

# Sudbury Town Council

## History of Sudbury's Charter Market

### The Julian and Gregorian Calendars

Before we investigate the history of Sudbury and its Charter Market, I should mention that it is very difficult to verify exact dates of early documents and historical events, mainly because of the Julian and Gregorian Calendars. The Julian Calendar was proposed by Julius Caesar in AUC 708 (46 BC) and was a reform of the Roman Calendar. It took effect on the 1 January AUC 709 (45 BC) and was in general use in Europe and Northern Africa until 1582, when Pope Gregory XIII introduced the Gregorian calendar.<sup>1</sup> Since the Roman emperor's system miscalculated the length of the solar year by 11 minutes, the calendar had since fallen out of sync with the seasons. This concerned Pope Gregory because it meant that Easter, traditionally observed on March 21, fell further away from the spring equinox with each passing year.<sup>2</sup> An example of how an early document was dated is when, in 1330 Elizabeth De Burgh, confirmed the Charter of Richard de Clare... *"Dated at Clare on the Friday after the feast of St. John the Baptist in the third year of the reign of King Edward the third after the conquest"*.

### The history of charter markets and how they developed

A charter market or fair is a street market or fair which was established by a Royal Charter<sup>3</sup>, with many dating back to the Middle Ages. As they are today, markets and fairs were trading institutions held at regular intervals. In medieval England and Wales, it was common for a market to be held once a week, on a set day and in a set place. For a fair, the rule was different, they would be held annually on a set date, held in a set place, and normally associated with the feast of a particular saint. A fair might last only a single day or over several days, ranging from two or three days to a week or more.

From 1199 to 1516, Royal grants of markets and fairs were generally recorded in charters. As such, markets and fairs fall into two categories: prescriptive and granted. Many of the oldest and most successful markets and fairs were held by prescriptive right, or in other words, by custom.

The second category of markets and fairs is those set up by a grant. By 1066, the right to establish a market or fair was via a Royal franchise. However, it is not until the thirteenth century that there is evidence that the King enforced his right to licence all markets and fairs.

These Royal grants were detailed and specific, as they named the grantee, stated the day of the week for the market or the feast day, and duration of the fair. The location of the market or fair was also noted, usually at a manor belonging to the grantee, with its exact site occasionally specified. Once a charter was granted, it gave the grantee (local lords, in Sudbury's case the great family of de Clare) the right to take tolls and afforded the town some protection from rival markets. When a chartered market was granted for specific market days, a nearby rival market could not operate on the same day(s).

From at least the reign of King John (1199 until his death in 1216) the King also insisted on his right to approve any alterations to the timing, duration or location of existing markets and fairs. For example, anyone wishing to change the day of his market was obliged to secure a grant recording this Royal licence.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian\\_calendar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_calendar)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.history.com/news/6-things-you-may-not-know-about-the-gregorian-calendar>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/royal-grants-letters-patent-charters-from-1199/>

Prior to 1200, markets were often held on Sundays, the day when the community congregated in town to attend church. Some of the more ancient markets appear to have been held in churchyards. At the time of the Norman conquest, most of the population made their living through agriculture and livestock farming. Most lived on their farms, situated outside towns, and the town itself supported a

relatively small population of permanent residents. Farmers and their families brought their surplus produce to informal markets held on the grounds of their church after worship. By the 13th century, however, a movement against Sunday markets gathered momentum, and the market gradually moved to a site in town's centre and was held on a weekday. By the 15th century, towns were legally prohibited from holding markets in churchyards.

## The Town of Sudbury

Sudbury's history dates back into the age of the Saxons and celebrates being the oldest recorded town in Suffolk. The town's earliest mention is when **Ælfhun**, Bishop of Dunwich came to Sudbury in 797AD, and consequently died in the town. The news made it into the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles in 797AD, the first record of a town in Suffolk.<sup>4</sup> A Portland stone statue of **Ælfhun** stands on The Croft at Sudbury, sculpted in 1999 by Alan Michlewaite.<sup>5</sup>



**Ælfhun, Bishop of Dunwich**<sup>6</sup>

The town was an important trading centre on the River Stour from earliest times. The Domesday entry for Sudbury in 1086 lists the eight acres of meadow for the burghers ***“And there is a market and there are monyers there.”***<sup>7</sup> The monyers worked at the mint which was situated in King Street and had been minting coinage since the reign of King Aethelred II (979-1016). Sudbury coins can be identified by SUDBY on the reverse in Anglo Saxon times changing to SUTHBY after the Norman Conquest in 1066.

Market tolls were a significant source of income to the lord of the manor. At the time of Domesday, Sudbury belonged to the King, so William the Conqueror received any profits from the market. The market took place once a week on Saturdays, until 1829 when the day for holding the corn market changed to Thursdays.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.racns.co.uk/sculptures.asp?action=getsurvey&id=617>

<sup>5</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%86lfhun>

<sup>6</sup> <https://statues.vanderkrogt.net/object.php?webpage=ST&record=gbee045>

<sup>7</sup> <https://opendomesday.org/place/TL8741/sudbury/>

## 1009 – First record of Sudbury Market

Records state that around the beginning of the 11 century the King issued a charter sanctioning Sudbury Market, but unfortunately its whereabouts is unknown.

The British History online website, and the publication 'Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England and Wales to 1516', states that the date of inception of Sudbury Market was 1009, although, the Sudbury History Society and various other bodies believe that a market was present in the town prior to this date. At the very least the market has been active for well over 1,000 years.

Originally it is thought that the market in Sudbury was not established by charter but existed de facto, because Sudbury had a mint. As the introduction the CMH Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs explains, this means it was a prescriptive market.



979 -1016 COIN MINTED IN SUDBURY

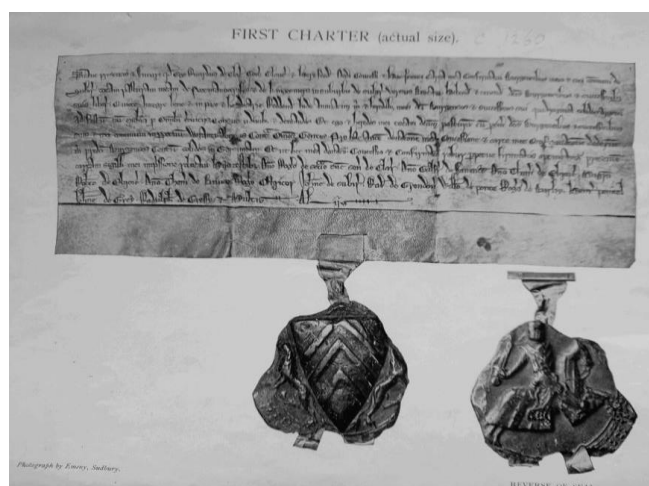
1086 EXTRACT FROM SUDBURY ENTRY SHOWING MARKET AND MINT

TERRA MATRIS MORCHARI comitis Quā Wilt camerari<sup>7</sup> Otho aurifex  
feruant In manu reg<sup>7</sup> TINGOHR<sup>7</sup> H<sup>7</sup> Sutberje ten<sup>7</sup> Mat<sup>7</sup> morchari  
comit. t. r. e. in rex Wiltm in dno. 111. car<sup>7</sup> tre. Tūc. i. ult. m. 11. & LXIII. borg.  
in dno. 7. 11. car<sup>7</sup> tre. Int<sup>7</sup> ocs. 1111. car<sup>7</sup>. ECCLA S<sup>7</sup>CI GREGORII. de. l. ac.  
libe tre. tēte. hund. & xxv. ac pti. 7. i. mol. 7. 11. eq<sup>7</sup> i dno halle. 7 xvii. an.  
7 xxiiii. por. & c. ou. 7 xviii ac pti burg. 7. i. mercatu. 7 ibi fūt monetarii.  
tē ual xviii lib. 7 m. xviii. ad nume<sup>7</sup>. h. 1111. q<sup>7</sup> i long. 7. 111. i lat. & de gelto  
v. fol. Soca i eadē uilla.

