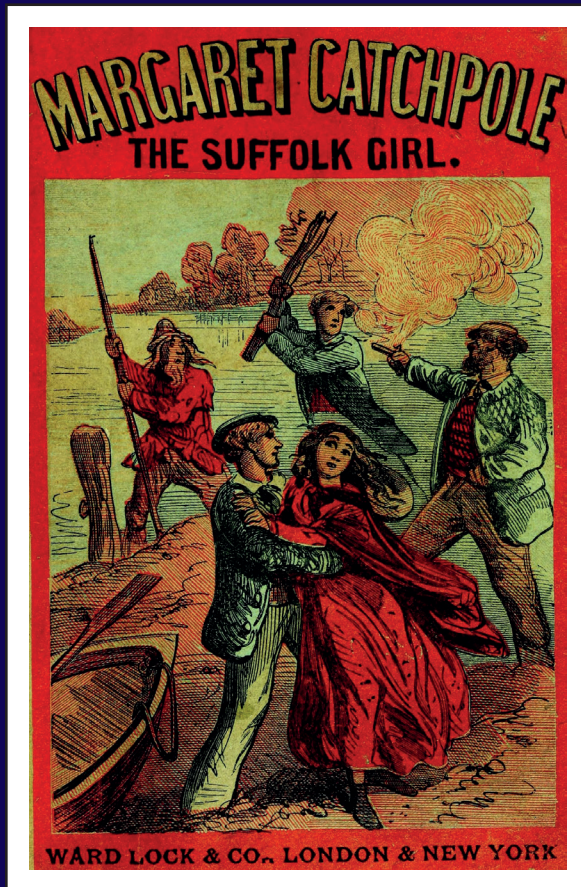


SUFFOLK ROOTS

Vol. 50 : No. 4 : March 2025

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS



THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF SUFFOLK FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

SUFFOLK ROOTS

JOURNAL OF SUFFOLK FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

VOLUME 50 : NUMBER 4 : MARCH 2025



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Theme of this Issue

Suffolk Women

Notable female ancestors

Cover Picture

*Yellowback cover of **Margaret Catchpole** by **Richard Cobbold**, 1890.
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Suffolk Roots

Suffolk Roots is the quarterly journal of the Suffolk Family History Society, published in March, June, September and December. Views expressed in the journal are those of individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Editors or the Society. The Editors reserve the right to edit or refuse submitted material. Neither the Editors nor the Society take any responsibility for the accuracy of facts in the articles published (although the Editors take such steps as are reasonable to ensure their accuracy) or for the loss or damage of any materials submitted for publication. Copyright in the journal and its contents is held jointly by the Society and the relevant contributor(s).

SUFFOLK ROOTS

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Suffolk FHS Fair



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

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

- 11:00** Ian Waller: The times they are a'changing
12:00 Break
13:30 Nick Barratt: Future of Family History
14:30 Break
15:15 Judith Berry: Suffolk Archives - 2025 and beyond

**Saturday 26th April 2025
10am to 4.30pm
Free entry**

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131 Fore St
Ipswich IP4 1LN
Car parks nearby**



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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.



This talk looks at the many changes which have taken place in the family history world over the last 40/50 years since rubbing shoulders and getting bruised at St Catherine's House to the age of on-line data. A nostalgic trip back in time where much is still relevant today!

Dr Nick Barratt is an author, broadcaster and historian best known for his work on Who Do You Think You Are. He is an Executive Director at Royal Holloway University of London, a visiting academic at the Knowledge Media Institute at the Open University, a teaching fellow at the University of Dundee and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. Nick looks at the impact of digital technology on the way we research and share information about our ancestors, including the risks and opportunities posed by generative artificial intelligence.



Join Judith Berry, Head of Suffolk Archives and The Hold, for an update on the Suffolk Archives service and plans for the future, including Ancestry.

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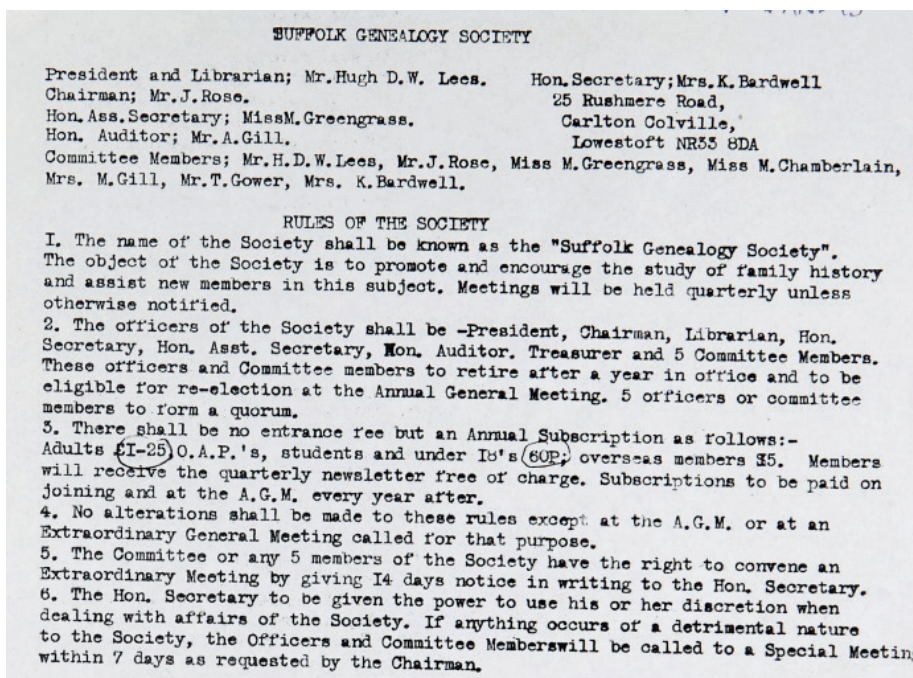
- Quarterly Suffolk Roots Journal
- Discount on CD's and downloads
- Members Help Forum
 - Extra resources on website
- 5 groups in Suffolk with monthly meetings
- Monthly free Zoom presentations
- Parish register transcripts available

Charity No 108774

TRUSTEES' MESSAGE – REMEMBERING 50 YEARS

Welcome to the first edition of *Suffolk Roots* in 2025, which is the 50th year of our Society's existence. The inaugural meeting was held in Lowestoft on 22 January 1975, when the Suffolk Genealogy Society was formed. Appropriately, our Lowestoft Group started the celebrations exactly 50 years later with their meeting at the Victoria Hotel on 22 January 2025, which is reported in the following article in this issue.

The screenshot below shows the committee formed at that first meeting, and the rules.



There were 33 members noted in the first edition of *Suffolk Roots*, which was then a hand-typed 4-page newsletter. Of those original members, it is amazing to find that four are still members today, and I had a chat recently with one of them, **Trevor Rix**, who, together with his wife **Mary**, holds Membership #29. Trevor recalled attending the first meeting of the Bury St Edmunds Group, which was held in the Guildhall (probably on 27 May 1978), and Mary became chair of the group, a position she held for about 10 years. The Bury Group met in a school hall, and then at the Record Office in Raingate Street.

Both Trevor and Mary were heavily involved in the, then, Publications Committee, and started the 1851 census transcriptions, which resulted in the 1851 Census Index. I remember eagerly awaiting these, as I did also the Marriage Indexes which **Pamela Palgrave** started.

Trevor also recalled that the 1851 census project began just after the arrival of the first home computers in the early 1980s – Sinclair, Commodore, Amstrad and the like,

which changed, and continue to change, the way we research our family histories, and impact our lives in so many other ways.

I was fortunate to have one of those early computers, and remember only a few years later getting my first laptop for work, with one megabyte of memory, and running on MS-DOS. The main attraction, beyond its use as an expensive electric typewriter, was the ability to sort information and then find patterns – especially useful for family history, where we generate substantial amounts of data.



Commodore 64. Photo: [Bill Bertram](#), CC BY-SA 2.5, via Wikimedia

The Society grew quickly and at their second meeting, in April 1975, the membership had more than doubled, to 79. There was also an interesting list of other like-minded groups in the UK. Some were specifically family history / genealogy societies, some included heraldry in their name, and a couple were specifically heraldry societies. Mention was also made of the Federation of Family History Societies. The records held at Somerset House had just moved over to St Catherine's House in Aldwych, and I remember visiting there frequently, hefting those heavy volumes of Births, Marriages and Deaths, and hearing the occasional cry of success. The Public Record Office, now The National Archives, were looking forward to moving to Kew.

The first journal of 1976, so one year after starting, had 11 pages filled with new members' interests, strays found in other counties or countries, help wanted and offered, articles, and 'What's On'. Membership was then in the 150s. The first AGM took place on 21 April 1976.

I also looked back to see what was going on nationally and locally in 1975. Some of it seems depressingly familiar, with hospital consultants on strike and concerns about the budget. The Vietnam War ended in April, and **Margaret Thatcher** was elected Conservative Party leader. Britain held its first referendum on whether or not to stay in the Common Market. Some people were still to transition to colour TV. *The Good Life* with **Richard Briers** and **Felicity Kendal** was a favourite programme, but you could also watch *The Six Million Dollar Man*, or **Des O'Connor**. At the cinema you could see *The Towering Inferno* and *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*.

We have already asked members who have any anecdotes, memories, or photographs to get in touch, and repeat that appeal. We hope to publish those in forthcoming editions of *Suffolk Roots*.

We are holding a celebratory reception after our Fair, on Saturday 26 April at The Hold. All members are invited to this celebration, which is also an opportunity to thank all the volunteers, past and present, who have contributed to making this Society what it is. More information will be shared nearer the time and put up on our website, sent

out via the e-newsletter and the usual social media; but if you are planning to come to the Fair, please allow a couple of hours at the end to join us in the celebration!

Andy Kerridge, Chair
chair@suffolkfhs.co.uk

.....

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS AT LOWESTOFT

Members and guests of Suffolk Family History Society assembled at the Victoria Hotel on the Lowestoft seafront on Wednesday, 22 January, exactly 50 years to the day since the Society’s first meeting in 1975 in Lowestoft. Remarkably, some founder members made it to the celebration.

The first speaker, **Joe Thompson**, brought digital power to 2025 local history. Everyone was impressed that today’s Lowestoft High Street could be viewed adjacent to how it used to be. Some buildings had of course been lost to the bombs of the Luftwaffe and local planning decisions. Deeper layers explored the people who had lived there.

Trevor Gower, a founder member who had been a teenager back in 1975, then spoke about the early days of the Society and recalled his work with the steering committee 50 years ago. It was an era of paper, card indices, visits to libraries, and postal correspondence. We were reminded of stamped addressed envelopes (SAEs) for replies to letters, and that the original name was Suffolk Genealogy Society. He recalled people from the past who were instrumental in forming the Society, such as **Katherine Bardwell** and **Hugh Lees**.



Society Patron, Doug Howlett, cuts the cake
Photo: Andy Kerridge

Next, local historian **David Butcher** took us through his life. He described how he came to Lowestoft and put down strong roots here, and shared his enthusiasm for everything Lowestoft. He then talked about one of his passions: *Lowestoft Parish Registers, Manorial Records and Probate Material*, which he managed to make both educational and entertaining – quite a feat considering the title!

But time was running out, and a 50th Anniversary cake was cut by the Society's Patron, **Doug Howlett**, who then closed the afternoon with thanks to the local group.

Lowestoft Group of Suffolk FHS meets at 7pm on the first Tuesday of the month in St Margaret's Church Hall, Hollingsworth Road. New members are always welcome.

Julian Turner and Janis Kirby
Lowestoft Group

.....

KATHRYN (KATE) ANN LOUISE CHANTRY (1960-2024)

We were saddened to hear at the beginning of November of the death of **Kate Chantry**. Kate had recently retired from Suffolk Archives after 34 years loyal service with Suffolk County Council. We were aware that she had been away from work for many months, but the news of her passing was nevertheless a shock to us all.

A memorial service celebrating Kate's life was held on 6 February at the parish church of St Andrew the Apostle at Melton, Suffolk. The service was well attended by her family and friends and those representing the many groups and societies who have supported and attended the Record Offices in Suffolk. It was whilst she was working for the Suffolk Record Office (now Suffolk Archives) in Ipswich that many of us would have met Kate and the close working relationship with the SRO was developed and maintained. Kate with her colleagues from the Record Offices often supported our family history fairs and exhibitions and this support was likewise reciprocated. Some of our members volunteered their time working on projects for the SRO (and continue to do so) and full acknowledgement of their service was given by Kate when, as a guest at our 40th anniversary celebrations in July 2015, she gave an eloquent and impromptu speech, thanking those members and the Society for their work and support.

Our longstanding relationship inevitably came under some strain when the Council decided to dramatically reduce Suffolk Archives' presence at Lowestoft and to close the record office at Bury St Edmunds. However, whatever the decisions made by others, Kate remained kind, friendly, courteous, and above all professional throughout that difficult period.

D A Howlett
Patron

NEW MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Below are the interests of our newest members who joined between 2 November 2024 and 1 February 2025. If you see a name you are interested in, take a note of the member's number, go onto our website, and use the Members' Interests section (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 back of this journal) briefly outlining your interest, and your contact details, and he will forward to the relevant member.

Surname	Cnty	Place	Dates	Member #
Allard	SFK	Any	All	13163
Alldread	SFK	Any	All	13163
Arnold	SFK	Rougham	All	13132
Baker	SFK	Grundisburgh	All	13162
Barber	SFK	Ipswich, Trimley, Somersham, Baylham, Any	Pre-1900	13133
Bloomfield	SFK	Any	All	13163
Bover	ESS	Any	1600 on	13147
Broom	SFK	Grundisburgh	All	13162
Brown	SFK	Rougham	All	13132
Buckle	SFK	Rougham	All	13158
Burcham	NFK	Wymondham	1770-1860	13147
Burcham	SFK	Lowestoft	1860 on	13147
Clay	SFK	Any, West Suffolk mainly	All	13165
Clouting	SFK	Little Glenham	1700-1840	13161
Cooper	SFK	Wingfield, Stradbroke, Hoxne, Fressingfield	All	13143
Cox	OXF	Any	All	13147
Death	SFK	Edwardstone	All	13158
Dixon	SFK	Finningham, Westhorpe	1840-1950	13146
Driver	SFK	Holbrook, Freston	All	13162
Durrant	ANY	Any	All	13164
Farthing	SFK	Ipswich, Trimley, Somersham, Baylham, Any	Pre-1900	13133
Foster	SFK	Haverhill, Acton, Sudbury	1800 on	13145
Francis	SFK	Offton, Bricett	1800-1900	13146
Friend	SFK	Framlingham	1700-1800	13141
Fundell	ANY	Any	All	13126
Game	SFK	Any	All	13163
Gooch	SFK	Cowlinge	1800-1855	13135
Gooch	SFK	Horringer	All	13135
Goodchild	CAM	Woodditton	1800-1856	13135
Green	SFK	Offton, Bricett	1840-1900	13146
Haste	SFK	Holbrook, Freston	All	13162
Hunt	SFK	Rougham	All	13132
Jarvice	SFK	Any	All	13135
King	SFK	Ipswich, Trimley, Somersham, Baylham, Any	Pre-1900	13133

Surname	Cnty	Place	Dates	Member #
Lambert	SFK	Willisham	1800-1900	13146
Leach	SFK	Grundisburgh	All	13162
Leete	ANY	Any	1592 on	13128
Leggett	SFK	Little Glenham	Pre-1800	13160
Mabson	SFK	Kelsale	All	13138
Martin	SFK	Any	Pre-1800	13160
Mingay	SFK	Orford	All	13152
Mullinger	SFK	Cotton	1840-1950	13146
Nice	SFK	Rougham	All	13132
Nunn	NFK	Welney	All	13143
ONeill	SFK	Blythburgh, Framlingham, Parham, Brandeston, Wrentham, Wenhaston	All	13156
Osborn	SFK	Edwardstone	All	13158
Osborne	SFK	Orford	All	13138
Overton	SFK	Needham Market	1840-1950	13146
Parkhurst	SFK	Ipswich	1588-1675	13128
Peck	SFK	Norton, Stowlangloft, Pakenham	All	13163
Pendle	SFK	Parham	Pre-1775	13160
Plummer	SFK	Bury St. Edmunds	All	13127
Pratt	SFK	Layam	1869-1908	13148
Rogers	SFK	Any	All	13163
Roundacre	SFK	Ipswich, Trimley, Somersham, Baylham, Any	Pre-1900	13133
Rush	SFK	Sudborne	1450-1683	13129
Rush	SFK	Playford, Kesgrave	All	13153
Rush	SFK	Holbrook, Freston	All	13162
Scowen	ANY	Any	All	13126
Simmonds	SFK	Any	All	13163
Smith	SFK	Grundisburgh	All	13162
Spashett	SFK	Lowestoft	All	13153
Stiff	SFK	Ipswich, Blything Hundred	1873-1908	13148
Suckling	SFK	Haverhill	1800 on	13145
Turner	SFK	Westleton	Pre-1780	13160
Umferry	SFK	Ipswich, Trimley, Somersham, Baylham, Any	Pre-1900	13133
Waller	SFK	Framlingham	1700-1800	13141
Ward	SFK	Rougham	All	13158
Warren	SFK	Ipswich, Trimley, Somersham, Baylham, Any	Pre-1900	13133
Westrup	SFK	Aldringham	All	13138
Whiting	SFK	Badingham	Pre-1830	13160
Wing	SFK	Horringer, Timworth, Thingoe	All	13135
Wiseman	SFK	Haverhill	1800 on	13145
Wright	SFK	Sudbourne	1800-1850	13147
Wright	SFK	Badingham	1875	13160
Wyard	SFK	Elmsett	1700s	13131

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MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

In 2024, 205 new members joined, including 48 overseas members. This makes the total membership around 1,640, of whom about 160 are overseas.

I'm pleased to report that the majority are now opting for electronic membership, which is having a significant positive impact on our finances, especially when it comes to the publication and postage costs of our journal. It also simplifies the processing of new memberships from this end.

The switch to direct debits from standing orders is going apace, making the split between the two options roughly equal, so thank you to those members who have agreed to change. In future this will make the inevitable changes to subscription rates easier to manage without the attendant reminders to members still paying by standing order. Notwithstanding that, some members have indicated that they prefer to stick with standing orders, which is understood and fine.

Please note that once a direct debit has been set up there is no need to take further action. It will be effective from 1 April each year and any changes will be notified to members via e-mail or newsletters, etc.

The alternative methods of making subscription payments are still available on the website, viz., via the online shop and an online Google form for providing details (e.g. member interests), which is still processed by Suffolk FHS, and also payment via Parish Chest (<https://www.parishchest.com/suffolk-family-history-society-12237.php>), which is separate from our online shop. The latter does not have the facility to add or amend members' interests, but these can still be sent to the Membership Secretary on a separate form.

There are likely to be some significant changes to the website in the coming months, which Andy will inform you about in the newsletters. Hopefully, this will make membership processes simpler than at present, something I for one will look forward to!

Finally, a reminder of the new subscription rates:

- Electronic membership (all categories), journal on website = £10.00
- UK membership / Joint* (Postal journal) = £14.00
- Overseas Membership (Airmail) = £25.00
- Life Membership (Not available for overseas postal) = £120.00

**Joint membership: All members must reside at the same address. Only one name is required. One journal per joint membership.*

Payment may be made through the online shop, but cheques are still acceptable. Members can check their subscription validity by clicking on their name under the Members' Area on the website.

David Horton
Membership Secretary

BAPTISM INDEX NEWS

Having had no access for the past four months to original registers located in the Suffolk Archives at The Hold, Ipswich, and it being five months since the permanent closure of the former Bury branch, progress by our teams who were working there has been more like 'On Hold'.

However, thanks to the efforts of some of our dedicated helpers using alternative resources at home, we've continued to make some progress, and all our teams are now within single figures of parishes from bringing you their next deanery areas.

