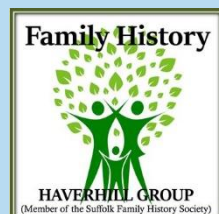




NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026



SUFFOLK FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY - Registered Charity No 1087748



Next Meeting:

Thursday 8th January 2026 at 7.30pm

Old Independent Church Hall

Join us as we kick off 2026 with an exciting programme! To start off the New Year, we have invited members to present short, 10-minute talks on topics of their own choosing. Don't miss the chance to enjoy a diverse range of engaging presentations



A big thank you to Angela Wright for stepping up and representing our group at the Old Independent church's Carols by Candlelight. It was great to have Angela there, reading one of the lessons for everyone on our behalf.

Struggled deciphering handwriting:- Why not try these courses:-

4 free palaeography courses

There are a number of websites that can help you understand old handwriting, and these four below provide free online palaeography courses.

- The National Archives (TNA) website has a series of excellent online tutorial exercises that fit this mould, as well as more advanced practice documents accessible for free at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/palaeography – here you will also find alphabet guides and further tips on how to accurately read and transcribe the old words, numbers and dates.
- The book [Reading the Past: Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century English Handwriting](#) is freely available at the University of York's Borthwick Institute website.
- For Scottish palaeography, the [Scotland's People website has a great resource](#) including 'posers and tutorials designed to provide several hours' tuition in different aspects of palaeography'.
- The [University of Cambridge offers a free online course in palaeography](#), featuring alphabets, manuscript images, and sample transcriptions.

Thanks to Alan Wingfield for sharing.

Family History and Genealogy Research

Our weekly help sessions at the Haverhill library resume on the 14th January 2025 between 2-4pm. Anyone wishing to attend please call the Library on 01440 848095.

Can I take this opportunity to thank Alan Bumpstead and his team of helpers who have worked tirelessly throughout the past year to help those researching their family history. These sessions could not take place without their commitment.

**We will also be hosting another Open/Research day at Haverhill Library on Saturday 24th January 2026 between 10am-2pm. Everyone welcome.
No need to book.**

Another great turnout for our annual fun Christmas Quiz. Thanks to all those who took part, particularly to our friends from the Sudbury group who came along.

Winners on the night were the 'Wild Bunch' seen here with the winning trophy.



It was an honour and a privilege to be part of a presentation of a 'Suffolk Regiment Way' road sign to Lt. Dan Bradnam.

The Family History (Haverhill) Group was instrumental in providing the names of casualties from WW1 & WW2 which have been used to name roads on the Persimmon development.



Pictured LtoR Cllr Joe Mason, Cllr Quinn Cox, Charmian Thompson, Stuart McAdam (Persimmon Homes), Lt. Dan Bradnam 21C B(Suffolk) Coy 1st Battalion ('The Vikings') The Royal Anglian Regiment, Cllr Bruce Davidson, Cllr John Burns, Brian Thompson, Martin Boswell.

MERRY + BRIGHT

By Diane Bohn



Christmas may be over,
The stockings put away,
The chocolate and the cookies
Enjoyed every single day.



Now the New Year's coming,
All hurry on their way,
To live their busy lives,
No more thoughts of Santa's sleigh.

Although the season's come and go,
And Holidays have their cheer,
The spirit of Christ can stay in our hearts,
To warm and bless all near.



I hope you had a merry Christmas,
Full of Christmas spirit,
But more than that I hope your year
Has much happiness and love in it!



What will you celebrate in January 2026

If you love fun and interesting facts then **National Trivia Day** is for you! Celebrated every year on January 4th

With the delicious scent of just-popped kernels filling the air, we happily celebrate **National Popcorn Day** on January 19th every year.

And my favorite!

January 27th marks **National Chocolate Cake Day**, a deliciously indulgent celebration dedicated to the eternal treat that has captured hearts everywhere. From the rich, decadent layers to light, airy slices, a chocolate cake represents comfort, joy, and festivity in every little bite.