Mercatu = Market

## Charter 1 – c.1260 – Of Richard De Clare (reign of Henry III – 1216-1272)

A charter, written in Latin, of Richard de Clare, Lord of the Manor, granted the Freemen grazing rights over Kings Marsh and Portmanscroft (the Freemen's Great and Little Commons) and whilst this charter does not mention the Market it still plays an important part of Sudbury's history. This little document, measuring only 9 inches by 3½ inches is undated but must have been granted between the year **1230**, when Richard de Clare succeeded to the lordship of Sudbury, and 1262, when he died, possibly about **1260**. Affixed to it, is a circular seal of green wax, having on one side the representation of a knight in mail armour mounted on his horse, and bearing a shield ornamented, like the trappings of the horse, with the chevrons of the de Clares. Round the seal is a mutilated legend, of which the words RICARDI.DE.CLEARE COMITIS. can still be distinguished. On the reverse of this seal are the de Clare arms on a shield supported by two lions rampant addorsed, and encircled by a similar mutilated legend, of which the words RDI.DE. CLARE.COMITIS.GLOU. are alone decipherable.<sup>8</sup> This charter remains the chief treasure of the freemen of Sudbury and is today held by the Trustees of the Common Lands, who have lodged it in the Suffolk Records Office in Bury St. Edmunds



**c.1260 – Charter of Richard De Clare**

<sup>8</sup> Hodson's History of The Borough of Sudbury – written by F.C.D. Sperling F.R. Hist. Soc. (Page 9)



## Translation of Charter <sup>9</sup>

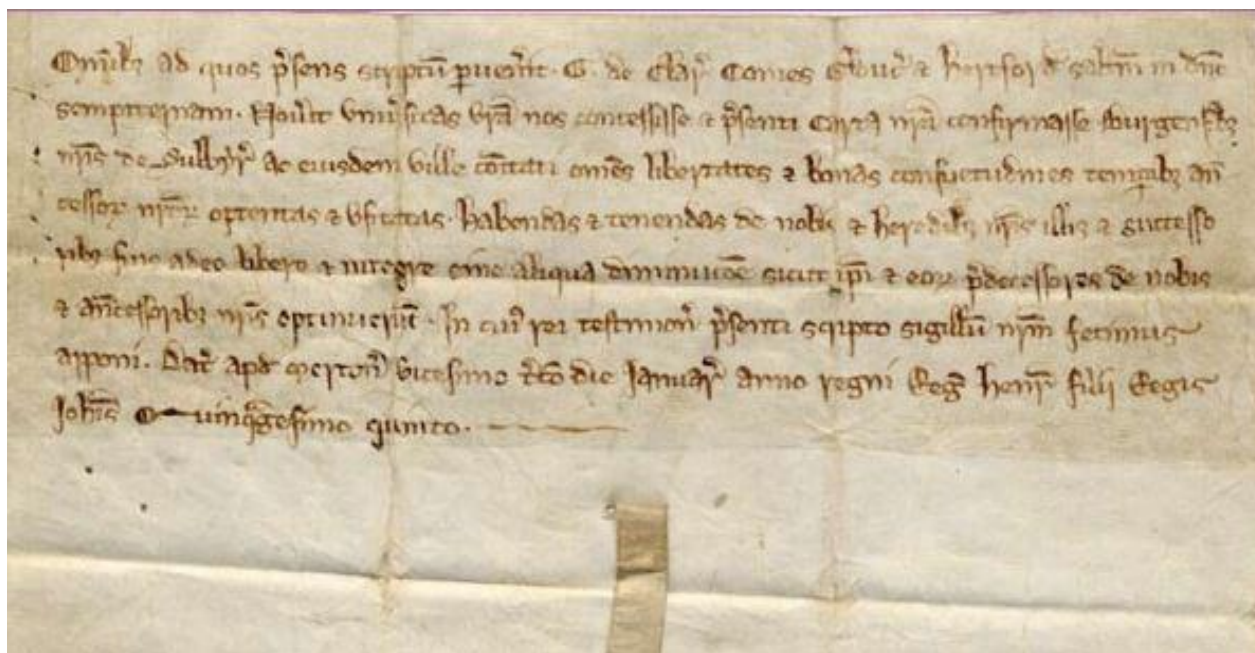
*Let all, both those who are now living and those who shall hereafter live, know that I Richard de Clare Earl of Gloucester and Hertford have given, granted, and by this my present charter confirmed to my Burgesses and to the whole commonalty of Sudbury all my pasture of Portmannecroft and of Kingsmarsh in the outskirts of Sudbury towards the North. To have and to hold to the said burgesses and their successors freely and peacefully &c. The said burgesses and their successors paying thence annually to me and my heirs forty silver shillings on the Feast of St. Michael for all services customs and demands. And I and my heirs will warrant all the said pasture with its appurtenances to the said burgesses and their successors and to all the commonalty for ever against all men. And for this my grant, gift, and charter of confirmation the aforesaid burgesses have given me one hundred shillings as an earnest. And that this my gift, grant and confirmation may have strength to stand good for ever I have strengthened this present charter with the impression of my seal.*

*In the presence of these witnesses. Sir Roger of the Exchequer then Steward of Clare. Sir Geoffry de Fanencourt. Sir Thomas of York. Master Robert of York. Sir Thomas of Baiuse. Roger Ostricer. John of Sudbury. Ralph of Grendon. William de Ponte. Roger of Barlay. Henry Pointel. John de Grey. Ralph de Cressy, and many others.* <sup>10</sup>

The charter of Richard de Clare, although is the earliest in existence, is probably by no means the first that the burgesses had obtained from their manorial lord.

## Charter 2 – c.1272 – of Gilbert de Clare (reign of Henry III – 1216-1272)

Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, and Hertford (son of Richard de Clare) granted a charter confirming to the burgesses and commonalty of Sudbury “all the liberties and good customs *which they had obtained and enjoyed in the days of his ancestors*”, suggesting that the freemen’s rights originated much earlier. <sup>11</sup> The image below was sourced from an exhibition held in Sudbury Library in 2009 by the Suffolk Records Office to celebrate 1000-year celebrations of Sudbury Market. However, I can find no reference to this document on their website.



