

Nov 2017

The Hadleigh Society

CAKES, ALE & PARTYING

Feasting & Fundraising in Medieval Suffolk

Don't miss our festive meeting on Wednesday 6th December. Kate Jewell's talk will trace some of the festivals which were important to medieval Suffolk communities, looking at how they celebrated them and discussing how one particular community used festivity to raise a huge amount of money in a time of need. Enjoy mulled wine and mince pies with us.

HADLEIGH HISTORY

We've two features for you this time: Sally Looker on the Hadleigh Archive and Ray Whitehand on his researches in the archives at Ipswich, discovering a murder tale from C17 Hadleigh.

AGM JUNE 2017

The 35th Annual General Meeting of the Society was held 13 June 2017 chaired by Margaret Woods.

Reports from the Treasurer, History Group and the Environmental & Planning group were given and there were no queries from the floor. The Chairman's review outlined the range of speakers for the past year and she thanked a number of members for the work done for the Society including the hard working committee.

Margaret Woods was thanked for her sterling work as Chairman by Graham Panton on behalf of the Society.

Elections - Dick Fletcher was elected to the committee and the existing President, Officers and Committee Members were re-elected en bloc.

The official business was followed by a presentation given by Sue Angland and Jan Byrne on Changing Hadleigh (see page 11), in turn followed by cheese and wine with members having the opportunity to chat.

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THE HADLEIGH ARCHIVE – *a treasure trove of documents*

From a talk by Sally Looker, a volunteer at the Hadleigh Archive, to Friends of St Mary's Church, Hadleigh on 21 Oct 2017

Some of you may not be aware of the archive or, if you are, you may not know exactly what it is. There is, after all, a County Record Office which holds the main collections for west Suffolk, including Hadleigh. Why, therefore, should there be a separate archive in the town?

It is certainly unusual – most of Suffolk's other towns and boroughs deposited their early records at the Suffolk Record Office many years ago. Hadleigh is the exception. My aim is to explain how and why this could happen as well as the types of document we hold, how they are cared for and what we are trying to achieve.

All of the documents we have focus on the town of Hadleigh and range in date from the medieval period right through to the present day. Of special significance are the early records created by the Market Feoffment Charity, the Grand Feoffment Charity and the Corporation. These bodies governed many aspects of town life including the market, charities and alms houses, poor relief, workhouse and grammar school. Their records, dating from the 15th to the 17th centuries, provide a fascinating insight into life in a dynamic, prosperous market town at that period. Later deposits have increased the holdings several times over and cover a wide variety of sources. These include title deeds, business records, school

records, cemetery registers, family history papers, photographs, maps and books.

Our activities at Hadleigh Archive began in the mid-1990s but the story of the care and preservation of the records begins 30 years earlier.

It was the death of Harold Grimwade in 1963 which galvanised efforts to carry out the first major cataloguing project. Since the 1840s, Grimwade & Son, solicitors at 8 Market Place, had been acting (under various names) for the charities. With the death of their father, the Misses Grimwade set about the disposal of a vast accumulation of documents stored in the offices there. Official records were sent to the West Suffolk Record Office but the Hadleigh charity records were deposited with Hadleigh Urban District Council – what have been described as a “treasure trove of over 2,000 documents” were suddenly the responsibility of the Muniments Committee.

Amongst them is this spectacular document, the *Inspeximus* Charter of 1432 – this confirms the original lost charter of 1252 when Henry III had granted the right to hold a Monday market and annual three-day fair at Michaelmas to the Lord of Toppesfield Manor.

Written in Latin, on parchment, and measuring about 12” x 8”, it is highly decorative. At the top LH-side we can see the king's initial, a capital H, illuminated in two shades of blue on a gold background.



Attached to the bottom is the royal seal in dark green wax showing Henry VI on his charger.

Six years later, William Clopton was to grant all the market area, buildings, rents and market rights to 15 Hadleigh trustees led by Augustus Dunton – this marks the founding of the Market Feoffment Charity.

Hadleigh Urban District Council minutes of 1964 reveal a determination to not only tackle the task of sorting and caring for the documents but also “to arrange the display of documents and other things of historic interest”. The Muniment Committee, to be re-named the Local History Committee, had 14 members, including WAB Jones and Cyril Cook.

The role of WAB Jones was crucial. An Oxford history graduate, he came to the town in 1935 to take up the post of headmaster at the National School for Boys in Bridge Street. In the years up to the 1960s, he had access to the archive

and was sending reports of important Hadleigh documents to the National Register of Archives in London. When the Grimwade documents were handed over he was the natural choice to take on the task of sorting and listing them, reporting to the council on 18 Jun 1964 that the job was well under way. “Twenty-four containers are already filled, numbered and the contents listed” By December, he had dealt with all of them and they were stored in the attic at Toppesfield Hall.

