

SUFFOLK FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY SUDBURY & DISTRICT GROUP



Update

September 2019

TONIGHT'S SPEAKER

We welcome this evening's speaker Geoffrey Kay with his talk entitled The English Gypsy Caravan.

SUDBURY HERITAGE CENTRE - FRIENDS BULLETIN - September 2019

New in the Heritage Centre will be a tribute to Sudbury silk created by a design team from the Stephen Walters Company. Visitors can also see presentations on a 60in screen about the silk industry which include images of the rows of cottages where hundreds of weavers toiled at their looms in the 19th century. Many of these were demolished in the 1960s. If you are one of our long distance friends you can see photographs of these, and many others from our silk history, at www.sudburysuffolk.co.uk/heritage.

Archive members love dressing up and recently took the top prize at Sudbury Carnival as famous women from history, with our own Heritage Centre trustee Phyllis Felton waving regally as Queen Victoria. By the way, in her Heritage centre role, Phyllis could do with a hand occasionally with keeping our display cases free of finger prints and dust. Please contact her at 01787 375676 if you would like to help. We also need some additional volunteers to Host at the Heritage Centre in September and October. Please call me or email if you would like to know more.



A moment in time

This is one of the recent additions to our historic photo archive which is now approaching 1,000 images. The photographer was standing close to St Peter's Church and looking into North Street. This is what he saw on that day in the 1950s when there was two-way traffic

and the street had narrower pavements and random parking. The petrol pumps have gone now, so has Woolworth's store and the imposing Pearl Assurance office on the left. Look closely at the women in the photograph for another big change - not a single pair of trousers, jeans or leggings in sight!

The Archive itself has an interesting origin. Soon after Sudbury Museum was reborn at the Town Hall in 2005 as the Heritage Centre, it became obvious that we needed to collect and conserve the town's photographic history. Much of this was in private ownership, often tucked away in drawers and cupboards or displayed in frames. Some had already faded badly and there is always the danger of rare images of important moments in the past being dispersed or even destroyed. The increasing popularity of the internet in the 1990s offered the solution, and David Burnett, secretary of Sudbury Museum Trust, and Heritage Centre designer Robin Drury set up the archive. Photographs are borrowed from owners, scanned and then returned, in this way a digital image is kept safely and can be enjoyed online around the world. Some date from the days of photography. Our thanks to Derek Kisby from Sudbury and Bert Reeve from Acton who have both recently made contributions.

An American visitor recently left a \$5 bill in our donation box at the Heritage Centre, perhaps in appreciation of Anne Grimshaw's colourful presentation on the link between our former bunting weaving industry, and the Star Spangled Banner. This is the flag that inspired the American national anthem and is a high profile exhibit at the Smithsonian Museum of American History in Washington. At the moment Anne's presentation has star billing on the Heritage Centre screen until November.

Then we will be highlighting events at the very beginning of the last century when local soldier heroes were carried shoulder high down the Market Hill. They had volunteered to serve in the South African conflict between the British and the Boer settlers. Twelve of those who returned were given the rare honour of the Freedom of the Borough. Forty year earlier the colonial politician who played a major role in triggering the war was at school in Sudbury. The future Sir Leander Star Jameson initiated the notorious military failure known as the Jameson Raid. He was a friend and collaborator of Cecil Rhodes, whose name was given to Rhodesia and which is now Zimbabwe.

Now here's a thought to ponder. The house in Friars Street where the Jameson family lived in the 1860s is Greyfriars, a double fronted house opposite the Angel which has a Blue Plaque. This is puzzling, because the street name refers to the Dominican order that had a Priory in the street until Henry VIII decided otherwise. Its friars wore black cloaks and were known as the Blackfriars. The Greyfriars, so called because they wore grey habits, were monks of the Dominican order which did not have a foundation in Sudbury. Does the Greyfriars of the Jameson house hark back to the days when the family lived in Edinburgh? Politician Jameson's father Robert acquired the Suffolk and Essex Free Press and moved his family here from Edinburgh. He was certainly an imaginative character having written a romantic novel that he serialised in his newspaper, and named his son Leander after the lover of the priestess Hero in Greek mythology. Could the house name have anything to do with a small dog that had become famous in his native Edinburgh, and far beyond, for refusing to leave his master's graveside? And where was that? In Blackfriars churchyard which is why the little terrier is known as Blackfriars Bobby and commemorated by a statue that is now a tourist attraction. Do you think it's a feasible explanation, or do you know otherwise?