Progress

Clare deanery (1538-1649) – our Bury team have just six parishes to complete

Dunwich deanery (1650-1753) and (1538-1649) - our Ipswich team have just six and seven parishes respectively to complete for each of these two releases. Yes, that's over 200 years, surviving registers permitting, so a chance to grow your family tree there by quite a few generations!

Hartismere deanery (1538-1649) – our Home team have just eight parishes to complete.

Lothingland deanery (1650-1753), and Fordham deanery, Sudbury West deanery area, and Samford & Colneis deanery area (all 1538-1649) are also under way.

Gleanings

Perhaps the most precise baptism entry found so far has been from our recent work to fill the 1706-1753 gap in Fressingfield, which wasn't available when we published Hoxne deanery (1650-1753):

Gervas Holmes, a very proud father and vicar otp ('of this parish'), who according to our Hoxne Marriages CD had married, by licence, **Sarah Wogan** just a year earlier in the same parish, recorded:

'Gervas, Son of Gervas & Sarah Holmes, Vicar (otp) was pb April 8 1741. Mem'd: my Son was born Wed Apr 8 1741, about 7 mins after 2 in the afternoon & about 6 o'clock in the same afternoon was baptised by me'

The next family entry recorded:

'Sarah Dau of Gervas & Sarah Holmes was baptised April 18 1742 ... Mem'd: born Apr 18 about 4 in ye morning being Easter Sunday. Buried 29 Jun 1742'

Better news for the family in the following entry but without any note this time:

'Sarah Dau of Gervas & Sarah Holmes ... baptised March 19 1744'

These and all the other missing Fressingfield entries are now available, free to view, on the Corrections page (under the Publications tab) on the Society website.

If you can't wait for our next releases and would like a glimpse of what's coming, entries from some 60 parish files (details below) completed so far but not yet published are already available from our Baptism Search Service (contact details at the back of this journal).

Clare Deanery (phase 4)		
Barnardiston (1540-1649)	Denham (1539-1649)	Moulton (1560-1650)
Bradley Lt (1561-1649)	Denston (1561-1649)	Poslingford (1559-1649)
Chedburgh (1538-1649)	Depden (1538-1652)	Thurlow Lt (1561-1649)
Clare (1557-1640)	Gazeley (1543-1649)	Withersfield (1558-1649)
Cowlinge (1559-1649)	Lidgate (1553-1649)	Wratting Gt (1593-1649)
Dunwich Deanery (phases 3 and 4)		
Aldringham (1551-1753)	Dunwich (1672-1753)	Sibton (1558-1753)
Benacre (1727-1753)	Halesworth (1653-1753)	Sotherton (1558-1753)
Blyford (1695-1753)	Heveningham (1551-1753)	South Cove (1538-1753)
Bramfield (1539-1753)	Holton St Pet (1539-1753)	Southwold (1602-1753)
Carlton (1538-1753)	Knodishall (1567-1753)	Spexhall (1537-1753)
Chediston (1653-1753)	Linstead Mag' (1558-1753)	Ubbeston (1555-1753)
Cookley (1539-1753)	Linstead Par' (1538-1753)	Uggeshall (1558-1753)
Covehithe (1574-1753)	Peasenhall (1558-1753)	Wangford (1694-1753)
Cratfield (1650-1718)	Reydon (1712-1753)	
Darsham (1539-1753)	Rumburgh (1559-1753)	
Hartismere Deanery (phase 4)		
Aspall (1559-1649)	Gislingham (1559-1649)	Thornham M' (1555-1649)
Bacton (1539-1649)	Mendlesham (1558-1649)	Thrandeston (1558-1649)
Brome (1559-1649)	Oakley (1539-1649)	Westhorpe (1538-1649)
Burgate (1560-1649)	Rickingham S' (1558-1649)	Wetheringsett (1556-1649)
Cotton (1538-1649)	Rishangles (1593-1646)	Wyverstone (1560-1649)
Finningham (1560-1649)	Stuston (1631-1649)	

Finally, The Hold is set to reopen in a couple of weeks with improved public access, but arrangements for team-working there by our volunteers, as before, are yet to be confirmed. Hopefully there will be an arrangement which suits everyone, and we will soon be bringing you yet more Suffolk baptisms.

Alan Bumpstead

Baptism Index Co-ordinator

baptisms@suffolkfhs.org.uk

MARRIAGE INDEX NEWS

Carlford & Wilford deanery phases 3 and 4 has now reached completion and been sent to **Arthur Bird** and **Derek Wright** for the final publication stages and CD production. When that's completed, these two CDs will cover 30 parishes with a possible spread of years from 1539 to 1755. The size of parish varies enormously, from just nine years of phase 3 in Bawdsey to over 1,200 entries for Woodbridge in phase 4, more than twice the volume of marriages than in any other part of the deanery.

The parishes covered are as follows: Alderton (1674-1754), Bawdsey (1744-1752), Great Bealings (1539-1752), Little Bealings (1558-1751), Boyton (1535-1754), Bredfield (1711-1753), Bromeswell (1634-1750), Burgh (1559-1746), Clopton (1735-1754), Culpho (1722-1754), Dallinghoo (1560-1754), Grundisburgh (1540-1754), Hasketon (1541-1754), Hollesley (1623-1752), Kesgrave (1658-1752), Martlesham (1653-1753), Melton (1559-1753), Newbourne (1561-1649), Otley (1734-1754), Pettistree (1539-1753), Playford (1661-1753), Ramsholt (1706-1754), Rushmere St Andrew (1585-1755), Shottisham (1618-1754), Sutton (1555-1743), Tuddenham St Martin (1696-1753), Ufford (1558-1754), Wickham Market (1557-1753), Witlesham (1539-1752), and Woodbridge (1545-1754). Not all the parishes have a completely consecutive run of years, but there's still much information from so many hundreds of years ago.

Colneis & Samford deanery is now being checked for phase 4 (its final CD) with 26 parishes in this section of the oldest registers. To date, I have worked from Belstead to Hingham.

On the theme of women in Suffolk, it's interesting to see how women were regarded in the older registers. If a name has not been filled in, it's far more likely to be the bride's. A widow may be noted as such on remarriage, but only rarely is a man marked as a widower, even on repeated remarriages. Indeed, a widow quite often becomes 'nameless', as in a 1549 Woodbridge marriage between **William Free** and the **Widow Pyke**; and her single status is sometimes queried by the clergyman: for example, in a 1589 marriage at Orford between **Robert Shipman** and **Joane Hutton**, Joanne is marked as a '*single/grasse widow*', and in 1619 at Woodbridge **Ann Bachelor** is entered as '*widdow (as she affirms)*'.

And spare a thought for the life of **Elizabeth**, the wife of **Walter Litsenburgh**, buried on 16 April 1721 at Ufford. Her bereaved husband married **Prudence Birch** just two weeks later, on 1 May, and their daughter **Prudence** was baptised on 2 July of the same year. Walter both died and was buried on 2 June 1742, and recorded as '*an old Dutchman aged 86*', making him in his 60s in the 1720s!

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WELCOME FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to the first edition of the Society's 50th anniversary year. It's quite the milestone! We hope as many members as possible will be able to attend the annual Fair at The Hold on 26 April and the celebratory reception that will follow.

When we picked the theme 'Suffolk women' for this edition we expected that some really excellent articles would drop into the Inbox, and you haven't disappointed. As a result, we can bring you a spread of interesting stories about the disparate lives of Suffolk-born women in times past. Without too many spoilers, some carried a heavy burden of family commitments, others pursued a life of service, and some undertook acts of heroism or derring-do. But whatever their circumstances, it's fair to say that they all strived to make the best of their opportunities as far as the conventions of the day allowed.

The first of the articles is about the remarkably spirited **Margaret Catchpole** (1762-1819), who must feature in any 'top 10' of celebrated Suffolk women – partly due to her exploits, and partly because of the legend to which she gave rise. She even has a pub named after her, the *Margaret Catchpole* in Cliff Lane, Ipswich. We are delighted to bring you Margaret's story (or stories – true and romanticised) as recounted by author **Naomi Clifford**. But we can be proud of all the women featured below. It's also the case that when you start looking out for them, these impressive Suffolk women pop up everywhere: one of us was recently watching an old episode of '*Fake or Fortune*' that featured a lost sculpture by **Dame Elisabeth Frink**, who, it turns out, was born and bred in Great Thurlow. But that's perhaps a story for another occasion.

Looking ahead, the theme for June's edition will be 'Mental health'. In past times, mental health conditions and learning disabilities were much less well understood than they are today, and those affected by them were not always treated appropriately. Have you found an ancestor who was affected in this way? What have you learned about their life? Did they live at home or in an asylum? Were they cared for and fulfilled, or did their condition deprive them of the opportunities that might be available now? Or perhaps you had an ancestor who treated people with mental health conditions, or worked in an asylum? It's an intriguing subject that is relatively little explored in family history texts. We look forward to hearing how your ancestors' experiences cast light on it.

As ever, if the theme doesn't float your boat but something else arising from your family history research does, please don't hesitate to jot it down anyway – we will love to receive it. And don't forget that we're always happy to accept Help Wanted items that may advance your research, and contributions to our continuing series on great-grandparents. We look forward to hearing from you!

Lesley Hall and Rob Ward
Co-editors

THE LEGEND OF MARGARET CATCHPOLE

Over two hundred years after her death, Margaret Catchpole (1762-1819) is remembered by many – for the things she was not and the things she did not do, because someone who never met her wrote her purported biography, which was largely a work of fiction.

Ironically Margaret Catchpole's life was extraordinary enough without this.

So, what did Margaret do or not do that was so noteworthy?

Margaret was born in Suffolk, probably at Brandeston, and registered by her mother Elizabeth Catchpole at the church of St Andrew and St Eustachius, Hoo, on 14 March 1762. Elizabeth was unmarried at the time (the identity of Margaret's father is unknown), although she later married Robert Nunn and went on to have five legitimate children. Four of these children died of disease, probably typhoid, three of them expiring while living in the House of Industry (the workhouse) at Melton, where Elizabeth herself succumbed in 1785, with her husband following four years later. It is safe to say that Margaret had a difficult start to life.

Margaret was put into domestic service with a series of local families, probably starting at the age of 11, as was usual for girls. At some time before this, she learned to read and write, to sew and to ride a horse, all skills important in her story. Her life continued in an unexceptional way until, in May 1794, aged 32, she joined the household of **John Cobbold** (1746-1835), the head of a prosperous Ipswich brewing family, and his wife, the poet **Elizabeth** or **Eliza Knipe** (1767-1824). Interesting aside: Eliza was the model for **Charles Dickens'** character Mrs Leo Hunter in *The Pickwick Papers*.

The Cobbold household, initially based at The Cliff in Ipswich and later the Manor House at St Margaret's Green, was warm, generous and extremely populous. When Eliza Knipe married the widowed John in 1791, she took on the care of his 15 children



*Margaret Catchpole, by Richard Cobbold, 1840
(public domain via Wikimedia Commons)*

by his first wife, and then went on to have seven of her own. Her son **Richard** was born in 1797 and it was his account of Margaret Catchpole's life that revived her reputation long after she died.

Margaret left the Cobbold household after 18 months but immediately became ill with some unspecified and recurring condition. Between periods working as a servant, she returned intermittently to live with an aunt and uncle, but ended up in lodgings near the Ipswich waterside, a location that suggests destitution may have pushed her into sex work.

It was during this period that Margaret committed her first felony. Previously, she had led a respectable life and was highly regarded by the Cobbolds. Eliza's son Richard Cobbold later claimed that through her actions she had even saved the lives of some of the Cobbold children, but as he made up so much of his biography of Margaret, we have no way of knowing whether this was true.



Elizabeth Cobbold (1767-1824), in a portrait attributed to George Frost (1754-1821). (public domain via Wikipedia)

Margaret's crimes

In the early hours of 23 May 1797, Margaret, dressed as a man, broke into John Cobbold's stables and stole his strawberry roan horse. She saddled up and rode away but the guard of a passing mail coach spotted her. The following day Cobbold printed up a poster advertising a reward of five pounds for information about the roan and about another horse he had lost some days earlier.

Margaret initially aimed for Chelmsford in Essex, about 45 miles away, but apparently thought better of it. Despite her disguise, she feared she would be recognised close to home, and instead decided to keep on for London, arriving at Whitechapel, in the East End, in the evening. The following morning, she tried to sell the horse for 30 guineas (£31.50). The guard of the mail coach, sent in pursuit by John Cobbold, tracked her down to a horse dealer in Marsden Street, Moorfields, where she was arrested. Everyone was amazed to find that the culprit was a woman.

John and Eliza Cobbold set off for London, John to prosecute Margaret and, strange as it might seem, Eliza to support her former servant. The theft of a horse was a felony



Margaret stealing the horse, by Richard Cobbold. Image courtesy of Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection, Sydney Living Museums. <https://mhns.wa.au/stories/general/remarkable-margaret-catchpole>

and all felonies carried the death sentence. Margaret was potentially headed to the gallows and, although only about one in ten capital sentences were actually carried out, the alternative punishments were severe – transportation to New South Wales was the most usual outcome. *‘The poor unhappy creature was so affected when she saw me, it was some time before she could enter the room’* wrote Eliza to a stepdaughter.

Margaret Catchpole confessed her crime and was charged with stealing the horse. She claimed that she was goaded into it by a passing sailor friend called **John Cook**, but his identity was never proved. She had bought the male attire herself, she said, but it is not clear how she got the money to do so. She never gave a good account of why she had taken the horse, except to say that Cook promised to be a ‘friend’ to her.

Four days after stealing the horse, on 27 May 1797, Margaret Catchpole was committed for trial in Middlesex and remanded to Newgate Prison, later being transferred to Ipswich Gaol. Ten weeks later she was tried at Bury St Edmunds Summer Assizes in front of **Lord Chief Baron McDonald**, who sentenced her to death, as the law stipulated. After 12 days she was reprieved, the Cobbolds having spoken up for her, and instead sentenced to be transported for seven years. She was returned to Ipswich Gaol, where conditions were reasonable – it was one of the first prisons to be run on the principles advocated by the prison reformer **John Howard**.

On 23 March 1800, nearly three years after she was tried, Margaret slipped out of the women's ward at supper time and, dressed in a sailor's suit (pantaloon and a smock frock) she had sewn out of bedsheets, scaled a 20-foot (6 metres) perimeter wall using home-made linen rope. The hand-bill offering a reward for her arrest gives us an indication of her appearance: *'very dark, swarthy, and hard favoured'*.

Why did Margaret feel the need to escape? Perhaps she feared that she was about to be sent to a prison hulk moored in the Thames Estuary or elsewhere prior to removal to New South Wales. Hulks had a fearsome reputation as pits of disease and brutality, and it was not unknown for prisoners to languish there for years before actually departing for New South Wales. She may also have feared the journey itself. Ships' captains were known to withhold supplies of food and bedding, hoping to sell them once they landed, and women were vulnerable to sexual abuse by the crew and the male prisoners.

Once she had left Ipswich Gaol, Margaret headed for the home of a friend and then for nearby marshes, perhaps looking for help from a smuggling gang. She was not at liberty for long – the friend gave up her whereabouts when the prison governor threatened imprisonment. Margaret appeared at the Bury assizes two days after her escape and was once again convicted of a capital offence – this time, escaping – and sentenced, once again, to death.

However, there was no appetite for Margaret's execution. In early August her sentence was commuted to transportation to New South Wales for life. She had been doubly lucky. Her case offers a sharp contrast to the unfortunate **Sarah Lloyd**, who had appeared at the same Bury assizes a few days before Margaret's escape and was hanged a month later, despite vociferous objections by **Capel Lofft**, a barrister, magistrate and MP. Sarah's crime was to allow her lover **Joseph Clarke** to enter her mistress' house after dark to steal money and valuables. When she was caught, Sarah confessed all, but this served only to seal her fate. Clarke confessed nothing and the case against him was dropped for lack of evidence.

Margaret was once more in Ipswich Gaol awaiting transportation. Again, she was lucky. Not only did she have a further nine months at Ipswich before she was taken to Portsmouth, but conditions on the ships had improved greatly since her original sentence – the government started paying a bonus for the arrival of healthy convicts, and men and women were sent on separate ships. However, Margaret needed money to survive on board, so before she set sail she was motivated to write the first of a series of letters to Eliza Cobbold, which are now in the collection of the National Archive of Australia:

'My sorrowes are very Grat to think I must Be Banished out of my owen Countreay and from all my Dearest frindes for ever... I must humbly Beg on your Goodness to Consider me a Littell trifell of money, it would be a very Grat Comfort to your poor unhappy searvant.'

Transportation

On 19 June 1801 Margaret Catchpole and 95 other women spent the first of 176 days aboard *The Nile*, disembarking in Botany Bay in mid-December. Margaret's luck held, for she was chosen to work as a cook to **John Palmer**, a well-off official, at Woolloomooloo Farm. As she wrote to Eliza in January 1802:

'As i was a Going to be Landed, on the Left hand of me, it put me in mind of the Cleeff,⁽¹⁾ Both the housen and Lik wise the hills so as it put me in very Good spirites seing a places so much Lik my owen nativ home. It is a Grat deel moor Lik englent then ever i Did expet to a seen for hear is Gardden stuff of all koind expt gosbres and Currenes and appellees. The Garddens are very Buttefull in ded all planted with geraniums and they run up 7 and 8 feet hy.'

For the details of further letters written by Margaret to Eliza Cobbold, who sent boxes of clothes and gifts to her, and to her uncle and aunt, I refer you to *Margaret Catchpole: Her Life and Letters* by **Laurie Chater Forth**, available from The Cobbold Family Trust.⁽²⁾ These letters, the last one written in 1811, give Margaret a unique place in Australian history as they are among the few written home by convicts, not many of whom were literate, and even fewer by women.

Margaret eventually acquired a small farm of her own. She did not marry, nor did she have children, but she worked as a midwife and was highly regarded. She died of influenza in 1819, aged 58, and was buried at Richmond, New South Wales.

Richard Cobbold's '*perfectly true narrative*'

But for the imagination of the Reverend Richard Cobbold, memory of Margaret Catchpole would have faded, her letters, remarkable as they are, a footnote in history books.

However, in 1845, when Richard Cobbold was 48 and the rector of Wortham in Suffolk, his purported biography *Margaret Catchpole, a Suffolk Girl*,⁽³⁾ which he claimed was a '*perfectly true narrative*', was launched on the public. The book is essentially an historical romance with the theme of Christian redemption (indeed, the final chapter is titled '*Repentance and Amendment*'). According to Cobbold, it was lack of religion that caused Margaret to fall into '*errors of temper and passion, which led to the violation of the laws of God and man*'. It was only when she discovered the truth of the Christian faith that she was able



*Rev Richard Cobbold (1797-1877).
(public domain via Wikipedia)*

to return to God. For the story to reach its full potential, however, Cobbold felt that the truth about Margaret's own life had to be embellished or magicked away.

Cobbold, whose ponderous style perfectly reflected his amiable pomposity, decided to render Margaret a more acceptable heroine by making her 10 years younger, beautiful, and in pursuit of a passionate but chaste affair with a fictitious handsome smuggler by the name of William Laud. According to Cobbold, it was Laud who urged her to 'borrow' the horse and ride to London where they would be married. In Cobbold's narrative, Laud is subsequently, and conveniently, killed off in an altercation with a revenue man. In Australia, the misunderstood Margaret settled down nicely, married and had children, dying in 1841.

Cobbold also painted 33 charming, naïve, watercolours illustrating the dramatic points in Margaret's life.⁽⁴⁾ The book was a roaring success and spawned numerous plays, musicals and, in the 20th century, films and an opera.⁽⁵⁾ The legend of Margaret Catchpole persists even into the 21st century, with **Carol Birch's** novel *Scapegallows* published in 2007, based not on Margaret's life but on Richard Cobbold's version of it.

