsby, Thurgarton, Hallowington, the Parks and Oulton, have not bills respectfully delivered at their houses (as men are employ'd for the purpose) they are respectfully solicited to make a complaint to the Manager.

LANGLEY, PRINTER, MANSFIELD.

The playbill for The Way to Get Married, Southwell Theatre, 11 September 1828

not long afterwards and John married a **Bridget Birch** in 1853. In the 1851 census, someone of that name, aged 26 years, was listed as a 'servant' and 'house keeper' in the household headed by **John Francis**, 'farmer' of Claypole. An Ann Summersett, a former resident of Palmer Lane and who may have been Summersett's wife, is recorded as being buried on 12 December 1853 in the parish of St Margaret in the City and County of York, aged 66 years.⁽³²⁾ But, to date, no resting place has been identified for Henry Neville Summersett himself.

To conclude, there is a great opportunity for someone interested in the Summersett family and/or literary and theatrical history of the late 18th and early 19th centuries to carry this research further. I am too old and live too far away from the UK to do that directly. Although rewarding, it is an especially challenging task because people who work in the theatre are notoriously difficult to follow as they tend to travel around and use different stage names.⁽³³⁾ Nevertheless, records and playbills from numerous theatres exist in various archives and could potentially be transcribed and collated to provide a more complete picture. With increasing digitisation such a task should become less demanding and time-consuming.

Anthony Ivor Reeder Mb 12982

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References and Sources

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2. Suffolk FHS, *Suffolk Baptism Index, East of Sudbury Deanery 1754-1812*.
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4. *Ipswich Journal*, Saturday 31 March 1792, p.1; *Ipswich Journal*, Saturday 12 May 1792, p.2.
5. Steve Orman. *Henry Summersett biography*. <https://henrysummersett.wordpress.com/henry-summersett-biography/> (accessed 11 June 2024).
6. Henry Summersett: *Happiness in Retirement. A Poem*. Grantham: printed by M. Hurst, High-street,: 1812, p.46.
7. Orman (n.5). Hereafter, if there has been a recent reprint then that is referenced, otherwise the original edition is described.
8. Henry Summersett: *The Worst of Stains. A Novel*. Steve Orman (editor). Notes, p.182. Valancourt Books, Richmond, Virginia, 2014.
9. *Ibid.*, (Author's) Preface, p.3.
10. Steve Orman: *About me*. <https://henrysummersett.wordpress.com/about/> (accessed 11 June 2024).
11. Henry Summersett: *Aberford; a Novel; or What You Will*. Printed for J. Hatchard, No.173, Piccadilly; and Lee and Hurst, No. 32, Pater-Noster-Row. London, 1798.
12. <https://www.regencyhistory.net/blog/maria-duchess-of-gloucester> (accessed 16 June 2024). **Lady Maria Waldegrave** married **William, 1st Duke of Gloucester**, at his house in Pall Mall in a secret ceremony (with no witnesses) performed by her chaplain, **Dr Morton**. **George III** disapproved of his brother's association with her.
13. Henry Summersett: *Leopold Warndorf. A Novel*. Steve Orman (editor). Introduction p. xii. Valancourt Books, Richmond, Virginia, 2013.

SUFFOLK FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity 1087748: Company No. 4191740, limited by guarantee.

**Notice is hereby given of the Annual General Meeting of the Society
to be held at 19:30 UK time on Tuesday 1 October 2024**

This will be conducted as an online meeting on the Zoom platform

AGENDA

Welcome by Andy Kerridge, Chair of the Society

Invitation to Doug Howlett, Patron of the Society, to chair the AGM

1. APOLOGIES

for absence: Proxy Forms received.

2. MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 10 October 2023, with matters arising not covered elsewhere in the Agenda.

3. TRUSTEES' REPORT – presented by the Chair.

4. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS – presented by the Treasurer.

To receive the Financial Accounts for year ended 31 March 2023.

5. INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

To approve the appointment, as the Independent Examiner, Counterculture Partnership LLP. Registered Office: Unit 115 Ducie House, Ducie Street, Manchester, M1 2JW.

6. APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES

We have one Trustee, Jean Licence, who has completed her three years, but she is willing to stand again. To receive other proposals for, and to appoint, additional Trustees.

7. OFFICERS

To receive nominations and agree the appointment of officers as proposed by the Trustees, namely:

Chair *Andy Kerridge*

Treasurer *Carolyn Alderson*

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Such matters as have been properly notified to the Company Secretary two weeks or more in advance of the Meeting.

9. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF THE 2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

To be announced on the Society's website by 1 March 2025. However, if circumstances dictate, this may be later. In any case an announcement will be made at least one month before the planned date of the 2025 AGM.

Kenneth J. Finch
Company Secretary

SUFFOLK FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

(Registered Charity No. 1087748)

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Zoom on 10 October 2023

The Meeting started at 19:30

Andy Kerridge, Chair of the Society, introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He introduced Doug Howlett, the Society's Patron, who chaired the Annual General Meeting. Doug thanked Andy for inviting him to chair and he also thanked everyone for their attendance.

1) Welcome and Apologies

Forty-four (44) members were present on the Zoom and there had been forty (40) proxy votes received. The meeting was quorate. Several apologies had been received by email.

2) Minutes of the previous AGM held on 22 October 2022, as published in the September 2023 issue of *Suffolk Roots*

No questions or comments were raised, and the minutes were accepted and approved by a show of hands.

3) Trustees' Report for the 2023 AGM presented by the Society's Chair, Andy Kerridge

This year it had been decided to hold the AGM remotely rather than at the Fair. This freed up time at the Fair, and the timing was also better for many.

The Trustees had continued to meet on Zoom with a couple of physical meetings. Thanks were expressed to:

- Susan Flockton, who had stepped down due to ill health, for her hard work.
- Susan Schibli for co-hosting the Zooms which continued to attract large audiences.
- The editors of *Suffolk Roots* for producing an excellent journal.

Sadly, the Bury and West London groups had to close during the year due to lack of volunteers. A lack of volunteers was being experienced by many organisations, but for the Society, with an increasing membership, finding people to join the Trustees was an increasing issue. The Society Chair asked anyone who could offer any assistance to please get in touch. The future of the Society could look bleak without this help.

Membership had continued to grow steadily, maintaining the turnaround seen in 2020.

Some significant work had been achieved by the Trustees during the year. Carolyn Alderson and David Horton had been setting up Direct Debits for membership, due to start soon, and Standing Orders would no longer be offered to new members. Existing members would be encouraged to move to DDs, with the next membership fee increase likely in 2025. Carolyn and Joan Horton had worked on the option of vouchers for redemption against membership or CD / Downloads. Job descriptions for key roles had been produced and policies had been reviewed. David Gobbitt had taken on the role of proofreader for *Suffolk Roots* and had also updated Derek Palgrave's 'Suffolk Chronology'. Pamela Palgrave, who for many years had overseen the transcriptions of marriages, had decided to step down, and thanks were given to both David and Pamela for their work for the Society.

The Society Chair thanked everyone for their support.

One question was raised about life membership and whether this would be affected by any increase in membership fees. Susan Izod Quay was reassured that this would not be the case, however she offered to move to electronic membership in support of the Society.

The AGM Chair congratulated Andy on a successful year.

4) Financial Accounts (as posted on the website prior to the meeting)

The Chair invited the Treasurer to present the accounts as of 31 March 2023.

The Treasurer reported an increase in unrestricted funds at £162K, up from £137K the previous year. This increase resulted from higher interest payments on the investments account, a reduction in administration fees, increased sales of publications and a revaluation of library stock.

There were no questions on the accounts, and they were formally approved by a show of hands. The Chair thanked the Treasurer for the presentation.

5) Independent Examiner

The Independent Examiner, John Phillips & Co, was reappointed by a show of hands.

6) Appointment of Trustees

No Trustees were due to retire by rotation. Kevin Pulford had been co-opted during the year and his appointment as Trustee was formally proposed by Joan Horton, seconded by Howard King, and voted by a show of hands.

7) Appointment of Officers

To receive nominations and agree the appointment of officers as proposed by the Trustees.

Andy Kerridge had been nominated as the Society's Chair and Carolyn Alderson as Treasurer. Their appointments were jointly proposed by Paul Halsall, seconded by Michael Hart and voted by a show of hands.

Ken Finch would remain a Trustee and keep the role of Secretary, and the Chair thanked Ken for his work.

8) AOB

The Trustees were delighted to award Jenny Rawlinson 'The 'Derek Palgrave Award'. Jenny took over as Ipswich Group Secretary in mid-2014 and provided an invaluable service to the Committee and local members, organising meetings, speakers and encouraging membership.

The Trustees next awarded Life Membership to Ken Pearce. Ken was West London's founder member, treasurer and venue booker, amongst other duties. He is currently Suffolk FHS's sixth longest serving member, with the membership number 90.

The Trustees then also awarded 'The Derek Palgrave Award' to Brian and Charmian Thompson. Brian is Chair and Charmian is Secretary of the Haverhill group which also celebrated its 40th Anniversary this year. They have undertaken several projects, notably the Haverhill Roll of Honour.

They work closely with local schools and Charmian is the Society's safeguarding officer. Brian has been a Trustee for five years.

The Chair also extended his thanks for all the hard work of those in receipt of an award.

9) Date, Time of the 2024 Annual General Meeting

The Society's Chair advised that the date had not yet been agreed but would be announced by 1 March 2024. It would probably be via Zoom and earlier in the year.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and involvement and the Trustees for their support. The meeting finished at 20:13.

SUFFOLK FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY 2024 AGM

The 2024 AGM will be held on Tuesday 1 October at 19:30

The 2024 AGM will be held via the Zoom platform. To participate using Zoom you need to be online and have Zoom installed on your computer/tablet, smartphone etc. The AGM will be recorded.

If you wish to participate by Zoom:

1. **Before 1 September 2024:** If you have changed your email address recently, please make sure our records are up to date by notifying our Membership Secretary, David Horton at membership@suffolkfhs.org.uk. We use the membership database as the source of email addresses.
2. A notice about the AGM will be sent out with the September e-Newsletter- which goes to all those with an email address held in the membership database (hence the importance of making sure it is correct), asking people to register their intention to attend.
3. For those joining the Society after 1 September, please contact the Chair directly at chair@suffolkfhs.org.uk for information on how to register.
4. **Two days before the meeting:** Those who have expressed an intention to attend by Zoom will receive, by email, the meeting details and the Zoom 'key'.
5. **The 2024 AGM Agenda, a Proxy Vote form and the Minutes of the 2023 AGM published in this issue of *Suffolk Roots*** will be repeated (under AGM) on the Society's website at www.suffolkfhs.org.uk together with a copy of the Society accounts.
6. **Only Society members will be able to participate and/or vote.** Where members hold joint membership, both members are allowed to vote.
7. **On the day:** Please log in to Zoom at or soon after 19:15, to allow for any connection issues.
8. **If you have technical issues** (can't hear audio etc.), there will be no time to deal with these once the meeting starts, so we suggest those not already familiar with Zoom try a practice session with friends or family.
9. **To ask questions or vote:** Questions may be asked via the chat function in Zoom. To vote we will try to use the Poll function. Explanations of how to use these will be given at the beginning of the meeting.

A quorum requires 30 members.

Please use the proxy form if you cannot attend – your vote is important.

SUFFOLK FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity 1087748: Company No. 4191740, limited by guarantee



PROXY VOTE FOR 2024 AGM

I/We

Of (address)

Being Member Number

Hereby appoint*

Or failing him/her appoint*

As my/our proxy to vote in my/our name(s) on my/our behalf at the Annual General Meeting to be held on 1 October 2024 and at any adjournment thereof.