Charter granted by Gilbert de Clare c.1272 measuring 7½” by 3½”

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/collections/getrecord/GB174\\_EE501\\_1\\_1](https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/collections/getrecord/GB174_EE501_1_1)

<sup>10</sup> Hodson’s History of The Borough of Sudbury – written by F.C.D. Sperling F.R. Hist. Soc. (Page 10)

<sup>11</sup> Hodson’s History of The Borough of Sudbury – written by F.C.D. Sperling F.R. Hist. Soc. (Pages 12-13)

## Translation of Charter

*To all to whom this present writing shall come Gilbert de Clare Earl of Gloucester and Hertford (send) greeting in the LORD everlasting. Know all of you that we have granted and by this our present charter confirmed to our Burgesses of Sudbury and to the commonalty of that town all the liberties and good customs that were obtained and prevailed in the days of our ancestors to have and to hold of us and our heirs by them and their successors as freely and completely without any diminution as they and their predecessors obtained them from us and our ancestors. In testimony of which we have caused our seal to be set to this present writing.*

*Dated at Merton on the twenty-third day of January in the fifty-fifth year of the reign of King Henry the son of King John.* <sup>12</sup>

### **Charter 3 – 1329/30 – of Elizabeth de Burgh** (reign of Edward III – 1327-1377)

The charter of Richard de Clare was confirmed in a charter in 1329/30 by Elizabeth de Burgh, his granddaughter, who had succeeded to the lordship of Sudbury. However, the confirmation differs from the original grant in that Elizabeth de Burgh reserved the right to dig earth on the Commons to repair the mill pool – a right recognised six and a half centuries later when the mill became a hotel, and an excavator appeared on Portmanscroft alongside the mill pool.<sup>13 14</sup>

### **The Market Hill**

The centre of Sudbury was the site of an early settlement in the Stour Valley with fragments of Roman and British pottery found in excavations on the north side of it. Market Hill owes its existence to Lady Elizabeth de Burgh (1295-1360), a young widow, kin to royalty, who inherited land in this area including Sudbury. She was one of the wealthiest women in England, ‘lord’ of Sudbury - and an early town planner! She designed a ‘new’ Sudbury and ‘moved’ the town centre and market nearer to St Peter’s church. She invested much money in Sudbury and sold plots for ‘development’ so that it became a spacious shopping centre - or the 14th century layout which can still be seen today. Her motives for developing Market Hill were unlikely to have been selfless, and she almost certainly received a considerable return for her investment.

The Market Hill was carefully organised so as not to encroach on the lands of neighbouring Estates, which over the centuries have gradually been absorbed into Sudbury. An exact date for its construction is unclear, although it was likely to have been between 1318 and 1325. The Black Boy Pub is a focal point on Market Hill, exactly where Elizabeth de Burgh planned her ‘new’ Sudbury which, if she came back today, she would recognise immediately as the Market Hill she knew 700 years ago.<sup>15</sup>

I would like to think she would be honoured to find out that, following a public vote, the Black Boy Pub was renamed **The Lady Elizabeth** in February 2021.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Hodson’s History of The Borough of Sudbury – written by F.C.D. Sperling F.R. Hist. Soc. (Page 13)

<sup>13</sup> Suffolk Country Town – A Sudbury Miscellany by Allan W. Berry (Page 186)

<sup>14</sup> Hodson’s History of The Borough of Sudbury – written by F.C.D. Sperling F.R. Hist. Soc. (Pages 10-12)

<sup>15</sup> <https://virtualmuseum.sudburysuffolk.co.uk/recent-research/sudbury-the-lady-and-the-origins-of-market-hill/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.greeneking.co.uk/newsroom/latest-news/greene-king-announces-results-of-public-votes-to-rename-black-boy-and-blacks-head-pubs/>



**Elizabeth de Burgh, Lady of Clare**

Later, housing developments encroached on the open space in front of the St. Peter's Church, as shown in early 19<sup>th</sup> century images of the town. However, these were demolished by the 1840's, and now used for the market and as a car park.



**19<sup>th</sup> Century Market in Sudbury**

Sudbury is also the birthplace of the famous portrait and landscape painter, Thomas Gainsborough, born in Sepulchre Street (renamed Gainsborough Street) in 1727. On the 10<sup>th</sup> June 1913 a national monument to Gainsborough (1727-1788) was unveiled on the Market Hill by Queen Victoria's daughter Princess Louise and was sculpted by Bertram Mackennal.





**Thomas Gainsborough**



**Thomas Gainsborough Memorial**



**10<sup>th</sup> June 1913 unveiling ceremony**

#### **Charter 4 – 1397 – Licence from Roger de Mortimer (reign of Richard II – 1377-1399)**

Another interesting Charter, although not market related, is a licence from Roger Mortimer, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of March, to the Mayor and Bailiffs of Sudbury, empowering them to elect annually two Sergeants-at-mace to carry before the Mayor maces adorned with the Mortimer arms. This deed was written in Norman-French and dated from Clare Castle on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1397 (20 Richard II).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Hodson's History of The Borough of Sudbury – written by F.C.D. Sperling F.R. Hist. Soc. (Pages 13-14)

## Letters Patent – 1439 & 1455 – Of King Henry VI (reign – 1422-1461) <sup>18</sup>

Amongst the privileges possessed by the men of Sudbury, was freedom from tolls, both for themselves and their goods, throughout the whole of England. This exemption was confirmed to them by Letters Patent, 19 Henry VI (Nov. 22, 1440), and again in 1455 <sup>19</sup> (Letters patent were open letters issued under the Great Seal. They covered a huge diversity of subjects, including grants of official positions, lands, commissions, privileges, and pardons).

## Charter 5 – 1554 – Of Queen Mary I (reign – 1553-1558)

As we know Sudbury was an ancient borough, which first received a charter in the mid-thirteenth century, but despite having a mayor by 1331 it was not incorporated until 1554, when the town was rewarded for its support of Queen Mary at her accession. The 1554 charter seems to have done little more than to confirm the existing borough constitution. In addition to a mayor, the corporation consisted of a self-selecting oligarchy of six aldermen and 24 capital burgesses, plus a steward who presided over the borough court <sup>20</sup>

The preamble to this charter, runs thus –

***“Our town of Sudbury is an old and ancient town, having in it from time out of mind for the better ruling and government of the same one mayor, six aldermen, four and twenty burgesses, two sergeants, one bailiff, two constables, and other common officers, by the which the men and inhabitants thereof from time to time out of mind have been ruled and governed..... Nevertheless, by the report of credible persons, the deeds writings, and letters patent of our progenitors of the gifts and grants of the liberties and privileges aforesaid, for the lack of good and safe custody of the same have been embezzled and conveyed away from the want whereof some doubt may hereafter arise whether our town of Sudbury be sufficiently incorporated of one Mayor,” &c.*** <sup>21</sup>

Unfortunately, the charter has been missing for well over 100 years. For some time, it was thought that a charter held in the National Archives Office in London was the original, put there for safe keeping, however in 1985 an article printed in the local newspaper by the then Town Archivist, Mr. Michael Hills, stated that he had discovered that document was only a copy, and the original was still missing. The only evidence of the Charter’s existence (other than the copy held in the National Archives Office in London) was a document with the mayor of the days’ expenses, listing the purchase of a waterproof cloth, for the charter to be wrapped in on its journey from London to Sudbury.

## Charter 6 – 1559 – Of Queen Elizabeth I (reign – 1558-1603)

The charter of Queen Mary I was confirmed to the borough by Queen Elizabeth I on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 1559. <sup>22 23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/royal-grants-letters-patent-charters-from-1199/>

<sup>19</sup> Hodson’s History of The Borough of Sudbury – written by F.C.D. Sperling F.R. Hist. Soc. (Pages 14-15)

<sup>20</sup> [https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/constituencies/sudbury#footnoteref4\\_fng1sdj](https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/constituencies/sudbury#footnoteref4_fng1sdj)

<sup>21</sup> Hodson’s History of The Borough of Sudbury – written by F.C.D. Sperling F.R. Hist. Soc. (Pages 33-34)

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/collections/getrecord/GB174\\_EE501\\_1\\_6](https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/collections/getrecord/GB174_EE501_1_6)

<sup>23</sup> Hodson’s History of The Borough of Sudbury – written by F.C.D. Sperling F.R. Hist. Soc. (Page 34)



## Charter 7 – 1658 – Of Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector (reign – 1653-(Sept)1658)

The charter of Queen Mary I was confirmed to the borough by Oliver Cromwell on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1658 <sup>24</sup>

## Charter 8 – 1664 – Of King Charles II (reign – 1660-1685)

On the 27<sup>th</sup> July 1664 King Charles II granted a Royal Charter to the town confirming incorporation and granting a constitution almost identical to the charter of Queen Mary I (four articles differ from those in Mary's Charter)

Part of the charter states

***“And we will and by those presents do for us our heirs & successors grant & confirm to this Mayor, Aldermen & Burgesses of this Borough of Sudbury their successors that forever hereafter they may and shall have & hold one Market on every Saturday in every week in this Borough of Sudbury....”*** <sup>25</sup>

## 1684 – Surrender of Sudbury Borough Charter & Petition for a new charter

Faced with the threat of a Quo warranto <sup>26</sup> the Corporation, perhaps at the instigation of John Catesby, the Mayor, a lawyer drew up a document sealed on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 1684, whereby they surrendered to Charles II all Charters, Liberties and Privileges, whether held by custom or charter <sup>27</sup> (*Surrender of charter refers to the dissolution or termination of the existence of a corporation by a formal act on the part of the corporation in yielding its charter to the sovereignty under which the corporation was created and the acceptance of the same by the government*).