Cobbold's fictions were bold. In 1845 Margaret was still part of living memory and there were plenty of people alive who had known her. Cobbold claimed to have inherited 'documents' relating to Catchpole but did not, perhaps could not, produce them. His mother, from whom he claimed he learned about Margaret's early life, died in 1824 and was no longer available to offer her perspective.



St Mary's Church, Worham (Smb1001 via Wikimedia Commons, CC-BY-SA-3.0)

Still, we should be grateful to Cobbold for highlighting the life of Margaret Catchpole. She would probably not be known to so many of us but for his novelisation. She was clearly a much-loved, intelligent, capable and creative person who was kept back by lack of education and opportunity. I like to think that life in Australia allowed her to achieve at least some of her potential.

Naomi Clifford

<https://www.naomiclifford.com>

References and Sources

1. A reference to the Cobbolds' home at the Cliff Brewery.
2. The Cobbold Family Trust is a registered charity: <https://cobboldfht.com>. The quotations from Catchpole's letters are taken from Laurie Chater Forth's book.
3. *Margaret Catchpole, a Suffolk Girl* was originally published in three volumes by Henry Colburn in London in 1845. It has been reprinted several times.
4. Richard Cobbold & Pip Wright (2015), *A Picture History of Margaret Catchpole*. Pawprint Publishing. Available from the Cobbold Family Trust.
5. A small selection: Edward Stirling, *Margaret Catchpole: The Heroine of Suffolk or The Vicissitudes of Real Life* (1845), Pub: Thomas Hailes Lacy, London; *The Romantic Story of Margaret Catchpole*, film, starring **Lottie Lyell** and **Augustus Neville**, Dir. **Raymond Longford** (1911); Ipswich Arts, *Margaret Catchpole* (1970), a musical by members of the company.

Editors' Note: As well as being a ripping yarn, Margaret's story has a teasing angle for family historians. As explained by Naomi, Margaret had no children; she therefore has no direct descendants alive today. But might her DNA nonetheless live on? Well, it's just possible.

First, whilst Margaret had no full siblings, she is thought to have had a number of half-siblings from the marriage in 1766 of her mother **Elizabeth Catchpole** (?-1785) to **Robert Nunn** (c.1722-1789). Most of the children of this marriage died before they reached the age of procreation, but one of them, **John Nunn** (b. 1769 at Easton, Suffolk), may have gone on to marry and have offspring. A John Nunn is recorded as marrying **Mary Taylor** in Hoo, close to Easton, in 1789, and in 1840 another John Nunn was buried in Hoo aged 50 – so he was born in 1790. Was this John and Mary's son, and did he have children of his own?

Secondly, Catchpole was a common name in the Easton, Brandeston and Framlingham area at the time, as the parish records testify. The wider Catchpole family clearly flourished thereabouts, and so Margaret's mother, Elizabeth, may have had siblings or cousins who produced progeny. There are some trees on Ancestry that make apparently confident connections between Margaret and other Catchpoles, in particular a **Sarah Catchpole**, said to be Elizabeth's younger sister. Sarah married **William Leader** at Brandeston in 1776 and had four children (two born before her marriage and therefore Catchpoles) who may have survived. However, the key 'information' on these Ancestry trees is largely unsourced, and an attempt to recreate the link to Margaret using the main family history websites has frustrated us, at least.

If any reader has researched the Catchpole and Leader families and found a likely connection to Margaret herself, we'd love to hear from you.

SURVIVING HARDSHIP AND LOSS – THE LIFE OF AN ORDINARY WOMAN

Mary Warren (1878-1959) was an ordinary woman of her time. She was the sister of my husband's great-grandfather, and the youngest of seven children born to **William** and **Eliza Warren (née Rallingson)**.

Mary was born on 26 May 1878, and spent her childhood with her family in the village of Birdbrook, in Essex, close to the Suffolk border. She left school when she was 13 and began work as a machinist. It seems likely that she went to work at the Chauntry Mills textile factory in the nearby town of Haverhill, where the mother and grandmother of **Edgar Berger** (b. 31 August 1876) worked. The factory was built in 1784 and grew in importance, so that by the time Mary went to work there she was one of about 2,500 employees.

At the age of 21 she married Edgar, who had grown up in Haverhill with his family 'near the Swan'. The 1881 census showed him, aged 4, at this address with his grandmother **Sarah Berger** and two of her daughters, **Sarah** (22) and **Louisa Berger** (18), both recorded as 'Coat Hand'.



The Swan, date unknown, courtesy of Haverhill & District Local History Group. © Graham Nunn.

The *Swan* was a local hostelry built in the middle of the 17th century. Following the great fire of Haverhill in 1667, which destroyed a large part of the town, the building was restored and for many years was owned by the Greene King brewery, based in Bury St Edmunds.

After 10 years of marriage Mary had survived six pregnancies, although two of the children had died in infancy. The four who remained lived with their parents and grandmother in what was probably no more than a shack in the inn yard. Eventually they moved into a cottage next to the pub in Mill Road.

Elsie May was 9, **Cissie Maud** 6, **Sydney Christopher** 4, and **Phyllis Ivy** just one, when, on 12 April 1910, the *Evening Star* reported that their father had tried to take his own life:

'Shortly before half-past eleven on Monday morning, Edgar Berger, 33 years of age, a presser employed at the Haverhill Factory, is alleged to have endeavoured to commit suicide by cutting his throat. Berger, who resides at 10, Mill Road, Haverhill, had been suffering from influenza, bronchitis, and pleurisy for the past fortnight. About quarter-past eleven on Monday morning he left his bedroom and proceeded to the pantry, closing the door. He was observed by his wife and mother, who unsuccessfully endeavoured to force the door open. Assistance was sought from the neighbours, and when the door was forced, the unfortunate man was found lying on the floor with his throat cut, two blood-stained knives lying by his side. Dr. McGowan attended to the injury, and P.-c. Francis arrived within a few minutes of the occurrence'.

Edgar died three days later, leaving his family bereft. An inquest was presided over by the Deputy Coroner for Bury St Edmunds. This worthy gentleman ruled the cause to be pneumonia, *'accelerated by shock, the shock caused by having cut his throat while temporarily insane'*.

It would be another 50 years before suicide ceased to be a crime. Before 1961, the burial of a person who had taken their own life was generally not permitted in consecrated ground, although clergy had the power to allow it if they wished. Haverhill Cemetery, where he was buried, is a mixture of consecrated and unconsecrated ground, but perhaps the local vicar was sympathetic, as the first part of Edgar's funeral on 18 April 1910 was conducted in the parish church, and the vicar also presided at the graveside (*Haverhill Echo*, 23 April 1910). We cannot know whether his actions were premeditated or the result of a high temperature and unsteady hand, but perhaps the coroner's wording spared his family some of the humiliation related to his untimely departure.

Mary was heavily pregnant at the time and had to deal with her own loss as well as the grief of the children and her mother-in-law. Nine days after the inquest she went into labour and gave birth to another daughter. The 1911 census showed Mary (32), a widow and head of the family, at the house in Mill Road with her mother-in-

law (52) as a boarder, and the five children, Elsie May (10), Cissie Maud (7), Sydney Christopher (5), Phillis Ivy (2) and **Winifred** (1).

Tragedy had not finished with Mary though. Three years later, in 1914, five-year-old Phyllis contracted diphtheria and died in Haverhill Isolation Hospital. The preventive vaccine developed by **Emil von Behring**, today used routinely to protect babies born in this country, began its liberating journey that same year, alas too late for Phyllis. She was buried in the cemetery close to her father.

Eliza Warren, Mary’s mother, moved in to help her daughter cope, until she too died three months later, leaving Mary and her mother-in-law to care for the remaining children through the years of the Great War.

As the global conflict drew to a close, Mary might have expected to lead a more settled life, but this was not to be. At the beginning of 1918 Sarah Berger died at the age of 59. Eight months later, a week before the final ceasefire, Mary’s youngest daughter **Winifred** (8) and her only surviving son, Sydney (12), succumbed to a combination of influenza and pneumonia, Winifred on 3 November and Sydney the next day. They were victims of what would become known as the Spanish influenza pandemic, which spread like wildfire amongst both soldiers and civilians weakened by fighting and deprivation. Worldwide, the number of people who died during this outbreak was greater than those killed in the Great War itself.

Winifred and Sydney were just two statistics, but to Mary and her family their loss was a further crushing event in already traumatic lives. She and her remaining daughters, Elsie (18) and Cissie (15), had to use their emotional and financial resources to get through their grief together.

During the 1920s Mary’s life did improve, although the sadness caused by multiple losses stayed with her. Daughter Elsie married a poultry farmer, **Robert Eric Lewis**, in 1921. They moved to Chelmsford, taking Mary with them, and she was able to spend the next 30 years with family and enjoying the company of her grandsons. She died at the beginning of 1959, aged 81.

Almost 25 years later, in 1982, the *Swan* closed its doors to the public. The building has been replaced by a block of flats, and only echoes remain of the heartache and tragedy experienced there by the Warren and Berger families more than a century ago.

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OPEN SKIES: WOMEN IN RURAL INDUSTRIES IN SUFFOLK

PART I: c.1700-1900

This article discusses sources and a few works of art illustrating the many types of agricultural work that could be carried out by women, which may help us to understand more about their lives. Part I covers c.1700-1900 and Part II, to be published in June's *Roots*, will look at the 20th century.

The website of The National Archives describes how the lives of '*countless ordinary women, whose names we do not always know (can) emerge from the archives*'.⁽¹⁾ Accounts may seem hidden, but with patience and care, evidence can be found.

Crops and tasks vary from one area to another. Industries can decline and vanish. Established local customs might have defined what was a woman's task rather than a man's. As we will see, Commissioners examined the outdoor work of women in early Victorian Suffolk and other counties, listing the tasks by months, and enquiring whether such work might be morally damaging.

The linen industry

Suffolk is well known for its history of manufacturing woollen cloth. In addition, it once had a thriving linen industry that provided work for many women and children. Beccles, Diss, Halesworth and Bury St Edmunds all had linen markets.⁽²⁾

Linen was usually made from the flax plant, grown and processed in Suffolk. In World War I, the Board of Agriculture even purchased meadows around Bury St Edmunds to grow flax to make linen to cover aeroplane wings. The factories processing it employed mainly women.

From around 1500, linen was also widely manufactured from hemp. **Nesta Evans** records that the growing and processing of hemp flourished across the valleys of the River Waveney and Little Ouse, and through most of eastern Suffolk.⁽³⁾



Flax flower (public domain via Wikimedia Commons)

Hemp cloth was more hard-wearing than the expensive imported linen and was also used for making sailcloth. However, the industry declined after 1800 due to the Napoleonic wars pushing up the price of wheat, which then became a more profitable crop.⁽⁴⁾

The process of preparing hemp once harvested was complicated and labour-intensive, and the work was mainly carried out in small farms or cottages, so it could be undertaken by women and children. Those as young as five or six would wind yarn onto spools or turn the wheel for a spinner.

The term '*whitester*' means a woman who bleaches cloth, which was one stage in the process. The yarn, naturally a pale brown colour, was bleached by laying it out in sunlight in fields that were called '*bleaching greens*'. It had to be kept moist with watering cans. The finished cloth might then be bleached again, before being dyed if required.

Other terms include '*webster*', a female weaver, and the more familiar '*spinster*'. In other trades, a female brewer was a '*brewster*' and a female baker a '*baxter*', a word that evolved to also include males.

The wife of a farmer

'This be the first time I have writ in my book for three days, bein bussie'. This is a diary entry for 20 August 1796 by **Anne Hughes**, the hard-working wife of a farmer (in Herefordshire, not Suffolk).⁽⁵⁾ Often overlooked, the farmer's wife had many responsibilities that could include managing the accounts, growing vegetables, keeping chickens and pigs, making goods and dairy produce for market, feeding and clothing the household, and raising the children – all the time knowing how to run the farm. A woman might own a farm outright, of course, although this was less common.

The harvest

The most important event in the farming calendar and the culmination of a year's work, when women's labour was always vital. All the inhabitants of a village who were capable would go into the fields, old and young, female and male, along with itinerant workers, as had been traditional for millennia. This continued well into the 20th century, especially during wartime.



Detail from a carved bench end in Holy Trinity, Blythburgh, depicting a female figure at harvest (author's own)



A frieze showing harvest time in the Middle Ages (public domain via Wikimedia Commons)

Gleaning, i.e. gathering grain and other produce left by the reapers, was regarded as the traditional right of women and children. **Janet Barnes** records in *Seven Centuries on Middleton Moor, Suffolk* that it only ended with the advent of the combine harvester after World War II.⁽⁶⁾

Jean-Francois Millet (1814-1875), who painted *The Gleaners*, was part of the Realism movement that began in France in the 1840s. He wanted to portray accurate scenes of real life, not romanticised ideals.



The Gleaners (1857) by Jean-François Millet
(public domain via Wikimedia Commons)

Reports of Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture (1843)

There was a growing concern in the early 19th century that working in the fields was affecting the morals and welfare of women and damaging children's education. The 1834 Poor Law Act led to the setting up of an enquiry by specially appointed Commissioners into the conditions of employment of women and children in agriculture. Witnesses from 12 counties gave evidence.⁽⁷⁾

Conditions in Suffolk, Norfolk and Lincoln were reported on by **Stephen Charles Denison**. His instructions were to examine the nature of the work, wages and hours of female agricultural labourers, to '*throw light on their physical and moral conditions*'. He also investigated conditions for children: their bodily health, opportunities for obtaining schooling, and moral and religious education.

Nicola Verdon writes that the Commissioners '*tended to rely on the evidence of landowners, farmers, land agents, Poor Law Guardians or medical practitioners*'.⁽⁸⁾ Denison does not refer to women themselves being invited to give their opinions. He concluded that outdoor labour was '*conducive to health*' for both women and children, although this may have been influenced by the weight of evidence from employers.

However, a witness from Kesgrave thought '*field work is no school of morals to young women*'. **Rev. Barton** of Wickhambrook said: '*I don't think field-work has a good moral tendency as regards young girls; in short, I cannot but attribute the unsteadiness of young women in a great measure to the congregating together at field-work.*' Another witness thought that '*at Hunstanton field work was said to contribute to the bastardy lists*'.⁽⁹⁾

Dairy work was regarded as skilled, with responsibility for hygiene as well as cheesemaking. The report submitted by **Alfred Austin** for Wiltshire, Dorset, Devon and Somerset also described it as *'the severest labour performed by women in connection with agriculture'*. Work would last the greater part of the day and throughout the principal part of the year. Milking and cheesemaking was carried out twice a day, including handling cheeses that frequently weighed a quarter of a hundredweight (12.7 kg).



The Dairy Maid by William Say, mezzotint and etching (c.1803-1834). Licensed by National Portrait Gallery

Blything Hundred – the cycle of work

Denison's report included the following evidence of the annual cycle of agricultural work for women provided by the Board of Guardians of the Blything Union. At the start of the year the work involved pulling turnips, gathering stones, forking grass, feeding stock, and dressing corn. Then came planting peas and beans, hoeing wheat, and picking couch grass. Haymaking was in June, along with weeding, and singling turnips and beet by hand. Harvest work and gleaning in August was followed by cutting beans, taking grass out of pea and bean land, and preparing land for wheat. From October to December there was dropping wheat and taking up grass, and in some parishes pulling beet and turnips.

The length of the working day varied from 8 to 12 hours, depending on the nature of work and the time of year. **R N Shave Esq** of Kesgrave Hall reported that *'the farmers object to employing young unmarried females, because it lessens the work for married women and their families'*.

Stowmarket – hop farming

Denison's evidence for this area was in a report presented by the witnesses **Mr Buchanan**, Clerk to the Union, **Mr John Hart** and **Mr Kirby Moore**, of Badley:

- January: Usually no employ.*
- February: Bean-setting, etc.*
- March: Ditto.*
- April: Hoeing wheat, picking stones off land, tying the hops.*
- May: Ditto.*
- June: Ditto; hay-making at end of month.*
- July: Weeding wheat (occasionally) and hay harvest.*
- August: Women always employed in raking barley after the waggons; when gleaning comes in they are all engaged in that, and will not leave it; hop-picking.*

September: Very little employ except in hop districts, unless barley is late; they sometimes go out to gather beanstalks for firing.

October: Dibbling and dropping wheat.

December: Scarcely any.'

There was little or no work available in January, November and December. It is evident that hop-picking and tying the hops (April) could form an important income, especially as a large workforce was needed. Farmers allowed women to bring their children into the fields to help.

The report concluded: *'In August and September the National School is broken up, to allow the children to go gleaning and hop picking. This last occupies about three weeks, if the crop is good... The hops are of great benefit to the poor here. If the crop fails, they often find great difficulty in paying their rents at Michaelmas.'*

Arthur Young was an agriculturalist, the son of a Suffolk clergyman. In 1793 he was appointed Secretary of the Board of Agriculture and travelled across the country, investigating farming conditions. His *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Suffolk* was published in 1813.⁽¹⁰⁾ He described the hop beds being prepared in March, with holes dug *'six feet asunder'* and three rows of sets to each bed. Earth was drawn up to form a hillock, with three poles of about 24 feet to each hill, giving the hop fields their characteristic appearance.

Nicola Verdon notes that according to the Commissioner's Report of 1843 for Kent, it varied in different areas as to whether the men or the women opened the hills in the hop fields.⁽¹¹⁾



*Hop-pickers at work. Colour line block by Leighton Brothers after A Hunt (1850-)
(public domain via Wellcome Collection)*

Over 100 years later, **George Orwell** kept a diary of his experiences hop-picking in Kent, giving a good insight into the process.⁽¹²⁾ The pickers tore down the vines trained up the poles, stripping them of leaves. This meant standing all day, and the juice would stain skin black, and the spiny stems cut hands to pieces. Tired children fell asleep underneath the vines.

At the end of the harvest, pickers chose a woman to be King and a man to be Queen. They were dressed in flowers and ribbons, and led a procession with decorated hop poles, followed by feasting.

Ena Carter, a renowned local historian, lived in Stowupland for 50 years. Both she and her husband **Jack** were passionate about '*learning, preserving and sharing knowledge*' of the past. Her meticulous research on local hop farming is available at www.stowuplandlocalhistorygroup.org.

Dr Joan Thirsk and **Jean Imray** record that farmers paid their harvesters partly in hops.⁽¹³⁾ For example, the accounts of **George Rope**, of Grove Farm, Blaxhall, for 16 July 1878 show that he agreed with eight men that they would receive the following allowances as well as their wage:

'3 lbs malt, 3 lbs hops, 1 st mutton, Gift (instead of dinners), 35 lb mutton @ 4d, 1 coo. wheat - 20/-, 17/- for largess or spending money for all the family.'

The total cost to Mr Rope of 18 lbs of hops for his workers came to £1 7s 0 d.

The areas of greatest hop production were in southeast England, while the industry in Suffolk declined steeply in the second half of the 19th century, ceasing in 1906.

Child labour

Boys commonly worked 12 hours a day, while girls and the younger ones worked the same hours as their mothers, so between 8 and 12 hours daily. They would routinely be taken out of school to work on the land. The Report for Blything said:

'The younger children of both sexes are employed in bird keeping, stock keeping, dropping corn, gathering stones and picking grass. The older children are also employed in weeding corn. The boys assist in general farm work.'

Nicola Verdon records that in the census returns for 1851, 1861 and 1871, around one in 10 male agricultural workers were aged between 5 and 14. At around 10 or 11 years, if strong enough, a boy might help lead the horse for ploughing before moving on to drive the plough.⁽¹⁴⁾



*Hop Harvest Queen, 1850s engraving
(owned by the author)*

The Agricultural Children Act 1873 prohibited the employment of children under the age of 8. To be exempted, parental confirmation was required that a child had attended school a certain number of times in the preceding year. The Act proved ineffective and the rules were later tightened.⁽¹⁵⁾

School attendance became compulsory with the Education Act 1880. Many children still worked outside school hours, since parents could not afford to lose their wages, however meagre.