Unless otherwise instructed, the proxy may vote as he/she thinks fit or abstain from voting.

Signed Date

Completed proxy forms should be sent to the Society Secretary:

Mr K Finch
65 Churchill Avenue
Ipswich
IP4 5DT

e-mail: secretary@suffolkfhs.org.uk

* Any Officer (e.g. the Secretary) or a named person who will attend the AGM.

PROXY VOTES BY E-MAIL

These will be accepted provided members' full details are given, including membership number, and instructions are clear and unambiguous.

e-mail to secretary@suffolkfhs.org.uk with 'proxy vote' in the subject box.

TRUSTEES

Nominations or applications to join the Trustees may be made to the Secretary or any current Trustee at any time of the year.

ACCOUNTS

The accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2024 will be posted on the Society's website by 1 September 2024. Copies by post may be had from the Secretary on receipt of a large, stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Suffolk FHS Fair



**Fascinating talks, interesting
displays/stalls from Family History
and related organisations**

+ Free family history help desk (from 11:00-15:00)

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12:00 Break
13:30 "The Last Revolt" of the Agricultural Labourers:
The Swing Riots in Suffolk & Norfolk 1830
14:30 Break
15:15 The Suffolk Trinity: Unravelling Ancestral Ties to
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Special guests

Ian Waller is a retired professional genealogist, author, Fellow of AGRA and the Society of Genealogists. Vice chairman of the Family History Federation.



Most of us will have agricultural labourers in our ancestry. This talk discusses their lives and the wealth of records which enable us to piece together their lives. The fact that they existed means that documentary evidence exists.

Dr Harvey Osborne is the Course Leader for History at the University of Suffolk. He is a historian of modern Britain, focussing on rural crime and protest. This presentation will explore the direction of the Swing riots in Suffolk and Norfolk and highlight the sources which allow us to learn something about those involved.



Julie Johnson is a professional genealogist with over 25 years of experience, a writer, member of the Register of Qualified Genealogists and an Associate of AGRA.

The Suffolk Trinity: Unravelling Ancestral Ties to Suffolk's county animals and a family connection. Looking at the Smith family association with the Suffolk punch, Suffolk Sheep and Red poll cattle.

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IPSWICH VACCINATION RETURNS & CIVIL DEATHS REGISTERS

We have been given access to a goldmine of data especially for those interested in family and social history in Ipswich in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The vaccination returns are copies of the civil registers of births for the town, with the addition of the deaths of any infants who died before they could be vaccinated (more detail below).

RETURN of all BIRTHS Registered during the Month of August in the Sub-District of Ipswich Western
within the District of Mr. R. Jennings. Vaccination Officer, made under 34 and 35 Vic., c. 48, s. 8.

Note.—Cols. 1 to 9 of this form are to be filled up by the Registrar; those in Cols. 1 to VI. are to be filled up by the Vaccination Officer. Provisions as made in Cols. 9 to 14 for the Registrar's Month, showing the date of giving the Notice, and to whom given.

Extract from the Register Book of Births relating to each Child							Minutes of Notice given pursuant to 30 and 31 Vic., c. 54, s. 15		Register of Certificates				
No. in Birth Register	When born	Where born*	Name, if any, of child	Sex	Name and Surname of the Father, or (if the child be illegitimate) of the Mother	Rank, Occupation, or Profession of Parent	When given	To whom given	Date of Medical Certificate of Successful Vaccination	Date at which certificate is presented to the Registrar (if any) (if not, the date may be)	Name of the Medical Man by whom the Certificate is signed	Date of Certificate (if any) (if not, the date may be)	Date when child has been vaccinated
I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV
x 33	17 th July	St. Philip Street	Joan Helen	Girl	Lillian Maud Norman General Domestic Servant	—	29 th Aug	St. Philip Street Ipswich.					15 Sept 1911
x 34	16 th July	Richwick Road	Jean May	Girl	Albert Charles Heber Barker	Stableman (Railway)	22 nd Aug	Hooker					25 Sept 1911
x 35	7 th Aug	Wellcutt Road	Brenda Alice	Girl	Cyril Leonard Warren	Insurance Office Company	23 rd Aug	Father					1 st Nov 1911
x 36	12 th July	Cullingham Road	Walter George	Boy	Walter Harris	Labourer (Removal Contractors)	23 rd Aug	Hooker					13 Oct 1911
x 37	23 rd Aug	Barnett's Street	Yvonne Daphne	Girl	Nika Spall	Formerly Corporation Labourer	24 th Aug	Father					4 Oct 1911

I certify that this is a true Return. Witness my hand this 1st day of September 1911.
R. Jennings Registrar.

* Be careful to insert such particulars as will enable the Vaccination Officer readily to find the address.

Page from Ipswich vaccination births register (image courtesy of Suffolk Archives)

Above is a copy of a page from such a register for late December 1911 and early January 1912. It contains columns for when and where born, name, sex, name and surname of father (or if illegitimate, mother), Rank, Occupation or Profession of Parent, and then details of the vaccination. So almost everything that you would find on a birth certificate apart from the informant. There is also a column for conscientious objection – presumably by one or other of the parents to the vaccination.

In addition, Suffolk Archives hold copies of the vaccination infant death registers for Ipswich for the same period. These registers exist for other towns, and their purpose was to identify infants who no longer required vaccination because they had died (column V on the register image above). The vaccination officers would be sent monthly lists of births and infant deaths by the registrar so that they could identify infants who had died. They would then enter these deaths into the appropriate

column in the vaccination register. In towns where only vaccination birth registers survive, it is therefore only deaths before vaccination that can be seen.

As vaccination was supposed to be conducted within the first 4 months of life, we do not usually see deaths after the age of 4 months. In Ipswich, however, a copy of the entire death register was made, apparently at the request of the then Medical Officer for Ipswich. Obviously, there are the original death registers which are now held by the General Register Office, from which we can order copies for a fee, but Ipswich's records are freely available. It is believed they are the only ones in existence in England & Wales. They carry the information seen on death certificates, without the informant and the certifying doctor's name (see copy of death register, below). In addition, there is an indication of the date of an inquest, if performed – suggesting that a sudden or unexplained death had occurred.

There are many causes of death recorded which we would find 'normal' in a historical context: pneumonia, old age, cancer, meningitis. But there are some that prompt a second look:

- Shock to the system caused by injuries accidentally received by a flower stand falling on deceased on 9th September 1895 at the Parish of St Peter, Ipswich
- Diarrhoea, probably accelerated by bad smells caused by defective drainage
- Natural causes, namely the effects of long dissipation and drunkenness

Early in the 2000s, a project led by **Peter Razzell** (then of the Open University) transcribed the contents of the vaccination birth registers and the death registers for Ipswich from 1872-1910. The data was transcribed by a team of volunteers, some of whom were Suffolk FHS members. The project was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. That data is what we now have access to.

The information collected through the transcription of the data from the vaccination and death registers has formed the basis of several papers including:

- Razzell, P., Davies, R., Garrett, E.M. (2007). *Sociological Study of Fertility and Mortality in Ipswich, 1872-1910* [data collection]. UK Data Service. SN: 5413, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-5413-1>
- Garrett, E. & Reid, A. (2022). *What was Killing Babies in Ipswich Between 1872 and 1909?*, *Historical Life Course Studies*, 12, 173-204: <https://doi.org/10.51964/hlcs11592> (publicly accessible through the weblink)

As the work of transcription has already been paid for by public funds, we have agreed with Suffolk Archives and the original project team that the information in the Ipswich registers will be freely available to anyone who wants it.

Initially, we will run this as a free look-up service, with requests for surnames. Remember that it is the period 1872-1910 that is currently covered. Please send your requests to me, my full contact details are towards the rear of this journal. **If**

LEISTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL HISTORY & ARCHIVE

The first two parts of this article appeared in our last issue: *Suffolk Roots*, Vol. 50 No. 1, June 2024. We are now pleased to publish a further three parts.

Part Three: The Post-War Years – 1945 to 1967

In the summer of 1944, the Leiston County Secondary School finally left Sudbury and returned to Leiston. The following summer, at the age of 62, **James Broadhead** retired after serving as headmaster for 26 years.

In 1945 the school was renamed. Under the Education Act 1945, it became Leiston Grammar School (LGS) with pupils being selected on merit, usually via the 11-plus exam. In the autumn of that year a new headmaster arrived, a certain **Mr H E H Goldfinch** – a new head and a new regime!

In this inaugural year (1945-1946), LGS had just eight full-time teachers and 110 pupils on the school roll. The photo below, dated 1946, shows the staff at that time. Six of those pictured had taught at the school for most of their careers, and at least four went to Sudbury when the school was evacuated.



LGS staff, 1946.

*H E H Goldfinch centre front. John Parr, right of HEH.
Raymond Clark, back row far left, Herbert Bartholomew, back row middle.*

However, the school rapidly grew over the following years and by 1956 there were 15 teachers and 263 pupils on the school roll, including 33 in the sixth form. This level of staffing and pupils then remained fairly constant up to the 1970s when the school closed. Over the years, of course, many teachers came and went. Several good teachers stayed for a few years and, having gained experience, left for more senior posts. Other more indifferent teachers just left!

However, a number of teachers stayed at LGS for most or all of their career. Brief histories of some are included below.

H E H Goldfinch (1902-1975)

HEH was born in Essex and was the only son of a headmaster of a council school in Forest Gate. In 1939 he was teaching at a school in Weymouth, Dorset. Although the subjects HEH taught were Maths and Physics, at LGS he also placed great emphasis on music and the arts. Perhaps not so much on sporting activities. At LGS he encouraged pupils to learn to play musical instruments and a school orchestra was formed. He also founded the Leiston Choral Society.

The 'kindly disposition' of Mr Broadhead rather gave way to a drive for academic excellence, and this was achieved in many cases. HEH and his teachers worked hard for the school, and each year pupils were feted for winning scholarships to Oxford, Cambridge etc., and other forms of further education.

Alas, other less academically gifted students were perhaps somewhat overlooked and not encouraged to reach their full potential. After all, they were bright enough to be selected via the 11-plus exam and deserved better!

HEH was very authoritarian and laid down strict rules of behaviour. New pupils were issued with four foolscap pages of guidance, including 21 rules to be obeyed. One such rule was that the Grammar School pupils were not allowed to speak to the Secondary Modern School pupils next door. This was enforced to the extent that one pupil was forbidden to talk to her twin sister over the fence.

He ruled for 21 years, retiring due to ill health in 1967, after which he moved to Ipswich. He passed away in 1975 at the age of 72.

Incidentally Mr Goldfinch was always known by his initials HEH and not a lot of people knew they stood for Harold Eric Hartley!

Raymond Clark (1913-2003)

Raymond Clark was born in Yorkshire in March 1913. In an interview in 2003 he recalled that he started teaching as a pupil teacher in a village school. He then spent two years teaching French at Silcoates, an independent school near Wakefield.



In that interview he also admitted that he was a disciplinarian but said it was discipline with love! I am not sure how many old pupils would agree with that view? Most would say that both Messrs Clark and Goldfinch ruled by fear, and certainly neither hesitated to use the cane whenever they thought it necessary.

In June 1939 Mr Clark moved to Leiston to take up the post of Assistant French Teacher – just in time to join the evacuation to Sudbury. In the 1946 picture he is pictured standing first left.

After the retirement of Mr Bartholomew in 1959, Mr Clark became Deputy Headmaster. When HEH retired in 1967, he was appointed Headteacher tasked with guiding the school through to becoming a comprehensive. This was achieved in 1973 and he retired aged 60 having served at LGS for 34 years. He passed away in 2003.