**1684 Surrender of all Charters, Liberties and Privileges <sup>28</sup>**

<sup>24</sup> Hodson's History of The Borough of Sudbury – written by F.C.D. Sperling F.R. Hist. Soc. (Pages 34)

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/collections/getrecord/GB174\\_EE501\\_1\\_9](https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/collections/getrecord/GB174_EE501_1_9)

<sup>26</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quo\\_warranto](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quo_warranto)

<sup>27</sup> Extract from a book by Allan W. Berry titled Seventeenth Century Sudbury (Page 97)

<sup>28</sup> [https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/collections/getrecord/GB174\\_EE501\\_1\\_10](https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/collections/getrecord/GB174_EE501_1_10) (Page 95-97)

## **Charter 9 – 1685 – Letters Patent of James II (reign – 1685-1688)**

The petition of the Mayor and Corporation for a new charter, having surrendered the old one, was referred to the Attorney or Solicitor General on 13<sup>th</sup> January. A new charter, granted on 5 March, by James II, confirmed Catesby as Mayor, and approved another of the family, George Catesby, as Town Clerk. The Duke of Grafton was named as Recorder. The number of Aldermen was increased from seven to ten. As before the Charter granted a market and three fairs. <sup>29 30</sup>

## **1714 – Brewer’s map of Sudbury**

An early map of Sudbury, surveyed by Cornelius Brewer in 1714, clearly shows the marketplace in the centre of the town. The map, which is owned by Sudbury Town Council, has resided for many years in Suffolk Record Office in Bury St. Edmunds. In 2014 Gainsborough’s House organised for the conservation of the map so that it could be publicly displayed, at the house, for the first time so that it could be seen by residents of Sudbury and visitors to the town. According to the inscription the map was created to show the extent of Sudbury’s common pastures. At the time the town’s aldermen controlled the town corporation and the commons. Their houses are prominently shown on the map, and together with the elaborately decorated town crest suggest that they ordered for the map to be made. It is important to note the town centre layout has not changed since this map. <sup>31</sup>



**Extract from Brewer’s Map of Sudbury 1714**

<sup>29</sup> Extract from a book by Allan W. Berry titled Seventeenth Century Sudbury (Page 97)

<sup>30</sup> [https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/collections/getrecord/GB174\\_EE501\\_1\\_11](https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/collections/getrecord/GB174_EE501_1_11)

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.aboutmyarea.co.uk/Suffolk/Sudbury/CO10/News/Whats-On/264901-Gainsborough%E2%80%99s-House-Exhibition-Of-Brewer%E2%80%99s-Map-of-Sudbury-in-1714-January-11th-May>

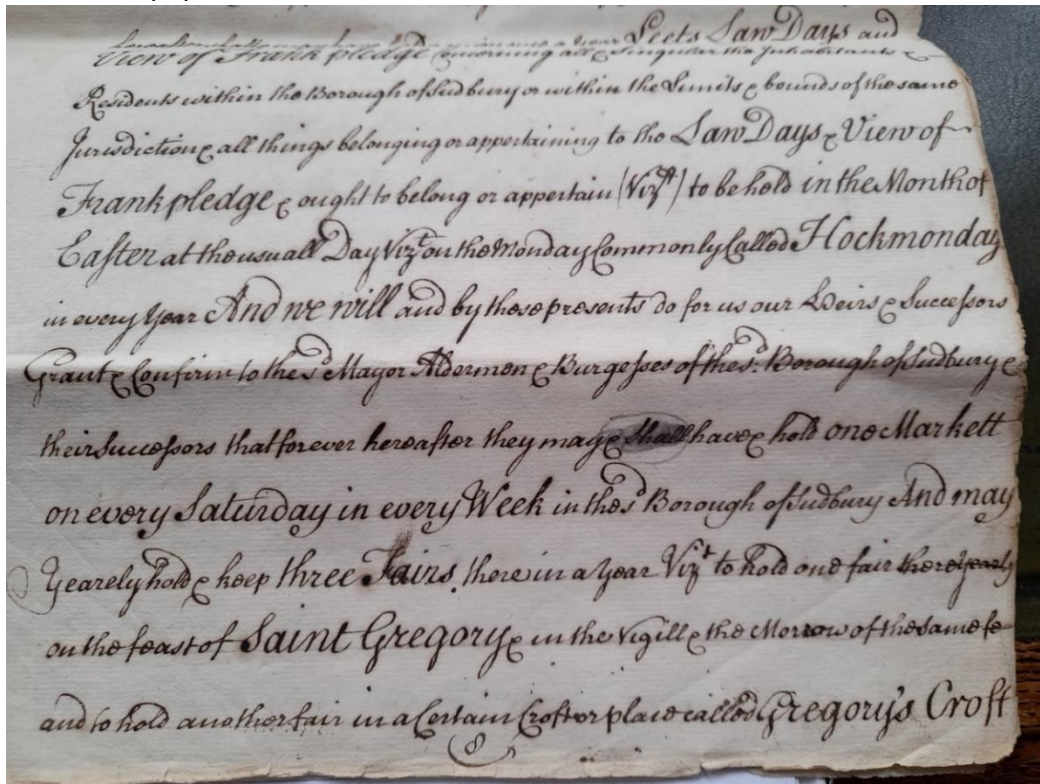


## King Charles II Royal Charter

Over the years several translations have been made of the 1664 King Charles II Royal Charter, copies of which are now kept at the County Records Office at Bury St. Edmunds and by Sudbury Town Council. Extracts from some of these translations, mentioning the Market, are shown overleaf.

