

Sudbury Heritage Centre

Sudbury Town Hall



Explore the
unique history
of our town

museum
&
photo archive

Time line



Sudbury is proud of its Heritage Centre in the Town Hall which earns praise for its content, presentation and technical innovation. Access is from Gaol Lane and admission is free. It is normally open on weekdays during office hours and occasionally on Saturdays.

Moments after you step through the gateway of the former prison and walk past a wall of reproduction circus posters, you realise that you are in an unusual space. Moored high up on your left is an airship, a two-metre-long model of a German Zeppelin that raided Sudbury in WWI. Below is an actual bomb that it dropped that night in 1916.

Curved panels and display cases offer windows on the town's past from the Iron Age to the 21st century.

The Wheeler Room

An illuminated old time police sergeant invites you through a dark tunnel into the Wheeler Room. You are there greeted by a series of on-screen images featuring Sudbury in Edwardian days. Another large screen shows the current presentation exploring some aspect of Sudbury's past. Here too you can operate the photo archive console that gives you access to a huge collection of photographs held by Sudbury Museum Trust.

Five significant Sudbury characters are illustrated on one wall. Among them Archbishop Simon of Sudbury who lost his head in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 and Thomas Gainsborough the artist, whose Sudbury birthplace is also a museum and gallery.

Above the characters hang reproductions of paintings by Mark Catesby the son of a 17th century mayor. He wrote, illustrated and published the first natural history of America.

You can also view drawers of exhibits from the Sudbury Ephemera Archive.



Sudbury Photo Archive



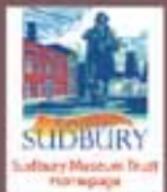
Use the keyboard or touch the screen to view more than 1,000 historic images of Sudbury.

The earliest dates from the early 1850s, only a decade after Henry Fox Talbot patented his method of producing reasonably permanent photographs. A search facility enables you to look for particular interests by period, keywords or by subject groups such as views of the town in the past, shops that are now history, transport and the impact of war.

CAUGHT ON CAMERA

The Historic Photo Archive for Sudbury

Sudbury Museum Trust



Home c1870-1914 1914-1938 1939-1945 1946-c1975

[View all images](#)

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[Transport](#)

[Mid-20th Century Townscape](#)

[Thompson Spender](#)



Sudbury at War



The town war memorial outside St Gregory's Church lists the names of 300 men and women who died in the two World Wars but reveals nothing about their lives or deaths.

Narrative panels to the right of the museum entrance are our tribute to them. In graphic text and by photographs, they tell the sometimes harrowing stories of many who lost their lives - eight out of ten dying in the terrible conflict of World War I.

Further displays commemorate the fate of those who fought in World War Two. All their names are listed and kept in biographical memorial books on the shelves below.



The Americans in Sudbury

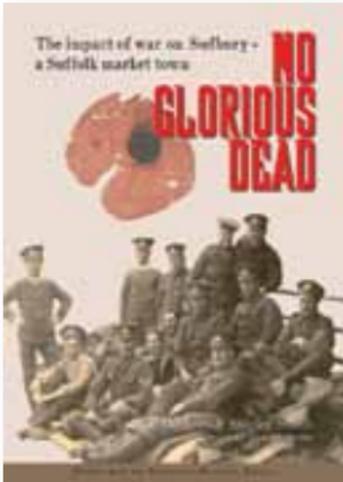
In 1944 Sudbury became the local playground of 3,000 men of the United States American Air Force. The 486th Bomb Group had taken over a newly-built airfield just over a mile from the town centre.

This area of the museum is a narrative tribute to the hundreds based here who died in the monumental effort to release Occupied Europe from the grasp of Nazi Germany. Models of their B-24 and B-17 bombers fly overhead.

Star exhibit is a huge dramatic artwork of a damaged B-17 Flying Fortress flying low over the town centre as it returns from a bombing raid. One engine is feathered and the tail peppered with holes. The display case below contains contemporary memorabilia.