Even in the 20th century, as Janet Barnes records, *'toddlers and maybe non-school attendees spent time with their mothers stone picking, bird scaring and gleaning. Boys also earned their first pennies holding ponies, picking stones for the roads and fetching water.'*

The reed harvest – 'yealming'

The author of the website *thatchinginfo.com* describes how Victorian women worked alongside the reed cutters on the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads by undertaking 'yealming' – bundling and tying the reeds cut by the male workers, ready to be used in thatching. It was hard work, in wintertime.

There are accounts of medieval women working as assistants to male thatchers, or of a wife assisting her craftsman husband (often working for free!). This practice is known to have continued into the Victorian era, and is documented in photographs.



*During the Reed-Harvest (1886) by Peter Henry Emerson and T.F. Goodall
(public domain via National Gallery of Art)*

For single rural women in the 19th century, the choice was often between domestic service or agricultural work. The increasing demand for servants by the growing middle classes, better paid factory work, combined with the growth of the railways making travel easier, led many to leave their villages for large towns and cities.

Moreover, the website author continues, in agriculture '*their wages were always less than the men and the scope of learning any skilled trade was denied them*'. Their descendants were to return to rural areas to join the Women's Land Army (WLA) in both world wars, to serve their country. There was a WLA training centre in Framlingham, with thatching one skill among the many taught there.

Two late-Victorian artists



Potato Harvest (1888) by Edith Martineau, 1905 print from *Women Painters of the World*, from the time of **Caterina Vigri**, 1413-1463, to **Rosa Bonheur** and the present day, by **Walter Shaw Sparrow**, *The Art and Life Library*, Hodder & Stoughton, 27 Paternoster Row, London (public domain via Wikimedia Commons)

Edith Martineau (1842-1909) was a watercolourist from Liverpool. Her painting '*Potato Harvest*' (1888) was reproduced in '*Women Painters of the World*', a 1905 compilation of 300 paintings by 200 women artists. She was also elected to the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours in 1888. The potato picker is strong and appears almost heroic as she gazes into the distance, holding her heavy basket.

Winter Work (1883-4) by **Sir George Clausen** (see next page) hangs in Tate Britain. He was known for naturalistic paintings of agricultural workers, often of scenes in Essex. He was also an official war artist in World War I. The blade that the woman and men are using has a curled tip and is variously known as a turnip or swede knife, or beet hook. Used for trimming the roots and tops, it could be quite dangerous to fingers. Mangelwurzels were a winter fodder crop, developed in the 17th century. Wearing an old sack with the front corners tucked in provided protection against the elements.



Winter Work (1883-4) by Sir George Clausen (public domain via Wikimedia Commons)

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AN UNHAPPY MARRIAGE

In the mid-19th century, a married woman had the same legal status as a criminal, a minor or a lunatic. She had no rights of ownership — everything she inherited, earned or owned passed immediately to her husband, and she needed his permission to dispose of anything at all. There was almost no way out of an unhappy or abusive marriage, and certainly no divorce. Whatever the circumstances, a married woman who left her husband could expect only strong social disapproval.

My 3x great-aunt, **Jane Alethea Fenton**, married **Walter Evered** in 1850, when she was 17 and he was 25. Walter farmed 22 acres in Rougham. Their first son, **Frederick**, was born in January 1851, the second, **Samuel**, in October 1852, and a daughter, **Christiana**, three years later, in April 1855. But by April 1852 the marriage was in serious trouble, as Walter's advertisement in the *Bury and Norwich Post* of 30 June testifies:

'CAUTION TO TRADESMEN OF BURY SAINT EDMUNDS AND ITS VICINITY

I, WALTER EVERED, of Rougham, in the County of Suffolk, Farmer, hereby Give Notice that I will not be answerable for any Debts that my Wife, Jane Alethea Evered, may contract after this third day of April, in the year of our Lord, One Thousand and Eight Hundred and Fifty-two.

Rougham, June 3rd, 1852

WALTER EVERED'

The relationship quickly became acrimonious, and Jane took her children and returned to live with her parents, **Frederick** and **Lucy Fenton**, at the Malting Farm, Thurston.

Towards the end of 1854, after she had turned 21, Jane Alethea was due to inherit £200 which had been left to her in the will of an affluent and generous uncle, **Samuel Fenton**, her father's brother. The executors failed to pay her, arguing that they needed the permission of her estranged husband, Walter, and so in 1854, and with the support of her father, Jane instituted court proceedings.

Jane was born before the advent of civil registration, and was baptised as a child of about four. The executors argued that since Jane had not been baptised until 1837, there was no proof that she was now 21. This argument, surely disingenuous, suggests the executors' strong disapproval of Jane's behaviour in leaving her husband. Jane was afraid the money would be paid to Walter, who was himself objecting to the legacy being paid to his wife.⁽¹⁾ In this, Jane was supported by her father, Frederick, as, in legal terms, her 'next friend'. She had affidavits from her mother, Lucy, as to her identity and birth. Three Rougham neighbours of mature years, **Lucy Richardson**, **Maria Drury** and **Harriet Hunt**, wives of agricultural labourers in Rougham, swore affidavits in Jane's favour. They were all from well-established Rougham families, would have known Walter Evered well, and were well-placed to give evidence as

to his behaviour towards his wife. A doctor who practised in Bury St Edmunds also swore an affidavit in Jane's favour. Sadly, I have not been able to trace any of these affidavits. In her statement to the court, Jane complained that Walter had treated her and their children:

*'with great violence and cruelty, frequently turning them out of doors, and keeping them excluded the whole night, and at other times depriving them of all sustenance except what the said plaintiff [Jane] has procured from her father, and he has recently made over his business of a farmer to his brother **Orbell Evered**, and entirely deserted his wife and children, who, for some time past, have been living with her father, who is ill able to support her and her children.'*

Jane and Walter's third child, born some three years after the second one, would have been conceived in the mid-summer of 1854. Jane moved into her parents' home in July 1854, and the legal proceedings began in November the same year. Jane complained of Walter's violence in her submission, and asked the court to have the legacy paid into her separate account, or settled for her benefit, *'and that no part, or a small part only thereof, ought to be paid to her husband.'*

Given the animosity that existed between Walter and Jane, the third child may have resulted from Jane being forced, and was possibly the immediate cause of her return to her parents, as well as her mother Lucy's refusal to allow Walter into her house. Walter also stated that matters had come to a head in July 1854, when

'Various differences unfortunately occurred between myself and my said wife previously to the month of July [1854].'

Walter Evered's account of the marriage failure blames his wife for her *'extravagant habits'* which left him owing money to traders for *'articles of dress and other things unnecessary and improperly purchased'* at a time when Jane was continuously either pregnant or nursing. He told the court that Jane was:

'a person of violent and irritable temper [who] quitted my house and went to the house of her father with my children whom she carried away with her.'

Walter complained that Jane's mother, Lucy, had blocked his attempts to see and talk to his wife and children — she would not let him into the house. He protested that Jane's accusations were *'scandalous and untrue'*, that he had offered to take another home for his family, and that although he had not contributed to the support of his wife and children for three months, that was because her parents had prevented him from doing so.

The court's final judgment was delivered in June 1855. It was recorded separately from the other court papers, and I spent a nervous hour or two at Kew, waiting to see the outcome. To my delight, the court found in Jane's favour. It fully accepted that Jane was of age, and that Walter had failed to support her. Apart from allowing the

executors their expenses as executors, the court ordered the them to pay Jane’s legacy to her ‘for her own use and upon her sole receipt’.⁽²⁾

This is the last we hear of Walter Evered. He had given over his farm in Rougham to his brother Orbell, he does not appear on any subsequent English census, nor is his death registered in England, so he may have migrated overseas. In any case, he seems to have cut all contact with his family.

Jane continued to live and work with her parents until Frederick and Lucy gave up their farm in 1858, and for a short spell in the 1860s Jane and her children lived in Bury St Edmunds, taking in boarders. By 1871, Jane was in Hammersmith, west London, where she again set up as a boarding-house keeper; she spent the rest of her life there, looking after lodgers and, on occasion, brothers, nieces and nephews who had fallen on hard times. She entered into another long-term relationship, with a **William Ayling**, and although they did not marry, the surviving records show she was known as ‘Mrs Ayling’. She had become financially independent, able to support herself and her children and other members of her family.

Against very considerable odds, and with her family’s support, Jane had mounted a successful and significant legal revolt, freeing herself from a miserable, abusive marriage, and preventing her husband from benefitting from her legacy.

Patricia Neville Mb 1784
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WELL, WELL, WELL: THE STORY OF A SUFFOLK HEROINE

Sometimes in life, you just have to get in the damn bucket and do it yourself...

Victorian women lived under very different cultural norms, ideals, and limitations to those of today. But that doesn’t mean they were all diminutive or frail; many courageous women of the era defied genteel expectations, paving the way for future generations to enjoy greater freedoms.

One such woman was **Miss Ellen Pritty**, who, at the time of the 1921 census, was living in Cretingham, Suffolk. On the schedule, she described herself as a spinster and a housekeeper working at home.⁽¹⁾ We know from other sources that she looked after ‘paying guests’ who needed some support.⁽²⁾ Nothing out of the ordinary there, perhaps, but only a month later, the *Ipswich Journal* would report her ‘bravery and pluck’. While the newspaper didn’t call women ‘weaker vessels’ directly, it nonetheless noted that ‘some men’ of the era would have done.⁽³⁾

From the records that still exist, it might be suggested that Miss Pritty liked things done properly - and that she was prepared to do things herself if necessary!

Beginning at the end

On a surprisingly warm day in October 1926, family and friends stood at a graveside in Framlingham to watch Miss Pritty's coffin lowered into the ground.⁽⁴⁾ Ellen was 83 when she died, and had never married nor had children.⁽⁵⁾ She had lived in Kelsale during the final years of her life.⁽⁶⁾ Her final home, like her previous one, was neat, symmetrical, respectable, and suitable for a 1920s woman of independent means.

A picture from that time depicts Ellen sitting in her garden, a white-haired lady in a shawl and cap reading quietly. Several young people are lined up around her, because, while technically childless, Ellen was nonetheless a matriarch with a large extended family.⁽⁷⁾ A picture may speak a thousand words, but this one hides thousands more – for Ellen was not an old lady who had lived an entirely quiet and uneventful life in rural Suffolk.



Ellen Pritty's headstone in Framlingham Cemetery (photo taken by the author in 2023)

Ellen's upbringing

We might view Ellen today as a self-made woman, albeit one who had some advantages in her early life.

Born in 1843, she entered the world as the daughter of farmer **George Pritty** and his wife, **Elizabeth**.⁽⁸⁾ By 1851, Ellen was the fifth of seven consecutive daughters, but her mother then produced two sons.⁽⁹⁾ Eventually, Ellen became one of 11.⁽¹⁰⁾

Ellen and her sisters didn't grow up and marry local farmers' sons in their turn. In fact, only two of the eight Pritty sisters ever married at all.⁽¹¹⁾ Perhaps watching their mother endure at least nine pregnancies in 10 years had put them off the idea of marriage and babies, or perhaps there was relative hardship when their father died, pushing them into paid work instead of domesticity.⁽¹²⁾

The extended Pritty family were in drapery and dressmaking, and a live-in teacher educated the children.⁽¹³⁾ As a result of this ready-made network, almost all the Pritty sisters became assistants at drapers' shops, including Ellen herself, who was a 'shop maid' as a teenager.⁽¹⁴⁾

Striking out

By 1871, Ellen was in Devon, living in Higher Terrace, Torquay, a nurse working for **Cordelia Mott**, a woman of significant means.⁽¹⁵⁾

Frustratingly, the 1881 census has not yet revealed Ellen's whereabouts, despite an extensive search. Ellen's former mistress, however, died in Paris.⁽¹⁶⁾ Is it possible Ellen was abroad for the census? In any event, she returned to Suffolk in time for the 1891 count, now retired from a senior position in a household, experienced in the ways of those of high rank, and set up as the mistress of her own abode.⁽¹⁷⁾

Cretingham

Before she moved to Kelsale, Ellen had lived 13 miles west in Cretingham. There, she resided in a rather larger home with a pretty porch flanked by Georgian windows and perfectly positioned chimneys on either end of the roof.

Perhaps it's telling that in 1891, somewhat irregularly, Ellen was enumerated as the head of household, a retired housekeeper, while her brother was runner-up on the schedule. The pair had two live-in servants, as many as anybody else in the village.⁽¹⁸⁾

In the fragments available, Ellen comes across as a purposeful woman with a keen sense of duty. We know, for example, that she organised a message to the new King expressing sympathy at the death of Queen Victoria on behalf of 87 Cretingham parishioners.⁽¹⁹⁾ Later, she wrote to the *Guardians* to demand that a local couple receive support from their sons as well as relief, and, later still, she got involved in the sale of a village fire engine!⁽²⁰⁾

By 1900, Ellen, now in her 50s, had a new project: she decided she needed a well. Hearing of a local man possessing 'wonderful powers' with a divining rod, she entreated him to bring his hazel twigs to Cretingham, where they apparently exhibited 'extraordinary animation'. Confident in the diviner's assertions, Ellen organised the digging of a new well and – concurrently – the filling of her pond, from which her water had previously been supplied.⁽²¹⁾



Miss Pritty (right) and two others outside her home in Cretingham, c.1915 (courtesy of Linda Fiske) (image cropped by author to redact address)

Tragedy and heroism

On a hot August Friday morning, Ellen heard a furore in her garden. It was 10:30 am, and **James Harry Mann**,⁽²²⁾ a local builder in his 30s, had descended 48 feet into the (still dry) well under construction. A while later, workmen at the top heard Mann groan.⁽²³⁾ They called for help. In fact, they panicked, pointing wildly at the well, frantically shouting, 'He's dead, he's dead'!⁽²⁴⁾

Ellen came charging out of the house, armed with brandy. Quickly grasping that the workmen dared not go down the well themselves, she promptly got herself into the workmen's bucket and demanded to be let down by rope.

Arriving at the bottom, Ellen found Mann flat on his back. She pulled his shirt open, rubbed his chest and lifted his head, but it was already too late; the poor man had gone. In her own words, 'He was cold as marble. I poured some brandy down his throat, and tried to restore animation by rubbing him, but without success.'⁽²⁵⁾

Not long after her descent, the men at the surface pulled Ellen back up, blinking into the sunlight – a necessarily quick endeavour as she too could have suffocated in the well.

'I sat down on a log of wood nearby, but I could not get the sight of the poor man out of my mind... I was very ill in the evening [from the noxious gas], but thank God, I've been spared.'⁽²⁶⁾

It took three hours for conditions deep in the well to be deemed safe enough to retrieve Mann's body. He left a young widow and a little boy.

The aftermath

The press picked up the story, and after it appeared in the *Ipswich Journal*, it spread rapidly across the country. One report stated:

'Miss Pritty is just the sort of lady one would expect to act promptly in an emergency, and perform a brave deed. Tall, with slightly knit brows, searching eyes, and firmly-pressed lips, her features at once suggest strength of will and force of character. She readily consented to describe her adventure, but it could easily be seen that she wished to take as little credit as possible.'⁽²⁷⁾



Miss Pritty, from a photograph by A Tear, Ipswich, published in The Strand Magazine (c.1901) in an article by Alfred T Storey entitled 'Peace Heroes of 1900', p.645. (public domain courtesy of <https://www.victorianvoices.net/>)

On 9 November 1900, Ellen's neighbours presented her with £6 17s to buy a piece of plate. The great and the good signed the accompanying testimonial, including **Lord Tollemache**.⁽²⁸⁾ The presentation was also picked up by several newspapers, even if some of them referred to Ellen as a '*plucky girl*' called Helen!⁽²⁹⁾

The *Empire News* bucked the trend for duplication and reported that, whilst Ellen was noble, '[the] incident is disappointing. Her fellow villagers presented Miss Pritty with a purse of gold, but they never thought of ducking the three cowards [i.e. the workmen] in the horsepond'!⁽³⁰⁾

Two further commendations followed for Ellen: an award from the Royal Humane Society⁽³¹⁾ and a bronze medal for great gallantry and presence of mind from the Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, presented by the new King himself in July 1901.⁽³²⁾

As for the well? It remained dry – as did a second dug immediately afterwards. Litigation against the diviner followed,⁽³³⁾ and Ellen even advertised her home for sale '*in consequence of expenditure through sinking two wells and no water*'.⁽³⁴⁾ Whether she ever had any intention of selling is debatable, but she was eventually awarded £42 in damages.⁽³⁵⁾

Conclusion

Ellen didn't leave Cretingham until after the 1921 census, even after the tragic loss of one of her boarders.⁽³⁶⁾ Another boarder lived with her in both Cretingham and Kelsale for a total of more than 20 years, but both he and Ellen died long before a piped water supply arrived in Cretingham after the Second World War.⁽³⁷⁾

One of the medals worn by Ellen was auctioned in Australia in 2014, smashing its estimate.⁽³⁸⁾ Apt, perhaps, given the heroine herself smashed society's estimation of the '*weaker vessel*' and '*gentler sex*' 100 years ago.⁽³⁹⁾

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25. Ibid.
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BESSIE CARLEY – A LIFE OF SERVICE CUT SHORT

Bessie Carley (1881-1920) was a nurse throughout her working life. She was awarded the Royal Red Cross for her exceptional service during the Great War. She was also one of my great-aunts.

Bessie was born in the Suffolk village of Badingham, the seventh of the 11 children born to farmer **John Carley** and his wife **Jane Adeline (née Mills)**. She trained as a nurse at the Warneford Hospital in Leamington Spa; later she returned to Suffolk, working in Ipswich, and subsequently took up a post in Dovercourt, Essex, the post she held at the outbreak of war.

Bessie's wartime record,⁽¹⁾ from which much of the information in this article is drawn, shows that six days after the United Kingdom's declaration of war against Germany on 4 August 1914, she joined the First Eastern General Hospital in Cambridge,⁽²⁾ as part of the Territorial Force Nursing Service (TFNS).⁽³⁾

The First Eastern had been mobilised on 5 August, but planning for field hospitals such as this had been under way for some time. Initially, the hospital was in temporary accommodation, but just 10 weeks after the outbreak of war, on 17 October, the newly built field hospital was ready to accept patients. At its height, the hospital had 1,700 beds, and it treated some 70,000 casualties during the course of the war.

The TFNS had been established in 1908, part of the reform of the British auxiliary forces which created the Territorial Force. Nurses who were 23 years of age or older, and who had at least three years of training, were able to volunteer for the service. On the outbreak of the First World War, up to 2,784 nurses were mobilised to staff field hospitals such as the First Eastern. It is likely that Bessie had volunteered for the TFNS some time prior to the outbreak of war.

Reports on Bessie's work are included in the records of her war service. In 1915, the Matron, **Enid M Newton**, wrote

'Sister Carley has worked for me for the period of one year. She is energetic, methodical, hard working and punctual. She has a good deal of initiative. Her ward has a good tone.'

In February 1917, Bessie was awarded the Royal Red Cross, 2nd Class, for exceptional services in military nursing in her Home Unit. This was an award first instituted by Queen Victoria⁽⁴⁾ and later updated by King George V,⁽⁵⁾ to be conferred on military nurses 'for special devotion and competency which they may have displayed in their nursing duties with Our Army in the Field, or in Our Naval and Military Hospitals.'



Badge of the Royal Red Cross (via Wikipedia)

In March 1917, Bessie formally agreed to serve abroad. She underwent a medical examination on 12 April and was declared to be in a fit state of health. She was then among many staff from the First Eastern who were sent to France that month to set up a new hospital, Eastern General Hospital (No. 55), at Wimereux near Boulogne.⁽⁶⁾ Bessie was appointed Assistant Matron of this 1,040-bed hospital.



Eastern General Hospital (No. 55), Wimereux (CC BY-NC 4.0, via [Eric Edwards' blogsite](#) 'History of the 18th Battalion CEF, "The Fighting Eighteenth"')

No. 55 General Hospital remained in use until March 1919.⁽⁷⁾ In her report, written in January 1919, Matron **Annie Macdonald** wrote:

'Miss B Carley has worked under me since Oct/15, first as Sister then as Assist. Matron.