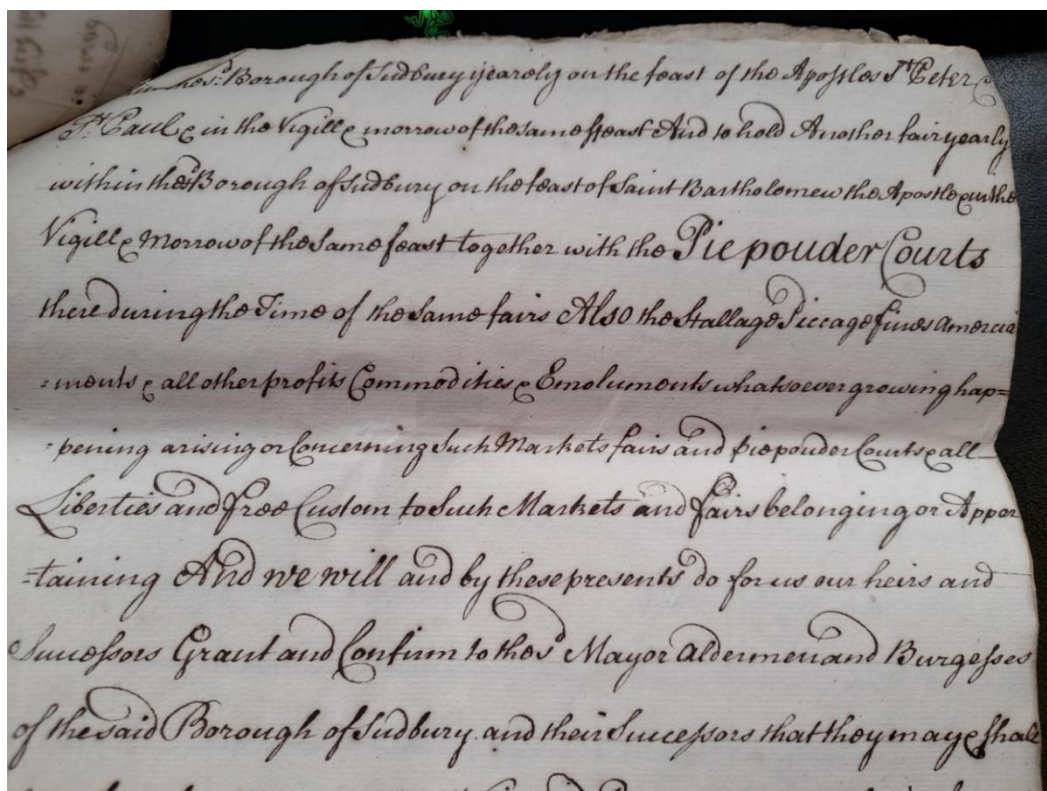
### 1746 – Translation of the 1664 King Charles II Royal Charter

Handwritten on deed paper



View of Frankpledge <sup>concerning all things within the jurisdiction</sup> and  
Residents within the Borough of Sudbury or within the limits & bounds of the same  
Jurisdiction all things belonging or appertaining to the San Days & View of  
Frankpledge & ought to belong or appertain (viz) to be hold in the Month of  
Easter at the usual Day viz on the Monday commonly called Hock Monday  
in every Year And we will and by these presents do for us our Heirs & Successors  
Grant & Confirm to the Mayor Aldermen & Burgeses of the Borough of Sudbury &  
their Successors that forever hereafter they maye ~~shall~~ have & hold one Markett  
on every Saturday in every Week in the Borough of Sudbury And may  
Yearely have & keep three Fairs there in a year viz to hold one fair the first yearly  
on the feast of Saint Gregory in the Vigill & the Morrow of the same fe  
and to hold another fair in a certain Court place called Gregory's Cross

An extract from the translation made in 1746 from the 1664 King Charles II Royal Charter



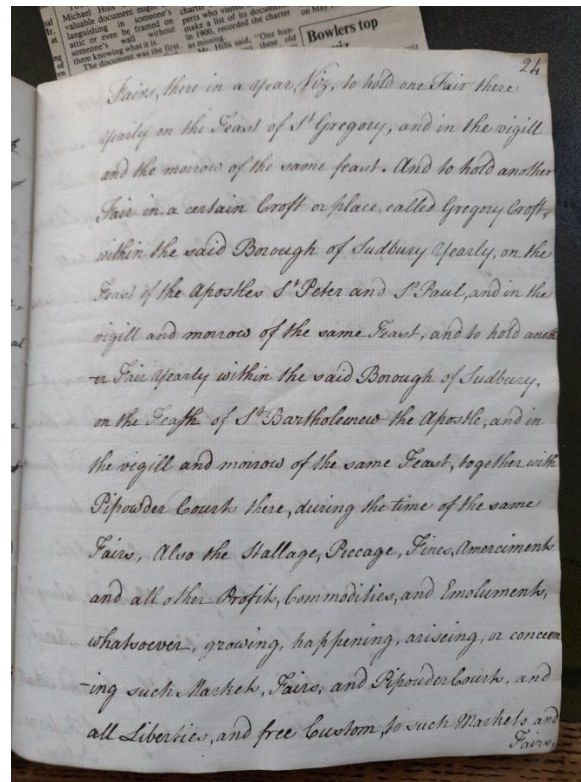
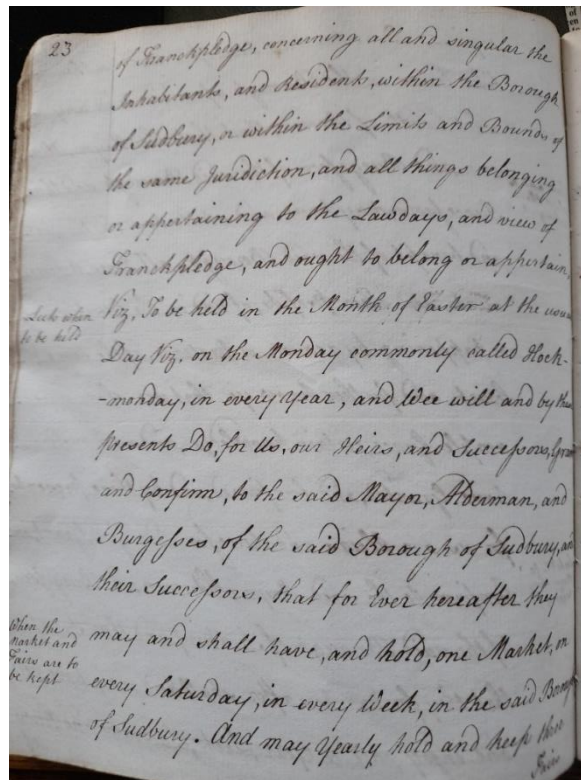
the Borough of Sudbury yearly on the feast of the Apostles St Peter  
St Paul & in the Vigill & morrow of the same feast And to hold Another fair yearly  
within the Borough of Sudbury on the feast of Saint Bartholomew the Apostle on the  
Vigill & morrow of the same feast together with the Pie powder Courts  
there during the Time of the same fairs Also the Stallage & Licage fines Amerci-  
aments & all other profits Commodities & Emoluments whatsoever growing hap-  
pening arising or concerning such Markets fairs and pie powder Courts all  
Liberties and Free Custom to such Markets and fairs belonging or Appor-  
taining And we will and by these presents do for us our heirs and  
Successors Grant and Confirm to the Mayor Aldermen and Burgeses  
of the said Borough of Sudbury and their Successors that they maye shall

An extract from the translation made in 1746 of the 1664 King Charles II Royal Charter



## 1778 – Translation of the 1664 King Charles II Royal Charter

A bound handwritten translation held by Sudbury Town Council.

