

# **SUDBURY FREEMEN'S SOCIETY**



## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2016**



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**Committee:** M E J Wheeler (Chairman), B L Hibble (Treasurer), R P Alston (Clerk),  
C A Grimwood, M Offord, Mrs S M Prior, A Shelley, C J R Wheeler, M Batty.

The above were elected at the Quinquennial Meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014 or at later Annual Meetings and the Chairman wishes to repeat his thanks and admiration for the work carried on by all the Committee without exception but in particular the Clerk and the Treasurer. At a time when the world is full of very busy people and service to the community is undervalued, he is grateful for their continuing patience and support.

The Committee (which has power to 'co-opt' under the Constitution) is always keen to recruit more help; both to provide continuity and to understudy any of the current roles. Any Freeman or Widow who wants to be involved in anyway however small please contact the Chairman or any other Committee member.

### **Admissions**

On 25<sup>th</sup> October 2016 at Sudbury Town Hall before the Mayor of Sudbury the following were admitted to The Freedom of Sudbury:

Alexander Grimwood

The administration of Admission to The Freedom was transferred to Sudbury Town Council in 2014. The Local Government Act 1972 made Babergh District Council responsible for maintaining the Register of Sudbury Freemen, both councils later decided to devolve this task fully to Sudbury Town Council.

The Town Council, after taking legal advice, rationalised the criteria for Admission to The Freedom by Descent to that of children and grand-children of Freemen.

Most other Town Guilds now have similar Admission criteria.

Applications for Admission by Descent should be made to The Town Clerk, Sudbury Town Council.

The Town Council have power to admit Honorary Freemen, which is exercised on rare occasions.

The Committee wants to encourage 'apprenticeships' as far as it is possible and are investigating possibilities – this remains a route for Admission to the Freedom of Sudbury.

## **Deaths**

The deaths, since the publication of the last Annual Report, are reported with regret of:

(Charles) John Grimwood  
William John Scott  
Louisa Margaret Browning (Parsonson family)  
Lancelot David Edynbry (Berry family)

Mrs J E French (Widow – GS)

We reason that some ‘mail returned gone away’ events represent unreported deaths and we apologise for any omissions but do our best!

### **‘John Grimwood’**

*An Appreciation by Alan Shelley.*

Charles John Grimwood, known to everyone as **John**, and Chairman of Sudbury Freeman’s Society 1971-1993, was a notable and popular representative of the Sudbury community. He died on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016 aged 78. Family and friends not least the Freeman of Sudbury sadly miss him.

A highly respected member of the prominent Grimwood family, he was immediately elected to the chair in September 1971 when it was decided to revive the ‘Freemen’s Protection Society’ that originated in the 1890s.

The Grimwood’s distinguished presence is recognised by the high quality of their many building projects within the town and outer district. The family has a long established record of civic duty and commitment to Sudbury.

This emanates from the building firm of George Grimwood and Sons, founded in the 1800s by William Grimwood. His son George senior was a local councillor and his son GH Grimwood was twice Mayor of Sudbury. Notably, Girton College, Cambridge was built by the firm, with bricks from Arthur Grimwood’s Brick Company at Cornard, Sudbury. CG Grimwood JP, a leading member of society, was the managing director of the Sudbury Gas and Coke Company. I am sure I could extend the accolade to other members of the Grimwood family.

Throughout his term of office John kept a close administrative eye on the proceedings of the association renamed as Sudbury Freeman’s Society. Under John’s direction, the coat of arms was adopted and he personally organised the manufacture of neckties from Vanners silk works. In his capacity as Chairman of the Sudbury Freeman he oversaw many changes that occurred during a rather bumpy period that involved registration of the Common Lands and a number of issues concerning the Charity Commission.

Uppermost of these was the enforced sale of valuable land in 1987. The freemen were threatened with compulsory purchase at a knock down price, under powers of the NHS. This coupled with the perceptive need for a Community Hospital for the good of Sudbury, forced the reluctant sale of this valuable Freeman's property. Sadly, no hospital was ever built and the NHS sold the land at a huge profit for alternative development. This event was a cause of considerable stress and disappointment to John.

That outcome brought about further problems with the Charity Commission requiring changes to the arrangements of the Common Lands Scheme and instigating the formation of the Sudbury Freeman's Trust. These actions between 1986 and 87 coincided with the commemoration of 900 years since the first written record of the Sudbury freemen in 1086.

John will be remembered with affection by all, and most particularly by the Sudbury Freeman's Society as their first and greatly inspirational Chairman.