The wills and title deeds of the town’s charities, amalgamated into the Grand Feoffment Charity, had been kept in the church. These were proof of ownership to Dr William Pykenham’s foundation of 12 alms houses in George Street and over 40 later bequests of both money and property, given for the relief of the poor. They filled three large chests housed in the Muniment Room above the Vestry. From time to time, rough lists of what was in the chests had been drawn-up but the documents were muddled and there was no simple way of identifying them.



Here we have one example of many: a grant, dated 1491, from Henry Monnyng and others, to Pykenham and others, of a tenement and land called

Hertyscrofte in Helstrete (today known as George Street). It was one of many properties purchased by William Pykenham, Rector of Hadleigh, with which to endow his alms houses.

On parchment, with 3 seals, it measures about 15 x 6 inches. Unlike some of the deeds which were folded and do not lie flat, this one is in excellent condition for a document nearly 600 years old.

Eventually, WAB Jones, as Honorary Archivist, and Cyril Cook were to catalogue 75 boxes of documents, every item being given a reference number and for each a typed index card was made.

However, by the 1970s the management of the archive was going through an uncertain period. Following local government reorganisation in 1974, ownership was transferred from Hadleigh UDC to the newly-formed

Hadleigh Town Council. The documents were moved to a new location in the Guildhall/Town Hall complex, only to be moved again to Bridge Street while the Guildhall was totally refurbished. Material was being added to the collections but remained uncatalogued and it became clear that it was necessary to take a different approach.

In 1995 Hadleigh Archive was set up, operating under the wing of Hadleigh Town Council, and working from the ground floor room on the East of the building. Cyril Cook and Sue Andrews were appointed Joint Honorary Archivists, Cyril leading the transcribing group and Sue, the cataloguing group. You may recognise many of the faces in this early photograph of volunteers. Standing 4th from the left is Sue who prioritised the work, supervised volunteers and sorted out pressing



problems, such as storage.

The council provides us with an office, storage facilities, an annual budget and has overall responsibility for the archive. The day-to-day operation and maintenance is carried out by two groups of volunteers.

A major aim was to start a digital catalogue and it was Joe Byrne, here sitting at the computer, who made this happen. At a time when it was impossible to purchase suitable software, he devised a fully-searchable program based on Visual Fox Pro which proved to be both efficient and user-friendly. Missing his expertise, we now use a simple Excel spreadsheet for our database catalogue. In addition, he worked on the project to scan all the photographs into the computer, stored as a separate photographic catalogue which continues to grow.

Currently, the cataloguing group meets every Friday afternoon. Although we have, since 2013, been working without Sue's guidance, we continue to function along the same lines with six members. Our time is split between listing new accessions, inputting onto the database, scanning photographs to add to our digital picture library and dealing with enquiries.

The transcribing group, now led by Margaret Woods, meets on a Tuesday afternoon to transcribe 16th and 17th Hadleigh documents. The transcriptions are word-processed, checked and then printed off, to be filed in folders along with a copy of the original. They are available on "open access" in the archive room. Not only does this make the

documents more accessible but it protects the originals by reducing the handling of them.

Over 20 years work has resulted in a growing number of completed texts of the most significant documents, including the Market Feoffment Book, Account books for the Markets and Fairs, and Hospital Account Books.

The Collectors' Accounts, for which an unbroken series survives from 1564 to 1730, are particularly important, giving a detailed picture of one of the most ambitious systems of poor relief in the country. They are also a good illustration of the difficulties encountered when transcribing an old form of handwriting, which is often faded, has no standardized spelling, and uses frequent abbreviations.

The collector, elected annually, compiled a detailed balance sheet of accounts at the end of his year of office.

The first page of John Alabaster's account for 1613, gives the income: "rents received as followeth". At the top of the list is the rent of £50 received "Of Rudland for Mascalls". Mascalls is the estate at Offton bought by the feoffees from the sale of the gilds in 1550. Underneath are the rents of other properties such as Nokes (at Capel), Spensers (at Polstead), Paytons and the Stonehouse.

Total income for that year is £181.8s.10d.

Several pages of what are called "disbursements", or expenditure, follow, with very detailed descriptions of every item of cloth or clothing supplied, to

whom it was given and how much it cost.