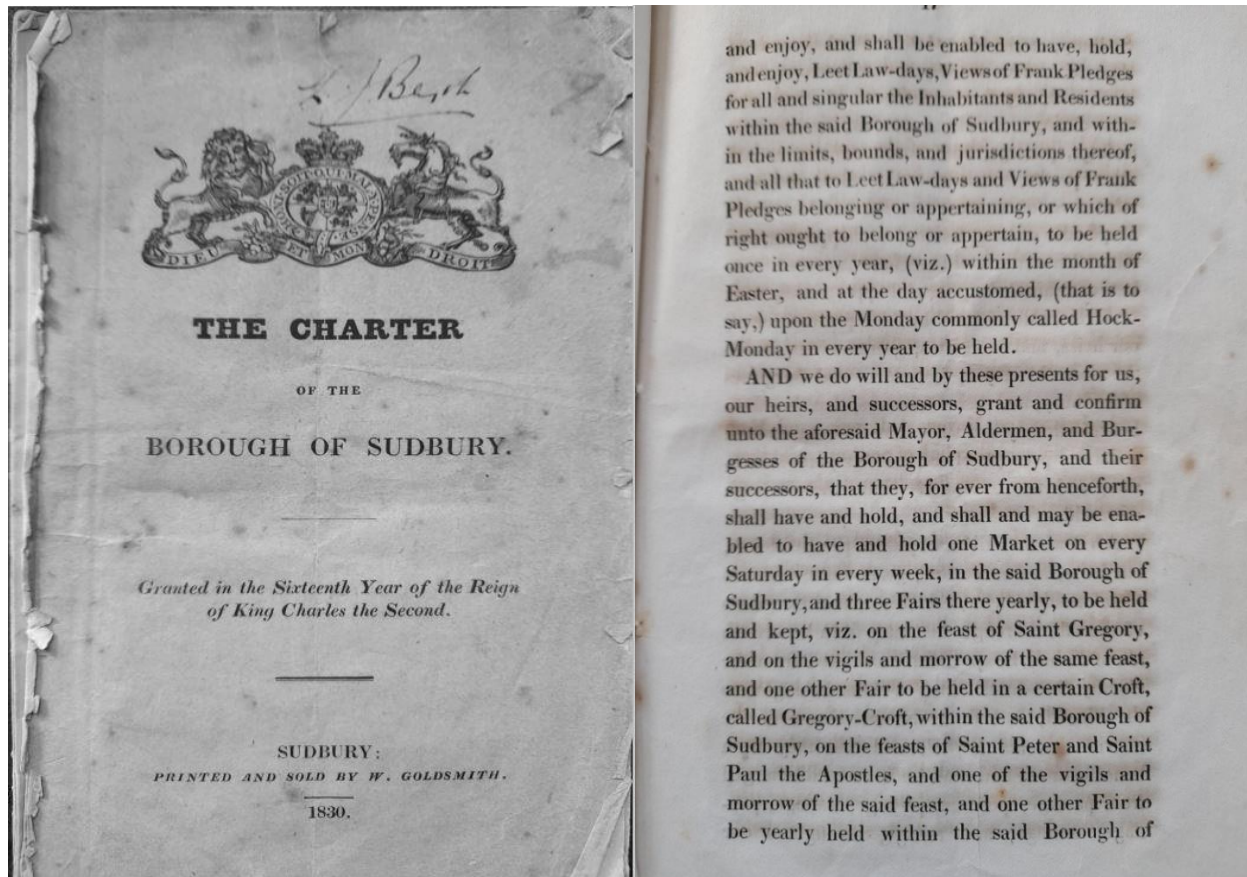


Translation made in 1778 of the 1664 King Charles II Royal Charter

Extract from the translation states **“and wee will and by these presents Do, for Us, our Heirs, and successors, grant and confirm, to the said Mayor, Alderman and Burgesses, of the said Borough of Sudbury and their successors, that for ever hereafter they may and shall have, and hold, one Market, on every Saturday, in every week, in the said Borough of Sudbury.....”**

## 1830 – Translation of the 1664 King Charles II Royal Charter

A printed translation sold by W. Goldsmith held by Sudbury Town Council.



A printed translation of the 1664 King Charles II Royal Charter printed in 1830

Below are extracts taken from the grant which appertain to the Market.

Page 17/18 - ***AND we do will and by these presents for us, our heirs, and successors, grant and confirm unto the aforesaid Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the Borough of Sudbury, and their successors, that they, for ever from henceforth, shall have and hold, and shall and may be enabled to have and hold on Market on every Saturday in every week, in the said Borough of Sudbury, and three Fairs there yearly, to be held and kept, viz. on the feast of Saint Gregory, and on the vigils and morrow of the same feast, and one other Fair to be held in a certain Croft called Gregory-Croft, within the said Borough of Sudbury, on the feasts of Saint Peter and Saint Paul the Apostles, and one of the vigils and morrow of the said feast, and one other Fair to be yearly held within the said Borough of Sudbury, on the feast of Saint Bartholomew the Apostle, and the vigils and morrow of the same feast, together with Courts of Piepowder then during the time of the fair, together with stallage, pickage, fines, amerciaments, and all other profits, commodities, and emoluments whatsoever of such markets, fairs, and Courts of Piepowder coming, issuing, or happening, and with all liberties and free customs to such markets and fairs belonging and appertaining.***

Page 21/22 - ***AND, moreover, of our more ample grace, certain knowledge, and mere motion, we have granted and ordained, and by these presents for us, our heirs, and successors, do grant, ordain, and confirm, that the Mayor of the said Borough of Sudbury, for the time being, is and shall be Clerk of our Market within the said Borough of Sudbury; And we have also granted, and do by these presents grant and confirm to the aforesaid Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses, and their successors, that they from henceforth shall and may do and have, within the Borough aforesaid, the Assize and Assay of Bread, Wine and Ale, and other Victuals, and of all Weights and Measures whatsoever, and***



also the amending and correction thereof, and shall do and execute all other things which to the office of a Clerk of us, our heirs, and successors, do belong to do and exercise,

Page 23/24 - **AND FURTHER, of our more ample grace, we do will, and of our certain knowledge and mere motion, for us, our heirs, and successors, do grant and confirm to the said Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the said Borough of Sudbury, for the time being, or such Bailiff, by the aforesaid, shall be named and chosen from the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary last past, shall be Bailiff and Collector of all and singular rents of assize whatsoever, free tenants and tenements of our Manor of Sudbury aforesaid, within the Borough aforesaid; And of all and singular rents, perquisites, and profits of toll, markets, fairs, standing in the market, and gross wool within the Borough aforesaid, and of all and singular rents, reversions, perquisites, and profits of the port of Manscroft, Fishing the Water at the Bridge of Sudbury aforesaid;**

## 1829/1830 change of Market day

The market has always played a strong role in the commercial life of Sudbury. According to the Suffolk Archives Office, in Pigot's Directory of 1830 (*a major British directory started in 1814 by James Pigot and covered England, Scotland and Wales in the period before official Civic Registration began and are a valuable source of information regarding all major professions, nobility, gentry, clergy, trades and occupations including taverns and public houses*), the change of market day from Saturday to Thursday was noted: **'The market, which used to be holden on Saturday, has been lately altered to Thursday.'** By 1874 a pig market was established on Saturdays and the market then became a twice weekly event which has continued to the present time.

...to be obtained or  
...the Place  
...clock, in  
...at s... continues

...Gold Seats, and a Key. Whoever will take the same to  
Mr. J. D. Bright, watch-maker, Saxmundham, shall re-  
ceive the above reward.  
Saxmundham, Sept, 16, 1829.

**SUDBURY MARKET.**

**I**N consequence of a very general expression of  
public opinion as to the advantages likely to accrue  
to the Agriculturists, Merchants, and Millers, attending  
Sudbury Market from an Alteration of the Day of hold-  
ing the said Market Notice is hereby given, that the same  
will be holden ON THURSDAY, the 1st of October,  
at 12 o'clock at Noon, and on every succeeding THURS-  
DAY, at the same hour, instead of Saturday, as heretofore.  
••• Horses, Sheep, and Neat Stock, may be Shewn for  
Sale in Sudbury Market Free of Toll.