John Parr (1888-1974)

John Parr was born in 1888. In the 1911 census he was recorded as a student engineer, living with his parents in Lancashire. He joined the school staff in 1919 to teach Mechanical Engineering and Engineering Drawing.

Mr Parr remained in Leiston when the school was evacuated. His services were required to run the engineering workshop and train engineering operatives for the war effort. He is seated next to HEH in the 1946 photo.

He retired in 1953 having served for 34 years, but returned in 1958 to help out when Mr Bartholomew was taken ill.

Herbert Bartholomew (1903-1967)

Herbert Bartholomew (generally known as Bart) was born in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire in August 1903. He studied science at the University of Leeds and was awarded the higher degree of MSc. After spending four years as science master at the Probus School in Cornwall, in 1929 he came to Leiston to join the school staff as Senior Science Master. He went to Sudbury when the school was evacuated. In the 1946 picture he is standing in the centre just behind HEH.

For many years he was master-in-charge of Games.



He was also superintendent of the Leiston Evening Institute.

In 1953, following the retirement of Mr Parr, Bart became Senior Master and Deputy Headmaster. Unfortunately, in 1958, after nearly 30 years at LGS, poor health forced his early retirement and he passed away in 1967.

Edna Mary Donnelly (1920-2005)

Edna Mary Donnelly was born in Ipswich in May 1920. In the 1939 Register, she was listed as a student living with her parents in Sidegate Lane, Ipswich.

After beginning her teaching career in Walthamstow, she joined LGS in 1942 during the evacuation to Sudbury. In the 1946 picture she is seated first left. Over the years Edna taught a variety of subjects, including Biology, Art, and Religious Education (RE), and was the Games mistress for many years.

Edna married fellow teacher **John Michael Barden** (see below) in 1952, and after a few years away to raise their two daughters she returned to teach at LGS until 1973 when the school became a comprehensive, thereby completing a 31-year association with the grammar school.

In 1973 Edna became a Year Head at the new Leiston High School, a promotion which involved leading other teachers, and pastoral care. She taught a range of subjects including RE, and finally retired in 1982.

John Michael Barden (1924-2006)

John Michael Barden (aka Jack) was born in Leiston in September 1924. He attended the local primary school and then became a pupil at Leiston County Secondary School (later LGS). He went with the school to Sudbury when it was evacuated in 1940 during WWII.

In 1941, having completed his O-levels and wanting to become a Woodwork teacher, he applied for a place at Loughborough College, which required all students to join a cadet force. So, he joined the Nottingham University Air Squadron, studied the theory of aviation, and learnt to fly a Tiger Moth.

In 1944 Jack gained his wings flying Havard trainers (the North American T-6 Texan) at the British Flying Training School in Oklahoma, USA.



Back in England, he was trained to fire a rifle, to use a bayonet, a Bren gun, and a Sten gun, and to throw a grenade. He also learnt to fly an Airspeed Horsa glider. This was a large troop-carrying glider capable of transporting up to 30 troops, together with a jeep or anti-tank gun. However, hostilities ended before he saw active service.

After the war, Jack completed his training as a teacher and returned to LGS as a handicraft teacher and sports master.

He was an accomplished cricketer and footballer, and was a bit of a hero to us lads who regularly trooped up to Victory Road to watch him play for the Leiston Town teams.

Jack continued to teach at LGS until 1973 when the school became a comprehensive. Therefore, including his time as a pupil, he completed a record 48-year association with the school!

From 1973 Jack taught Design & Technology, as well as Woodwork, at the new Leiston Middle School, until his retirement in 1983.

Part Four: The Final Curtain – 1967 to 1973

In the 1960s, there were many criticisms of grammar schools and selective education, which was argued to be socially exclusive and divisive. It was an anathema to the Labour government of **Harold Wilson**, and the drive for mixed ability schools was implemented by Circular 10/65, a request to local education authorities to plan for the conversion of all secondary schools into comprehensive schools where pupils would not be selected on the basis of academic ability.

Thus, the days of Leiston Grammar School were numbered. The senior master and long-serving French teacher, Mr Raymond Clark (standing 1st left in the 1946 photo), was appointed as Head to see the school through to 'comprehensivisation'. This was finally completed in 1973, ending the school's proud record of providing a higher-level education to the more academically gifted local pupils for over 60 years.

After the closure of LGS, the school buildings were cleared out and adapted to accommodate the new Middle School. Later, when Leiston moved to two-tier education, the original Grammar School building became Leiston High School's Sixth Form Centre. More recently, following the decision to end 16+ education, the old school building was sold for residential use.

Part Five: The Leiston Grammar School Archive

Many visitors and pupils will remember the dozens of photos in black frames which lined the central corridor of the school. Dating from as early as 1922, they featured the various sports teams which represented the school.

Each year the tennis, hockey, football and cricket teams posed for the photographer, usually at the front of the school building.

Unfortunately, the LEA official in charge of the change to secondary education was tasked to remove all traces of the 'elitist' Grammar School, and when the building was cleared, the team photos were consigned to the skip.

Happily, they were rescued by **Frank Huxley**, the LGS Classics teacher, and cared for by the Leiston Town Clerk, **John Rayner**, who brought them along to the biennial school reunions.

However, they began to show their age and so, in 2018, they were passed on to the Alde Valley Suffolk Family History Group (AVSFHG), who took on the task of digitising and copying the pictures. They were then catalogued and indexed, and the originals were given to the Suffolk Record Office (now Suffolk Archives), who will preserve them for posterity.

Since that time, thanks to contributions from far and wide, the LGS archive has grown extensively and now includes over 300 panoramic, sports team and form photos. We also have *Leistonian* magazines, sports day programmes and other ephemera.



The Leiston Grammar School building today (courtesy John Martin)

Over the last few years, we have been contacted by many LGS alumni and their families. Pictures and information have been sent to all parts of the world, including to a lady in the USA who attended the school in the late 1960s, who in return shared her memories and put names to some of the pupils and staff.



The LGS Hockey Team, 1951-1952
Back Row: J Watson, J Rouse, J Mills, P Clouting, G Boast, E Blakely, S Blowers.
Front Row: M Runnacles, D Wardley, Mrs Barden, M Moore, K Bastow.



The LGS Football Team, 1959-1960
Back Row: Mr Goldfinch, A Flatt, D Ratcliffe, A Van-Roon, ???ery, A Woods, C Rigden, T Packard, S Ling,
D Watson, Mr Barden.
Front Row: D Turner, D Wilson, J Finch, T Johnson (Capt), J Martin, M Pearson, R Foster.



Form 5, 1961

Standing L-R: David Caley, Paul Wray, Kenneth Drane, Richard Young, ??? Smith, Colin Brown, Peter Chaston, John Bugg. Seated L-R: Teresa Downing, Elizabeth Cutler, Rosemary Blunden, Mr Molyneux, Sheila Flatman, Stephanie Hughes, Margaret Warnes.



LGS Sixth Form, 1960

*Back, L-R: Julian Chilvers, Richard Flatman, George Chorlton, David Andrews, Martin Stevens, Richard Van Roon, Desmond Wilson, Murray Pearson, David? Crosby.
Next, L-R: Jane Warne, Sally Brown, Sandra Moore, Margaret Betenson, Joy Burtenshaw, Janise Evans, Felicity Roe.
Sitting, L-R: Patrick Mills, John Martin, Terry Johnson, Mr Clarke (Knobby), Geoffrey Salway, John Kitchenman, Tony Roland.
Front, L-R: Jill Westhorpe, Sheena Brown, Judith Kemp, Ann Rouse.*

SYLEHAM MILLS

A list of millers of Syleham from **Julian Turner**, forwarded by **Eileen Blythe** (creator of a *Directory of Millers*, available via the Members' Area of the Society's website), inspired this article based on the watermill and windmill of Syleham.

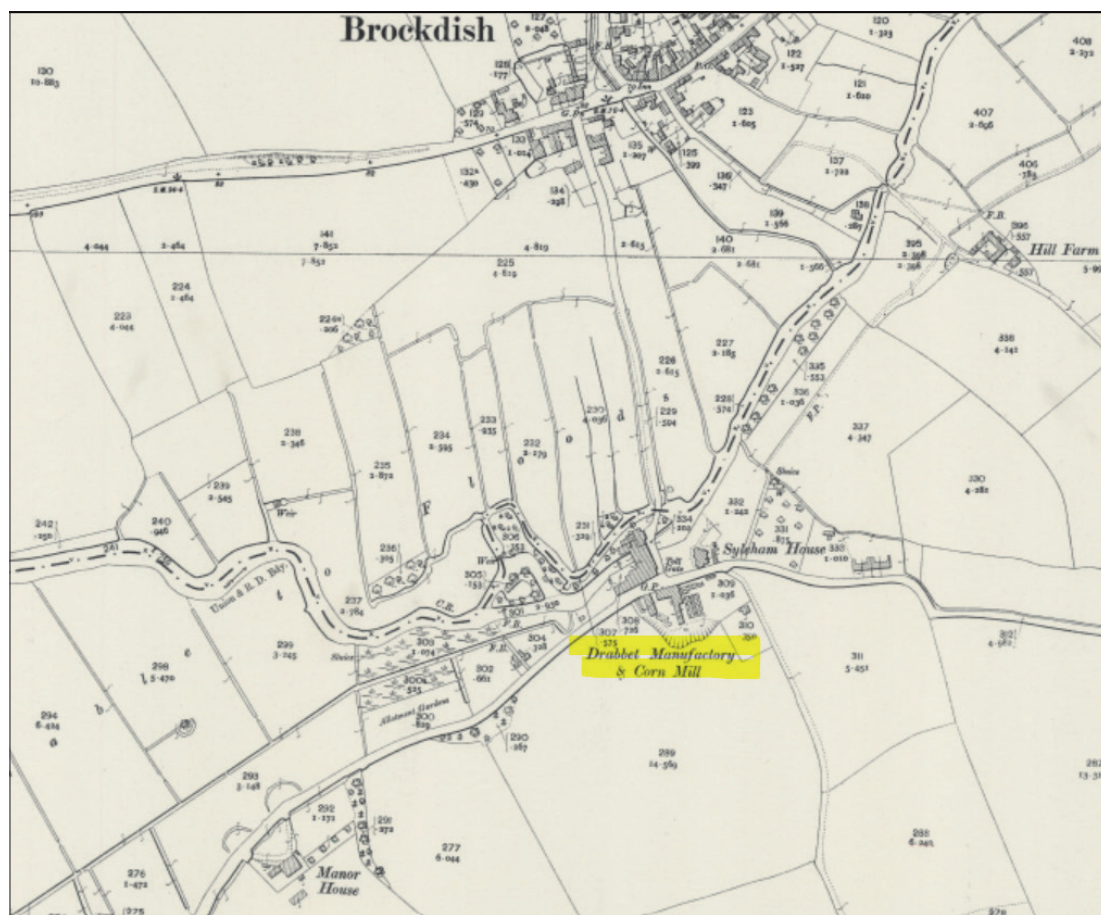
The Syleham watermill

The Syleham watermill was located to the north-east of the village, at the toll bridge across the River Waveney, on the Norfolk border. It was built or rebuilt around 1540, on the site of a Saxon and Medieval mill, following the dissolution of the monasteries.⁽¹⁾ A Suffolk gazetteer entry for Syleham in 1855 recorded '*an extensive water corn mill, the greater part of which was converted into a linen and cotton manufactory, about fifteen years ago*'.⁽²⁾ The conversion took place in 1839, and all corn milling ceased in 1849. A steam engine was installed in the 1860s, and steam power was used when water levels fell too low. The mill became a factory for the manufacture of drabbett (a coarse cloth made from linen and cotton, used for making smocks) and ready-made clothing, and from 1900 was listed as the Syleham Drabbett Co. Drabbett manufacture ceased around 1914, as demand decreased, but clothing manufacture continued.