She is a well-trained woman, interested in all branches of nursing, a good administrator and teacher. She quickly sees important points and her judgement can be relied on. Very even-tempered, tactful, energetic and hardworking, her one desire is to be useful. I find her the greatest help in my work.'

After the closure of the hospital, Bessie was detailed for duty with the 18th Casualty Clearing Station (CCS) in Doullens,⁽⁸⁾ some 40 km south-west of Arras. That too closed, in July 1919, but about that time Bessie was invalided back to the UK for surgery to remove varicose veins, a condition which had been exacerbated by her war service. The treatment was followed by a period of sick leave.

On 9 October 1919 she wrote to the Matron-in-Chief of the TFNS to inform her that she had been passed as fit for Home Service and was awaiting orders; she was *'willing and desirous of remaining in the Force for as long as [her] services [were] required.'* However, by this time the number of staff was being greatly reduced, and on 14 October 1919 Bessie was formally demobilised, having completed just over five years' service.

In June 1919, she had been awarded the Royal Red Cross, 1st Class, 'in recognition of [her] valuable services with the Armies in France and Flanders.'⁽⁹⁾

In April 1920, Bessie was appointed to the position of Matron at the newly formed Streatham Red Cross Medical and Surgical Home in south London. She took up residence on Monday 19 April, only to fall ill the following Sunday. An ambulance rushed her to Guy's Hospital where she died the following day.⁽¹⁰⁾ The cause of death was a cerebral haemorrhage. She was 38 years of age.

Among the mourners at Bessie's funeral at the church of St John the Baptist in Badingham was Annie Macdonald who, as Matron at First Eastern and then at No. 55 General Hospital, had been Bessie's superior. Bessie is buried in the churchyard at Badingham.

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Editors' Note: Helen informs us that there is an article by Elizabeth Walne containing other details of Bessie Carley's life at: <https://badingham-and-cransford.co.uk/2020/07/25/bessie-carley-badinghams-decorated-tfns-assistant-matron/>

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*Bessie Carley's gravestone in Badingham.
Photo courtesy of 'Tim' from
FindAGrave.com*

SIDE-TRACKED BY ALICE

From time to time in my family history research, I stumble across the story of someone who, although not part of the family bloodline, piques my curiosity. Such was **Alice Mary Clutten (née Sheppard)** (1865-1934).

While browsing through Suffolk newspapers, I discovered that my great-grandfathers, **Charles Read** of Brundish and **John Carley** of Badingham, were members of the Board of Guardians for Hoxne Poor Law Union in the 1880s. So too was **Samuel Francis Clutten** (1851-1937) of Fressingfield, a cousin of Charles's wife **Emma (née Clutten)**. The three men were farmers, each employing several agricultural labourers.

In further browsing, I found a report of the funeral of Samuel's wife **Celia Jane (née Rope)** in 1887.⁽¹⁾ The family tragedy was highlighted by the Victorian pathos of the final sentences:

'The crowd seemed very much affected at the grave – indeed it was a sight not soon to be forgotten. The stricken husband, with two small children, sorrowing for her who had given a life which had cost her own, caused very many to shed tears.'

What, I wondered, had happened to Samuel and his children **Emily Elizabeth** (8), **Edith Mary** (almost 6), **Ada Celia** (3), and newborn **Edward Gideon** in the following years?

The 1891 census showed that Samuel had given up the farm in Fressingfield and was working as a merchant's assistant in Loddon, Norfolk. Meanwhile, his daughters were the only three boarders at a school run by sisters **Mary F** and **Hettie H Cockburn** back in Fressingfield. Edward seems to have been being cared for by Samuel's aunt, **Mary Ann Clutten**, and by his unmarried sisters **Julia Ann** and **Sarah** in Earsham, Norfolk.

In January 1893, Samuel enrolled all four of his children in the school at Loddon.⁽²⁾ Also enrolled was **Francis A Clement**, son of Alice Clutten (*sic*), who was a year older than Samuel's son Edward. It seemed Samuel had remarried. I soon found the banns of marriage, showing that Alice was a widow living in Northwood, Middlesex; and a notice of marriage⁽³⁾ provided the further information that Alice was the widow of **T S Clement**, Santiago del Estero, Buenos Aires, Argentina. That posed more questions: what was Alice's background and how had Samuel met her? Perhaps the next census would provide a clue.

Samuel was shown in Wangford in 1901, working as a registrar of births and deaths. With him was his middle daughter Edith, a pupil teacher, and his son Edward, along with **Hilda Ricketts**, a six-year-old niece. But neither Alice nor her son Francis were included in the census entry. Strange...

I found Alice in Chelsea, London, working as a monthly nurse⁽⁴⁾ in the household of **William C P Jay**, a barrister and US-born British subject, and his Australian-born

wife. It was clearly a well-to-do household: Alice was one of six staff. Her birthplace is given as Fressingfield, Norfolk (*sic*).

It is likely that Alice had continued working between 1891 and 1901 (and continued to work in subsequent years). In her profession, recommendations from previous employers would have been all-important and a gap of any length between engagements would have made it more difficult to obtain a new position. This would particularly have been the case with the wealthier (and better-paying) clients for whom Alice seems to have worked.

Francis was boarding at 'The College' in Beccles; at the time of the 1901 census he was 14. His birthplace was given as South America.

Going back a decade to 1891, I found Alice M Clement, as she was then, employed as a nurse in the Kensington household of barrister **Henry C Bennett**. Her birthplace is recorded as Fressingfield, Suffolk. Given this, it is perhaps not surprising to find Francis, then aged 4, in Fressingfield, in the care of his widowed grandmother, **Mary Ann Sheppard**.

It didn't take much more research to find that Alice had been born in 1865 to **James Sheppard** (1816-1888) and his wife **Mary Ann (née Pulham)** (b.1836) in Fressingfield, where her four grandparents also lived. Alice had a brother **Samuel**, four years older, and a sister **Emily**, three years younger. (Emily was the mother of Hilda Ricketts whom I'd found with Samuel Clutton in the 1901 census and was herself widowed young, but that's a further sidetrack!)

Alice's father had originally worked as a groom, then served in the 10th Royal Hussars for five years. He was discharged from the army after the amputation of his left hand following an accident with a horse.⁽⁵⁾ The census records suggest that James had periods surviving on his army pension but at other times was employed as an agricultural labourer. Might he have been employed by Samuel, or by Samuel's father **Edward** who had had the farm before him?

The 1881 census shows Alice, then aged 16, working as a housemaid in Ipswich. This would not have been unusual employment for a girl of Alice's background. She was one of four servants in the household. **Isabella Darby**, her employer, was a widowed annuitant with four children aged from 12 down to 5. Perhaps it was here that Alice first demonstrated an aptitude for working with children.

By the time the following census was taken, Alice had apparently been to Argentina, where she had married, had a son and been widowed. How these things came about are open questions. Alice's son Francis was baptised in Fressingfield on 15 September 1889 and the entry in the baptismal register has the annotation 'Allegedly Bn 18 Sep 1886 At Calle Bolivar, Buenos Ayres'.⁽⁶⁾ Did the vicar have some doubts about the veracity of Alice's story?

Alice appears in Wangford with husband Samuel in the 1911 census. No occupation is shown. Had Alice settled to a less active life in Suffolk? No, that doesn't seem to be Alice's way!

While going backwards, forwards and sideways in my search for more information about her, I was surprised to find Alice's name on passenger lists and/or US immigration forms for transatlantic crossings to New York in 1916, 1919 and 1920; in each case she intended to stay about three months. Samuel remained at home. The image of the handwritten immigration form of 1916 shows that Alice had previously visited New York in 1914/1915; it is unclear whether that was a single trip or two separate trips.

In 1916, Alice went to visit a friend, **Mrs A G Vanderbilt**. On the subsequent two trips, it was **Mrs Raymond Baker**. Mrs Baker is shown to have paid Alice's fare in 1919. Who were these friends? Surely Alice couldn't have a connection to *the* Vanderbilt family?

Research revealed that Mrs Vanderbilt and Mrs Baker were one and the same person, born **Margaret Emerson** (1884-1960),⁽⁷⁾ and that the relationship 'friend' on the immigration form was probably just more appropriate than the other option of 'relative'.

Margaret was a seriously wealthy woman. Her second marriage took place in Surrey, England in 1911. The *Daily Mirror*, in its report of the wedding, described **Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt**, Margaret's new husband, as '*the richest young man in the world*'.⁽⁸⁾

Alfred was a keen sportsman and spent much of his time in Britain, where he indulged his interest in horses and traditional coaching skills. By 1908 he was running two seasonal coach services (for the gentry) from central London to Brighton, at times driving one of them himself!^(9, 10) Sometimes Margaret travelled with him. Perhaps it was on one of these trips that she came across Alice.



Mrs A G Vanderbilt (Margaret Emerson McKim) (1886-1960)
(Public domain via the Bain collection at the US Library of Congress)

Alfred died in 1915: he was travelling on *HMS Lusitania* when it was torpedoed and sunk by a German U-boat. Margaret married again in 1918, this time to **Raymond T Baker**, who was Director of the United States Mint, a presidential appointment.

I feel sure that Alice must have been employed by Margaret. Alice's occupation on the

immigration forms is shown as 'nurse'. Margaret had two sons by Alfred, in 1912 and 1914, and then a daughter by Raymond in 1920, so she had a young family at the time of Alice's visits. She was accustomed to employing immigrant workers: the 1920 census, taken in January 1920, shows 11 servants in Raymond and Margaret's household. They had all, without exception, been born in Europe. Had Margaret sought recommendations for staff when she was over here? However Alice came to be in the Vanderbilt or Baker households, she must have found it hugely different from the environment in which she herself had grown up.

After Alice's trip to the USA in 1920, she appears with Samuel in Wangford in the 1921 census with her occupation given as 'home duties'. Samuel was still working; he retired from his position with the Blything Board of Governors in 1923, at the age of 72.⁽¹¹⁾ Alice was 58. Perhaps she was also retired; I have found no further information about either Alice or Samuel until their deaths in 1934 and 1937 respectively.

Their wills show that, at some stage, they had moved from Wangford to Field Stile Road in Southwold. The house was owned by Alice, who left it to her son Francis. She had also owned Buenos Aires Western Railway Debenture stock and some Canadian stocks and shares; Samuel was the beneficiary for life of the income from these. The probate value of her estate was just over £2,500.

Alice comes across as an enterprising, determined and independent woman. I wonder if her mother Mary Ann was surprised by how her daughter's life turned out or if, had she had the opportunity, she would have liked to have done something similar herself. It would be interesting if any of Alice's descendants were able to shed more light on her life.

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Alfred Vanderbilt driving one of his coaches, 1909. Photo: [William Albert Rouch](#) (public domain via Wikimedia Commons)

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2. National School Admission Registers & Log-Books, 1870-1914.
3. *Norfolk Chronicle*, 1 October 1892, p.7. Samuel is referred to here as S. Francis Clutten, indicating that he preferred to use his middle name. I have opted here to refer to him as Samuel to avoid confusion with his stepson Francis.
4. A monthly nurse was employed to care for a mother and her baby in the post-partum period, which would not necessarily be exactly a month. There was no formal training for the role.
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ELLEN ELIZABETH MANNALL – A LIFE IN SERVICE

Ellen was born on 26 August 1876 at Sudbourne in Suffolk, the daughter of **Isaac Mannall** and **Mary Ann (née Woods)**. She was baptised at All Saints, Sudbourne on 22 October. In the 1881 census the family was living in Chapel Road, Sudbourne. Isaac was an agricultural worker, and as most of the land in Sudbourne was part of the Sudbourne Hall Estate it is assumed that he would have been an estate worker like many of the other members of the family.

In 1883 Isaac committed suicide by hanging himself one night. Mary then married the widower next door, but Ellen is not recorded with the family on the 1891 census.

Growing up, she could only have dreamed of the employment that she finally obtained. Unfortunately, not much is known about Ellen until 1901 where we find her working in Cheyne Gardens, Chelsea, as a nurse to the **Wing** family.

In 1909 **William Sidney** was born and shortly afterwards Ellen began a long association with the Sidney family, first as nanny to William, who became the 1st Viscount De L'Isle, and then his sister **Mary**.

William Sidney's father, also **William**, was the 5th Baron De L'Isle and Dudley and the latter's mother, **Mary Foulis**, was the last surviving member of the Foulis family. William's home was Penshurst Place in Kent. The house, once the property of **King Henry VIII**, was left to his son **King Edward VI** and then granted to **Sir William Sidney** in 1552. The Sidney family have been in continuous occupation for more than

470 years.⁽¹⁾ Mary’s ancestral home was Ingleby Manor in North Yorkshire. It was here, in 1939, that we find Ellen with William, 5th Baron De L’Isle and Dudley, his wife **Winifred Agneta Yorke Sidney (née Bevan)** and **Lady De L’Isle and Dudley (Elizabeth)**.

Ingleby is reached from the small village of Ingleby Greenhow, near the little 12th-century church. A meandering drive lined with towering lime and oak trees leads to Ingleby Manor, surrounded by acres of peaceful gardens and woodland in a natural amphitheatre of the Cleveland Hills on the edge of the North York Moors. It is a fascinating historic manor house dating from about 1540.⁽²⁾

After the war they returned to London. The electoral registers for Chelsea show that Ellen was still working for the family, living with them first at the Cadogan Hotel and then at the Basil Street Hotel. In 1945 William, 5th Lord De L’Isle and Dudley, died but she continued to look after his widow, Winifred.

At the age of 70 Ellen must have retired, and in 1949 we find her at the Old Rectory, Newick, near Lewes in Sussex. By 1960 she had moved to the Calverley Hotel in Royal Tunbridge Wells where she died on 5 February 1967.

In her will dated 17 March 1960 and made at Royal Tunbridge Wells, Ellen writes ‘To:- William Philip Viscount De L’Isle ... in gratitude for his kindness and help to me over many years’. William was also executor of her will, so ending nearly a half century association with the Sidney family.

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A DISTRICT NURSE IN SUFFOLK, 1910-1949

Our family Bible has an entry made by my great-grandfather recording the birth of his daughter **Gertrude Elizabeth Grimmer** on Wednesday 16 January 1889, at 10 minutes past six in the morning. She was the third and youngest child born to a farming family who lived in the north Suffolk village of Mettingham, in the Waveney valley. Her brother **John** would eventually marry and take over the farm. Her older sister **Edith** remained at home, unmarried, running the house and dairy and caring for their elderly parents. Gertrude was baptised at All Saints’ Church, Mettingham on 20 October 1889, and the 1891 census shows her, aged two, living at Mettingham Hall with her family and a general servant, **Alice Hipperson**. She was educated at boarding school and decided to train as a nurse.

Gertie began her training at the West Suffolk General Hospital in Bury St Edmunds on 23 July 1910 and completed it three years later. The Superintendent's report described her as *'a good nurse, kind and thoughtful, much liked by doctors and patients.'*

During her early career she met fellow nurse **Isabel Campbell**, and the two remained lifelong friends, sharing nurses' homes and then settling together, both as district nurses, in Suffolk. The 1939 register places Gertie and Isabel together in their household in London Road, Harleston. Whether they were more than friends is hard to know, but from the way I remember my mother tutting and raising her eyebrows every time Isabel's name was mentioned, it is perfectly possible!



Nurse Grimmer (author's photo)



Isabel (author's photo)

Gertie gained experience in private nursing in Norwich before the events of World War I overtook her. She began working at the Norfolk War Hospital in Thorpe St Andrew, where she remained in service until April 1919, caring for soldiers sent home from the Front.

She then attended Leeds General Infirmary where she trained as a district nurse. She became a Queen's Nurse, and was very proud to wear her badge.

The Queen's Nursing Institute is the oldest professional nursing organisation in the UK, and according to the *Guinness Book of Records* it is the oldest nursing charity in the world. It was founded to organise the training of district nurses (particularly to help poorer people) with a grant from the Women's Jubilee Fund in 1887, and received a Royal Charter from **Queen Victoria** in 1889 (the year Gertie was



Caring for injured soldiers (author's photo)

born). Queen's Nurses needed to have completed basic training, district training and midwifery. The Queen's Nurse badge was a qualification and the recipients needed to show they could maintain good care in the community in line with national standards.

Gertie returned to the Waveney Valley, first taking up a post as school nurse in Redenhall in 1922, then taking time out to do a midwifery course, and finally settling as a district nurse in Weybread, where she gave service until her retirement in 1949. Nurse Grimmer (with her constant array of little dogs) was well known in the area at the time, as she motored around in her car, carrying her baby-weighting scales and ministering to the sick. The Inspector's notes reported her to be '*an excellent nurse and midwife*'. She was '[a] capable nurse with good routine, tactful and ... a good influence'.

At some time after 1939 Isabel fades from the story, probably passing away (I have not found the record yet), or returning to her native Highlands. Gertie met the **Rev Frank Richardson**, vicar of Weybread, and they married in 1947. Frank had been inducted to the parish in 1937 after a career in different parishes in England, including Sheffield, Barnsley, Southall, and Staffordshire. He had lost his first wife in 1946. Although neither of them was in the first flush of youth, Gertie and Frank continued to live happily at Weybread until he died, and she then moved to a little house in Beccles where she remained until her own death in January 1970, at the age of 81 years.

To me, as a small child, Aunt Gertie was a grumpy, forgetful old lady. To my older sister she was an inspiration and role model for her own nursing career. It was not until I received Gertie's photo album into my care that I understood the family love and respect for a lady who did things her way in a time when it was not always easy for women to follow an independent life and career.

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FINDING WILL

In summer 2019, BBC News reported that the remains of 13 British soldiers killed in the Great War had been discovered and reburied in a Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) cemetery. Having friends living on the erstwhile front line in northern France, I knew that this was still a relatively common occurrence. In this case, *'some corner of a foreign field'* was close to Monchy Le Preux, south-east of Arras, where groundworks were under way for a water treatment plant. This had been a front line area, continuously shelled, captured and recaptured over many months, and those buried in this battlefield cemetery seem not to have been recovered and reburied after the war.

The Ministry of Defence Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre employs a team of 'War Detectives' to identify remains and inform and support possible family members. The work of this team featured in the ITV programme *Long Lost Families – The Unknown Soldiers*.

The artefacts found with the remains strongly indicated that the soldiers were from the Suffolk Regiment, who were known to have been attempting an advance there in June 1917. Efforts to extract viable DNA failed to find matches with possible relatives, before the remains were reburied in the nearby CWGC cemetery at Wancourt, with full military honours, by soldiers from the Royal Anglian Regiment – successor to the 'Suffolks'. Without confirmed identification, their headstones state simply that they are *'Known unto God'*.



Members of the Royal Anglian Regiment with the headstones of the unknown soldiers being buried at Wancourt British Cemetery (Crown Copyright, by permission of MOD Commemorations Team)

I am one of many descendants of **Thomas** (1827-1890) and **Kate Woodward** (1845-1904) of Whitehall, Old Newton, Suffolk. Kate was Thomas' second wife and they had 15 children born between 1867 and 1886.



*Inscription reads:
'2nd Lieutenant W T Woodward'
C of E (Church of England)
Suffolk Regt.
Photo courtesy of Woodward family.*

In June 2024, one of the 'War Detectives' wrote to a cousin thought to be the eldest next of kin of a Woodward descendant who had died in France in 1917. In the spoil heap, after exhuming the remains, they had found an identity bracelet belonging to 2nd Lieutenant **William Thomas Woodward** (known as Will). He was known to have died on 14 June 1917 near Monchy Le Preux. His remains had never been recovered, and his name was therefore listed on the Arras Memorial, Bay 4 – one of thousands with no known grave.

He had attended Ipswich School, and also been a scout leader. The school magazine (No. 162 of June 1917) described what happened.