**STOW HUNDRED,**  
SEPTEMBER 17th, 1829.

**T**HE Directors and Acting Guardians of the  
Poor for the said Hundred, will hold their next Gen-  
eral Quarterly Meeting on Friday, the 2d day of October  
next, at the King's Head Inn, in Stowmarket, in the coun-  
ty of Suffolk, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon; when and  
where all Persons entitled to Contest for such office as

**TIME**

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Extract from The Suffolk Chronicle; or Weekly General Advertiser & County Express dated Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September 1829 <sup>32</sup>

Here are three parish churches (all of them handsome buildings), respectively dedicated to St. Gregory, St. Peter, and All Saints. The market, which used to be holden on Saturday, has been lately altered to Thursday; the fairs take place on the 12th March, 10th July, and 4th September. By the returns to parliament for 1821, the population of the three parishes of Sudbury consisted of 3,950 inhabitants.

Extract from Pigot's Directory of 1830 <sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/>

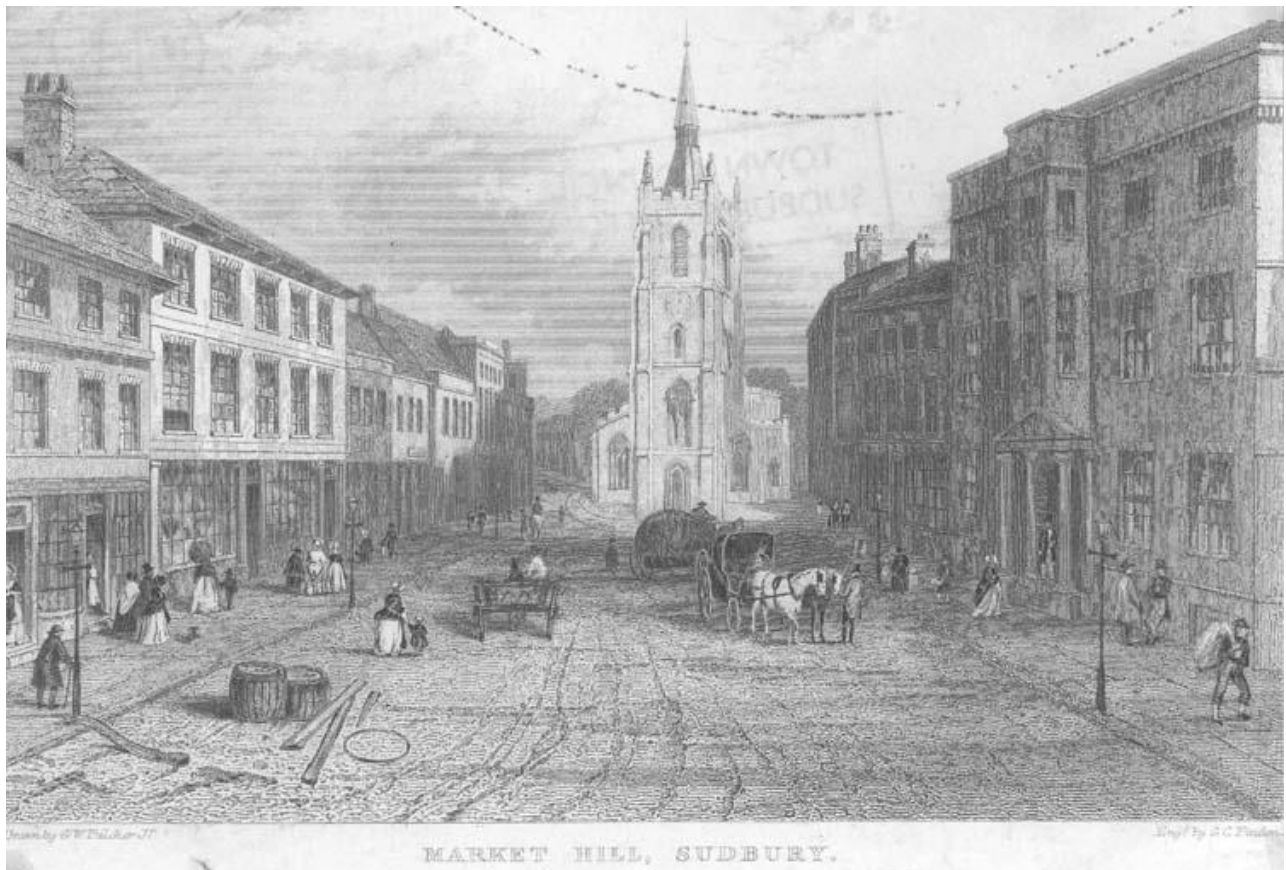


## 1850–2009 - Market Hill images

The following images and information has been sourced from the town council's collection and the Sudbury Photo Archives website <https://photoarchive.sudburyheritagecentre.co.uk/>



**1850 Market**



**c.1860 Fulcher engraving of the Market Hill**



Early 20th century market day farmers would come by pony and trap to sell at the corn exchange



