

History News Archive 2008 - 2009

The *Saffron Walden Historical Journal* carries a number of shorter items as 'History News' regarding history-related events in the locality, usually at the end of the journal, but sometimes on other pages. Some of these later expand into longer articles. A selection of these items reproduced below reflects the wide range of history activities in and around Saffron Walden. Some of the original wording has been lightly edited to update it. Only a few of the original illustrations are included, where possible in colour. The date of the issue containing the item is given in brackets.

Enquiries to saffronwaldenhistory@gmail.com



EDDYSTONE LIGHTHOUSE:
The Parish of Littlebury Millennium Society/ History Group held a most exciting event for the children of the village during August. This was a history day re-enactment by 20 children of the building (in cardboard 12 foot-high replica) and collapse of Winstanley's lighthouse at Eddystone in 1703, the latter on the site of his 'House of Wonders' at Littlebury. He was tragically killed when this

splendid edifice collapsed, with him in it, during the great storm of 26 November 1703. (No 16: Autumn 2008)

SEAX IMAGES ONLINE: There are now 1,204 images of Saffron Walden documents viewable online a Essex Record Office, relating to the poor laws, utilities, enclosure, inquests and other subjects. Public access to SEAX is available at the ERO Archive Access Point in Saffron Walden Library. www.seax.essexcc.gov.uk (No 15: Spring 2008)

RECORDERS WORKSHOP: Uttlesford Local History Recorders held a very successful IT workshop in September 2007 at the Thaxted Day Centre, organised by Michael Southgate. The morning session was run by Rosemarie Gant, exploring the RUTH database she designed for village

records. The afternoon session consisted of practical lessons by Nina Gaubert in how to set up a history website. (No 15: Spring 2008)

MUSEUM EXHIBITION: A special exhibition, 'Every Object tells a Story', has been running at Saffron Walden Museum, featuring some of the 175,000 objects in the museum stores. They included items as diverse as the museum's very first acquisition in 1832, a Roman pot from Almshouse meadow, and a poacher's coat from Thaxted 30 years ago. A rare Norwegian rock, Rhomb-Porphry found at Hatfield Broad Oak, which came with the ice sheet 450,000 years ago, was the oldest object on display; a preserved red squirrel, run over by a car at Landscape View, Saffron Walden in 2003, one of the most recent. The third TV set to be seen in Elsenham in 1948, a WW2 demob suit and these bronze casket fittings (illustration) all illustrate what diverse resource this museum can be. (No 15: Spring 2008)

RECORDERS OF UTTLESFORD HISTORY: The Recorders of Uttlesford History (RUH) celebrated their 10th anniversary with a cake, and with the launch of a new website. Already it offers about a thousand pages and is the premier site for researching the history of the district:

www.recordinguttlesfordhistory.org.uk

Their next major event will be the first-ever Uttlesford History Fair, booked for Saffron Walden Town Hall on Saturday 28 March 2009, for Recorders, historians and history societies wishing to produce displays and presentations of their research. This will be the first big history event of this kind since 1984 when the Saffron Walden Historical Society held a history day. (No 16: Autumn 2008)

CASTLE STREET RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION is currently engaged in researching the history of the street, and this includes interviewing all past and present residents to form a unique oral history archive on this fascinating area of the town. In August the Association held a Sunday afternoon tea party to say thank you to all those who have been contributing to the Oral History project. There were more than 50 guests and it was a very lively event, where old friends were reunited after many decades. Peter Riding, chairman of the Association, presented a photographic exhibition of Castle Street in previous decades. (No 16: Autumn 2008)



UTTLESFORD HERITAGE: The public inquiry into the plan by BAA to build a second runway at Stansted Airport was set to begin in April, but has now been postponed. Cobbs Lane ancient byway would be among important heritage features damaged or destroyed by this massive scheme – in total 440 hectares for the runway and additional land for road and rail works. The loss to Uttlesford

heritage is admitted by BAA to be 'major adverse' – information on www.stopstanstedexpansion.com(No 17: Spring 2009)

PREHISTORIC LANDSCAPE: A group of students attended a highly popular landscape history evening class at Clavering last autumn, tutored by Dr Nicholas James. Dr James is making a return visit to Clavering on Saturday 18 April to tutor a day-school on Prehistoric Landscape History. (No 17: Spring 2009)

TOWN ARCHIVES: The Saffron Walden Town Archives will have their last public exhibition in the town on Saturday 28 March at the Town Hall, as part of the Uttlesford History Fair. The archives are being transferred to Chelmsford ERO and replaced with digital images, of which hundreds are now online. Once digitised, the original archives will generally be closed for public viewing. Public access to the SEAX database is available at the ERO Archive Access Point on the first floor of Saffron Walden Library. Further information www.seax.essexcc.gov.uk(No 17: Spring 2009)