Best wishes to you all. Val Herbert, Friends Co-ordinator (01787 372097)

MY PETERLOO PEOPLE AND PARENTS - AND WHY GREAT-GREAT-GREAT GRANDFATHER IS UNDER THE M62

I have just returned from a week's holiday in Manchester – yes, really. And it only rained once. Forget smoky mill chimneys and grimy buildings – they no longer exist. There are fantastic conversions of glorious old buildings into new uses, the skyline is awash with cranes as more new buildings are erected. There are museums, galleries, libraries, archives everywhere. My reason for going was the 200th anniversary and commemoration of the Peterloo Massacre on 16 August 1819 – one of the darkest days in British political history.*



Briefly, on 16 August 1819 there was a peaceful march to Manchester of 60,000 people from nearby towns who wanted to reform the electoral system to ‘one man one vote’, The authorities considered this highly dangerous and feared a French-style Revolution could erupt. They sent in the cavalry to disperse the crowd resulting in 18 dead and almost 700 injured, many of them women and children. They suffered sabre cuts from the local yeomanry, beatings from the local constables and crush injuries.

All my maternal ancestors came from Oldham, about ten miles north of Manchester and it is possible that some of them were there on the fateful day. They were certainly neighbours of at least two of the badly injured people who gave evidence at a public inquiry. In Oldham Local Studies and Archives I discovered all this from the casualties’ names list, occupations and addresses, a tithe map and another local map showing property owners and occupiers.

The will of a 5x great uncle listed executors as his wife and sister and “Joseph Travis, grocer of Oldham” – who was he? Turns out that on 16 August 1819 he was a special constable appointed by the Oldham magistrates to count the number of people walking along his ‘patch’ of the road to Manchester – he counted 864. When told by the magistrates to go nearer to Manchester, he objected saying he would have to call on his 71-year-old father to mind the shop as he did not want to lose business by shutting the shop!

Coming to much more recent times, In Manchester Local Studies and Archives I looked at the log books of the school that my parents attended. I was delighted to find teachers' names that I remember my parents mentioning and even my mother's name was written down as the recipient of a swimming proficiency certificate which entitled her to free membership of the local swimming baths in 1924! Also that year the school ran a trip to the Empire Exhibition at Wembley – another event I remember my mother talking about!

On a less happy note: I visited a local church where I knew my maternal grandparents and great grandparents, and 3x great-grandparents, were buried. I had seen their two gravestones in 1968/9 when I began an interest in family history. So, I was all agog to see them again. I found my grandparents and great grandparents' gravestone easily enough but could not find the other which I recalled as being not far away. I just could not find it. Indeed, I could find no gravestones before about 1895 – I was looking for one of 1859. The area around the church itself was suspiciously empty save for three or four war graves, isolated in a lawn area.

Eventually, I asked the vicar why I could not find my 3x great grandparents' gravestone. The upshot was that it, along with others, now forms hardcore for the M62 motorway... I was not best pleased, not solely because it was my family's gravestone that had been vandalised (officially) - in fairness, no one could have traced me to ask if I minded their smashing it up and flogging it to the highest bidder – but because all gravestones are documents in stone and should be preserved as such on a par with paper and parchment documents. They often contain information that cannot be found elsewhere.

At the very least, the gravestones could have been photographed and the photos given to Oldham Local Studies and Archives or Lancashire Record Office. But it was at a time (about 1972) when no one was much interested in family history, it was considered an odd sort of thing to do. Who would know or care that they had been lost forever? Fortunately, in my 1969 visit I had written down the names and dates. This is why we in the Family History Society transcribe monumental inscriptions.

Despite the loss of the gravestone, I had a brilliant time in the local studies departments and archives of Manchester, Oldham and Rochdale. If you have ancestors in this area, do go – there is lots to see and do and I found all the librarians and archivists extremely helpful and enthusiastic.

* Peterloo takes its name from the place where the massacre happened – St Peter's Field in Manchester – and a reference to the 1815 battle of Waterloo. If you do not know about Peterloo and its significance, have a look at these websites (there are many more).