One page of disbursements has numerous entries for items of cloth and clothing, many for children:

For instance, the third entry reads: "Jannings boys apparell when he went to James Turner 3 yards carsey 5s / 2 yards canvas 2s / 2 yards cotton a payer of stockings & buttons 20d / 2 shirts 3s 6d lockrum & making 10d" Jannings boy, who perhaps was to go to James Turner as an apprentice, has been well kitted out to the value of 15 shillings. [carsey is the phonetic spelling for kersey, a type of cloth]

The transcript of the same page makes the information much more readable.

Towards the bottom of the page there are payments for repairs to charity property:

"To Oly cooke a day work goinge to capell to see the houses for the reparations" - 6d

For 3 eves bords to the almes howse" - 1s.

Work has recently moved onto translation from Latin of early 17th century borough documents - the Book of Recognizances and The Book of Sessions of the Peace.

A project to translate 13th and 14th century Hadleigh manorial records, carried out independently by Margaret, gives us a resource not previously available locally. Digital copies of the photographs of over 200 manuscripts, obtained from Canterbury Archives, are now stored on our computer. The

results of Margaret's research, covering a period of Hadleigh's history of which so far not much is known, will be available to us all when her book is published next year.

New deposits come in on a regular basis and in a variety of ways.

Files and papers from both the Hadleigh Town Council and the Market Feoffment Charity are regularly passed through for listing and storage. The largest single deposit was in 2005 when the Council transferred to us their backlog of planning application files from 1974. Even after weeding, these run to more than 20 boxes.

Of real benefit to the council has been the sorting and listing of their title deeds and identification of unused plots in the cemetery. Documents were also identified proving Town Council ownership of the approach road to the Bridge St allotments. In the long-running anti-Tesco campaign this was crucial.

We can provide secure storage when necessary. St Mary's have made use of our facilities. When the Church Office was moved to the vestry a home had to be found for the photographs which had hung there for many years and had started to deteriorate. They are now boxed and stored in Safe 5. The most valuable books from the Deanery Library collection are also stored in the Archive, removed to prevent further deterioration from the dampness of the Deanery Tower.

Of these, the most important is Dr David Wilkin's manuscript of 1721.

Comprising a medley of historical information about the church and town, it includes a fascinating description by Wilkins of his trail around the church, giving an accurate account of the position of fixtures and fittings, with details of monumental inscriptions.

There is also a written account of the perambulation or “beating the bounds” made by Wilkins, his churchwardens and some parishioners on two days in May 1721. Some years later the churchwarden, Richard Parsons, drew a charming map of the route, the first known map of the whole parish of Hadleigh.

Several deposits have come in as bequests from local people, who are unfortunately no longer with us. We have research notes and papers of WAB Jones, Cyril Cook, Edward Ringer and John Bloomfield.

In addition, the photographs collected by Colin Bull were given to the Archive in 2014; the largest single photographic collection we have, with 1,680 images. All are packed, numbered and scanned into a separate digital picture library. Currently they are being identified and listed to make it easier to access them.

Several bundles of title deeds have been deposited with us, either as a donation or on loan. To date we have the deeds of about 20 Hadleigh properties which ensures survival of the information contained in them. Occasionally, title deeds come up for sale on E-Bay and we have made several purchases of this kind. In this way, deeds relating to Toppesfield and Bridge Street Mills, properties in Duke Street and George

Street, including East House, have come back to the town.

We even have five boxes of documents “rescued” from a skip outside a local solicitor’s office by John Bloomfield.

We have, at the last count, 227 boxes of documents, the most important being stored in five fireproof steel safes, the rest (the more modern or photocopied material) are shelved, either in the archive office, or in a third-floor attic room. All items are packaged in acid-free folders and boxes; temperature and humidity levels are monitored on a regular basis. The Suffolk Record Office provides advice on the conservation of fragile items when necessary and supplies many of our packaging materials. On a recent visit to the office we received the seal of approval from Bridget Hanley, the Collections Manager at Ipswich Record Office.

We are committed to making the collections available to members of the public, both individuals and local organisations. In the past year we have supplied information and images to Hadleigh Library and the WW1 Project as well as a tour and talk to Bildeston School children. Our latest contribution has been to identify and supply photographs for the “Hadleigh in the 50s and 60s” exhibition.

Enquiries are welcome. It is best to get in touch with the Town Council in the first instance who can forward an enquiry to us. Personal visits are necessarily by prior arrangement; we are not able at present to provide regular opening times though that is something that may be possible in the future.

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Our work at Hadleigh Archive ensures that the town's records are being preserved and conserved in the town in which they were created. They are a valuable resource, accessible to local researchers without the necessity to travel to Bury St Edmunds.

