

The Hadleigh Society

December
2015

ROOF THE GUILDHALL KITCHEN

The Hadleigh Society Environment Group has been re-formed and is working on a feasibility study to repair the remains of the detached Guildhall Kitchen, and then to protect it with a 'roof'. The 'kitchen', though of great historical importance, at present has neither good visitor appeal nor a use.

With the agreement of the Feoffment the Group has had meetings on site with Natalie Drewett of Babergh District Council and David Eve from Historic England; both were enthusiastic in principle about saving the structure and creating an undercover space for those using the garden. Various options are being considered: a smart parabolic tent, a contemporary orangery-type structure to enclose the kitchen, or a new roof on the existing walls, once these have been repaired and strengthened.



As can be seen to the right in this photo the structure still retains some high class brickwork, probably original and dating from the 15th Century.

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HADLEIGH IN 1871 – PART 4

From an original presentation by the Hadleigh Society History Group in November 1990

N.B. Paragraphs in italics are direct quotes from the 1871 Board minutes, correspondence or the Ipswich Journal.

In this episode the main activity is the restoration of St Mary's Church, Hadleigh
There was a report in the Ipswich Journal in January 1871 about 'Preparing for the Restoration of Hadleigh Church, Fund Raising & a Conversazione'.

'The Rector, the Very Rev. R.T. Wheeler & the Restoration Committee have certainly left no efforts untried with a view to raise the necessary funds for effectually restoring the interior of the church & introduce open sittings.

It will be remembered that on 2 August 1870 a public meeting, convened by the Rector was held in the Town Hall for the purpose of considering the benching of the church & raising the necessary funds for that purpose & the restoration of the interior, & at that meeting subscribers names were enrolled & it was resolved that the subscriptions could be paid either in one sum or by instalments. Thus quietly, but doubtless in a most successful manner, has the important business of raising the necessary funds been proceeding; & on Friday 6th inst. a highly successful entertainment was given in the Town Hall in further aid of the funds.

In order to bring people together & to receive the first instalments of subscriptions, it was determined to hold a conversazione in the Town Hall.

Accordingly last Monday evening at 6pm the Hall doors were thrown open to the public at an admission charge of 1s to this interesting, instructive & highly pleasing exhibition. The weather ... exercises a material influence over the attendance at any entertainment; while the ladies & others were engaged in the interior decoration & arrangements of the Hall, the leaden clouds, driven by occasional heavy gales from the west, discharged their contents with the large hailstones clattering against the skylight, & the thick gloom which prevailed being temporarily lit up by vivid lightning flashes accompanied by heavy peals of thunder.

In the circulars announcing the conversazione friends were requested to assist by sending to the rector any objects of interest they possess for exhibition. This request was most cheerfully & readily complied with, not only by several gentlemen resident in the town but those residing in Ipswich & other places. During the evening various objects of scientific interest & amusement were

exhibited including – electro-magnetic engine, air-pump, working model of a steam engine, photography by limelight, dissolving views, graphoscopes, microscopes, stereoscopes, zoetropes, enamel portraits, magic mirrors, paintings & various articles of beauty. ... Suffice to say the exhibition was on a grand & extensive scale. Refreshments were supplied by Mr Aldous of the Lion Hotel'.

A very different type of entertainment was reported when Tom Thumb, who was 3 feet 4 inches tall weighing 5 stone & being 40 years old arrived in Hadleigh:- 'the renowned Charles J. Stratton, better known as General Tom Thumb, & his wife, Lavinia W. Stratton, with George Washington Morrison Nutt, alias Commodore Nutt, & Miss Winnie Warren, visited on Thursday & were the objects of much attraction – a large concourse of people assembling in the neighbourhood of the Lion Hotel, anxious to have a glimpse of them on their arrival. The afternoon exhibition was indifferently patronised, but in the evening there was a large company, & the entertainment proved the most amusing & delightful of any given for a very long period. The dramatic performance of these four diminutive but extremely clever individuals created much merriment, the acting of the Commodore being enthusiastically applauded.'

The fund raising for the rest of the church repairs had been successful & after the church had been closed for three months, the Ipswich Journal for 9th December 1871 was able to report:

'On the successful completion of the restoration of the fine old church of Hadleigh, the bells rang out in a joyous peal last Thursday from the old tower & they have rung for no better cause since they were first placed there three centuries ago. The churches of Hadleigh, Lavenham & Long Melford are three grand monuments to the piety of our forefathers. For Hadleigh residents, so large a building entails considerable cost to the inhabitants to repair it, but they have not flinched by way of carrying it out.'

