

## STURMER LOCAL HISTORY GROUP 2013 ANNUAL REPORT FOR RECORDERS OF UTTLESFORD HISTORY

Sturmer Local History Group was busy with work on the heritage trail, Sturmer Steps in 2013.

The Group was formed in 2011 and obtained a grant for the trail from HLF – All Our Stories in 2012.

A heritage trail was opened in the village in November 2013. There are four boards on a four mile walk giving details of the history and environment of Sturmer. A leaflet had been published about the trail and widely distributed.

Events and activities were held to support the trail throughout the year. Oral history interviews have taken place and some have already been passed to the Essex Records Office (ERO). House histories have also been prepared. The Group met regularly to decide on the content of the boards and leaflets and to share information about the project and Sturmer history in general.

A celebration event was held to open the trail. There was a ribbon cutting ceremony and tea and exhibitions in the village hall. We also had a photographic competition. This event was well attended by a wide variety of people – all with an interest in Sturmer.

We have published articles in the Sturmer Village News on the project and local history. The local newspapers publicised our success with the grant, opening and other events. We have a website [www.sturmerhistory.com](http://www.sturmerhistory.com) and a Twitter account @Sturmer\_History. Our account on History Pin (type Sturmer on the map) shows a report on our project and pictures of historical interest. We also have videos on Youtube – search for Sturmer Steps.

We belong to the Braintree Voluntary Support Association and Recorders of Uttlesford History and have greatly appreciated their help and activities in 2013. Haverhill and District and Halstead Local history Societies have also been very supportive.

Our training has included oral history, house histories, using archives, maps and Parish Registers, putting on exhibitions, landscape history and conservation.

We took a group to the ERO as part of our project in June 2013. They were delighted and surprised at the information on Sturmer they found there and the help they were given with their own projects. ERO staff at

the Access Point in Saffron Walden have also been very encouraging and helpful to us.

We held three Victorian classroom re-enactments in the village hall and took a group of children to Saffron Walden Museum for a Roman Day. Two groups also had a handling session for mystery Victorian objects after their re-enactment. We have visited schools this year in the hope of continuing these events as our grant has been extended until April 2014.

We have prepared school packs for all those who attend the events and will be circulating them soon.

We had help from the University of Cambridge throughout the project and attended a special celebration in Cambridge at the end of November. We met other groups who had had help with their All Our Stories Projects and this was a very interesting and happy day for us.

The Parish Council and Co-op Community Fund have supported us with a small grant, affiliation fees and a grant for a filing cabinet which is filling with our growing archive.

We met Christopher Gurteen and Daniel Hannan to find out more about the Gurteen family (who still run a textile business in Haverhill) and Sturmer Hall.

We involved the Women's Institute and local businesses (pub and garden centre) in the project.

St Mary's Church, Sturmer has told us they have three volunteers willing to give guided tours of the church which hold memorials of Leofsunu (see "The Battle of Maldon" poem) and William Hicks who served at the Battle of Trafalgar.

Looking ahead, we are continuing with our re-enactments, school visits to Saffron Walden and school packs. We will have an open archive day on 1 March in response to requests at the November celebration. Our 20 March meeting will be a talk from Pip Wright on "For the rest of your natural" - stories of Suffolk convicts sentenced to transportation to Australia.

In conclusion, we hope to have an equally successful, if slightly less busy year in 2014.