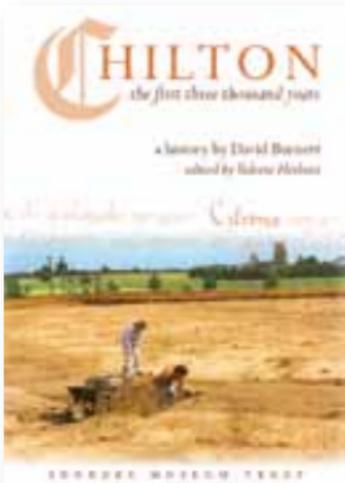
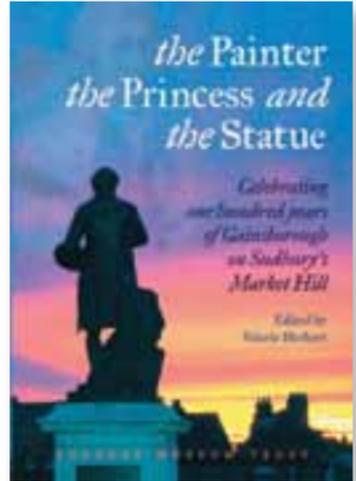
Publications

Books published by Sudbury Museum Trust - see [website](#) for purchase details.



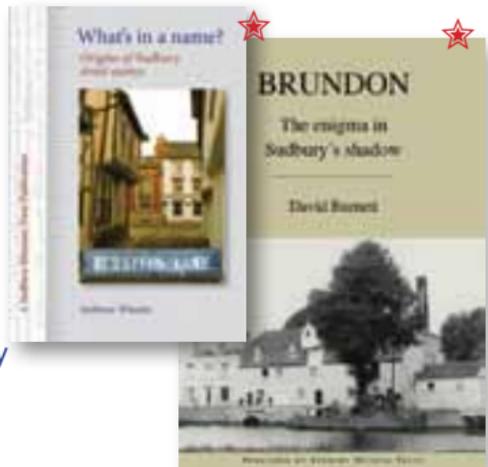
No Glorious Dead An expanded version of the narrative war memorial in the Heritage Centre that additionally records the effect of the wars on the town and its people.

The Painter, the Princess & the Statue The story behind the successful campaign to raise a statue to Thomas Gainsborough in Sudbury. One of Queen Victoria's daughters was patron of the fund and unveiled the statue.



Chilton A much-praised history of this village on the border of Sudbury which has Iron Age origins. Includes results of detailed research into the history of the manor house, its owners and the church.

What's in a name? This intriguing study of Sudbury street names has been reprinted twice.



Sudbury Pubs of Yesteryear

At one time there were about 50 pubs in Sudbury. When this map was first printed in 2008, pints were still being pulled in 14 of those named. Several have closed since.

Brunдон A scholarly study of a small hamlet just a short walk across the fields from Sudbury.



★ *Now out of print*

Sudbury Heritage *online*

A wealth of information about
Sudbury's history on our website
sudburysuffolk.co.uk/heritage



Photo Archive

This collection of over 1000 photographs opens a window on many aspects of the town's past. This scene of cows walking through the streets to be milked, is from the archive.

Sudbury at War

Explore the impact on the town of both World Wars or access another link to a comprehensive website detailing many aspects of the USAAF 'friendly invasion' in 1944-45.



1885 Town Map

Enlarged sections of this large-scale map even show small details such as garden paths and individual trees. A fascinating contrast from the Sudbury we know today.

Virtual Museum

View on-line interesting objects, such as this Roman lantern. Many are in store or inaccessible for public viewing - the latter include 17th century wall paintings in a private house.

Recent Research

Illustrated articles on Sudbury history including the life of Simon of Sudbury; the silk weaving industry; our link with Sudbury, Ontario; the surgeon who saved Churchill's life; a history of Sudbury Freemasons.



sudburysuffolk.co.uk/heritage

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