DID YOUR ANCESTORS WORK AT AUDLEY END? English Heritage are planning to enhance the interpretation of the stable block and kitchen garden at Audley End and Dr Andrew Hann, who is the Properties Historian, is keen to track down descendants of any estate workers. He is particularly interested in those working on the estate in the 1880s - 1900s, most of the gardeners, gamekeepers and other outdoor workers were local people. If you do have any memories of parents or grandparents who worked at Audley End or any photos, artefacts or

letters about them, please contact: Andrew.Hann@english-heritage.org.uk(No 17: Spring 2009)

SOCIETY'S 75th ANNIVERSARY: Saffron Walden Historical Society held a most successful day school on timber-framed buildings, to celebrate their 75th anniversary. Chairman Rev Michael Swindlehurst cut the anniversary cake made by secretary Kathryn Fiddock, at the society's Christmas social. (No 17: Spring 2009)

HERITAGE QUEST CENTRE: Saffron Walden Museum's bid for Lottery funding to build a new Heritage Quest Centre on land at Thaxted Road was successful ... Meanwhile the typically exciting work of the museum goes on all the time – currently former curator and ethnography expert Len Pole is cataloguing all the museum's World Cultures collections, and has already discovered that the museum possesses one of the best collections of Australian Aboriginal material in this country. Curator Carolyn Wingfield has been to Edinburgh to identify mystery objects in the stores, including a very rare prehistoric beaker pot from Berden. (No 17: Spring 2009)



UTTLESFORD HISTORY FAIR: Up to 2,000 people converged on the first-ever Uttlesford History Fair, organised by the Recorders of Uttlesford History, with visitors from as far away as Cornwall, Wales and Wiltshire. Free entry was made possible thanks to generous support from various sponsors. Altogether 30 Recorders and local history organisations at the fair offered an insight into the fascinating history of the Uttlesford district with original archives, photographic displays, digital presentations, archaeology and focus on conserving documents, oral history, family history and an exhibition of the ancient town archives. The event firmly put history and heritage on the Uttlesford map and raised the profile of the Recorders, who do essential work in their communities recording and

conserving documents and promoting a love of history. (No 17: Spring 2009) *Photographs* ©Gordon Ridgewell



Image by Gordon Ridgewell

LAUNCH OF SWHS PUBLICATIONS: Local historians, friends and family attended the launch at Saffron Walden Library in May of Geoffrey Ball's book, *Land Agriculture & Industry in NW Essex*, the first volume under the Historical Society's new initiative, SWHS Publications. It is hoped that Profits from the book can be used to put further historical research

into the public domain. After signing copies, Geoffrey gave a talk explaining how the book explores the way agriculture and its associated industries have been at the centre of life and work in north-west Essex over many centuries – the theme which runs through the seven contributions to local history encompassed in this volume... *Photograph of society chairman Rev Michael Swindlehurst (left) with the author (right)* ©Gordon Ridgewell.

TOWN ARCHIVES: During October 2009 archivists from the Essex Record Office will be taking delivery of the remaining records in Saffron Walden Town Archives, some of which were seen on their last public exhibition at the Uttlesford History Fair. The agreement with Saffron Walden Town Council promises their digitisation along with the hundreds of town documents already uploaded to SEAX, the ERO's online catalogue. The Town Council's collection of artwork will be remaining, however – a separate exhibition to show them to the public was also organised last spring with the help of the Saffron Walden Arts Trust. *Photograph of Town Clerk Malcolm White (left) with county council staff moving the archival boxes* ©Gordon Ridgewell. (No 18: Autumn 2009)





BEST TIC IN ESSEX:
Congratulations to the Tourist Information Centre in Saffron Walden for winning the title of the best tourist office in the whole of Essex. The Saffron Walden office, which now goes forward to the regional finals, has been run for the past two years by the Town Council, but was originally developed by Uttlesford District Council under its tourism officer Elisabeth Blackie. All local

historians, and particularly the Journal team, are very grateful to the staff and volunteers of the TIC who do a great job selling publications to visitors. The TIC has also recently launched a new website. (No 18: Autumn 2009)



CASTLE STREET PROJECT: The brilliantly successful Castle Street Remembered project has concluded with the publication of the first volumes of transcribed recordings, with a 40-page summary given to all participants. The project was the brainchild of Peter Riding in 2007 and Local History Recorder Zofia Everett undertook to interview as many present and past Castle Street residents as

possible to record their memories. *Photograph Gordon Ridgewell.* (No 18: Autumn 2009)

REGIMENTAL FREEDOM OF TOWN: An inspiring historical event took place this summer with the Freedom of Saffron Walden being awarded to the soldiers based at Carver Barracks. In celebration, the Regiment paraded through the town cheered by hundreds of local people. *Photograph Gordon Ridgewell.* (No 18: Autumn 2009)