### **Honorary Macebearers**

Honorary Macebearers were provided for:

Sudbury Civic Service  
Mayor Making  
Commemoration Service for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The Battle of the Somme  
Remembrance Day Service

We always need more Macebearers to ensure that we can always provide the traditional two whenever we are asked by The Mayor's Secretary. Sometimes, for good reasons (such as civic funerals) we are asked at very short notice and so we need reserves; it is not a difficult job and always rewarding! Please volunteer.

The Civic Service (Sunday October 1<sup>st</sup> 2017) would be a good time to start. We need some new and younger macebearers.

### **Your Personal Details**

Names and addresses of Freeman and Widows are held on computer files by the Society strictly to assist in mailing out material relevant to the Society and its members. Anyone who objects to his or her details being so held should inform the Chairman or any member of the Committee.

We do our best to maintain accurate lists of freemen and widows of freemen – but we are only human and mistakes can occur. If mail is returned undelivered after two attempts, we delete the name from our lists to save costs. Names can easily be reinstated if we receive the correct details. We have had some success this year in recovering details for 'lost' Freeman

Notification of any changes should be sent to The Chairman in writing via post or email: ([michael.friars@gmail.com](mailto:michael.friars@gmail.com)).

Hard copies will always be available to those who wish and at the Annual Meeting.

**SUDBURY FREEMEN'S TRUST**  
**Established 1986**  
**Registered Charity No. 295764**

**Trustees:** M E J Wheeler (Chairman) Mrs S M Prior, Mrs I Gregory,  
A. Shelley, E G Filer, (until 6<sup>th</sup> March 2017)  
Mrs F M Wheeler (Hon Secretary)

The current trustees were re-elected at the Quinquennial Meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014, to serve until the next Quinquennial Meeting. There is one casual vacancy.

The Trust offers its support for elderly Freemen and Widows to help them meet the cost of Local Authority 'Contact Care Line' emergency assistance and monitoring services. Applications by or on behalf of eligible Freemen and Widows are always welcome, our grants are not 'means tested'. There has been a most pleasing 'uptake' this year compared to previous years.

The Trustees express their sincere thanks to Fiona Wheeler for her work as Honorary Secretary to the Trust.

Ted Filer has been involved with The Society and The Trust for many years; only most recently as a Trustee. Increasing age and infirmity forced Ted to retire at the last meeting in March this year. All the Trustees pay tribute to his generous service, wisdom, wise counsel and deep knowledge of Sudbury and its long history. We need a replacement!

**Grants paid:**

Several 'Contact Care Line' payments to Freemen and Widows of Freemen.

Christopher Centre toward: further redecoration and essential improvements.

Sudbury Ephemera Society: copying and preservation of 'Sudbury' documents.

The purchase of a rare 'ARP' wartime map of Sudbury for display in due course.

**Finances**

The Trust was established to form part of the 1987 settlement with The Sudbury Common Lands Charity following the sale of Harp Close Meadow. At its foundation, the only material source of income of The Trust was a share of the net income of the Sudbury Common Lands Charity. In recent years, as more land was purchased and higher standards of conservation were sought, the net income of The Common Lands declined to the extent that this Charity now depends to some extent on financial support from external bodies. The income in recent years has been modest but stable.

The Capital of The Trust,, including 'The A R Wheeler Fund' is invested by professional fund managers, appointed by the trustees, with a remit to produce a modest but sustainable income over the longer term.

The Trustees look to distribute most of their net income after expenses in grants over the medium term but also maintain prudent reserves taking into account regular commitments and some contingency for emergencies.

Freemen and their families are invited to include The Sudbury Freemen's Trust among charities they support with their generosity. Donations to The Trust are fully eligible for Gift Aid if given by a UK taxpayer (see Page 6) and any bequests included in the Will of a UK domiciled person are fully deducted from value of the estate for inheritance tax.

**Sudbury Common Lands Charity**

(Registered Charity No. 212222)

Rev Richard Titford (Chairman)

Freemen Nominative Trustees (elected at the Quinquennial Meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014):

C A Grimwood, C J Wheeler, N Eley and M E J Wheeler

Payments as required by the Charity's Scheme were made to:

Sudbury Freemen's Trust  
Sudbury Municipal Charities

Adrian Walters (an Honorary Freeman of Sudbury) continues to do sterling work as Ranger, aided by his assistant and volunteer rangers. You can read his regular columns in the local press. There is an authoritative leaflet on 'dog management' on The Common Lands, that has been widely praised with copies available from many places in Sudbury.

The Common Lands Charity also has an excellent website: [www.sudburycommonlandscharity.org](http://www.sudburycommonlandscharity.org) where you can sign up for Adrian's regular e-mail updates.

The Trustees are still looking to extend the land under their management either by agreement or possibly purchase and continue to look at new ways to raise funds to support their conservation work and all agree that it is vital that cattle continue to graze The Common Lands for many generations to come.