Suffolk Family History Society News

Upcoming zooms

Our next Zooms are

- **TUESDAY 13 -Jan-26** As per the piece in December's Suffolk Roots, we are looking ahead to when the transcriptions of parish registers are complete and what records we should be considering to transcribe next. There is of course a huge choice, and **Simon Fowler and Carolyn Alderson** will talk about **Manorial Records, Militia Lists, Workhouse records, and school records** as options. We are guided by members and hopefully this helps you make an informed choice. It is setting priorities, as we would like to transcribe them all of course!!
- Monday 19th Jan: **Penny Walters** will discuss **Ethical Dilemmas in Genealogy**. Researching a family tree traditionally involved asking relatives about their lives, drawing a tree and undertaking a paper trail, but it now involves finding new mostly online records and dealing with strangers on the internet. What information should and shouldn't you include on your tree? Attendees will benefit from reflecting on their own ethical dilemmas and considering ethical issues with empathy, sensitivity and diplomacy. What is the way forward? Are you an ethical genealogist? What ethical dilemmas have you found in your genealogy research?

The links for both these Zooms are now in the members area of their website. The link is in the News section/tab. Due to some quirk, the first one to occur, Life After Parish Registers is listed second. If you do not know how to access the members pages, please send Andy Kerridge an email to request the registration link at SuffolkFHSChair@outlook.com. All at 7:30 pm UK time

New website

The website should be launched early in January. We have been testing and testing, but of course there are many more of you than of us, so please explore and try things out after the 6th. Your existing log in details should be the same,

The big change is that the shop is now an integral part of the website, so only the one log in. It will recognise that you are a member and give discount as appropriate when you make a purchase, for example. There are lots of other changes of course, including one search portal of all the indexes available to members, which will now include the Vaccination Birth and Death registers for Ipswich, and we will be adding much more over the coming months.

Findmypast Release

New Royal Navy records on Findmypast released 29 December

- Royal Navy Casualty Logs, 1939-1945: 5,400 ships and 100,000 names. Search by name, official number, age, ship name, injury and death dates.
- Royal Navy Submarine Movement Cards: Over 40,000 service cards with name, rating, official numbers, birth dates, awards, and every ship served on with dates.
- Women's Royal Naval Service Enrolment Forms, 1917-1919. Over 6,000 detailed enrolment forms of the WRNS. Records include key details like name, age, address, marital status, next of kin, and personal questionnaires.
- Royal Naval Division Records, 1916-1919: Details of the officers and ratings who joined or trained at the major Navy centre at Crystal Palace – officially known as HMS Victory VI – during the WWI. It contains around 4,500 names, covering birth date, address, occupation, next of kin, and service number
- British and Allied Warships Lost in WWII, 1939-1945:

Haverhill Family History Group

2026 Programme of Meetings & Events

8 Jan	Ten-minute talks by members	Ourselves
Sat 24 Jan	OPEN DAY at Haverhill Library (CB9 8HB) 10am – 2pm	Ourselves
12 Feb	East London	Peter Tatam
12 Mar	Snapshots from the life of Lee Miller	Derek Adams
9 Apr	A Sign of the times	Sarah Doig
14 May	AGM The change in your pocket	Charmian Thompson
11 June	“The Development of Helicopters”	Duncan Bickley
July	Visit (TBC)	Must Book
10 Sept	Paranormal East Anglia Suffolk	Mike Wabe
Sat 19 Sept (TBC)	OPEN DAY at Haverhill Library (CB9 8HB) 10am – 3pm (TBC)	Ourselves
8 Oct	A glimpse into the life of a Registrar of Births Deaths & Marriages	Kim Case
12 Nov	Restoring a Lancaster	Kelly Bennett + 1
10 Dec	Christmas Quiz A light-hearted social evening with refreshments	Ourselves

Wednesday afternoons, help with your Research at Haverhill Library 2 - 4pm

Guided use of the Internet, especially for newcomers or those ‘stuck’

telephone 01440 848095 to book your place