A very good description of the mill appears on the Norfolk Mills website,⁽³⁾ which lists a **William Mann** as taking out insurance for Syleham Mill in 1779. In 1781, William Mann was described as a flour merchant at Syleham.⁽⁴⁾ William passed away in 1812, the executors of his estate being **R, C and W Mann**, of Syleham.⁽⁵⁾ By 1818, **Charles Mann** was reported as owner of Syleham Mill, but it was managed by others – **Benjamin Green** from around 1814,⁽⁶⁾ and a bankruptcy case reported in 1826 against **Robert Crytoft Harvey** and **Edward Hill** listed Syleham Mill as among a number that they managed. Syleham Mill and Farm were to be returned by the assignees to their owner, Charles Mann.⁽⁷⁾ Later in 1826, the mill was advertised for sale or to let: '*...all those highly desirable WATER CORN MILLS, delightful Residence Cottages, Barn, Stables, the Tolls arising from a Gate near the Mill, and about 40 acres of rich arable, meadow and pasture Land, situated in the pleasant village of Syleham... The Mill, which has six feet fall of water, has two water wheels, two pit wheels, six pairs of stones, going-gears, machinery fixtures, &c... The Granaries are spacious and with the stables are contiguous to the mill; the mill is capable of manufacturing 20 lasts of wheat per week..*'.⁽⁸⁾

Newspaper articles later in the 1820s started describing Charles Mann as '*late of Syleham*' and his wife, **Sarah**, died in Peckham, Surrey in 1829.⁽⁹⁾

It is not clear who owned the mill after this, but in 1838 Syleham Corn Mill was again advertised to let, being described as an '*excellent family residence*', and as a '*highly desirable water corn mill, residence, cottages, stables, the tolls arising from a gate near the mill, and about 8 acres of remarkably luxuriant pasture land*', adding that '*the premises are well adapted to a manufactory on a large scale*'.⁽¹⁰⁾



*Location of Syleham Drabbett Mill (Syleham Watermill), on River Waveney
Courtesy NLS, OS Map 25 inch, Norfolk CX1.6, 1903*

The mill was taken on by **Henry Warne**, who in the 1841 Diss census was a 45-year-old linen manufacturer, living with **Sarah** (40), **Henry** (14), **Charles** (12), **James** (6) and, enumerated separately in the same dwelling, **John Beswick** (50). The Norfolk Mills entry for Syleham watermill indicates that about this time Henry closed his Diss business and moved to Hoxne Mill, and by 1844 was also involved in running the Syleham Mill.

The 1844 *Gazetteer of Suffolk*⁽¹¹⁾ recorded a **Roy Robinson** as a miller in Syleham, although the 1841 census had listed Roy as a miller living in nearby Brockdish. The *Norfolk Chronicle* of 23 July 1842 reported the marriage of Ray Robinson of 'Syleham Mills', but by 1851, Roy and his father **James** were millers in Wortham, Suffolk – both also born there. It's not clear which Syleham mill Roy worked at, but the press regularly used the term 'Syleham Mills' to refer to the watermill.

The mill was again advertised for sale in 1849,⁽¹²⁾ stating that it been converted into a factory and was the property of Henry Warne.

In the 1851 Syleham census, living at the Mansion (which was near the Tollgate house), Henry Warne (58, b. Diss, Norfolk) was recorded as a '*Drabett Manufacturer and Employer of 96 hands*'. With him were wife Sarah (53, b. Flush [probably Flash], Staffs), son Charles (21, b. Diss, Norfolk), also his brother-in-law, widower Jno Beswick (69, b. Flush, Staffs), a manufacturer's overlooker, and grandson **Thos Coleby** (7, b. Hoxne, Suffolk). Henry died in 1851 and left the mill and factory to his son Charles.

As well as producing cloth, a by-product as advertised by H Warne of Syleham Mill was '*STARCH FIBRE FOR PIG FEEDING. The best food for the above purpose, £5 0s. per ton, or 5s. 3d. per cwt*'.⁽¹³⁾ Later, it was also being sold as suitable feed for horses, cows and poultry!

An 1859 advertisement for '*WARNE'S PATENT VENTILATING REPELLENT, SYLEHAM MILLS*' recorded the proprietors as Henry Warne and Son, describing how their material for clothing known as drabett '*is now entirely Waterproof by a patent process which will stand any amount of rain*', and listing three qualities/weights of fabric, variously suited to labourers, agriculturalists and sportsmen, and gamekeepers and dealers.⁽¹⁴⁾

By 1861, Henry's son Charles Warne (31) had taken over the business, and was living in Syleham as a linen and cotton manufacturer. With him were wife **Mary** (23, b. Bingham, Notts), daughters **Ada** (4) and **Kate** (1) (both born in Syleham), his manager, **Robert Musk** (65, b. Norfolk), listed as a yarn and linen merchant, a boarder – clerk **Thomas Slack** (16), a nursemaid and a cook.

Charles did not succeed in business. His bankruptcy in 1867, which impacted on many local tradesmen, was described by the press in length, with a follow up on 23 March 1869, reporting '*the declaration of a further and final dividend under the failure of Charles Warne, who was described as of Syleham Mills, Syleham, Suffolk, drabett and linen manufacturer. The petition was filed in March, 1867, and on 30th of May, 1867 the bankrupt received a discharge... For having contracted certain of his debts by means of acceptances to bills in favour of Messrs. Wilkinson and Co., of Leeds, for which he had not received value, without any reasonable means or expectation of being able to pay the same. The liabilities amounted to 18,367l. 19s. and a deficiency of 13,818l. 11s. is disclosed upon the accounts. The failure was ascribed by the bankrupt to insufficiency of capital to carry on the business*'.⁽¹⁵⁾

In the 1871 census, Charles Warne, 41, still described as a '*Linen/cotton manufacturer*', was with wife Mary (33), and children **Charles H** (7), **Margaret** (4), **Sarah E** (9 mo), and Kate (11). There were three servants. The manager of the drabett factory, **William Adkins** (48, b. Bressingham), lived in a separate, nearby property.

However, it seems Charles was in the process of winding up his affairs. Newspapers carried adverts for a large auction of property at Syleham Mill in March 1871, highlighting '*HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, PLATE, PLATED ARTICLES, BOOKS, PAINTINGS, GUNS, 2 RIDING HORSES, 2 PONIES, CARRIAGE, HARNESS, HAY, STRAW, BEET-ROOT, BEDDING PLANTS & FRUIT TREES (IN POTS), SEASONED*

BOARD & PLANK; TWO STEAM ENGINES, IRON, STEEL, FILES, NAILS, STOCK OF READY-MADE CLOTHES &C..', which were further described in the lengthy ensuing text (including 140oz plate and 300 books!).⁽¹⁶⁾

Charles Warne's business was officially transferred to the Syleham Mills Drabbett Company in 1871.⁽¹⁷⁾ Charles Warne and his wife Mary both died in 1872.

The Syleham Mills Drabbett Company was taken on by **E A Holmes**, as indicated by a report of a works outing in 1873:

'On Monday last the employees of Messrs E. A. Holmes and Co, drabbett manufacturers, Syleham Mills, with their families and friends, left Harleston by the 7.52 train en route for Yarmouth, where they arrived about ten o'clock. Here they dispersed to enjoy the various seaside amusements. Boating, bathing, &c., were freely indulged in during the day, the parties arriving at their homes shortly before 10 p.m. Thanks are due to the Firm for their kind treat, this being an additional proof of the good feeling existing between employers and employed since the business has been taken over by Messrs. Holmes and Co'.⁽¹⁸⁾

In the 1881 Syleham census, living at the Factory House were Edward A Holmes (38) and brother **Gervas** (43, b. St Margaret South Elmham). Edward was a 'Drabbett manufacturer emp. 80 hands', and Gervas a bell founder 'Bronze Manuf' and JP for Norfolk. Next door at Toll Gate was William Atkins (58), the foreman of factory labour, with wife **Rachel** (58).

Previously, in 1871 the brothers had lived in Brockdish – just across the bridge over the Waveney – when Gervas was a farmer of 280 acres, and also a magistrate; and his brother Adolphus E (Edward) was a 'Manufacturer of Drabbett'. The 1877 *Harrod & Co Directory*⁽¹⁹⁾ and 1883 *White's Directory*⁽²⁰⁾ described Gervas as a JP and lord of the manors of Brockdish Hall and Brockdish Earl, and owner of the Hall.

In 1885, 'Syleham Mills' was listed under the management of 'Chase, Edwards and Holmes, drabbett mfrs. by steam and water power', a separate entry identifying 'Holmes Edward Adolphus' of Syleham House with this business.⁽²¹⁾ By 1892, *Kelly's Directory* listed the manufactory at Syleham Mills as 'Syleham Drabbett Co, linen and smock manufacturers', managed by Edward Holmes.⁽²²⁾

There was a fire at the mill in 1889, caused by an overheated flue. Fortunately, it was spotted quickly and the works fire engine under the management of Mr E A Holmes, together with the Brockdish engine and with help from villagers and employees, was able to extinguish it, although considerable damage was reported, 'the dressing and finishing rooms being burnt out and the roof destroyed'.⁽²³⁾

In the 1891 Syleham census, Edward A Holmes was living (with his wife **Catherine** and daughter **Mary**) in a 'Privite Ho' adjacent to the Drabbett Factory and Toll Gate (where William Atkins was now listed as Factory Manager). There was no occupation listed for Edward, but he continued to be the factory owner, as in a report on a fire in

1899,⁽²⁴⁾ the fire engines from Brockdish and 'Mr A. Holmes Syleham factory' rendered assistance at a fire in the pea, hay and clover stacks at nearby Monks Hall. Later that year, a presentation was made to Edward Holmes and his wife, in regret of their moving from the neighbourhood. The Rector spoke about '*the length of time, nearly 30 years, that Mr Holmes had been connected with the parishes of Brockdish and Syleham, and how both Mrs Holmes and himself had endeared themselves to the people through their universal kindness, courtesy and liberality*'. In turn, Mr Holmes was reported as having spoken about the manner in which he came to be involved with the Syleham Mills Co.⁽²⁵⁾

In 1902, a **W Emms** was advertising for drabett weavers to work at Syleham Mills.⁽²⁶⁾ The Emms family were in residence at Syleham House and had been advertising for staff there too. The Emms were evidently able to improve the business, as in 1906 a new shaft for the watermill was installed:

'What is considered to be the largest casting ever turned out of a mould in this neighbourhood has just been produced at Messrs. E. Youngs and Co's "Swootman" Foundry, Diss, in the form of a huge shaft for driving the large water wheel at the drabett factory of Messrs. Emms and Co., Syleham. The shaft, which is of octagon circumference, is 16ft. in length and of 18in. diameter, and weighs 2 tons 12 cwt. The iron of which it is composed was all melted in an hour and a half and took 48 hours to cool... Yesterday the shaft was carted to Syleham Mills where it is now being fitted.'⁽²⁷⁾

Syleham Mill suffered a devastating fire on 24 May 1928.⁽²⁸⁾ The report in the local press the following day⁽²⁹⁾ described how the alarm had been raised at 3pm, and the responding fire brigades arrived at 4pm (from Harleston) and 4:15pm (from Bungay). The fire started in one of the mill's engine rooms, probably caused by an overheated bearing. A few days later the same paper carried an entry headed '**SYLEHAM MILLS FIRE**' saying that '**Mr E. R. Emms** and family of Syleham House, Diss, wish to thank all those kind helpers who helped to extinguish this fire. Also he wishes to express his appreciation for the promptness of the Harleston and Bungay Fire Brigades'. On the same page, an editorial commented on the need for '*something better than a horse-drawn fire engine in the locality*' as they had watched '*the major portion of Syleham Mills disappear in a cloud of smoke, leaving charred foundations as a warning*'.⁽³⁰⁾ All that remained was the dye works, where clothing manufacture continued well into the 20th century.⁽³¹⁾

The Syleham windmill

The Syleham windmill was one of a pair of post mills built at Earsham Street, Wingfield in 1730.⁽³²⁾ In 1823 one mill was relocated to Syleham, as the then owner, **Robert Sparkes**, thought the mills were too close together.⁽³³⁾ The census entries for some of the millers indicate it was located at Great Green, Syleham. A 1973 newspaper article described its history as '*built on Mill Farm, Winfield, in 1730, then in about 1823, it was moved lock stock and grinding stone to its present site at Home Farm, Syleham, a distance*

of some two miles'.⁽³⁴⁾ Home Farm was located on what is now Windmill Lane. It was further stated that the mill ended its useful life in 1952, and that the then owners, the **Wingfield** family, were hoping to restore it for opening to the public. Unfortunately, the mill was blown down in 1987, and the remains removed in 2007. The present-day map shows a road called Windmill Lane on one side of the Great Green location.⁽³⁵⁾

Newspaper and census records help to identify millers in Syleham, and the address in the census may indicate their association with the windmill.