c.1900's Sudbury-Market-Place





c.1900's Market Day



c1906 Market Day





**1914 Market Day**



**c.1920's Market Day**



**A grainy view of the market dating from the interwar years – one lady's cloche hat suggests the 1920s**



**1944-45 Taken by an American Serviceman on Market Day**

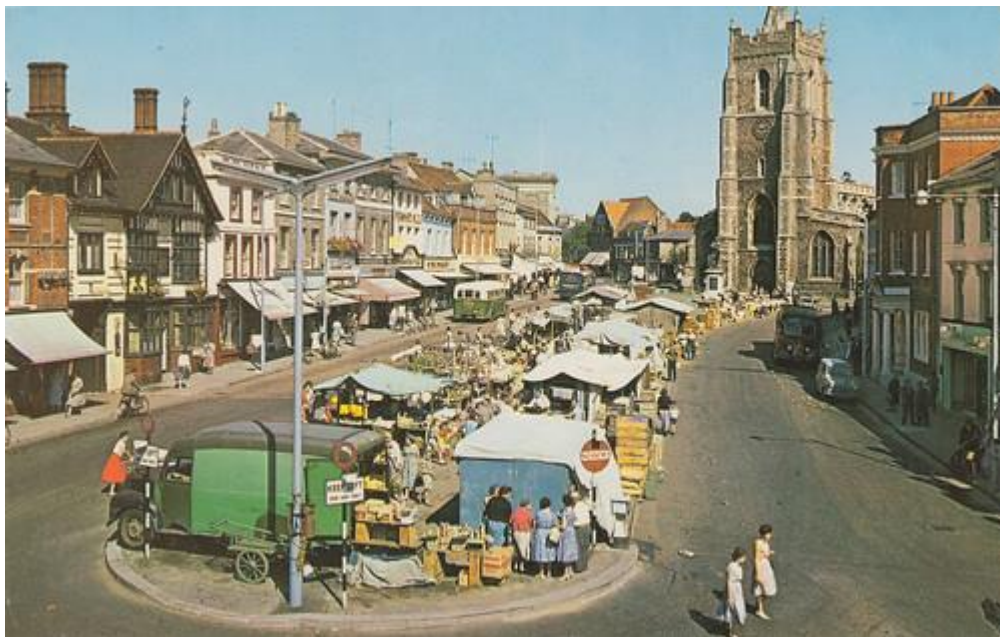


**1944-45 A market day scene taken some time during the winter**





c.1960



Early 1960's



1963



1968 work in progress to remove the spire from St. Peter's





**Early 1970's - Market Traders Barrows stored in the cattle market**



**1973 Postcard**





1985



c.1990's





**c.2008 Continental Market**



**c.2008 Continental Market**

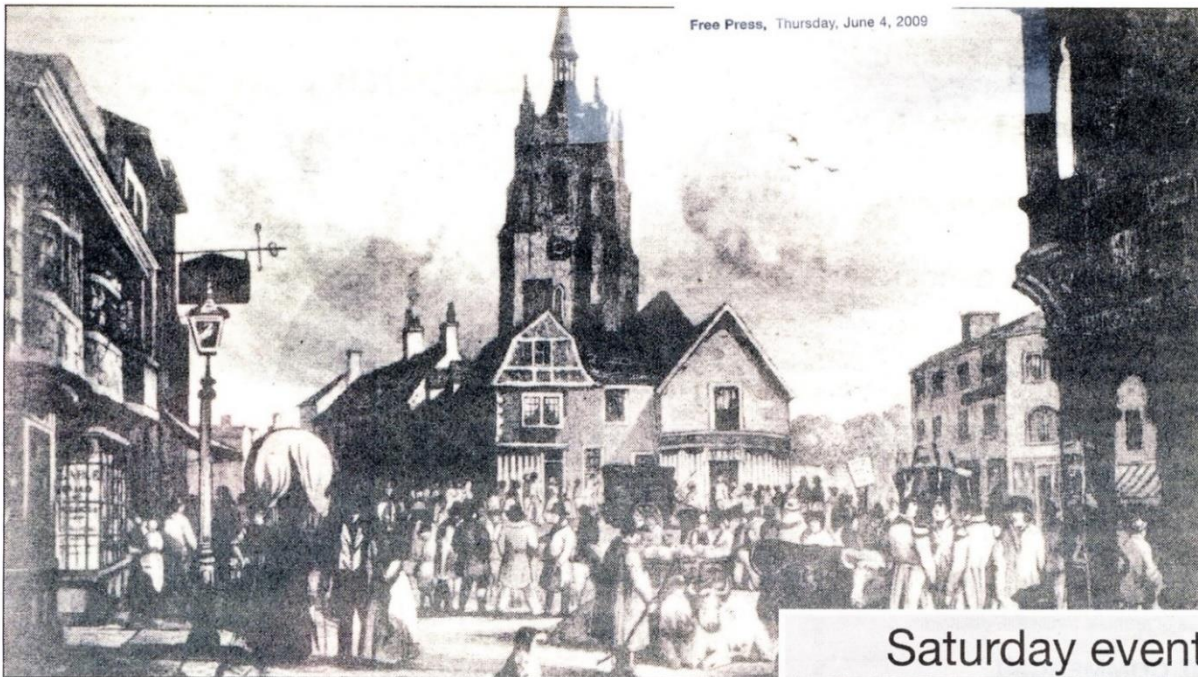


**c.2008 Continental Market**



## 2009 – 1000 year celebrations of Sudbury Market

In 2009 the town celebrated 1000 years since the first mention of Sudbury Market. Various events were held throughout the year to mark the occasion as can be seen in the following press cuttings and poster.



Free Press, Thursday, June 4, 2009

Years gone by ... left, the market in the 19th century. Below, how it looked in 1965.



# Market celebrates 1,000th birthday

MEDIEVAL knights will be battling it out this weekend to celebrate more than a thousand years of Sudbury Town Market.

The Delphi Club on Newton Road will become a medieval settlement on Saturday and Sunday as the town celebrates the special milestone.

A parade of costumed characters will process into Sudbury town centre at noon on Saturday where the Mayor will officially open proceedings.

The group will then make its way back to the Delphi Club where an archery tournament at 1pm will kick-off the two-day celebrations.

Mayor of Sudbury Adrian Osbourne is looking forward to the event but says he will not be doing any chain mail.

He said: "I hope that the event

will be well supported, the Town Council has worked very hard to get it sorted. "If children can learn from medieval times then that has to be a good thing."

There will be jousting, gunnery displays, falconry and a living encampment where visitors will be able to experience how people lived in medieval times.

Teresa Elford, events organiser at Sudbury Town Council, said: "We hope to make the day educational so that people will learn and have a bit of fun at the same time."

"The re-enactment weekend will be the launch of a year-long celebration for over 1,000 years of Sudbury market."

Everybody is welcome and admission is free.

For more information, contact Sudbury Town Council on 01787 372331.

## Saturday events

12pm Official start. Town parade and opening ceremony  
1pm Archery tournament  
1.45pm-2.15pm Men at arms display  
2.15pm-3pm Fashion parade  
3pm-3.30pm Gunnery display  
3.30pm-4pm Prepare for war in the encampment  
4pm-5pm Medieval battle  
5pm Official finish

## Sunday events

10.30am Official start  
10.30am-11am Medieval falconry display  
11.15am-11.30am Fashion parade  
11.30am-12pm Archery display  
12pm-12.30pm Men at arms display  
12.30pm-1pm Medieval falconry display  
1pm-2pm Medieval jousting  
2pm-2.30pm Arming and dressing the knight  
2.30pm-3pm Gunnery display  
3pm-3.30pm Medieval battle  
3.30pm-4.30pm Medieval jousting  
4.30pm-5pm Medieval falconry display  
5pm Official finish



Modern day ... One thousand years on and it's still going strong.





HOW IT USED TO BE: Above left, Fiona Johnson shows how it was to live and cook in medieval times, while, above right, these two gallant men settle their differences with a swordfight

Photographs:  
PHIL MORLEY

# Bringing 1,000 years of history back to life

**MARKET TOWN:** People were 'invigorated and enthralled' by event

By Rebecca Lefort

A SUFFOLK market town has celebrated more than 1,000 years of existence by going back in time.

Sudbury marked the occasion over the weekend with a medieval re-enactment which included jousting and archery.

It is not known exactly when Sudbury became a town, but there are references to a market on the site from 931AD, and it is mentioned in the *Domesday Book*, published in 1086AD.

So town chiefs, including the new mayor, Adrian Osborne, decided to celebrate more than 1,000 years of the town at the weekend.

"It truly was marvellous and better than we'd expected," said Mr Osborne.

"I think people were invigorated and enthralled by what was on offer. It really brought the period to life and transported us back in time.

"Everyone was wearing typical medieval costumes and it was very accurate. I think people are proud of their history and it is good to learn more about it.

"There was one tent which showed the medical treatments of



**OLD REMEDIES:** Karen Hamilton-Viall talks to people about medieval medicines

very scary, which makes you realise how far we've come."

Mr Osborne said as well as looking fondly back at the past of Sudbury, the town was also able to look forward to the future with optimism.

will continue to grow and thrive because it is a great market and I definitely think Sudbury will exist in another 1,000 years.

"I think this is a strong town with a belief in itself, despite national financial difficulties at the moment.

1,000 years people did a re-enactment of today. I imagine we'd think it would be boring. But 1,000 years ago people would have thought it was normal to walk around with swords – so things change."



# Historical Market

## in St. Peter's, Sudbury

Celebrating over 1000 years since the official inception of the towns market, Sudbury Town Council hosts a spectacular historical market alongside the regular weekly market.

**Thursday 29th October 2009 10am-3pm**



## Experience the Past & the Present

Wander amongst both modern and authentic historical market stalls; smell, taste, touch and hear the market as our ancestors would have done over 1,000 years ago.



For further information contact Sudbury Town Council  
Tel: 01787 372331  
or email: [teresa.elford@sudburytowncouncil.co.uk](mailto:teresa.elford@sudburytowncouncil.co.uk)  
or visit: [www.sudburytowncouncil.co.uk](http://www.sudburytowncouncil.co.uk)







October 2009 - 1000 Year Market Celebrations John Coleman's stall



c.2010-15





c.2010-15



6.9.2015 Sudbury Market





**Current day market**



**Current day market**





Current day market









**Compiled by:** Teresa Elford  
Mayor's Secretary/Event Co-ordinator

May 2021