Two years ago the church was reopened after extensive restoration to the roof. The opening service last Thursday was the first held for 3 months to allow for the remainder of the work to take place. Still remaining from the earlier restoration was the floor of the nave & aisles to bench. The floor was in a bad state, the pavement had been broken up in all directions to make way for memorial slabs until it presented a curious patchwork appearance. The greater part of the nave was occupied with pews of the ugliest pattern. So deep that those seated in them could see no more than each other's heads & so badly constructed that they looked like cattle pens at a market place & gave a very crazy, ramshackle look to the

interior. The whole interior looked mean & shabby. These have now been removed & the memorial slabs carefully placed in the north & south chapels. The floor is now laid with tiles – red & black & laid in a very pretty pattern. This flooring is only in the passages for the benches are placed on boarded flooring at the same level as the tiles. Consequently there are no steps to trip the heedless or bother the infirm.

The benches are all of oak of a very elegant make. The backs are sloping & the end framing is crossed so as to obtain this form. Some represent ears of corn, others fruit or flowers & hardly two are alike. To those who knew the church in its former condition, the effect of these benches is so remarkable that it is agreeable.

When the roof of the nave was restored, some iron staves were used at the ends of the massive tie-beams. They were well made & painted in bright colours.

However it was felt that they were out of place in a timber roof & so strong has been the desire of the parishioners to make their church what it should be in all things that the iron-work has now been cased in oak. Every lover of English architecture will be thankful for the removal of what must have been an eyesore

A very handsome pulpit has been placed at the northern side of the entrance to the chancel. It is octagonal in form & the panels are of English oak. The pedestal is formed of a large piece of polished marble. This is surrounded with a stone

capital. The stairs by which the pulpit is approached are of stone with a handrail of oak borne upon iron stanchions.

A handsome brass lectern is placed under the centre of the chancel arch; it is the gift of Miss Knox, daughter of the late rector.

The chancel has been re-floored & the altar entirely replaced. The tiles are richer & of a more elaborate pattern. The altar rail is of oak upon oak standards. The north & south aisles terminate at the east end chapels separated from them by wooden screens, the latter being carefully repaired.

These works have all been carried out from the designs of Mr J. Drayton-Wyatt of Holloway, London & the consulting architect to the church Building Society of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury. The contract for the works finished was taken by J. A. Pettitt of Hadleigh. The woodwork carving was executed by Mr John Spurgeon of Stowmarket & Mr John Dakin of Bury St Edmunds has given a general superintendence to the works. The stone corbels & other masonry were executed by Mr Downs of Hadleigh & the pulpit was by Messrs Farmer & Brindley of London. The tiles have all been supplied by Mr Goodwin of Hertford & laid by Mr Pettitt. The lectern is by Messrs Hardman of London.'

On the day of the opening ‘the first serious fall of snow came ... & continued falling until sometime after the congregation had assembled. The weather

had a serious effect on attendance. The Bishop of Ely was announced to preach in the morning; all the principal inhabitants were present together with visitors from a distance, but the church was not full. The Rector, the Rev R.T. Wheeler assisted by the curate, the Rev J.C.W. Valpy, read the prayers; the Rev H. Pigot MA, a gentleman who was formerly curate of Hadleigh & the writer of the most interesting & gossipy local histories, read the second lesson. The choir, all volunteers, performed their part

in admirable style & Mr Hardacre, who has been for many years organist at Hadleigh Church, ably presided at the organ assisted by his daughter.

The total cost of the works now concluded amounts to £1500 of which a large proportion is either paid or promised. People of all classes have given liberally & the subscriptions have been spread over three years in many cases.'

DELIVERIES TO MEMBERS

Now that many of you opt to get Hadleigh Society news and posters by email we have reviewed our remaining paper deliveries. We will continue to deliver newsletters, either by hand to Hadleigh addresses

or by post. We won't do this anymore just for posters. We place a few of these around the town centre and will send them by email. Please print and display if you are in a good position for passers-by.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Hadleigh Town Council is preparing to produce a neighbourhood plan for the town. It carried out a survey of opinions from residents last year and received some replies but anyone who didn't respond to that

and would like to register their views can visit
<http://hadleigh.onesuffolk.net/neighbourhood-plan/>, look at the survey and comment to councillors.