Outline of events: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/what-was-the-peterloo-massacre-of-1819/zbdrkmn>

This is the main Peterloo website; it is complex but comprehensive and well put together: <https://peterloo1819.co.uk/>

Animation of the day's events of 16 August 1819: <https://vimeo.com/215861505>
A gripping drama-doc of the inquest of victim John

Lees: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cu2xSTSeI4A#> *Anne Grimshaw*

SNIPPETS FROM SUFFOLK FREE PRESS

Feb 7th 1846

St. Peter's church clock. the church wardens Mr. Andrews and Mr. Grover* have entrusted the management of the clock to Mr. Joseph Hills*, watch maker. He has undertaken keeping it in order; winding etc for the sum of £5-00 per annum. A subscription has been raised for the purpose.

**Mr. Grover, grocery shop owner and mayor, see Wetherspoons!*

**Joseph Hills, post master, national cage bird judge and great uncle to, to Ray and his sons Michael and Edward*

1861

Chilton lime kilns near Sudbury (Cotts?) near Mauldon Inn. Maria Baldwin respectfully informs the clergy, gentry and others that a constant supply of good fresh burnt lime is always to be had at her old fashioned kiln in Catts Lane, and hopes by personal attention to business to insure a continuance of the patronage she has so long received.

Ranking as one of the 'others', I wonder did she have to pay by the word?

June 19th 1862

A new lecture hall was proposed for lectures and entertainment, to be built at back premises of H.B. Smith. Subscriptions have raised £400 so far.

any guesses?

If it was the Victoria Hall, built 1887 they had a long wait! It could be elsewhere...

March 31st 1852

A proposal to form a photographic society was put to the Mayor Mr. Grover (*him again!*)

A non professional entertainment at the Town Hall ~Mr. Cole. A. Adams read selections from Shakespeare and Dickens, and Mrs Harridge (?) providing many songs. the proceeds to the Mothers Meeting There was a crowded auditorium, takings £3 ./

March 1st 1864

Mr. A. Baker, Draper, King Street has called on us (SFP) with a request that we should give a most emphatic denial to a rumour that smallpox had broken out in his establishment; there has not been a single case either in his own family or any of his employees.

Liz Cole

WILLS

It is now possible to order post 1858 wills from the GRO for £1.50 instead of £10. Quite a drop.

Sheila Piper

**OUR GROUP RESEARCH DAY AT
SUDBURY LIBRARY**

Sunday 3 November 11.00 - 3.00

SUDBURY FREEMEN

<https://www.sudburyfreemen.org/>

Our website aims to raise the profile of the Sudbury Freeman's Society and to promote an understanding of the freemen and their history. Anyone with an ancestor in Sudbury may find that they have a connection with a freeman as there have been freemen in Sudbury for over 1,000 years.

No one is quite sure how that freedom was first obtained but the history of the freedom in Sudbury dates to the Anglo-Saxon period. Freemen included all sorts of people from Lords of Manors and priests to ordinary burgesses and small holders. The Domesday Book recorded more free men in Suffolk than in any other county in England.

A document in 1515 shows that the Sudbury freedom gave the right to carry on a business in the town and the right to graze cattle on the Common Lands. With the commencement of the Borough Court Books in 1563, names of individual freemen began to be recorded sporadically. From 1657 more formal recording of names began which, with a number of gaps, continues to the present day. Sudbury also acquired the right to elect two Members of Parliament and a reputation for political corruption as freemen were the only people entitled to vote in the Borough until 1832.

Electoral roles and lists of people who had gained the freedom through birth, servitude, (apprenticeship), or purchase provide a tantalising glimpse of the lives of past Sudburians. We are hoping to tell some of their stories and make our archives available to the wider world.

Fiona Wheeler

NEXT MEETINGS:

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| 29 Oct | Church Brasses and Brass Rubbing | <i>Martin Stuchfield</i> |
| 26 Nov | In a Manner of Speaking
(A humorous look at the story of the English Language) | <i>Charlie Haylock</i> |
| December | No Meeting | |

If a meeting needs to be cancelled at short notice (ie due to bad weather) we will put it on our Group Website page.

PLEASE TAKE A POSTER TO DISPLAY

NEED TO GET IN TOUCH?

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