I have, hopefully, given an indication of the scale and importance of these archives and their relevance even today – not to mention the work involved.

Sally Looker

A HADLEIGH MURDER

While browsing through some uncatalogued – undated assize records for Suffolk held at Ipswich Record Office Ray Whitehand came across a bundle of documents SRO(I): B104/1/50 which hold part of the story of a couple of c17th murders in Hadleigh. This article concentrates on the first one, dated c1680.

Initially when I flattened out the first heavily creased slip of a document I discovered the text was wholly written in Latin. This was a major barrier for someone whose understanding of Latin is very basic. I could pick out the odd word or two: *Marie Goldsmith of Hadleigh, vid. Sturgeon ffisk gent maior*. Cheney's Handbook of Dates told me *Quarto die July Anno Reg Caroli*

scde tricesima tertio translates into 4th July 1680. Otherwise I was at a loss as to the significance of the document – that is until I turned the slip over and found a nearly full English translation on the reverse.

It transpired this was a summons by Hadleigh's town mayor Sturgeon Fisk, commanding **Maria Goldsmith** to appear at the next assizes to provide evidence *'against **Priscilla Sherman spinster** who is greatly suspected to have been concerned in the murder of two persons whose bones were lately digged up in a yard belonging to a house called The Angell in Hadleigh'*. The Angel was situated at the bottom of Angel Street, now part of The King's Head.

Returning to the bundle I discovered two more 'recognizances'. The first of which, dated 12th July 1680 summonsed **William Hush of Hadleigh, labourer** to provide evidence in the same case. The other document, dated 19th July 1680 summonsed **John Williamson de Hadleigh bricklayer** and **William Bird** to *personally appear at the next assizes and generalls gaole delude to be holden for this county*.

So here I was with three fascinating items which seemingly formed the basis for an intriguing project, especially as they presented many questions. Whose bones were those 'digged' up? Was this a case of murder or just concealment of a death? And just what part did Priscilla play in the events?

So it was back to the assizes collection to see if other documents could expand the story and provide answers to my

questions. As the collection is not dated or catalogued in any detail it is a very slow process working through the various bundles, which don't even appear to be in date order. Eventually my straining eyes did pick up a reference to Priscilla Sherman B104/1/11/1(5). Again this was written in Latin, only this time there was no English translation. Fortunately, Margaret Woods very kindly offered translate it. While the translation has considerably added to the story it has failed to answer any of my questions, instead it has really thrown up many more.

The new find would appear to be an account of a murder presented to an Assizes jury on 1 July 1674! As with court records of this period in general, there is a lot of jargon, but basically it was suggested that Priscilla Sherman lately of Hadleigh, spinster, did at some time previous, did by force of arms at Hadleigh, feloniously, wilfully and out of malice made an assault on a certain person unknown to the jurors in the peace of God and of the said Lord King, And that the aforesaid Priscilla Sherman, with a certain knife worth sixpence, which she ... had and held in her right hand then and there 'did cut the throat', of the afore-mentioned unknown person.... in and on the throat with the aforesaid knife, one fatal wound in length two inches and in depth one inch, from which certain mortal wound the aforesaid unknown person at Hadleigh immediately died. And thus the afore-mentioned Priscilla Sherman killed and murdered the aforesaid unknown person at Hadleigh in the aforesaid manner and form -

feloniously, wilfully and out of malice aforethought against the peace of the said present Lord King, his crown and dignity etc..

To summarise:

The six year gap between the documents and some other detail initially throws up the question are we talking about one or two separate events. However the naming on the reverse of the 1674 document of William Bird, Maria Goldsmith, William Rush and John Wilkinson (being those summoned to court in 1680) implies this is in all probability same event.

At this period of time - when Hadleigh enjoyed its own borough status the corporation could hold courts presided over by two J.P.s whose duties could include investigating accusations of crime and prosecuting felonies including intentions to maim or kill with force of arms. However murder and larceny were ultimately beyond their jurisdiction. This leaves open the possibility the case was originally presented to the corporation's own court, but when it became apparent murder had been committed the case was transferred to a higher court. This would explain the gap between the various documents.

Can we be sure all the documents refer to the same Priscilla Sherman. A Priscilla Sherman was baptised in Bildeston on 4 December 1625, her parents being Henry & Judith. A second person of the same name was baptised in Ipswich St Mary Stoke on 13 April 1656. A search of Hadleigh's burial register for any Priscilla Sherman

internment throws up a single burial on 22nd October 1685. If this is our lady, does it offer any clue how the judgement went? Being so soon after the likely date for the case, does this imply Priscilla was found guilty, and hanged, yet if she was convicted of murder would she have been allowed a Christian burial? Yes! Apparently Margaret Shelford was hanged in 1634 after being found guilty of theft and robbery. Her burial, recorded in the parish register, was in all probability carried out in an unconsecrated piece of ground on the northern edge of the churchyard reserved for executions, suicides and the 'unbaptised'.