FOUNDRYDATA: A HERITAGE PROJECT USING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY.

Foundries used to be almost everywhere. It has been said that Hadleigh had two in the 19th Century. Does anyone know more about that?

The metal work that they produced filled the streets factories and homes of Britain (and much of the rest of the world) and is rapidly disappearing. The firms have mostly closed. Everyday stuff is being melted down, often leaving no trace and certainly no written or photographic record.

Eddie Birch and Jonathan Prus have decided to try and capture this information before it's too late. Collecting all this is a huge task and will only happen if the project is democratic and engages many interested people. It is envisaged, if you like, as a sort of wiki-foundrypedia. The web-site is www.foundrydata.org and anyone can access the saved data without password or registration.

The database divides into four main sections:

- Artefact (castings, their locations, descriptions and photos)
- Foundries (the manufacturing process and its physical location)

- Firms and People (the history of who, what, when and where)
- References (printed and digital sources to test or validate the above)

and these sections are interlinked so that (for example) the record of a lamp post is linked to the foundry that made it. The range of interesting castings is vast, ranging from huge engine parts, bridges and ordnance to minuscule brass "toys".

This note is an invitation to join in. The sorts of activity involved include:

- Posting your existing images and information
- Combing the streets and taking pictures of castings (and the foundry marks on them)
- Locating and researching the foundries
- Tracking the people and firms who did this work, building a history
- Working out what technology was used and how it was propagated.

If you wish to add material you will need a password.

If you're curious about this please ring Jonathan Prus on 01435 830155 or email: jonathan@foundrydata.org

BRUCE SUTHERLAND 1916 - 2015

I should like to write a few words in memory of one of our members, Bruce Sutherland, who sadly passed away earlier this year. When I moved to Hadleigh in the 1990s, Bruce and his wife Jill, fellow residents in Benton Street, were both very welcoming. In fact, Jill was one of the kindest people I have ever met.

Bruce had arrived in Hadleigh in 1945 when he obtained the position of assistant vet for the area. He helped to establish Highcliff Veterinary Practice and was very proud of their achievements. He also ran a market garden for many years.

Bruce and Jill joined the Hadleigh Society in 1984 soon after its formation. They joined the Society's History Group and also became part of the team of volunteers who, led by Sue Andrews, started cataloguing the Town Archives. Bruce liked to keep physically and mentally active and hosted many of our History Group meetings providing tea and ginger biscuits. He participated in the Group's presentation on The Great War at the grand age of 97.

During our History Group meetings Bruce recounted many stories from his life as a vet. He enjoyed working with large animals and his account of visiting the bear that lived at Layham Hall was highly entertaining. He became a well-respected specialist in the welfare of horses. His legacy hopefully will be his invention 'The Birther', which will aid animals when giving birth. Field trials are currently being conducted and Bruce's family hope to bring his invention to market. It would be a tremendous way of keeping his memory alive and also acknowledging all his achievements within his profession.

Bruce was a straight-talking man who was very proud of his Scottish roots. On a personal note, he taught me how to master the art of driving along Benton Street. 'Don't dither!' he would say. His words of wisdom have stood me in very good stead!

It was a privilege to have known you, Bruce. We will miss you.

Sue England

THE HADLEIGH SOCIETY

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*All views expressed are
those of the contributors
and are not necessarily
those of the Hadleigh
Society*

Programme of Events 2015/16

Wed 2 Dec	Out On The Margins - Suffolk Poachers and Smugglers	William Tyler
Tue 2 Feb 2016	The Suffolk Suffragettes in Felixstowe	Philip Hadwen
Wed 16 Mar	The Lost City of Dunwich	Mark Mitchells
Tue 10 May	TBA	
Wed 15 Jun	AGM & Guildhall Kitchen	
Tue 9 Aug	The Angel Roofs of East Anglia	Michael Rimmer
Wed 5 Oct	Hadleigh Great War Centenary Project	Mark Brennan
Tue 6 Dec	The Bronze Age in Suffolk	Edward Martin

Meetings are held in Hadleigh Old Town Hall, 8pm, unless otherwise notified. Entry is free for members, £3 for non-members.

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The Hadleigh Society website has past newsletters and other information at
<http://www.hadsoc.org.uk/>