In the early 1830s, the mill was run by **John Roper**. An article in 1831 listed a sale by auction, over four days, on the premises of John Roper, miller of Hoxne and Syleham (for the benefit of his creditors), of a large number of items including animals, stable equipment, carts, tools, dried goods, household items, and '*all sundries belonging to the Syleham mill*'.⁽³⁶⁾ A couple of weeks later, his mills were also being sold:

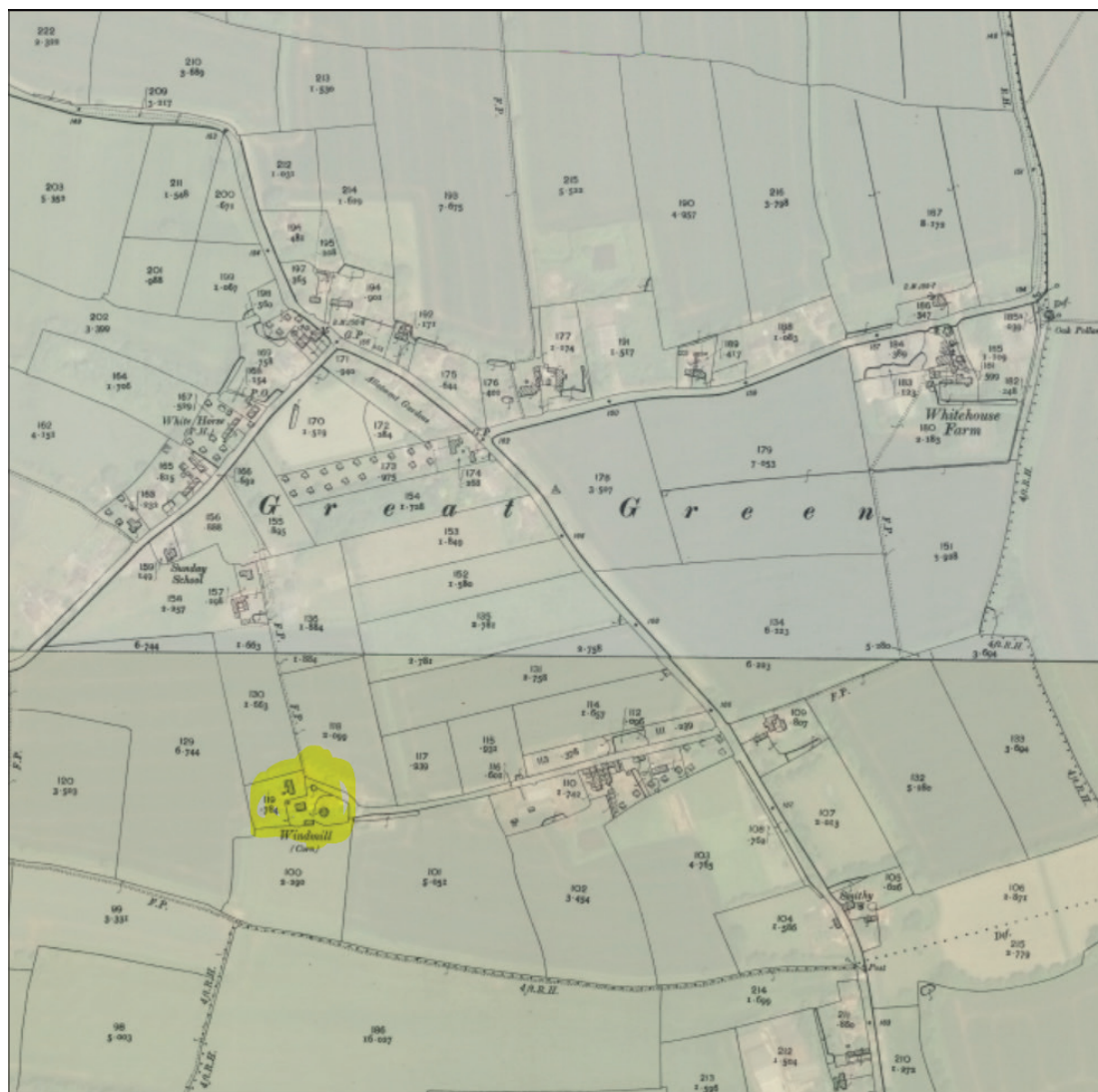
'By order of the Trustee of Mr John Roper, the following valuable FREEHOLD PROPERTY, at Hoxne and Syleham in Suffolk: – LOT 1. A large Post Wind-Mill with round-house, driving two pairs of stones of 4 feet 8 inches, with spur gears, spring sails, wind tackle and implements, and two acres and one rood of Arable Land, or thereabouts,... LOT 2. – A small Wind-mill, driving two pairs of four-feet Stones, with Spur Gears, Sails, Tackle and Implements, and a Piece of Arable Land containing about the same quantity as Lot 1'.⁽³⁷⁾

John Roper had financial difficulties in 1831 and again in 1835, resulting in a further auction of goods.⁽³⁸⁾ He was declared bankrupt in 1836.⁽³⁹⁾ From a legal case reported in spring 1837,⁽⁴⁰⁾ it appears that following the 1831 difficulties, John had moved from Hoxne to Syleham, and remained there between 1832 and 1835, when he encountered further financial issues and moved to London. His son, **John Roper jnr.**, set up business on his own account in 1831, at the age of 17, to take over the running of the Hoxne mill. He moved to Syleham after Christmas 1835 and remained until October 1836, at which point his goods were seized by the father's receivers, who claimed they had been bought with the father's money. John Roper jnr. took them to court, arguing that the goods had been illegally seized and the seizure had damaged his reputation and business.

Wikipedia lists later millers as **George Dye** (from 1839-1847), **John Bokenham** (1847-1848), **John Bryant** (1848-1867), **Sarah Ann Bryant** (John's wife, 1867-1874), **James Bryant** (1874-1907), **Arthur John Bryant** (1907-1936), **Jack Penton** (1945-1949), and **Elizabeth Jillard** (1949-1967). **Ivor Wingfield**, grandson of Arthur Bryant, purchased the mill in 1967.⁽⁴¹⁾

The 1841 census recorded a number of millers living around the Great Green area of Syleham:

William Bokenham (41, b. Suffolk), millwright, with **Mary** (38), **Charlotte** (16), **William** (14), **Charles** (9), **Thomas** (7), none of these b. Suffolk, **Edward** (1, b. Suffolk).



Great Green, Syleham. Courtesy NLS, OS 25" Suffolk XXV1.10 1903 Site of windmill highlighted

John Bryant (38, b. Suffolk), miller, with Sarah (30), **John** (10), **William** (8), **Marianne** (5), **George** (3), **Esther** (2), all b. Suffolk.

George Dye, (55, b. Suffolk), miller, with **Mary** (65, b. Suffolk)

John Bokenham (37, b. Suffolk), journeyman miller with **Rhoda** (36), **George** (16), **Samuel** (13), **Faith** (10), **Emma** (6), **Francis** (4), **John** (3 mo), all b. Suffolk.

George Dye died in 1847. The advertisement for sale of the mill in the *Suffolk Chronicle* stated that George had conducted his business for over 20 years, so he had probably bought it from John Roper. The property was described as 'A capital POST WIND-MILL in full trade, driving two pairs of French stones (one nearly new), two Spring Sails, and two Common Sails, is remarkably well winded, and all her Gears in most complete order.

ALSO, A CONVENIENT AND COMFORTABLE DWELLING HOUSE with Stable and Outbuilding, Garden and Mill Yard attached to the same; all in good repair... situated in Syleham in Suffolk, by the side of the Green...'.⁽⁴²⁾ John Bryant was listed in the 1844 *Gazetteer of Suffolk* as a corn miller in Wingfield,⁽⁴³⁾ and in the 1851 census he was living in Wingfield. His entry lists:

John Bryant (48, b. Wortham, Suffolk), miller, with Sarah (40, b. Wingfield), John (19, b. Wingfield), miller; William (17), miller, Mary Ann (15), Esther (11), **James** (8), all b. Syleham; **Eliza** (5), **Walter** (2), both b. Wingfield.

John Bokenham, meanwhile, appears to have fallen foul of the law, being sentenced to 3 months' imprisonment for embezzlement in March 1851;⁽⁴⁴⁾ he was recorded in Ipswich County Gaol in the census that year as a 47-year-old widower. By 1861 he was again listed as a miller, with his family in Hoxne.

In 1851, William Bokenham was a miller, millwright and tailor living in Cross Street, Hoxne.

Scanning through the 1851 census for Syleham, 'millers' living at Great Green were:

Faith Bokenham (21), with siblings, Frances (13), and **Henry** (8). All were born in Syleham, and were listed as either miller's daughter or son. Henry's birth (registered as Buckingham, in the Hoxne registration district) showed a mother's maiden surname of **West**, which would correspond to John Bokenham's wife.

William Howe (37, b. Willingham, Suffolk), widower, journeyman miller, with children: **Catherine** (6, b. Stratton St Michael, Norfolk), **Martin Wm** (4, b. Fressingfield, Suffolk), **Mary Ann** (2, b. Stradbroke, Suffolk), and **Ruth** (4 mo, b. Syleham).

In 1861, John Bryant, 58, now listed as a miller and farmer of 10 acres, was still living in Wingfield, with wife Sarah, and children Esther, James, Eliza, Walter and **Edgar** (9, b. Wingfield).

A **Charles Denny** (25, b. Earl Stonham), journeyman miller, with wife **Mary A** (20, b. Syleham) was also listed in Wingfield. It appears the Bryant and Denny families became friends, and there were close links between the Wingfield and Syleham windmills.

The Bryants' eldest son had taken on the Syleham windmill. John Bryant jnr. (29) was listed there as a journeyman miller with wife **Louise** (28, b. Withersdale, Suffolk), children **William** (5) and **Sarah** (1), both born Syleham, and a visiting carpenter, **David Service** (56, b. Yarmouth, Norfolk). With them at the Mill cottage was **Richard Palmer** (23, b. Wortwell, Norfolk), miller, with wife **Ann** (22, b. Syleham).

John Bryant snr. of Wingfield, miller, died in 1867, and the probate entry recorded the value of his effects as being under £600. The executors of the will included his widow

Sarah Ann Bryant, and his son John Bryant of Syleham, farmer. It appears that the Syleham windmill was left to his wife Sarah until she died, and that son James took over the running of it.

