

## Hadleigh Archive

The Hadleigh Town Council Archive holds a large collection of documents relating to the history of our ancient town. The main series consists of documents created during the process of local government by the town's "chief inhabitants" from the medieval period, through to the seventeenth century when Hadleigh acquired borough status and beyond, and covers all aspects of town life, including:

- *the market and annual Michaelmas Fair*, managed by the Hadleigh Market Feoffment Charity from 1438 when the rights to the market were granted to the town authorities by William Clopton, Lord of Toppesfield Manor. The Market Feoffment records give a detailed account of activities and assets.
- *various charities and town lands*. In 1497, William Pykenham, rector and archdeacon of Suffolk, bequeathed his almshouses to the town, together with 184 acres of land as an endowment to maintain them. His bequest, together with many other Hadleigh charities, became known as the Hadleigh Grand Feoffment Charity - surviving documents include the deeds of charity properties, records of administration and lists of recipients.
- *poor relief*. Hadleigh was at the forefront of efforts to improve the lives of its poorer inhabitants in the sixteenth century. A long run of Collector's Accounts, from 1547 to 1730, give details of annual rental income and "disbursements" paid to those in need.

In addition to these, there are many other sources - such as photographs, manuscript and printed maps and plans, deeds, the records of local schools, businesses and local organisations and a large number of items relating to miscellaneous events in the town. These are continually being added to by local people who want to ensure that such items, recording the 20th and 21st centuries, will be kept secure and in good condition for future researchers.

The aim of Hadleigh Archive is to conserve these irreplaceable original documents and to make them available for study by anyone wishing to use them.

To make this possible, two groups of volunteers are currently working on the collection: one, to transcribe historically valuable sixteenth and seventeenth century records and make them available in typed form, the other, to sort, box and then catalogue the documents onto a computerised database.

## Planning a Visit

There is no research service; however, visitors are welcome to come to the Archive - located in the Hadleigh Town Council offices at The Guildhall - by appointment. To arrange a visit, or just to make an enquiry, please contact:

Hadleigh Town Council, The Guildhall, Hadleigh, IP7 5DN.  
Opening hours: 9.30am – 12.30pm Tel: 01473 823884  
Email: hadleigharchives@gmail.com

Please note that for those interested in family history it is advisable, in the first instance, to follow the usual lines of research at the Suffolk Record Office in Bury St Edmunds before making a visit to Hadleigh Archive.