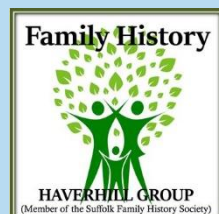




NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2026



SUFFOLK FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY - Registered Charity No 1087748

Next Meeting:

Thursday 9th April 2026 at 7.30pm

Old Independent Church Hall



A Sign of the Times: with Sarah Doig

A history of village signs throughout East Anglia. What they contain and how they relate to the villages they represent. The first village signs were in Norfolk and spread from there.



We're going LIVE on Saturday 18th April 2026

East Anglia
FHF REALLY USEFUL
Family History Show

2026
SAVE the DATE
MORE DETAILS
COMING SOON

FREE entry
FREE onsite parking

LIVE
in 2026

Friendly **FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETIES**, Knowledgeable **SPEAKERS** and **MORE!**
BURGESS HALL, Westwood Road, St Ives, Cambridgeshire PE27 6WU

With very little to include in this edition, I thought I would ask ChatGPT to write me a poem about researching family history in Haverhill and this is what it came up with!

In Haverhill's streets, where the whispers dwell,
I search for the stories that time could not tell.
Through fields of the past, in the soft Suffolk air,
I trace ancient footsteps, with quiet despair.

The cobblestones echo the lives long ago,
Of ancestors hidden in shadows below.
Their names in the ledgers, so faded and worn,
Speak of love, loss, and lives that were torn.

The church bells still ring with a voice of the past,
As I sift through the memories, so fleeting, so vast.
Old maps and letters, with ink slowly bled,
Tell of journeys and dreams that were long since fled.

The hearths they once warmed are now cold, cracked and bare,
Yet I feel them beside me, their presence is there.
In each family tree, I unearth what was lost,
Each branch a reminder of love's quiet cost.

Haverhill, Suffolk, where history breathes,
In the whispers of wind and rustling of leaves.
I search through the years, through the shadows and light,
To know who I was and the paths they took right.

Events at the OIC – Please support if you can.

SATURDAY 11TH APRIL— 10 AM TO MIDDAY

COFFEE MORNING WITH EASTER CRAFT/STORY TRAIL

Coffee Morning, with an Easter Trail and Paper Activities from the Bible Society for Families to join in with.



The poster is for an event at the Old Independent Church, Haverhill. It features a purple border and includes logos for the church and the Bible Society. The text is in various colors (purple, red, black) and includes illustrations of a rabbit, a book, and a cartoon character.

COFFEE MORNING, EASTER CRAFT & STORY TRAIL

SATURDAY 11th APRIL
Old Independent Church, Hamlet Road, Haverhill

10 AM TO MIDDAY IN CHURCH

 JOIN US FOR A FAMILY MORNING WITH
EASTER QUIZZES/SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

EASTER STORY TRAIL 

EASTER COLOURING SHEETS

FREE ADMISSION

REFRESHMENTS & CAKES AVAILABLE TOO 

Suffolk Family History Society News



Membership now due - If you are a member or wish to become a member of the SFHS, membership is due on the 1st April 2026. Visit [Membership | Suffolk Family History Society](#) for more details.

Upcoming zooms (all at 7:30 pm UK time)

- **13th April** **Chris Turland** **Alternative Transport In Suffolk**

Use this link to register for Chris' talk This is open to non-members, but that means taking a additional security measures. Each registrant will be manually approved so registration will not be immediate. **You do need to register at least by 6pm on 13th April.** You can of course register today, there is no penalty if you do not then join on the evening, and at least it's done.

- **18th May** **Steve Gill** **Understanding Old Photos**
- **15 Jun** **Vicky Holmes** **Coroners Inquests**

Family History Federation, Really Useful Show

The FHF Fair is in **St Ives, Cambridgeshire** on **18th April**. This is huge, with something like 36 exhibitors (Family History Societies, Maps, Medals, Postcards and more) not just from East Anglia, but also from as far afield as East Yorkshire and Devon. Entry is free, the talk by Donna is only £2 and the research advice panel is also free. Always worth a visit.

There is much more information on Facebook [Really Useful Show Facebook](#)

Here is a collection of some of my favourite BBC April Fools pranks. Would you have fallen for any of these hoaxes?

1957 - The Spaghetti Harvest



Panorama reports from Switzerland, where the combination of a mild winter and the virtual disappearance of pests like the spaghetti weevil, has resulted in a bumper spaghetti crop. Some viewers failed to see the funny side and criticised the BBC for airing the item on what is supposed to be a

serious factual programme. Others, however, were so intrigued they wanted to find out where they could purchase their very own spaghetti bush.

1976 - The Jovian-Plutonian effect

Renowned astronomer and beloved presenter of *The Sky at Night*, Patrick Moore, had the credibility and stern air of authority which allowed him to pull off a prank that was out of this world. In 1976, Moore told radio listeners that, due to a rare planetary alignment of Pluto and Jupiter, the Earth would experience a shift in its gravitational forces that morning, allowing them to float into the air.

At precisely 9:47am, Moore instructed the listeners to 'Jump now!'. Within minutes, calls were coming in reporting that they had felt

the impact of the Jovian-Plutonian effect. One caller claimed that she and her eleven friends had 'orbited gently around the room'. Another complained that he had risen so high that he hit his head on the ceiling and demanded compensation.

1980 - Big Ben goes digital

In 1980, the BBC World Service announced that London's most famous landmark was getting a facelift. The broadcaster told listeners that, to help tourists tell the time, the Big Ben clocktower would be going digital, and would henceforth be known as 'Digital Dave'.



The new and improved monument wouldn't just tell the time - it would also issue a five-minute news bulletin every night. On top of that, the iconic bongs would be replaced with beeps. While some listeners clocked that this was an April Fool's jest, many others rang in to express their outrage. A BBC spokesperson commented: 'Surprisingly, few people thought it was funny.'

And my favourite written in The Guardian in 1977

The British newspaper The Guardian once ran a seven-page "special report" on San Serriffe, a tiny republic supposedly located in the Indian Ocean and made up of several islands shaped like semicolons. The articles painted a vivid picture of the nation's geography, culture, and charm. The feature sparked an enormous reaction. Readers flooded the paper's phone lines, eager to learn more about this idyllic holiday destination. There was just one catch: San Serriffe didn't exist.



The entire report was an elaborate April Fool's Day hoax — a typographical in-joke packed with references to printing terminology. Even the islands' names, Upper Caisse and Lower Caisse, were playful nods to typesetting, and together they formed the shape of a semicolon.

Haverhill Family History Group

2026 Programme of Meetings & Events

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