'He had only been out there 5 weeks, part of which was spent at Calais. It was his first action, and he behaved splendidly, leading his men gallantly forward, until after capturing two trenches, he was wounded in the leg and compelled to stop. He was laid on a stretcher until means could be found to take him back to the dressing station, but shortly after a shell burst right on him, causing immediate death.'



*William Thomas Woodward.
His army service record described him
as just under 6ft, 10 stone, and with 6:6
vision. Photo courtesy of Woodward family.*

Will was a grandson of Thomas and Kate Woodward, and the elder son of **George Augustus** and **Agnes Woodward** of Whitehall, Old Newton. He was born on 27 March 1898 at Mendlesham, so was 19 when he died. Most poignantly, among family papers we have found his will, typed on his behalf 'in the Field' on 3 June 1917 – 11 days before he died. In it, he leaves his motorcycle to his brother, instructions to settle accounts and debts, bequests to family and friends, and instructions to send his photograph to particular young ladies of his acquaintance.

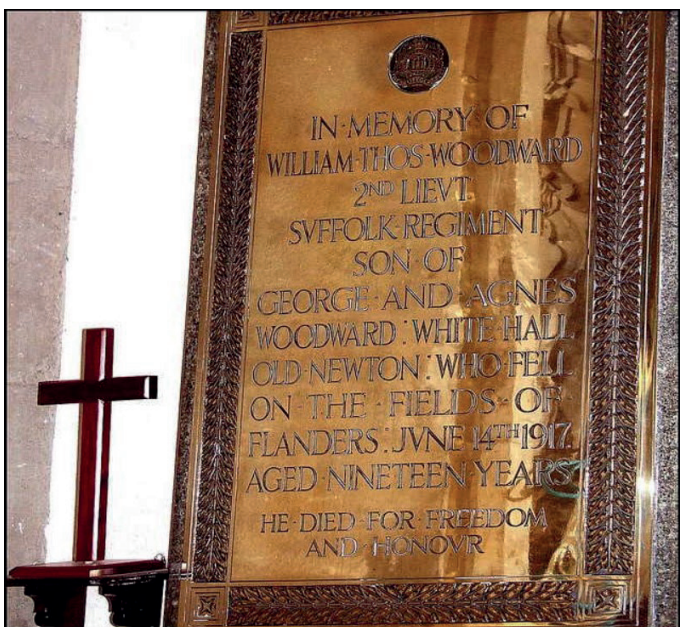
'I have spent a most enjoyable time in the Army and I think no one has spent a happier or better time since they left school than I have. It may also interest a few I was a "virgin".

[Signed] *Will T. Woodward'*

His name is on the Ipswich School War Memorial, and on the memorials at St Mary's Church and the Primitive Methodist Chapel, Old Newton.

There is also a memorial to William Thomas Woodward in St Peter's and St Mary's Church, Stowmarket.

Will's brother **George Philip (Phil) Woodward** and his wife **Mabel** farmed at Whitehall, later with their son **Tim**. In 1917, Phil and their father were managing 700 acres with 80 horses. He was a steward for the Suffolk Show from the early 1920s, acting as director and later honorary director, and contributing significantly to its great expansion and success. Mabel shared his interest in agriculture and heavy horses – a contrast with her childhood career, dancing in London and Paris with **Anna Pavlova**... but that's another story.



Memorial to William Thomas Woodward in St Peter and St Mary's Church, Stowmarket. Photo: William Bishop

Hazel Gowland Mb 741 (daughter of **Jean Pearson (née Woodward)**)
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CHARLES HURSHAM PLEADS GUILTY AND SUPERINTENDENT WATLING LOSES HIS HAT:

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE BOROUGH OF EYE POLICE

At the Ipswich Quarter Sessions on Friday 12 March 1852, **Charles Hursham**⁽¹⁾ (c.1835-1913) '*pleaded guilty of stealing a peck of mixed pea and bean meal, the property of **James Gooderham**, of Eye*'.⁽²⁾ For his crime, Charles was sentenced to the usual penalty for petty theft, three calendar months' hard labour in Ipswich Gaol, with the first and last fourteen days to be served in solitary confinement contemplating his wrongdoing.⁽³⁾

As a 17-year-old farm boy, Charles was in almost all respects typical of those committed for trial in mid-19th century Suffolk. The most common crime was petty larceny, and it was most commonly committed by young males from poor households.⁽⁴⁾ Charles lived just outside Eye with his widowed mother, **Mary (née Tye)** (1802-1872) and two brothers, **William** (1827-1863) and **John** (1840-1918). With no father to support the family, a mother on poor relief and John only 12 years old, the household depended on the earnings of William, who at the age of 24 was the only family member in a position to earn a full adult wage. For juveniles living in poverty like Charles, petty larceny was an ever-present temptation.

As the social historian **John Glyde** noted in the mid-1850s, Suffolk's juvenile petty thieves were not hardened criminals, rather they were unskilled rural labourers living on the verge of destitution: '*Our juveniles are generally not those who have been regularly trained to courses of dishonesty. They are frequently illegitimate, or have lost one parent*'.⁽⁵⁾ Conditions seem to have been particularly deplorable in Eye. The Poor Law Union of Hartismere, which included Eye, was ranked fourth in Suffolk in terms of the ratio of convicted criminals to population; and Eye was itself above the average for Hartismere.⁽⁶⁾ From this perspective, Charles's act of theft seems well-nigh inevitable, and it is a measure of both his desperation and his lack of opportunity that the best he could manage to steal was a few pounds of animal feed.

Rosalind Crone in her review of Suffolk prison registers from 1840 to 1878 came to much the same conclusion as Glyde, that in mid-century Suffolk those brought to court were typically young labourers from the poorest households:

'Offenders who came into contact with the 19th-century criminal justice system were overwhelmingly male (at Ipswich, 86% of inmates, and just under 90% at Bury), and typically aged between 16 and 30 (63% at Ipswich and 59% at Bury). They were also more likely to come from the poorest levels of society: 59% of offenders at Ipswich and 66% at Bury were unskilled workers (or daughters of unskilled workers), overwhelmingly described as 'labourer'.'⁽⁷⁾

And most were charged with petty thefts, '*a crime which could often be described as a strategy to supplement meagre incomes or to cope with periods of unemployment*'.⁽⁸⁾

Charles had been committed to Ipswich Gaol on 6 March, six days before appearing in court, and on admission his name and details were entered in the prison receiving book.⁽⁹⁾ This shows that Charles had brown hair, grey eyes, a round face and a fresh complexion, rare details of an ancestor so far back, though revealing nothing of either his character or his life; he gave his age as 16, which was a year out. More noteworthy is his declared seven years of schooling in Eye. As he declares no religion, it is unlikely he attended Sunday School, so his education would have been solely at the National School on Castle Hill; and this is where he would have gained the ability to read and write, as recorded in the receiving book. Crone points out that new prison inmates commonly took a reading and writing test,⁽¹⁰⁾ and they were required to attend the Ipswich prison school daily,⁽¹¹⁾ so it is likely that Charles not only had to declare his literacy, but also to demonstrate it. However, he was unable to sign his name when he married in 1857, and also when his daughter, **Henrietta Harriet**, married in 1900, so he may later have lost his ability to write through lack of practice, which was not unusual.⁽¹²⁾

The Eye magistrates

Four other names appear in Charles's entry in the receiving book. The first is that of his father, **William Hursham** (1799-1841), whom it notes correctly was a labourer and deceased. William had died of a fever exactly 11 years earlier in March 1841, so Charles had been without a father since the age of seven.

The second name is that of James Gooderham (c.1797-1860), aged about 54, the farmer who accused Charles of theft. Gooderham was reasonably well-off, occupying Town Farm, Cranley Hill, where at the 1851 census he farmed 134 acres and employed five labourers. Town Farm was less than half a mile from Charles's home in Ludgate Causeway and it seems likely that Charles was employed by Gooderham. Town Farm was also known as the Borough Farm, being owned by the Borough of Eye, and Gooderham was himself an Eye borough councillor, having been elected in May 1851. In 1853 he was nominated for election to the Board of Guardians of the Hartismere Union alongside **Samuel Peck**,⁽¹³⁾ the third name in the receiving book entry.

Samuel (1812-1880) was one of two Borough of Eye magistrates who signed the warrant for Charles' arrest and imprisonment prior to his appearance in court. Aged 40, he was an eminent figure in mid-19th-century Eye, being an alderman and, in 1852, the mayor; it was as mayor that Peck held his position as magistrate. His political influence and social position were supported by his extensive farming at Langton Green: in 1851 he held 1,496 acres and employed 20 men and 15 boys. In 1881, a year after his death, an impressive (and expensive) memorial was erected on Peck's grave in Eye cemetery, comprising '*A Sicilian marble cross, resting upon three eight-inch solid bases of the same material, the whole standing 5 feet 6 inches high*'.⁽¹⁴⁾

The other magistrate and fourth name recorded in the receiving book was that of **James Moore** (c.1793-1889), aged 58, who was born in Ireland but spent most of his long life as a surgeon and general practitioner at the upper end of Magdalen Street, Eye. According to his obituary, Moore qualified as a medical practitioner in 1818 and established his practice in Eye shortly afterwards.⁽¹⁵⁾ On appointment as a magistrate in 1836 he hosted a dinner for the mayor, aldermen and councillors at the *Horse Shoes Inn*: ‘*The bells rang merrily, and inhabitants of this ancient borough were reminded of its former gay days*’.⁽¹⁶⁾ Between 1846 and 1888, Moore was also a manager, a trustee and finally the president of the Eye Savings Bank, and when he died in 1889 at the age of 96, he left a comfortable personal estate of £4,873 7s 2d.

The Superintendent of Police

In addition to the magistrates, one further resident of Eye, whose name was not recorded in the receiving book, was instrumental in the imprisonment of Charles Hursham: **John Watling** (1804-?), aged 48, Superintendent of the Borough of Eye Police. It was Watling’s duty as Superintendent to execute the magistrates’ warrant and escort Charles to Ipswich Gaol. However, while the magistrates resembled their modern counterparts, Watling’s standing as Superintendent of Eye Police belonged more to the 18th century, and some historical context is needed in order to comprehend how this role came to be filled by a hairdresser.

Watling was appointed under the terms of the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 which gave all English boroughs the power to recruit paid constables, overseen by a superintendent, to police the town.⁽¹⁷⁾ Prior to the Act, policing depended upon householders who as ratepayers could be required to serve as petty or parish constables within their parish. Petty constables had some basic powers under common law, but were otherwise restricted to executing the judicial orders of the magistrates, for which they received no pay, only an allowance for expenses. Such allowances varied according to the duty performed, such as housing a prisoner, executing a search warrant, attending an election day or searching for men wanted on bastardy orders.⁽¹⁸⁾ But being untrained, without close supervision and unable to act as a united force, parish constables were increasingly ineffective in maintaining law and order, especially in the growing towns of industrial England.⁽¹⁹⁾

Under the Municipal Corporations Act, the appointment of paid police became the responsibility of a borough Watch Committee, chaired by the mayor. Eye’s first Superintendent of Police seems to have been **George Groom Short** (1792-1875), sometime maltster, sometime builder, father of the prominent portrait painter **William Short** (1829-1921),⁽²⁰⁾ and a man who enjoyed the patronage of the borough’s Whig administration. However, when the Whigs lost control of the borough in November 1839, the incoming Tory administration replaced Short with John Watling; and despite many shifts in political power, Watling was to remain in post for another 14 years.

Watling was born in Eye in 1803 or 1804, the first child of **Lydia (née Bond)** and **John Watling snr.**, and he followed his father into the hairdressing profession. Hairdressers traditionally date from the later 17th century with the elaboration of women's *coiffure* and the fashion for wearing perukes or periwigs as a mark of a man's social rank.⁽²¹⁾ Indeed, the association of hairdressing with wigs as a mark of rank continued into the 19th century and Watling himself supplied **Sir Edward Kerrison**, MP and Lord of the Honour of Eye, with wigs for his liveried coachmen.⁽²²⁾ However, with wigs falling out of social fashion in the late 18th century, hairdressers became either exclusively *coiffeurs* or converged with barbers, styling and cutting hair and beards, as well as offering a shave. In 1871, a contemporary of Watling, **Daniel Gooderham** (1816-1883), who ran a hairdressing business in upper Magdalen Street next door to the magistrate James Moore, charged the pork butcher, **Samuel Jessup** (1828-1903), 4 shillings per quarter to shave him regularly and curl his hair on a Sunday.⁽²³⁾



Upper Magdalen Street, Eye, showing Gooderham's hairdressing saloon on the left with the house of magistrate James Moore immediately beyond (original postcard)

Slow beginnings

The creation of a paid police force was welcomed as a move towards a more professional force and one less subject to the influence of local politics, as expressed in 1837 by the *Bury and Norwich Post*:⁽²⁴⁾

'parish constables (most commonly the little tradesmen of the place), even if they have the power, have not always the inclination to ferret out the perpetrators of crime from among their own neighbours [...] We venture to say that a police officer, a total stranger to the place, will do more towards the suppression of such lawless doings, than a host of neighbourly gentlemen thus playing at constables.'

However, while the large boroughs of Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds established professional police forces in 1836, just a year after the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act, smaller boroughs like Eye, Beccles and Southwold moved more slowly and sought simply to place their existing structure of parish constables on a paid and more official basis.⁽²⁵⁾ While sounding impressive, the Municipal Borough of Eye was reputedly the smallest borough in England, being coterminous with the parish of Eye and containing in 1841 a population of just 2,493 souls.⁽²⁶⁾ Local politics operated through intricate social networks, and it reflects well on Watling as a police officer that he managed to retain his post for 14 years, especially as the Whigs were back in power only a year after he had been appointed. Certainly, he enjoyed the patronage of Alderman Samuel Peck, his neighbour at Langton Green when he was first appointed, but had his work been poor, James Moore and the other magistrates under whose supervision he worked would have seen him dismissed.



Map showing the boundary of the Borough of Eye in green, 1837 (in author's possession)

In 1840, the cost of policing the borough was estimated at £120,⁽²⁷⁾ which would have paid for a superintendent and a constable; in 1836, Ipswich paid its police inspectors 20 shillings a week, its constables 14 shillings. In Eye there was no cost for uniforms, as they had none, nor for a police station, which they also lacked, though there may have been a clothing allowance and the borough met certain necessary expenses, such as attending court in Ipswich. The borough had retained two constables prior to 1835,⁽²⁸⁾ so it is surprising that no police officer other than Watling is recorded for Eye in the 1841 census or named in any newspaper reports of the 1840s. In 1846, the average for the municipal corporations was roughly 1 police officer for 1,000

inhabitants,⁽²⁹⁾ which would have given Eye 2.5 officers. Thus, while it was said of the Borough of Southwold in 1857 that *'The Superintendent has no force to superintend'*,⁽³⁰⁾ Superintendent Watling perhaps had one constable to oversee.

The newspapers reported several instances of Watling arresting petty criminals, mostly for theft (wax candles in 1841, a pullet in 1843, some pickled pork in 1848), though he also arrested a counterfeiter in 1841 and was himself assaulted in 1842 *'whilst in the execution of his duty'*, which earned the culprit a month's hard labour.⁽³¹⁾ For a dresser of hair, Watling appears to have been a competent and conscientious borough police officer, though he was mocked when one December night in 1844, vandals not only damaged a summer house and some gates, but also wheeled Watling's gig from its shed and wrecked it. The *Suffolk Chronicle* teased that this destructive spree was clearly the work of Spring Heeled Jack, a figure of Victorian folklore dating from the late 1830s blamed for outrages at night: *'Jack must take good care he is not caught at his work, for he is threatened with the utmost rigour of the law'*.⁽³²⁾

The force awakens

Though Watling was the only police officer recorded in Eye in 1841, in 1851, the year prior to Charles Hursham's arrest, six are listed. Four of these, **James Baker** (c.1825-?), **George [Joseph] Calver** (c.1810-1872), **John Cason** (c.1807-1855), and **Richard Death** (c.1808-1871), were not members of the regular borough police force but appear to have been special constables recruited to protect Eye workhouse from attack by unemployed agricultural workers. Following the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, cheaper American cereals were imported and British market prices fell. This reduced the cost of food for Britain's growing urban population, but also contributed to a severe agricultural depression in the early 1850s. As their farm income dropped, landowners increased the rents paid by tenant farmers, who in turn reduced wages and hired fewer workers.

With Eye workhouse full, the Hartismere Union Board of Guardians attempted to reduce the number seeking outdoor assistance by employing the men to pick oakum, the tedious process of teasing old rope into fibre with the fingers to provide caulking for ships. It was assumed that only those desperate enough for public assistance would continue working, yet in this instance the test failed and had to be abandoned after a week or so, leaving the applicants for relief without means of support. According to the *Suffolk Chronicle*, on the following day, Wednesday 15 January 1851, a *'considerable number'* of these unemployed men, *'armed with bludgeons, and carrying flags, entered the town, and marching to the Union House, immediately proceeded to attack it. The fellows scaled the walls, obtained complete possession, and then commenced breaking the windows'*.⁽³³⁾ In February, the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk noted in a House of Lords speech that there had been protests in other workhouses and that detachments of police, including special constables, were now guarding the workhouses in both

Barham and Eye.⁽³⁴⁾ Six weeks later, constables Pallant, Baker and Death were still lodged in Eye workhouse.⁽³⁵⁾

The sixth police officer recorded in Eye in the 1851 census stands out as quite different from the others: **Philemon Pallant** was neither a special constable nor a Borough of Eye officer but a professional East Suffolk police constable stationed in Yaxley, just outside Eye. The East Suffolk Constabulary was established in 1840 under the terms of the County Police Act of 1839, which permitted magistrates in each county to set up their own police force. As with the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, the aim was to replace the historic parish constable system with a professional police force, though unlike the 1835 Act in Eye, the 1839 Act produced across the rural parishes of Suffolk an organised, disciplined, effective and, indeed, now uniformed rural police force. Philemon Pallant had joined the East Suffolk Police at its formation as a 20-year-old, serving first at East Bergholt, south of Ipswich, before moving by 1844 to Yaxley, and he remained a professional police officer until his death in 1864.

That lost hat... and the disappearing police force

By the time of Charles Hursham's arrest in 1852, it was evident that the Borough of Eye Police fell short of the professional standards demanded by the government, standards which were being met in rural Suffolk, as in Yaxley, by the East Suffolk Constabulary. As John Glyde contended in the mid-1850s: *'The organised rural police contrast very favorably (sic) with the constabulary employed in some of our boroughs, where it is notorious that the force is of very little use in the suppression of nuisances and crime'*.⁽³⁶⁾ The professional reputation of the Eye police was not enhanced by a summons for assault brought early in 1853 by Watling's wife, **Elizabeth (née Swan)** (c.1806-1854), against the retired farmer **William Carter** (c.1792-1870). Suspecting her husband of infidelity with Carter's unmarried 31-year-old daughter, **Eliza** (1821-?), Elizabeth recruited one of her adult sons to accompany her to Carter's house late one night. Having stationed her son in the back yard, Elizabeth hammered at the front with a stick, whereupon her husband flew out the back door, his son capturing his hat as proof of his father's presence. Elizabeth's assault charge, which was heard before the Mayor of Eye and a full bench of magistrates, arose from a scuffle when Carter emerged from the front door, but the focus of the *Suffolk Chronicle* was on John Watling's role and whether the magistrates were doing their duty to the public *'in omitting to enquire into the circumstances so far as they relate to the "paid servant of the public," who figures so prominently in the matter'*.⁽³⁷⁾

In August 1852, Watling appeared in court having arrested two men for the theft of two bushels of malt (a case in which, incidentally, **Richard Hursham**, a cousin of Charles, also gave evidence⁽³⁸⁾), and he was in court again in March 1853 in a case of horse stealing.⁽³⁹⁾ However, he makes no further appearance in the newspapers as superintendent of Eye police and it appears he left the force later in 1853, or perhaps

in 1854. In December 1855, the Eye Watch Committee advertised for a police officer at not less than 23 shillings per week *'and a Suit of Clothes each year'*,⁽⁴⁰⁾ and in March 1856 a man was sentenced to six weeks in prison for assaulting and beating **William George** (c.1828-1915), *'while in the execution of his duty as a police-constable of the borough of Eye'*.⁽⁴¹⁾ William George was in his late twenties, an outsider from Great Yarmouth and later a police constable in Norfolk, so it appears that Eye Borough Police were finally modernising, notwithstanding the continuing lack of a uniform. However, with the passing of the Borough and County Police Act 1856, permitting borough forces to amalgamate with county forces,⁽⁴²⁾ the pressure to abolish Eye's independent police force was overwhelming and in November 1856 *'the Borough of Eye agreed to pay the Ipswich division of the County £95 a year for "two police officers stationed in the Borough"'*.⁽⁴³⁾ Philemon Pallant, the East Suffolk constable stationed at Yaxley in 1851, was appointed to the new post of Police Inspector at Eye,⁽⁴⁴⁾ and a year later, on 30 November 1857, barely 20 years after its formation, the Borough of Eye Police ceased to exist.⁽⁴⁵⁾

What happened next?