An 1870 report of a theft of flour from the mill, during the night, describes how the theft was interrupted by a couple of police constables who happened to be passing (at about 4am!), and the noise woke James and his brother-in-law. Giving evidence, James stated:

*'I am a miller at Syleham. My mother occupies Syleham wind mill and I manage the business for her. I left the mill on Tuesday, the 4th January, about 11 o'clock at night, locked up the door, and took the key. I was disturbed during the night by a noise; I got up, went into the mill yard, and saw three or four men standing. I went to my house and dressed; got the key and went to the mill with **Pannifer**, p.c. I unlocked the mill door and saw the other door standing open. I had fastened the door with an iron bar the previous night. I went through a trap door from the round house up into the mill and I there discovered a shutter had been undone that was closed when I went home the previous night. The shutter lay outside on the front house... I can't say how it was opened. It is 30 feet from the ground. A person could get up by the rod outside and get in there...'.⁽⁴⁵⁾*

The 1871 census listed Sarah Ann Bryant (60), living in a cottage in Wingfield, as a miller occupying two mills. Her sons, Walter (32), a miller, and Edgar (19), were with her, as was granddaughter **Gertrude Wright** (7, b. Syleham), and two visitors, Mary A Denny (35), and **Sarah Denny** (4), both b. Syleham.

John Bryant jnr. had moved to the Miller's House in Denham, where he was a miller and farmer, with a growing family.

James Bryant (28), miller, was recorded in Syleham with wife **Mary** (38, b. Layham), daughter **Blanche** (3, b. Syleham) and son **Arthur** (2, b. Syleham); and as a separate household in the same property was Charles Denny (36), miller, with son **Albert** (6, b. Syleham). He was listed as married, but his wife was absent (probably she was the Mary Denny visiting Sarah Ann Bryant).

James (37) was again listed as a corn miller in Syleham in 1881. He was employing one man, and living with wife Mary Ann (49) and children Arthur and Blanche. His 'niece' Sarah Denny (14), was visiting. His mother, Sarah Ann, was still living in Wingfield with granddaughter Gertude Wright, but had no occupation listed. Brother Walter, was a miller in Wingfield being helped by his nephew (John's son), William Bryant (25), miller (corn).

James' employee was the only other miller listed in Syleham in 1881:

Ephriam Sparrow (37, b. Syleham), journeyman miller, corn, with wife **Ester** (41), and daughters **Ada** (14), **Lener** (13), **Morina** (11), **Malinda** (10), **Rosa** (9), **Lizzie** (7), **Maggie** (6), **May** (4), and **Clara** (2), all b. Syleham.

James, as his employer, had to give Ephraim a character reference (excellent!) at the Stradbroke petty sessions in 1882, where he pleaded guilty to assault of his wife.⁽⁴⁶⁾

Ephraim lived all his life in Syleham, usually being described as an agricultural labourer, but in 1901 he again appeared as a miller (worker), living on Syleham Green. His daughters, May (24) and **Kathleen** (19, b. Syleham), were tailoresses at the Drabbett Factory. He died in 1909.

Charles Denny, meanwhile, had moved to be a miller in Weybread, and was employing two men and a boy.

The 1885 *White's Directory* entry for Syleham listed James Bryant as a corn miller and overseer.⁽⁴⁷⁾ Similarly, the 1892 *Kelly's Directory* described James Bryant as a '*miller (wind)*'.⁽⁴⁸⁾

In 1888, Sarah Bryant died and in accordance with her late husband's will, the mills in Syleham and Wingfield were put up for sale, the mill in Syleham being described as: '*A FREEHOLD POST-MILL, DWELLING HOUSE, Outbuildings and Premises in the occupation of Mr. James Bryant, at an annual rent of £30*'. The Wingfield mill was leasehold in the occupation of Walter Bryant (he was recorded there as a miller, with his family, in the 1881 census). Both mills were described as having two pairs of stones, and being in full trade.⁽⁴⁹⁾

In the 1891 census, James Bryant (48), was still the miller, living in Syleham windmill with his wife, Sarah, and children Blanche (23) and Arthur, now 21 and a miller too. There were no others listed as millers.

James was still the miller in 1901, in Mill Lane, adjacent to Syleham Green, listed as employer, with son Arthur (31), a '*millers son*', categorised as a worker. Both were working at home, and daughter-in-law Marianne Bryant (29, b. Syleham) was also resident. The only other miller listed in Syleham was Ephraim Sparrow, as mentioned earlier.

James died in 1907, and his son Arthur became the miller at Syleham windmill. James left effects of £937 1s 4d, with probate to his son Arthur John Bryant, miller, and daughter Blanche Mobbs (wife of **Robert Mobbs**).

Arthur (41), was living in Mill House, Syleham in 1911, a miller at a grist windmill. He described himself as an employer, and living in the same property was **Charles Finch** (44, b. Thorpe Abbott, Norfolk), whose relationship to Arthur was servant, and occupation was journeyman miller. With Arthur was his wife, Marianne, and the only one of their five children still living – **Laura** (7, b. Syleham).

Arthur continued to be listed as a '*miller (wind)*' in Syleham in the *Kelly's Directories* of 1912, 1916, 1922, 1925 and 1929. The 1939 Register recorded him still living at Mill House, Syleham, a master grist miller, with Marianne Bryant (a sub-postmistress) and

Eva M Bryant (later **Revell**), b. 1911, housekeeper. Arthur died in 1945.

R J Brown's book on windmills⁽⁵⁰⁾ records that after his death, Arthur's daughter sold the mill to Jack Penton. During his stay the mill was damaged by gales in the winter of 1946-1947, and a 'freak cyclone' in July 1947. The latter was described in a much later report in 1974, hailing the mill refurbishment completed by then owner Ivor Wingfield:

'SYLEHAM MILL 1946. A ferocious summer storm. The miller inside was powerless to turn the sails into the wind and as the mill tilted forward his lad was flicked high in the air and crashed down, breaking his back. The millstones fell and the sails tore round, held only by one great beam. Although some temporary repairs were made the condition of the mill has remained much the same since those days... One years work on refurbishing has allowed the owner, Mr Ivor Wingfield to open THIS SUNDAY, and a massive old donkey engine will once again turn the stones... Helping on the day will be Mr T Elsdon of Syleham who used to assist the last miller, Jack Penton'.⁽⁵¹⁾

The article appears to have overlooked Elizabeth Jillard, who took over the mill in 1949. This caused somewhat of a stir – a female miller was very unusual – and was reported in the national press: *'The old locals shook their heads when Miss Elizabeth Jillard of Kensington, London, arrived at Syleham, Suffolk, last year to take over the disused mill. "Huh", they snorted. "A woman grinding corn. T'aint natural". Elizabeth soon proved them wrong. By spring she had the great sails turning again. The milling room resounded with the rumbling and grinding of the massive stones. A few farmers brought their wheat. Then a few more'.⁽⁵²⁾* The news even reached Australia, where Elizabeth was heralded as Britain's only woman miller, a red-headed former English teacher (at a Polish refugee camp in Uganda).⁽⁵³⁾ She used an oil engine to grind the grain. In 1967 Ivor Wingfield purchased the mill, and repair work commenced in 1974. Ivor was the grandson of Arthur Bryant, through Arthur's daughter, Laura Bryant.

Lesley Hall

Co-editor

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SUFFOLK STRAYS INDEX

Elizabeth Burling, of the London Westminster & Middlesex Family History Society, came across the following information whilst in the London Metropolitan Archives, and thought our readers might be interested.

Indexes to the registers of eight Suffolk parishes, made by the **Rev Edward Cookson** of Ipswich in 1907, are located in the Small Family Collections at London Metropolitan Archives, Ref: CLC/521/MS01541.

The registers are for the parishes of:

- Great Bealings, 1544-1548
- Bungay Holy Trinity, 1557-1800
- Cockfield, 1564-1859
- Ilketshall St Andrew, 1541-1619
- Hasketon, 1538-1813
- Ufford, 1558-1614
- Spexhall, 1538-1769
- Martlesham, 1653-1812

The entries for the first four parishes are excerpts only, but the others appear to be complete. Whilst the original registers for all these parishes are available for consultation at Suffolk Archives' Ipswich branch (The Hold), the registers of Great Bealings deposited there apparently do not contain entries for 1543-1548, so this London collection could be important for anyone getting their family history back that far.

The Editors

CERTIFICATES OFFERED

Frances Turner has kindly offered some certificates she ordered in error. If anyone is interested in one or more of those listed below, please e-mail Frances at frances638@btinternet.com

Birth certificates

Name	Date of Birth	Details
Henry Garrod	24 December 1837	Son of John Garrod & Eliza Sheppard of Ipswich
Emma Gooding	14 November 1869	Daughter of Susannah Gooding of Ipswich
Emma Elizabeth Gooding	24 April 1866	Daughter of Edward Gooding & Mary Ann Pearsons of Ipswich
Emma Kate Gooding	22 October 1868	Daughter of John Richard Gooding & Susan Abigail Beaumont of Ipswich
Unnamed Pallant	15 August 1848	Daughter of Philip Pallant & Sarah Hazelton of Ipswich

Death certificates

Name	Date of Death	Details
Robert Baker	18 December 1846	2-day-old son of James Baker of Finningham
Robert Baker	30 November 1850	4-year-old son of George Baker of Wetheringsett
Robert Baker	4 July 1856	age 87 in Eye Union Workhouse
John Bloomfield	9 November 1865	age 84 at Foxhall Road, Ipswich
Mary Ann Bloomfield	11 November 1860	age 33 at Albion Place, Ipswich (wife of John Bloomfield)
Henry Garrod	27 August 1906	age 69 in Mickfield
Sarah Pallant	14 May 1861	age 39 at Fore Hamlet, Ipswich
Mary Saul	31 May 1847	age 77 in Carlton Colville
Sarah Steggall	20 December 1839	age 56 in Cotton (wife of Robert Steggall).

The Editors

GAMEKEEPERS FEEDBACK

The previous edition of *Suffolk Roots* (Vol. 50 No. 1 June 2024) featured an article entitled 'The Strange Case of the Earl's Gamekeepers'. Member **David Romanos** has provided some additional information:

*'Thanks for giving the dates of **William Easey** (1791-1844) and the fact that his son **Henry** became Head Gamekeeper. This enabled me to verify that he was one of 10 siblings of my 3x great-grandfather **George Easey** (1787-1865). Prior to this I only had William's birth year.*

*The Easeys had arrived in Dunwich from Cambridgeshire, and by matching Suffolk FHS records with Cambridgeshire ones I managed to get back to my 10x great-grandfather, also **William Easey**, who married in 1617. The family legend was that we were from Dunwich, but we had no idea of the Cambridgeshire origins.*

*Finally, my great-grandmother **Fanny Mills** (1862-1949) married my great-grandfather **George Easey** in Norwich in 1883, but for a time the Mills branch, originally from the Halesworth area, lived in Bury St Edmunds.'*

David can be contacted at david_romanos@yahoo.co.uk.

The Editors

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HELP WANTED – CULFORD ONE-PLACE STUDY

My mother's paternal side, the Smiths, were from Culford, from as far back as the mid-1700s through to the late 1800s. I recently drove through Culford and was instantly intrigued by it. I thought it would make a great One-Place study.

I am currently doing the Pharos course 'First Steps to a One-Place Study' and my research into Culford has now started. I am looking to cover both the past and present, recording the changes that have taken place, as well as life for its inhabitants over the centuries. I intend to share my research findings via a website and Facebook page when I have gathered a bit more information.