In conclusion: while I am convinced the above all deals with the same murder, and some of my questions have been answered. More remain. In particular the details of the court case - on the assumption one did take place:

TO BE CONTINUED:

My thanks to Sue Andrews and Margaret Woods for their respective help.

Ray Whitehand

B104/1/11 bundle 1 item 5

Translation

On front:

William Bird		}
Maria Goldsmith	sworn	
William Rush		
John Wilkinson	sworn	

Content:

The jury for the Lord King, on their oath, present that Priscilla Sherman lately of Hadleigh in the aforesaid county, spinster, [once more before their eyes, not possessed] but provoked at the instigation of the devil and sitting (in court) on the first day of July in the twenty-fifth year of the reign of Lord Charles the second, present King of England etc (1674). By force of arms at Hadleigh aforesaid in the aforesaid county, then and there being, feloniously, wilfully and out of malice aforethought made an assault on a certain person unknown to the jurors in the peace of God and of the said Lord King, And that the aforesaid Priscilla Sherman, with a certain knife worth sixpence, which she, the aforesaid Priscilla, had and held in her right hand then and there did cut the throat, in English '*did cut*' '*the throat*' of the afore-mentioned unknown person. Then and there with the aforesaid knife, feloniously, wilfully and out of malice aforethought did cut the afore-mentioned unknown person in and on the throat with the aforesaid knife, one fatal wound in length two inches and in depth one inch, from which certain mortal wound the aforesaid unknown person at Hadleigh in the aforesaid county immediately died. And thus the afore-mentioned Priscilla Sherman killed and murdered the aforesaid unknown person at Hadleigh aforesaid in the aforesaid county in the aforesaid manner and form - feloniously, wilfully and out of malice aforethought against the peace of the said present Lord King, his crown and dignity etc.

CHANGING HADLEIGH

*As presented by Sue Angland
and Jan Byrne*

We were taken on a nostalgic photographic trip down the High Street with slight diversions every so often not only looking at the change in buildings but also fashions of the day and modes of transport. In the days of the horse and cart the High Street appeared to be so much wider - no parked cars just bicycles!

Times ranged from the late 1800s to the present day. Some buildings from the past have been rescued from a very poor state of repair while sadly others have been demolished. There was the egg packing station in the Market Place where you could buy cheap cracked eggs and the time when the pathway at the side of Partridges (between Magdalen Road and the High Street) was a through road. Partridges started life as Salter's with premises on both sides of the road (the current Partridges and The Pedal House); the outside of the shop was festooned with goods including tin baths. And Hadleigh had a cinema too!

What wonderful names some of the shops had - Stow's Cheap Shop which had horses and carts to take goods out to the villages (now Nevelli's) and Cook's Emporium (the car park at the side of Barclays).

The photographs really do catch the atmosphere of the day and are a wonderful record of social history.

The most unusual photograph was of a window in a chimney stack!

Mavis Winders

PLANNING

We have submitted comments to several planning applications recently. You can see all of these on our website. In summary:

111 High Street B17/01052 - underpinning works. We supported, they granted.

East House, DC/17/03770 Change of use of redundant community facility to 2 dwellings. We supported, they granted.

The Wheatsheaf, 4 High Street, DC/17/04235- Full Planning Application. Change of Use from residential to Office Use.

We supported subject to no change of street frontage, they granted.

120 Benton Street DC/17/03523 Non Material amendments to B/06/00330/RES/CLD - housing development. We objected, they granted.

Rear of 4-14 Benton Street DC/17/02677 - Erection of 2 detached dwellings. We commented on scale and access.

Adjoining Hadleigh Hall - DC/17/04239 - Erection of detached dwelling. We said it should remain a green area.

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 2017/18

Wed 6 Dec	'Cakes, Ale & Partying'	Kate Jewell
Tue 6 Feb 2018	Hadleigh in the Sixties -	History Group
Wed 21 Mar	From Wool to Cloth	Nicholas Amor
Tues 1 May		Wendy Barnes
Wed 13 June	AGM	
Tue 7 Aug	Paston Letters	Mark Mitchells
Wed 3 Oct	History of Suffolk Farmsteads	Philip Aitken
Tue 4 Dec	History of Hadleigh Trade and Industry	Roger Kennel

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/>