John Watling seems to have struggled both professionally and personally after leaving the police. From 1853 to 1854, he is recorded as serving as Serjeant-at-Mace and rate collector for Eye, posts perhaps bestowed on him by that year's mayor, the eminent Samuel Peck, as compensation for loss of office.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Watling's spirited wife, Elizabeth, who had led the night raid that captured Watling's hat, died in May 1854 in her late 40s, leaving Watling, perhaps to his credit, free to marry Eliza Carter late in 1855. By January 1856, he was facing bankruptcy,⁽⁴⁷⁾ but by mid-1857 he was in possession of the *Victoria Arms* public house in Magdalen Street, Eye.⁽⁴⁸⁾ The 1861 census shows him living in the neighbouring village of Cross Street together with Eliza and his two youngest children by his first wife, **Elizabeth** (1844-1887) and **Emma** (1846-1928); he gives his occupation as hairdresser. At this point, John Watling, former Superintendent of the former Borough of Eye Police, disappears into historical obscurity, no memorial marking either the force or its longest serving Superintendent.

Which leaves the 17-year-old Charles Hursham returning from prison in June 1852 to his widowed mother, Mary, and a life of rural poverty in Eye. However, as recounted elsewhere,⁽⁴⁹⁾ all was to change within a few months, and by February 1853 the entire family had migrated to the Medway town of Frindsbury, Mary remarrying there and all three Hursham brothers now with the promise of lifetime jobs in Kent's growing cement industry. It is impossible to say what part, if any, Charles's prison sentence played in Mary's decision to move the family to Kent; whether, that is, stigma might have made their lives any harder than they were already. But, as is evident from the unrest of 1851, there were already reasons enough to leave Suffolk, and rural depopulation was endemic in the second half of the 19th century. As the towns and cities of England grew, so the population of Eye declined, falling from 2,587 in 1851 to

2,064 in 1891. Of the eight children of John and Elizabeth Watling, by 1871 none still lived in Eye: of those living, one was in Colchester, one cannot be traced, and four were in and around London.

As for Charles's life in Kent, in 1857 he married **Henrietta Shuter** (c.1836-1916) in Frindsbury and they remained married for 55 years until his death in 1913 aged 78. Charles was 74 and still working as an unskilled labourer when the first old age pensions were paid in 1909, and the bounty of 7s 6d a week for married couples allowed him to retire from a hard life typical of working-class men of his generation. But perhaps his life's very ordinariness was Charles's main achievement. In Kent he worked hard, kept out of gaol and, with Henrietta, fathered 14 children.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Since the first born, **Samuel** (1858–1933), was my great-grandfather, I, for one, am thankful for his ordinariness.

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THE BRICKLAYER OF WENHASTON AND CLERKENWELL

Editors' Note: *Following the article in December 2024's Suffolk Roots, 'William Cornish: Bricklayer of Woolpit and Stepney', member Eileen Blythe has provided the following information about her own bricklayer ancestor, who seems to have followed a similar route from Suffolk to London.*

My ancestor, **Charles Howard** (1800-1856), was a bricklayer of Wenhaston and Clerkenwell. His entry in the 1841 census, showing him as a bricklayer in Clerkenwell with his family of four children, led me to discover his marriage in August 1822 in St Marylebone, London. In the 1851 census he was listed as a Master bricklayer. He died in 1856 – the dangers of using lime mortar were not recognised at that time, but it did a lot of damage to the lungs.

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CALIFORNIA ESTATE LAND AND HOMEOWNERS

We heard recently from the Suffolk Building Society regarding the California estate in Ipswich. They are seeking to identify descendants of the first people to own land and homes on the estate. The reason is that this year marks the 175th anniversary of the first land purchased by the Society's founding fathers, known as Ipswich and Suffolk Freehold Land Society (FLS).

The California estate was built in around 1850. The land, on the east side of Ipswich, was formerly part of Caldwell Hall farm. The Society laid out roads across it and marked out 282 plots, or allotments, each large enough for its owner to gain the vote in national elections.

In 1850 there was worldwide excitement about the recent discovery of gold in America; as a result, the estate was dubbed locally as 'California', a name still in use today.

Plots were allocated in strict order to the very first FLS members who had supported the Society's founding in 1849 by investing their savings in one or more shares. This was thought to be the fairest way forward as the accumulation of small and large amounts saved by members was used to purchase this first 98 acres of land. Other estates would follow for allocation to members who joined later.

How can you help?

If any members of Suffolk Family History Society are descended from one of the FLS's first members as named on the original estate plan, then we would like to know their story. Eventually, we'd ideally like to do some PR activity around this. But at this early stage, it's important to us just to see what stories we might uncover.

There follows a list of the 282 plots, their location and the allottees, sorted by the allottees' surname. If you believe that one (or more) of the people mentioned is part of your family and you are able to help Suffolk Building Society, please contact **Luke Littleboy**, Head of Marketing at the Society, at LukeLittleboy@suffolkbildingsociety.co.uk.

Andy Kerridge, Chair

Plot #	Street Frontage	Name of Allottee	Plot #	Street Frontage	Name of Allottee
235	Parliament Rd	Adcock, James C	129	Bloomfield St	Bird, Joseph
236	Parliament Rd	Adcock, James Clarke	219	Britannia Rd	Bird, William
133	Bloomfield St	Alderton, Frederick	220	Britannia Rd	Bird, William
134	Bloomfield St	Alderton, Frederick	157	Cowper St	Bishop, E. W.
124	Bloomfield St	Alderton, Thomas	158	Cowper St	Bishop, E. W.
125	Bloomfield St	Alderton, Thomas	159	Cowper St	Bishop, E. W.
189	Crabbe St	Allen, Mark	103	Freehold Rd	Brett, Harry Geo
252	Parliament Rd	Archer, Robert	200	Freehold Rd	Brett, Michael George
253	Parliament Rd	Archer, Robert	201	Freehold Rd	Brett, Michael George
254	Parliament Rd	Archer, Robert	202	Freehold Rd	Brett, Michael George
255	Parliament Rd	Archer, Robert	28	Woodbridge Rd	Brown, Charles
256	Parliament Rd	Archer, Robert	227	Foxhall Rd	Bullar, George
257	Foxhall Rd	Archer, Robert	231	Parliament Rd	Burnett, William
135	Bloomfield St	Athawes?, E Allan	1	Howard St	Cade, Robert (snr.)
136	Freehold Rd	Athawes?, Edwin Allan	68	Cauldwell Hall Rd	Calver, James
209	Cauldwell Hall Rd	Backhouse, B. jnr.	92	Britannia Rd	Carrington, Eliza
208	Cauldwell Hall Rd	Backhouse, Benjamin	195	Crabbe St	Chalkley, John
49	Woodbridge Rd	Baker, William	196	Crabbe St	Chalkley, John
240	Parliament Rd	Balls, Edward	197	Crabbe St	Chalkley, John
241	Parliament Rd	Balls, Edward	7	Woodbridge Rd	Cole, John
242	Parliament Rd	Balls, Edward	278	Freehold Rd	Collins, James
243	Parliament Rd	Balls, Edward	69	Cauldwell Hall Rd	Cutler?, George
244	Parliament Rd	Balls, Edward	142	Cowper St	Daniel, Woodre?
130	Bloomfield St	Barnard, John	143	Cowper St	Daniel, Woodre?
74	Cauldwell Hall Rd	Basting, James ?Coates	272	Freehold Rd	Dawson, George
221	Britannia Rd	Basting?, William	53	Kirby St	Day, Joseph
184	Spring Rd	Batley, Henry Baring	54	Kirby St	Day, Joseph
185	Spring Rd	Batley, Henry Baring	55	Kirby St	Day, Joseph
172	Crabbe St	Bayley, William	56	Kirby St	Day, Joseph
267	Freehold Rd	Bennett, Henry	112	Bloomfield St	Day, Joseph
14	Spring Rd	Bennett, William	21	Milton St	Dermant / Dennant? Benjamin
15	Spring Rd	Bennett, William	23	Milton St	Dermant / Dennant? John
118	Bloomfield St	Bennett, William Roe	33	Milton St	Dermant / Dennant? John
217	Britannia Rd	Bird, Henry	57	Kirby St	Dothie, James
218	Britannia Rd	Bird, Henry	13	Howard St	Dothies, ? W P?
46	Kirby St	Bird, John	20	Milton St	Dothies, ?James? (jnr.)

Plot #	Street Frontage	Name of Allottee
6	Woodbridge Rd	Dunnett, Thomas
190	Crabbe St	Ebbage, George F
137	Freehold Rd	Edwards, George Strutt
96	Britannia Rd	Emmerson, James
31	Milton St	Everett, John
215	Britannia Rd	Fayers, Robert George
277	Freehold Rd	Felgate, Samuel
245	Parliament Rd	Fenton, James
246	Parliament Rd	Fenton, James
247	Parliament Rd	Fenton, James
248	Parliament Rd	Fenton, James
249	Parliament Rd	Fenton, James
250	Parliament Rd	Fenton, James
75	Spring Rd	Firth, William
76	Spring Rd	Firth, William
77	Spring Rd	Firth, William
78	Spring Rd	Firth, William
60	Kirby St	Fisk, Francis
61	Spring Rd	Fisk, Francis
62	Spring Rd	Fisk, Francis
237	Parliament Rd	Fisk, Francis
238	Parliament Rd	Fisk, Francis
239	Parliament Rd	Fisk, Francis
25	Woodbridge Rd	Fleury, Christopher
26	Woodbridge Rd	Fleury, Christopher
27	Woodbridge Rd	Fleury, Christopher
70	Cauldwell Hall Rd	Fleury, Christopher
71	Cauldwell Hall Rd	Fleury, Christopher
72	Cauldwell Hall Rd	Fleury, Christopher
73	Cauldwell Hall Rd	Fleury, Christopher
276	Freehold Rd	Fleury, James
106	Bloomfield St	Fox, William
99	Freehold Rd	Frost, Isaac
100	Freehold Rd	Frost, Isaac
101	Freehold Rd	Frost, Isaac
102	Freehold Rd	Frost, Isaac
192	Crabbe St	Garnham, Robert
117	Bloomfield St	Garrard, William
58	Kirby St	Gill, George ?Rand
131	Bloomfield St	Gill, Henry Harrison
213	Cauldwell Hall Rd	Goddard, Ebenezer?
138	Freehold Rd	Goodwin, Edgar
139	Freehold Rd	Goodwin, Edgar
140	Cowper St	Goodwin, Edgar

Plot #	Street Frontage	Name of Allottee
29	Milton St	Green, Thomas
260	Foxhall Rd	Grimwade, Edward
261	Foxhall Rd	Grimwade, Edward
262	Foxhall Rd	Grimwade, Edward
206	Cauldwell Hall Rd	Grimwood?, Edward
191	Crabbe St	Hacon?, George
251	Parliament Rd	Haggar, Robert
151	Cowper St	Hammond, Joseph
45	Kirby St	Hancock, ?Jonathan? Ralph
232	Parliament Rd	Hancock, Charles
233	Parliament Rd	Hancock, Charles
234	Parliament Rd	Hancock, Charles
132	Bloomfield St	Hancock, Ebenezer
42	Kirby St	Hancock, John R
43	Kirby St	Hancock, John R
44	Kirby St	Hancock, John R
34	Milton St	Hart, Thomas
152	Spring Rd	Howe, Thomas Potter
153	Spring Rd	Howe, Thomas Potter
22	Milton St	Hunt, James
2	Howard St	Jackson, James
9	Woodbridge Rd	Kindred, John
10	Howard St	Kindred, John
205	Cauldwell Hall Rd	Kindred, Jonathon
50	Woodbridge Rd	King, William
51	Woodbridge Rd	King, William
59	Kirby St	Knight, James Blackburn
275	Freehold Rd	Lawrence, Jeremiah
146	Cowper St	Leverett, Harry William
147	Cowper St	Leverett, Harry William
148	Cowper St	Leverett, Harry William
149	Cowper St	Leverett, Harry William
173	Crabbe St	Lewis, Henry
3	Howard St	Lincoln, Robert
30	Milton St	Long, Daniel
216	Britannia Rd	Lovewell, Benjamin ?Nicle
204	Cauldwell Hall Rd	Lyon, James
19	Milton St	Manning, William (Junior)
107	Bloomfield St	Meadows, William
17	Spring Rd	Miller, J B
18	Spring Rd	Miller, J B
182	Spring Rd	Pells, William
183	Spring Rd	Pells, William
80	Spring Rd	Phillips, Thomas

Plot #	Street Frontage	Name of Allottee
81	Spring Rd	Phillips, Thomas
82	Britannia Rd	Phillips, Thomas
83	Britannia Rd	Phillips, Thomas
119	Spring Rd	Phillips, William
38	Spring Rd	Piper, Stephen
39	Spring Rd	Piper, Stephen
40	Kirby St	Piper, Stephen
41	Kirby St	Piper, Stephen
120	Spring Rd	Pitcairn, David
121	Spring Rd	Pitcairn, David
122	Spring Rd	Pitcairn, David
123	Spring Rd	Pitcairn, David
16	Spring Rd	Poole, William
93	Britannia Rd	Popplewell, John
94	Britannia Rd	Popplewell, John
4	Howard St	Potter, John ?Shepherd?
211	Cauldwell Hall Rd	Potter?, William B.
229	Foxhall Rd	Prentice, Oliver
97	Britannia Rd	Radburn, William
98	Freehold Rd	Radburn, William
210	Cauldwell Hall Rd	Raffe, Charles
214	Cauldwell Hall Rd	Ray, Frederick
207	Cauldwell Hall Rd	Read, Augustus
63	Spring Rd	Ross, Thomas Baldk
64	Spring Rd	Ross, Thomas Baldk
65	Spring Rd	Ross, Thomas Baldk
66	Cauldwell Hall Rd	Ross, Thomas Baldk
186	Spring Rd	Rou?, John
79	Spring Rd	Ruggles, Charles
128	Bloomfield St	Ruggles, George
273	Freehold Rd	Rushbrooke, G. W.
274	Freehold Rd	Rushbrooke, G. W.
270	Freehold Rd	Scrivener, Charles
279	Freehold Rd	Scrivener, John Trigg
280	Freehold Rd	Scrivener, John Trigg
281	Freehold Rd	Scrivener, John Trigg
282	Freehold Rd	Scrivener, John Trigg
86	Britannia Rd	Seaman, George
203	Freehold Rd	Seaman, John
36	Spring Rd	Simpson, George
144	Cowper St	Simpson, George
145	Cowper St	Simpson, George
187	Spring Rd	Simpson, George
95	Britannia Rd	Simpson, Josiah

Plot #	Street Frontage	Name of Allottee
154	Cowper St	Skiller?, Robert
155	Cowper St	Skiller?, Robert
47	Kirby St	Slammer? ?Jonathan ?Eamly
35	Milton St	Slammer? Samuel
263	Parliament Rd	Smith, Daniel
264	Parliament Rd	Smith, Daniel
265	Parliament Rd	Smith, Daniel
266	Freehold Rd	Smith, Daniel
8	Woodbridge Rd	Smith, James
160	Cowper St	Smith, Robert
161	Cowper St	Smith, Robert
162	Cowper St	Smith, Robert
174	Crabbe St	Smith, Robert
175	Crabbe St	Smith, Robert
176	Crabbe St	Smith, Robert
126	Bloomfield St	Solomon, John Waite
127	Bloomfield St	Solomon, John Waite
87	Britannia Rd	Sparks, John Josiah
88	Britannia Rd	Sparks, John Josiah
89	Britannia Rd	Sparks, John Josiah
90	Britannia Rd	Sparks, John Josiah
91	Britannia Rd	Sparks, John Josiah
11	Howard St	Squirrell, George
12	Howard St	Squirrell, George
150	Cowper St	Squirrell, John
104	Bloomfield St	Stephens, Philip
105	Bloomfield St	Stephens, Philip
230	Foxhall Rd	Stevens?, Robert
67	Cauldwell Hall Rd	Talbot, John
163	Cowper St	Tanner, George
108	Bloomfield St	Thompson, Robert
109	Bloomfield St	Thompson, Robert
110	Bloomfield St	Thompson, Robert
111	Bloomfield St	Thompson, Robert
156	Cowper St	Thorn, Alfred
212	Cauldwell Hall Rd	Till or Tell, John
24	Woodbridge Rd	Timpson, Samuel
37	Spring Rd	Tonge, Thomas George
193	Crabbe St	Tracy, Henry
194	Crabbe St	Tracy, Henry
228	Foxhall Rd	Tracy, John
222	Britannia Rd	Tracy, Nathaniel
223	Britannia Rd	Tracy, Nathaniel
224	Britannia Rd	Tracy, Nathaniel

Plot #	Street Frontage	Name of Allottee
225	Britannia Rd	Tracy, Nathaniel
226	Britannia Rd	Tracy, Nathaniel
164	Cowper St	Tunmer?, George
165	Cowper St	Tunmer?, George
166	Freehold Rd	Tunmer?, George
167	Freehold Rd	Tunmer?, George
168	Freehold Rd	Tunmer?, George
188	Spring Rd	Ward, John
177	Crabbe St	Ward, Robert
178	Crabbe St	Ward, Robert
179	Crabbe St	Ward, Robert
180	Crabbe St	Ward, Robert
181	Crabbe St	Ward, Robert
268	Freehold Rd	Ward, Thomas
269	Freehold Rd	Ward, Thomas
48	Woodbridge Rd	Warner, Henry

Plot #	Street Frontage	Name of Allottee
5	Woodbridge Rd	Warner, William
52	Woodbridge Rd	Watson, Richard
271	Freehold Rd	Watts, Philip
169	Freehold Rd	Webb, James (Rev'd)
170	Crabbe St	Webb, James (Rev'd)
171	Crabbe St	Webb, James (Rev'd)
198	Crabbe St	Williams, James
199	Crabbe St	Williams, James
32	Milton St	Woods, John
84	Britannia Rd	Worby, William
85	Britannia Rd	Worby, William
258	Foxhall Rd	Yates, Thomas
259	Foxhall Rd	Yates, Thomas

HELP WANTED – PARKHURSTS OF MASSACHUSETTS

George Parkhurst Snr. was born on 1 May 1589 (or perhaps 1588) in Ipswich and married **Phebe Leete** in 1610. Their nine children were baptised in Ipswich, according to records.

George emigrated to North America in 1635 with Phebe and their (surviving?) children, where he settled in Watertown, Massachusetts. He is listed on a Watertown monument as a founding father. After he was widowed, he took a second wife in Massachusetts, a **Susanna Simson (Simpson?)**, perhaps originally from London.

At some point after 1655 George returned to London, England, and was buried in Ipswich after his death on 18 June 1675. One of his sons, **George Parkhurst Jrn.**, stayed in the Massachusetts colony and continued the Parkhurst line in North America.