I would be grateful to hear from anyone with connections to, or information about, Culford. I am particularly interested to hear from current or previous inhabitants, or descendants of previous inhabitants, as well as any stories or memories people may be willing to share.

Samantha Godley Mb 11612
sam.godley@one-place-studies.org

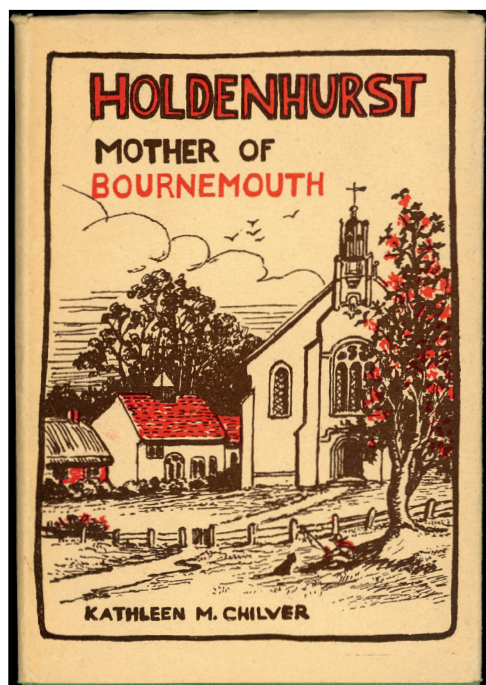
HELP WANTED – CHILVER AND SMYTHE RELATIVES

We recently transcribed an indenture for a member, who is interested in finding any present-day descendants/relatives of the people named in it, **George Robert Chilver** and **Ellen Kate Smythe**.

On 7 May 1885, an indenture was executed between George Robert Chilver of Ipswich, a tobacco manufacturer, Ellen Kate Smythe of the same place, spinster, and **John Sparrow** of Sudbury, a surgeon. The indenture was drawn up in anticipation of the marriage between George and Ellen and initially covered life insurance policies for George with the Prudential. It detailed various contingencies based on whether the marriage proceeded or if Ellen predeceased George. The document also included an extensive inventory of the furniture at 15 Burlington Road, Ipswich, listed room by room, with items such as half-a-dozen gravy spoons, an eight-day clock, and two Japanese tables. The marriage settlement was executed with their marriage taking place in the June quarter of 1886.

The indenture's journey through history is as fascinating as its content. The member's grandmother had nursed **Kathleen M Chilver** in her family home in Bournemouth, and the paperwork was handed down through the family, eventually being discovered by the member while sorting through documents after her mother's passing. Kathleen Chilver, as it turns out, was a noted writer. A brief internet search led to the Bournemouth Local History Facebook page:

'Miss Chilver, an amateur watercolourist, moved to Bournemouth and painted around Holdenhurst Village. She embodied the Miss Marple archetype of a gossipy old lady, gathering stories from locals. She learned that the village's history was recorded in unreadable, lost documents. Through persistent inquiry, she gained access to an old wooden chest in the church. Beneath a pile of hymnbooks, she discovered old wills, inventories, and other documents. Thrilled to verify the local lore, Miss Chilver published her findings in a book titled Holdenhurst, Mother of Bournemouth, illustrating it with her own watercolours of local buildings. During one of her painting excursions at Muccleshell Farm, farmworkers mistook her for a spy, and only the farmer's intervention assured them of her harmlessness.'



*The cover of Miss Chilver's book
(CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)*

The Facebook page also features a picture of Miss Chilver captioned '*Taken for a spy*', and some of her book's illustrations can be found on Flickr. Her book was published in 1956.

Using the usual genealogical tools, we found that Kathleen May Chilver was born in the June quarter of 1887, in the Ipswich Registration District, with her mother's maiden name given as Smythe. From the Society's transcriptions, she was baptised at St Matthew's Church on 11 July 1887, having been born on 10 May. The family address was given as 15 Burlington Road. The 1891 census shows the family living at 30 Burlington Road, with the household consisting of George (manager of a tobacco factory, aged 38) and Ellen Kate Chilver (30), Kathleen (4), Ellen's widowed father, **Edward R Smythe** (80), and a servant, **Rose Robinson** (19).

Ten years later, at the same address, Kathleen, now aged 14, was still George and Ellen's only child. Her age may have advanced by 10 years, but her parent's ages hadn't – both were apparently only six years older! George was in the same occupation. Another 10 years takes us to 1911, and we can see that Kathleen was indeed the only child. She was working as a mistress in a private school. Her father had died, her mother (46) was living on private means, and they had moved to 77 Richmond Park Road, Bournemouth.

George Robert Chilver seems to have died on 3 September 1908 and was buried in Boston cemetery, Lincolnshire (thanks to Findagrave). Unfortunately, the headstone has suffered damage and erosion and so we're not sure if there was more information on it originally. Why he was in Boston, we do not know.

In the 1939 Register, Kathleen was recorded as living by herself in Shaftesbury Road, Bournemouth, her birth date given as 10 April 1887 (not 10 May as her baptism record said – which was correct?). She was living on private means. Kathleen died on 19 November 1973 in Bournemouth and left a will.

Going back to George Robert Chilver, he was born in 1853 in the Ipswich area and, according to the 1861 census, was the son of another **George** and **Letitia Chilver**. He had one sister and two brothers. Ellen Kate Smythe appeared in Heigham, Norfolk, in 1881, although she was born in Bury St Edmunds. She was with her widowed father, Edward R Smythe (we saw him in the 1891 census, remember), an artist painting in oil, who was born in Ipswich. Going back to the 1861 and 1871 censuses, she was in Bury St Edmunds with her parents, though she appears to have had at least two brothers and two sisters.

Anyone connected with the families and wanting to learn more, please contact us.

Debbie Hooper
debbieahooper59@gmail.com

Andy Kerridge
chair@suffolkfhs.co.uk

GREAT-GRANDPARENTS IN COMMON

We are still receiving submissions for this series, which has proved popular as a potential means for Suffolk FHS members to make contact with other members with whom they share a great-grandparent. A subsequent direct exchange of information about those ancestors-in-common will hopefully enable one side – or possibly both – to expand their knowledge of the shared great-grandparents and even, perhaps, to add new branches to their family tree.

If your published data lead to such contact, please be sure to let *Suffolk Roots* know. Whether or not there is a story to publish, we shall be glad to hear of your success: knowing that families find connections through this or any other section of the journal helps to ensure that best use is made of the available space.

Great-grandparents of: **Liz Craig** contact esjones@btopenworld.com

Arthur Keer <i>b. 1881 Sudbourne, Suffolk</i> <i>d. 1966 Newmarket, Suffolk</i>	&	Annie Langham <i>b. 1882 Plumstead, Kent</i> <i>d. 1960 Tattingstone, Suffolk</i>
Trevor Richard Jones <i>b. 1876 Llangadock, Camarthenshire</i> <i>d. 1956 Brynamman, Camarthenshire</i>	&	Janet Bowen <i>b. 1879 Rhydyfro, Glamorgan</i> <i>d. 1939 Brynamman, Camarthenshire</i>
Charles Henry Denman <i>b. 1880 Taunton, Somerset</i> <i>d. 1955 Taunton, Somerset</i>	&	Mary Thomas <i>b. 1882 Bilbrook, Old Cleeve, Somerset</i> <i>d. 1969 Taunton, Somerset</i>
Wilfred George Fisher <i>b. 1896 Wedmore, Somerset</i> <i>d. 1967 Bath, Somerset</i>	&	Ivy Edith Willsman <i>b. 1894 Lympstone, Devon</i> <i>d. 1978 Trowbridge, Wiltshire</i>

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SUFFOLK FHS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

The Society's first meeting was in Lowestoft on 22 January 1975, so next year we will be celebrating our 50th anniversary. The Lowestoft Group are planning a celebration at the Victoria Hotel on the exact anniversary date and other groups are planning events for later in the year. As a Society, we will hold a reception after our Fair in Ipswich next year (date TBA). It would be fabulous to have a display showing people and events from the 50 years - whether they be photographs, memories or anything else. Please contact me if you have something of interest or a story to tell.

Andy Kerridge
chair@suffolkfhs.co.uk

BOOK REVIEW

THE MAN IN THE VAN: Reminiscences recorded by Brian Watson

The history of the nation's railways holds a fascination for family historians, trying to understand their railwayman ancestors' lives. They are also held dear by train enthusiasts, following the progress of railway technology through the steam era to the current day.

This book features a series of reminiscences and anecdotes, as told by veteran Suffolk railwayman **Irving Silverwood** to **Brian Watson**, Irving's friend and Secretary of the Great Eastern Railway (GER) Society.

We were given a taste of these last year in *Suffolk Roots* Vol 49, No: 1, June 2023, and they are included in this compact A5-size volume.

The book starts with a whistlestop tour of the evolution of East Anglia's railways, before recounting Irving's early life in Woodbridge, where being taken to see steam engines passing on a nearby line prompted his lifelong love of railways.

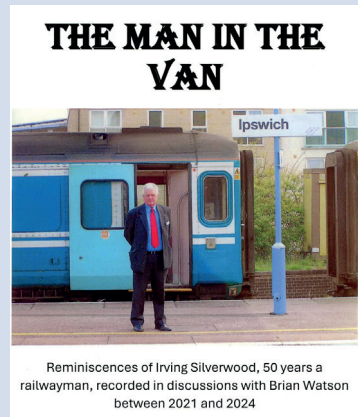
The book traces his 50-year career as a railwayman, starting in 1960 as an assistant crossing keeper, and working his way through various posts, including messenger boy, under-shunter, station master and guard. The anecdotes, some mundane, many amusing, cover all aspects of the work, providing a flavour of the tasks involved in each role, the ups and downs of the job, the people met, both other employees and customers, and the difficulties placed on family life. Irving comes across as a meticulous, conscientious and helpful person in the way he carried out his job.

The book contains many colour pictures, mostly of locomotives, which do help explain some of the railway terms used (but not excessively) throughout the book. As such, it will be of interest both to those with forebears working the railways during this 'more recent' period, and to those interested in the trains and railways of this region.

The book, produced in collaboration with the GER Society, is available from Bob Pearman Books, 8 Ffolkes Place, Kings Lynn, Norfolk or online at <https://www.pearman-books.com> (proceeds to the GER Society and Irving Silverwood). A copy will also be available in the Suffolk FHS Reference Library at The Hold, Ipswich.

Lesley Hall

Co-editor, Suffolk Roots



FORTHCOMING FAMILY HISTORY FAIRS AND EVENTS

As *Suffolk Roots* goes to press (August 2024) there are both physical and online events being organised. These are often advertised on the Family History Federation's website at <https://www.familyhistoryfederation.com/events>

We also aim to bring Suffolk a little closer to those members living outside the county by attending a variety of events across the country, but as yet, unfortunately, not overseas! Below are details of Family History Fairs at which Suffolk FHS will be present, with all available publications and up-to-date, searchable information on our database. Do come and make yourself known to us when we visit your area.