My grandmother **Ivie Krugmeier (née Parkhurst)** is his direct descendant. George Parkhurst Snr. is my 9th great-grandfather, and the forefather of generations of Parkhursts who remained in New England and later settled the West of the USA.

I would be interested in making contact with anyone who may also be researching this family.

Paula Krugmeier Mb 13128

pkrugme@gmail.com

HELP WANTED – FRANCIS FISK

I have tried everything I know of (New Zealand archives, shipping lists, etc.) to find details of my great-grandfather's arrival in New Zealand in (or around) 1853. His name was **Francis Fisk**, born 16 March 1840. He lived in Potter Street, St Clement's, Ipswich. His parents were **Francis** and **Hephzibah (née Scott)**. I have been told that he left Ipswich and came to Wellington, New Zealand in 1853 with a family called **Fletcher**. I can find no immigration evidence relating to either him or the Fletchers. There are other Fletchers in the family so the name is not unfamiliar. He is included with his family in the 1851 census, but not in 1861, and his death certificate states that died in 1918, having lived in New Zealand for 65 years.

If anyone can help with further details of his early life, especially what led to him leaving England, or with anything about the Fletchers, or can recommend a researcher I could engage to undertake further research (if that would be constructive), please contact me.

Sheryl Boshier Mb 12249

boshiers@xtra.co.nz

HELP WANTED – GOSLING PHOTOGRAPHS

My grandfather (the only grandparent I knew, as all the others had died) was **Isaac Gosling**, b. 31 March 1861 at Brettenham, Suffolk, d. April 1957.

Isaac's parents were **Thomas Pallant Gosling** (b. 3 March 1834, at Hitcham, Suffolk) and **Sarah Elizabeth Garner** (1839-1863).

Isaac was 18 months old when his mother died, but he had an older sister, **Emma Susannah Gosling** (29 December 1859-18 November 1946). Thomas was therefore left with two young children. It appears that his mother (**Louise Pallant**) came to help.

Thomas married again, to a **Susan Pearl**, and they had four children: **Matilde** (b. 27 April 1886); **Ellen** (b. July 1868), **Arthur** (b. 27 July 1869) and **John** (b. 18 August 1884)

I only have photos of Isaac, and wonder if any descendants of the above have any photos of my grandfather or of their other relatives.

Paula Vaisey Mb 1152

paulaandtony333@yahoo.com

HELP WANTED – CLAUGHTON

I am a new member and would like to express my appreciation to everyone involved in keeping the Society running and available to overseas members. I live in Australia and am unable to travel to the UK, so having access to the Society's website helps me work remotely on the next stage of my own family tree. In that connection, I have some questions relating to my Claughton family which other members may be able to answer.

Working backwards, my direct male Claughton line is **Michael Claughton, Stanley Claughton, Arthur Oswell Claughton, John Claughton** and **Henry Claughton**, who was the first in the line not born in Australia. Henry arrived in Sydney on the convict ship *Prince George* on 12 May 1837. He was part of the detachment of guards on the ship and was in the 80th Regiment of Foot. His regimental number was 812.

I am lucky to have a 60-page handwritten memoir by my great-grandfather, Arthur Claughton. Arthur wrote several stories and provided quite a bit of information about his grandfather Henry. I always thought this information would make it fairly easy to trace Henry back to England. The reality was quite the opposite and had me chasing several red herrings. It started with '*He was born in Manchester, England, one of seven brothers*'. Henry's birthplace was also recorded as Manchester on his death certificate. I spent a lot of time searching online for Claughtons in Manchester, but nothing added up. A few years ago, I found his original enlistment details in the *Nominal and Descriptive Roll of the 80th Regiment* (available via Trove). Regimental No. 812 was recorded as Henry Cloutin, who enlisted on 1 May 1831, aged 19 yrs 6 months, height 5' 8½". The place of enlistment was not recorded, but according to the *Record of Stations*, the 80th Regiment was based in Portsmouth in May 1831. His birthplace was recorded as Little Glemham, Suffolk, England.

On 5 Oct 1836, he was married as Henry Clowton to **Emma Fortune**, at St Mary Magdalene in Gillingham, Kent. At that time, the 80th Regiment was stationed in Chatham, not far from Gillingham. The couple must have known they were heading for the Australian colonies, and they departed England just two months after getting married. Henry had six children with Emma before she died in 1853 (her headstone in St John's Cemetery, Parramatta, has the name Emma Clawton). Later in 1853 Henry married **Honora Ward** and had seven children with her. I am descended from the second marriage through John Claughton, the fourth child born in 1858. Honora ('Annie') died in 1881. I only discovered a couple of years ago that Henry married a third time, to a widow, **Elizabeth Cole**, in 1886. It was the marriage certificate for this event that gave the final piece in the puzzle. Henry's parents were listed as **William Clouting** and **Mary Abel (Able)**. William and Mary were married in Little Glemham in 1803 and had four sons and a daughter. Henry was the youngest son, born c. 1811. I could find evidence in transcripts of English records linking the other four children to

William and Mary, but none linking Henry. After joining the Society and ordering the *Loes & Orford Deaneries Baptism Index (1754-1812)*, I finally found a source providing a baptism date and confirming Henry's parents.

How did we go from Clouting to Claughton? It seems Henry was probably illiterate, as he always signed his name as 'X' (his mark). My knowledge of Suffolk and its people is very limited, but some Google research indicated that with the true Suffolk accent it was apparently very common to drop the 'g' from '-ing' words to give a 'in' or 'un' sound. My theory is that when Henry moved out of Suffolk and gave his name, it possibly sounded like Clowton/Clautin/Clauton, or variations thereof, and he was never able to correct the spelling. I have found the following surname spellings on various documents relating to Henry: Clauten, Clauton, Clautin, Claughton, Clowton, Clawton, Cloughton, Clotten, Cloton. It first appeared spelled as Claughton in 1844 on the birth registration of his son **Thomas**, and this became the predominant spelling from about 1866. We now pronounce it phonetically as 'Clawton'.

So, my questions are:

- 1. How would 'Clouting' likely have been pronounced in the mid-1800s in Suffolk? Was my Google research accurate?
- 2. Would it have been unusual for a labourer in a small Suffolk village to make their way to Portsmouth to enlist in the Army? It seems a long way to travel. How would Henry have known where to go?
- 3. Based on the 1841-1881 census records for Little Glenham, Henry's brothers all remained in the village as agricultural labourers. Are there likely to be any records of who they worked for?

I would welcome thoughts and advice on the above.

David Claughton Mb 13161

dclaughton22@gmail.com

Editors' Note: Both the Nominal and Descriptive Roll of the 80th Regiment and the Record of Stations can be found as part of the records of the South Staffordshire Regiment (80th Regiment) relating to Australia and New Zealand, on the National Library of Australia site: <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1127471183/findingaid?digitised=y>

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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: **Joan Horton**, contact joan.horton@talktalk.net

David Jonas Forsdyke <i>b. 1845 Rendlesham, Suffolk</i> <i>d. 1916 Ipswich, Suffolk</i>	Jane Salisbury <i>b. 1843 Little Glemham, Suffolk</i> <i>d. 1910 Rendlesham, Suffolk</i>
Joseph Silas Sells <i>b. 1842 Southwark, London</i> <i>d. 1912 Peckham, London</i>	Alice Smith <i>b. 1843 Irchester, Northamptonshire</i> <i>d. 1896 Peckham, London</i>
George Storer <i>b. 1852 Derby, Derbyshire</i> <i>d. 1910 Derby, Derbyshire</i>	Sarah Acton <i>b. 1850 Derby, Derbyshire</i> <i>d. 1905 Derby, Derbyshire</i>
Henry Cadman <i>b. 1851 Derby, Derbyshire</i> <i>d. 1911 Derby, Derbyshire</i>	Sarah Ann Griffin <i>b. 1850 Derby, Derbyshire</i> <i>d. 1883 Derby, Derbyshire</i>

Great-grandparents of: **Peter Gibbs**, contact pete.gibbs.1st@gmail.com

Cornelius Gibbs <i>b. 1845 Thorndon, Suffolk</i> <i>d. 1912 Eye, Suffolk</i>	Eliza Wiffen <i>b. 1837 Melton, Suffolk</i> <i>d. 1926 Eye, Suffolk</i>
James Southgate <i>b. 1832 Sproughton, Suffolk</i> <i>d. 1910 Bramford, Suffolk</i>	Maria Hunt <i>b. 1835 Rougham, Suffolk</i> <i>d. 1918 Bramford, Suffolk</i>
Charles Harvey <i>b. 1861 Hadleigh, Suffolk</i> <i>d. 1928 Kingston upon Thames, Surrey</i>	Anna Margaret Stevenson <i>b. 1866 Tannington, Suffolk</i> <i>d. 1931 Kingston upon Thames, Surrey</i>

Frederick Adams <i>b. 1861 Earsham, Norfolk</i> <i>d. 1928 Ipswich, Suffolk</i>	Elizabeth Portia Leeks <i>b. 1865 Chelmondiston, Suffolk</i> <i>d. 1947 Woolverstone, Suffolk</i>
2 x Great-grandparents of: Barbara K Przeniczny (Kathy) , contact kprzeniczny@gmail.com	
George Adams <i>b. 1826 Baylham/Barham, Suffolk</i> <i>d. 1889 Ipswich, Suffolk</i>	Mary Ann Skeet <i>b. 1833 Felixstowe, Suffolk</i> <i>d. 1876 Ipswich, Suffolk</i>
Joseph Smith <i>b. 1831 Playford, Suffolk</i> <i>d. 1892 Rushmere St Andrew, Suffolk</i>	Jane Paternoster <i>b. 1836 Little Bealings, Suffolk</i> <i>d. 1921 Rushmere St Andrew, Suffolk</i>
Henry Palmer <i>b. 1831 Trimley St Martin, Suffolk</i> <i>d. 1917 Dovercourt, Essex</i>	Cassandra Elizabeth Lee <i>b. 1833 Ipswich, Suffolk</i> <i>d. 1869 Dovercourt, Essex</i>
Robert Lock <i>b. 1830 Shoreditch, Middlesex</i> <i>d. 1905 Colchester, Essex</i>	Ann Robert Archibald <i>b. 1834 Brechin, Angus, Scotland</i> <i>d. 1882 Ipswich, Suffolk</i>
George Sporle <i>b. 1831 Ipswich, Suffolk</i> <i>d. 1916 Ipswich, Essex</i>	Louisa Taylor <i>b. 1834 Ipswich, Suffolk</i> <i>d. 1888 Ipswich, Suffolk</i>
Charles Frederick Cubitt Sharmann <i>b. 1836 Great Yarmouth, Norfolk</i> <i>d. 1861 Ludham, Norfolk</i>	Maria Watts <i>b. 1838 Catfield, Norfolk</i> <i>d. 1868 Acle, Norfolk</i>
Robert Wilkinson <i>b. c. 1835 Tollesbury, Essex</i> <i>d. 1907 Tollesbury, Essex</i>	Emma Anna Killick <i>b. 1839 Salcott, Essex</i> <i>d. 1898 Tollesbury, Essex</i>
& one couple unknown.	

AI FOR FAMILY HISTORY: ANDREW REDFERN

On Tuesday, 28 January 2025, we welcomed **Andrew Redfern** from the Society of Australian Genealogists to talk to us via Zoom about the subject of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how we can use it to help with family history.

Andrew discussed the evolution and integration of AI in various aspects of daily life, including auto-correct, GPS, and online recommendations. AI's role in family history was emphasized, noting its use in indexing records, with Ancestry processing 2-3 million records daily compared to 2 million monthly in the past. The 1950 US census was indexed in nine days using AI, the 1940 census had taken 9 months!

The presentation was followed by a lively Q&A session, covering use of watermarks to identify images as AI-derived, transcription of old handwriting styles and Latin, the recently announced Chinese AI called Deepseek, and a mention of the podcast *The Family History AI Show* with **Mark Thompson** and **Steve Little**. There is also a Facebook group worth joining called *Genealogy and Artificial Intelligence (AI)*.

This article was prepared using an AI summary from OtterAI (other such tools are available).

Andy Kerridge, Chair
chair@suffolkfhs.co.uk

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FORTHCOMING FAMILY HISTORY FAIRS AND EVENTS

As *Suffolk Roots* goes to press (February 2025) 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 out-of-county 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.

Suffolk Family History Fair

26 April 2025

Free, Suffolk Archives, The Hold, Ipswich

Details: <https://suffolkfhs.co.uk/index.php/pages/view/society-fair>

In addition, there are the following Family History Shows:

RootsTech

6-8 March 2025

Online, Free

Details: <https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/>

Family History Show, Midlands

15 March 2025 10am–4pm

Severn Hall, Malvern, Three Counties Showground, WR13 6NW

Details: <https://thefamilyhistoryshow.com/midlands/>

Really Useful Family History Show Live

29 March 2025 10am-4pm

Free, Kinson Community Centre, Milhams Road, Kinson, Bournemouth

Details: <https://www.dorsetfhs.org.uk/events-activities/family-history-day/>

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

MARCH

LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	SPEAKER
Bury	27	Research evening focusing on commercial websites	Group
Haverhill	13	Breaking the Law and Transportation	Charmian Thompson
Ipswich	05	TBA	
Lowestoft	04	The Lincoln Letters	Dave Wollwebber
Sudbury	25	Title TBC	Ashley Cooper

APRIL

LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	SPEAKER
Haverhill	10	It happened here in Suffolk	Pip Wright
Ipswich	02	TBA	
Lowestoft	01	The Grit	Dean Parkin
Sudbury	29	Borley Rectory	Bryan Thurlow

MAY

LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	SPEAKER
Haverhill	15	AGM and By George, What Style <i>(Note the change of date)</i>	Francis Saltmarsh
Ipswich	07	TBA	
Lowestoft	06	AGM and Film from East Anglian Film Archive	Group

Sudbury	27	Tea for the British – With a little twist of Suffolk & Group AGM	<i>Miriam Stead</i>
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..... JUNE

LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	SPEAKER
Haverhill	12	The Mayflower	<i>Cathy Shelbourne</i>
Ipswich	04	TBA	
Lowestoft	03	The story of Sgt. ‘Long’ Jack Hargreaves	<i>Ivan Bunn</i>
Sudbury	24	Quiz (General) – All welcome	<i>Group</i>

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

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ZOOM TALKS

Zoom talks for members from March 2025 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 31 March 2025 at 7:30pm

DNA Test Taken, Now What? *Mia Bennet*

Monday 14 April 2025 at 7:30pm

TBD, on subject of Onehouse and Nacton Workhouses *Julie Johnson*

Monday 19 May 2025 at 7:30pm

Help-desk session: Let's try and find a way *Trevor Rix & Other*

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.

QUESTIONS / BRICKWALLS? RESEARCH HELP ON MONDAY 19 MAY

On Monday 19 May we have another problem-solving session on Zoom. It is a few years since we ran an event, chaired by **Gill Blanchard**, to help members with their queries. Given its success we thought we would run a similar event again.

This time **Trevor Rix** will be in the chair, supported by an experienced team. We need the questions in advance (one question per person please), so we have time to do some checking to make sure we give you the best answers.

Send your questions or genealogical problems to me (at the e-mail address below or to the postal address near the back of this journal), and I will share amongst the team. The questions should be along the lines: Where do I go next? What records are available? We cannot discuss searching for living relatives, and please keep to subjects covered by English records.

We know these helpdesk sessions are very popular. Even if you have not submitted a question, it is always interesting to hear of possible solutions.

The link to register for the Zoom will be posted on our website (News page) as well as sent out a month or so before in the e-newsletter and advertised on our social media pages.

Andy Kerridge, Chair
chair@suffolkfhs.co.uk

THEMES FOR SUFFOLK ROOTS

The theme of June's edition will be '*Mental Health*'. The Mental Health Act 2025 will be the first major reform of this legislation in England and Wales since 1983. However, there have been many pieces of legislation over the years to address the treatment of people with mental health conditions, resulting in the provision of various regimes and places of 'care'. Was your ancestor affected by a mental health issue, either personally or through those they were related to? Was the labelling just, or an excuse to get someone out of the way? What type of treatment did they receive, either from the local community, or in the institution they were placed in? Was your ancestor employed in such an institution? Or did they contribute to the understanding of mental illness?

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	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. In your research have you found ancestors in asylums, either as patients or workers? Was your ancestor a doctor or campaigner for improvements? Was your ancestor affected by a condition? Was your ancestor unjustly put in an institution? What were the conditions and treatments like? How were the institutions regarded within their communities?	Deadline 16 Apr
Provis'nl	Sep 2025	Education in Suffolk <i>How our ancestors were educated</i> It was not until 1880 that primary education became compulsory, and it was not free until later than that. In your research do you frequently find indications that your ancestors could not read or write? Have you been surprised that some were literate? How was your ancestor educated? At school? At university? Were they apprenticed to a trade? Was your ancestor a schoolmaster or mistress? What were the problems that stopped people going to school? Did any of your ancestors forfeit an education because they needed to work? Were any of them affected by medical conditions that prevented them from attending school? How did the wider availability of education affect communities?	Deadline 16 July
Provis'nl	Dec 2025	Where did they Come from? <i>Migration into Suffolk</i> We have previously looked at our ancestors who left Suffolk for other locations in the UK and further afield. But did your forebears move to live in Suffolk? If so, where were they before, what were they doing and why did they move? Was it for love, for work or perhaps something more unusual? Was their relocation temporary, for example for work, or war service? Were they successful in their new lives in the county? Did they set up a new business? How did their ingress affect the community? Were they welcomed or treated with suspicion?	Deadline 16 Oct

The agricultural life in Suffolk

There has been farming in Suffolk since Neolithic times, and it has had a major effect on the development of the physical and social landscape. Most of us will have some ancestors who worked on the land.

Were your forebears ‘ag labs’, or maybe they were farmers? What were the farms like, and what type of farming did they pursue?

How did they cope with the changing economic landscape? Were their farms blighted by bad weather, disease, or government policy?

Or perhaps they were involved in the supporting industries, such as manufacturing farm equipment, making fertiliser, or veterinary practice?

If your ancestors left the land, what were their reasons?

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MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Please note the changes for UK membership. If you pay by standing order and your subscription rate has changed, then you need to cancel and pay by other means as we no longer offer new standing orders as a payment option. Please contact the Membership Secretary for help on the alternatives.

Subscriptions for the Membership year beginning 1 April 2025:

A – UK postal membership / joint ⁽¹⁾	£14
B – Overseas postal membership	£25
C – Electronic membership	£10
D – Life membership (not available for overseas postal)	£120

¹ If joint membership is applied for, all members must reside at the same address

Anyone joining during the membership year will receive or be granted access to copies of *Suffolk Roots* for that membership year. To enquire about membership, please contact the Membership Secretary whose details are in the list of Officers, below.

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SUFFOLK FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Member of the Federation of Family History Societies : Reg. Charity No. 1087748 : Company Reg. No. 4191740

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OFFICERS 2024

Chair:	Andy Kerridge 8 Wyvern Close, Broughton Astley, Leicester, LE9 6NH Tel: 07858 775171	e-mail: chair@suffolkfhs.org.uk
Vice Chair:	Post currently vacant	
Membership Secretary:	David Horton 26 The Crescent, Slough, SL1 2LQ Tel: 01753 537673	e-mail: membership@suffolkfhs.org.uk
Publicity Officer:	TBA	e-mail: publicity@suffolkfhs.org.uk
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Treasurer:	Carolyn Alderson	e-mail: treasurer@suffolkfhs.org.uk
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 2026

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 Margaret's 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 future programme is being developed and 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.

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

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Mrs Margaret Barfield : Mr Robert Brown : Mr Michael J Durrant
Mr Douglas A Howlett : Mrs Pat King-Gardiner : Mr Derek Palgrave
Mrs Pamela Palgrave : Mr David Talmage : Mrs Ann Youngs
Mr Derek Wright : Mr Arthur Bird : Mr Ken Pearce : Mrs Sheila Piper

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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