Family History Show, London **5 October 2024 10am–4pm**
Kempton Park Racecourse, Sunbury, TW16 5AQ
Details: <https://thefamilyhistoryshow.com/london/>

Suffolk Family History Show **19 October 2024 10am–4:30pm**
Suffolk Archives, The Hold, Ipswich
Details: <https://suffolkfhs.co.uk/index.php/pages/view/society-fair>

West Surrey FHS Fair **9 November 2024 10am–4:30pm**
Woking Leisure Centre, Kingfield Rd, Woking
Details: <https://www.wsfhs.co.uk/pages/openday.php>

In addition, there are the following Family History Shows:

Families in British India Society (FIBIS) 25 Years **27–29 September 2024**
Oxford Belfry Hotel, Thame
Details: <https://www.fibis.org/25-years-conference/>

All About That Place 2024 **27 September–6 October 2024**
Society of Genealogists and BALH, Online, Free
Details: <https://www.balh.org.uk/news-all-about-that-place-2024-2024-04-10> and <https://www.subscribe.com/allaboutthatplace>

NextGENeration – Discoveries **5 October 2024**
Society of Genealogists – Online – Pay what you can
Details: <https://members.sog.org.uk/events/66141a9f1fce380008a49ebe/description?ticket=66141a9f1fce380008a49ebf>

Oxford FHS Fair **26 October 2024 10am–4pm**
Cherwell School North Site, Oxford, OX2 7EE
Details: <https://www.ofhs.uk/events/event/ofhs-family-history-fair-saturday-october-26th-2024>

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GROUP PROGRAMMES

All Society members are entitled to attend any or all Group meetings.

GROUP MEETING START-TIMES VARY – PLEASE CHECK THE GROUP CONTACTS PAGE. ALSO CHECK THE SOCIETY WEBSITE FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION

TBA = To be arranged : TBC = To be confirmed

AS WE GO TO PRESS, GROUPS HAVE CREATED PROGRAMMES OF INDOOR PHYSICAL MEETINGS, AS LISTED BELOW. IN ADDITION, A NUMBER OF ZOOM PRESENTATIONS HAVE BEEN ARRANGED

SEPTEMBER

LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	SPEAKER
Haverhill	12	It's on the Cards	<i>Vannessa Mann</i>
Ipswich	04	Arsenic's Toxic Legacy – Peoples, Places, Pests and Peppermints	<i>Neil Dickenson</i>
Lowestoft	03	Behind the Scenes – The Story of the Duplex Drive Amphibious Tanks of D-Day	<i>Stuart Burgess</i>
Sudbury	24	Witchcraft in Suffolk	<i>Alison Rowlands</i>

OCTOBER

LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	SPEAKER
Haverhill	10	Harvest Time and Horsemen's Memories – Rural Life in 1900	<i>Ashley Cooper</i>
Ipswich	02	Shadowing Peter Pan – The life of J M Barrie (there is a Suffolk link!) (as seen on TV!)	<i>Elizabeth Talbot</i>
Lowestoft	01	Lowestoft Town Riot and My Family's Involvement	<i>Janis Kirby</i>
Sudbury	13	Research Day at Sudbury Library, 11am-3pm	<i>Group</i>
Sudbury	29	A Millenium of Mills and Milling	<i>Robin Drury</i>

NOVEMBER

LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	SPEAKER
Haverhill	14	Generals, Leaders and People who had an Impact in WWI	<i>Group</i>
Ipswich	06	The Story of Flora Sandes – The Great War Woman Soldier	<i>Janette Robinson</i>
Lowestoft	05	My Grandad and Other Heroes of WWI	<i>Richard Mundy</i>
Sudbury	26	Great War Huts – an Accidental WWI Heritage Project	<i>Taff Gillingham</i>

DECEMBER

LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	SPEAKER
Haverhill	12	Christmas Quiz Social evening with refreshments.	<i>Group</i>
Ipswich	04	The Death of Frederick Barnes – Distinguished Ipswich Resident	<i>Keith Barker</i>
Lowestoft	03	Bert Collyer's Photos and Nibbles	<i>Bert Collyer</i>
Sudbury	31	No meeting	

Please check latest arrangements and details of the meeting topic on the Suffolk FHS Website

Organisers: Please inform *Suffolk Roots* of your upcoming Group Programmes

ZOOM TALKS

Zoom talks for members from September 2024 onwards are listed below. Please put these in your diaries and / or your computer-based calendars.

Further talks, prior to the next edition of *Suffolk Roots*, will be publicised via Facebook and in the News area of the website. Please check regularly for updates regarding these and any future talks.

We are continuing our very popular Zoom talks even now our Groups are meeting again, as a bonus to members both at home and abroad.

Members will receive an e-mail **shortly before each talk**, notifying them of the event and giving a link to register. If you do not receive such an e-mail, please contact Andy Kerridge at chair@suffolkfhs.org.uk.

Please ensure that prior to watching your first Zoom presentation you have downloaded and installed the Zoom software, which may be found at <https://zoom.us/download>, onto your PC, phone or other device.

Monday 2 September 2024 at 7:30pm

Ideas for researching Nonconformists

Jackie Depelle

Monday 7 October 2024 at 7:30pm

Bringing it up to date: Research in the 20th century

David Annall

Monday 18 November 2024 at 7:30pm

Voices from the workhouse

Janette Robinson

Monday 9 December 2024 at 7:30pm

Quiz

Members

We will make recordings available (when permitted) in the Members' Area of the website as soon as possible after the talk. Typically, they are then available for two weeks.

FUTURE THEMES FOR *SUFFOLK ROOTS*

The theme of December's edition will be '*Poverty and the Workhouse*'. It's likely that many of our ancestors will have fallen on hard times and either been sent to the workhouse or sought admission there, either for themselves or for family members. What were the circumstances behind this? Would they have rather 'died in the gutter' than go there? Was there a social stigma involved? Did your ancestors work in the workhouse, or for the Poor Law authorities?

Below are the provisional themes for other upcoming editions, to seed ideas for future contributions (although we do welcome articles of Suffolk interest on any subject).

STATUS	ISSUE	THEME TITLE	DATE TO THE EDITOR
Final	Dec 2024	Poverty and the Workhouse <i>How did poverty affect our ancestors' lives?</i> Just as today, in the past many people found it difficult to make ends meet. Has your research led you to believe that your ancestors were poor or less well off? How did this affect them, their health and prospects? Have you found ancestors in the workhouse? What were conditions like there? What were the circumstances that forced your forebears to need out-relief or enter the workhouse? Did any of your ancestors have a benefactor? Was your forebear employed by the Poor Law Union, or on a Board of Guardians?	Deadline 20 Oct
Provis'nl	Mar 2025	Suffolk Women <i>Notable female ancestors?</i> This year marks the 50th anniversary of Margaret Thatcher becoming the first female Conservative Party leader. We can't all have such well-known ancestors, but they do say 'Behind every great man...' In your research have you found remarkable women? Were they known for charitable work? Pillars of the community? Did they manage and raise large families? Did they suffer unimaginable heartbreak? Were they involved in war work? Did they lead protests, or were they a Suffragette? Or maybe they had more chequered lives?	Deadline 20 Jan
Provis'nl	Jun 2025	Mental Health <i>Signs of and treatment for mental health issues in our ancestors</i> In our ancestors' times, mental health issues and disabilities were less well understood, and were labelled very insensitively; and care and treatment varied greatly.	Deadline 20 Apr

How were the institutions regarded within their communities?

Deadline 20 Jun

How did the wider availability of education affect communities?

SUFFOLK FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

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Editor <i>Suffolk Roots:</i>	Co-editors Lesley Hall and Rob Ward can be contacted by e-mail Tel: 01276 679747	e-mail: editor@suffolkfhs.org.uk

If you are interested in taking up a vacant post or becoming
a member of the team, please contact any Trustee.

Please address your queries, letters and e-mails
to the appropriate officer at the corresponding address.

GROUP CONTACTS FOR 2024

Haverhill:

Meet 2nd Thursday of the month, at 7:30pm unless otherwise stated, at:
Old Independent Church Hall, Hamlet Road, Haverhill, CB9 9EF

Contact – Secretary: Charmian Thompson, 5 Hadrian Close, Haverhill, CB9 0NH

Tel: 01440 712652

e-mail: haverhill@suffolkfhs.org.uk

Ipswich:

Meet 1st Wednesday of the month, at 7:30pm unless otherwise stated, at:
The Salvation Army Citadel, 558 Woodbridge Road, Ipswich, IP4 4PH

Contact – Secretary: Jenny Rawlinson, 10 Carlford Court, 112 Parliament Road,
Ipswich, IP4 5EL

Tel: 01473 902367

e-mail: ipswich@suffolkfhs.org.uk

or **Chair:** Howard King, 11 Bodiam Road, Ipswich, IP3 8QP

Tel: 01473 274300

e-mail: IpswichChairman@suffolkfhs.org.uk

Lowestoft:

Meet 1st Tuesday of the month, at 7:30pm (doors open 7:00pm), unless otherwise stated, at:
St Margarets Church Hall, Hollingsworth Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 4BW

Contact – Chair: Janis Kirby

e-mail: lowestoft@suffolkfhs.org.uk

Sudbury & District:

Meet last Tuesday of the month, at 2:30pm unless otherwise stated, at:
Long Melford Village Hall, Long Melford, CO1 9LQ (Opposite Bull Hotel)

Contact – Chair: Sheila Piper

e-mail: sudbury@suffolkfhs.org.uk

Bury St Edmunds:

This group relaunched in June 2024 and has held two meetings. The programme for the rest of the year is being developed, with the next meeting likely in September. Details will be published on the Society's website (under the Groups tab) and Facebook pages when available.

West of London:

This group no longer meets. If you would like to help with restarting this group please e-mail: westlondon@suffolkfhs.org.uk.

SFHS DATA CO-ORDINATORS AND SEARCH SERVICES

BAPTISMS

Index Co-ordinator <i>baptisms@suffolkfhs.org.uk</i>	Alan Bumpstead 71 Downs Crescent, Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 9LJ	Phone: 01440 704157
Search Service <i>baptismsearch@suffolkfhs.org.uk</i>	Arthur Bird Search = 1 surname up to 30 entries <i>Please send your request by e-mail</i>	Phone: 01904 793884

BURIALS

Index Co-ordinator <i>burials@suffolkfhs.org.uk</i>	Arthur Bird	Phone: 01904 793884
Search Service <i>burialsearch@suffolkfhs.co.uk</i>	Arthur Bird Search = 1 surname up to 12 pages <i>Please send your request by e-mail</i>	Phone: 01904 793884

MARRIAGES

Index Co-ordinator <i>marriages@suffolkfhs.org.uk</i>	Yvonne Hesketh	
Search Service <i>marriages@suffolkfhs.org.uk</i>	Arthur Bird Search = 1 surname up to 30 entries Please state Surname, Forename, geographical area and dates <i>Please send your request by e-mail</i>	Phone: 01904 793884

MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS

Search Service <i>burialsearch@suffolkfhs.co.uk</i>	Arthur Bird Search = 1 surname for each parish Please state approximate date. <i>Please send your request by e-mail</i>	Phone: 01904 793884
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SFHS LIBRARY

Librarian <i>librarian@suffolkfhs.org.uk</i>	Jean Licence 60 Oldfield Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP8 3SE	Contact by e-mail
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SFHS WEBSITE

Webmaster <i>webmaster@suffolkfhs.org.uk</i>	Joe Bridgwater-Rowe Website: <i>www.suffolkfhs.co.uk</i>	Contact by e-mail
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All the above-named are volunteers. Please allow adequate time for research and delivery. To avoid any delay if you are paying by PayPal via the Shop, please be sure to state clearly for which service you are making payment.

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MEMBERS' INTERESTS

You can search for Members' Interests on our website
at <http://suffolkfhs.co.uk/index.php/interests>

SFHS PUBLICATIONS

We carefully transcribe, check and index parish register entries from across the county of Suffolk and publish these on a series of data CDs and downloadable files often including information recorded in the registers which is not available in data provided by commercial genealogy sites.

We are well on the way to our objective of publishing all remaining records from the 1538 start of parish registration up to 1900 (to 1837 for marriages).

A full list is available from the Shop on the Society's website
www.suffolkfhs.org.uk
or please request a list (post free) from Jean Licence (see below)

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