

# Foreword

The Sudbury Institute Club has this year reached its 175th Anniversary and this booklet has been compiled by Phil Walker for the pleasure of those Club members who may wish to know something of the history that trails in its wake.

The basis of this work is the commemorative history of the Club prepared by our then President, Sydney Hyde, for its 150th Anniversary. Phil has added to Mr Hyde's work, drawing on exhaustive research by another member, Walter Perry, to include notes on our Presidents from 1834 and bringing our story to the present day.

As a club we have lived through interesting times. At its foundation Wellington still strode the political stage. Were any of our founder members veterans of Waterloo or Trafalgar? And what were the views, in that rented North Street room, of the Tolpuddle martyrs? Suffolk too was a farming economy. Mr Hyde's remark about the second world war invites the question, was there then a call for a Club memorial board?

Domestically too the Institute Club has weathered turbulent times when money was short, rents were raised or membership flagged. But always rescue has arrived through the arts of a good Treasurer, the devotion of the Committee and the loyalty of our members. With these assets, especially the last, our continuing strength, we can look forward to a long and distinguished future.

**Jim Travis, President**  
September 2009



**Above:** The Free Press offices, Station Road, in the late 19th century, now the home of the Sudbury Institute Club. Not much has changed!

# The Sudbury Institute Club

## 1834 – 1984

### Introduction

I claim no more for this than that it is a story, and a somewhat sketchy story, of the Sudbury Institute Club. Because dates can often be meaningless in themselves, attention has frequently been drawn to parallel national and parochial events rather than to bare dates thus bringing hopefully more life to the history itself. This is especially true of the earlier years of the Club when, to illustrate the purpose and nature of the Club's origins, it was important to understand what life and conditions were like in 1834 when the Club was founded and how they influenced the Club's development.

It is not truly a history, for history demands an accuracy that in the case of the Club cannot in some instances be wholly guaranteed. There are gaps, fortunately few, in the Minutes upon which most of the story is based and omissions within the Minutes themselves and failure of times to record the implementation of resolutions carried at Committee and Annual General Meetings. It was inevitable, therefore, that from time to time there had to be an element of speculation and assumption had to be drawn where records were incomplete.

Thus, all that is claimed for this is a story based on all available facts plus assessments that have seemed reasonable in the circumstances.

There are members still happily with us whose recollections of circumstances and events in the more recent stages when the Minutes were incomplete may conflict with certain speculations or explanations and I hope they will be forgiving if they feel I may have erred where actual proof in the absence of concrete evidence is lacking.

However, whatever deficiencies there may be in the writing or compilation, it remains a story worth the telling and especially for new and prospective members who, in particular, will I hope find it interesting and enlightening.

Not least it is intended as a tribute to those many members, dead and alive, who have worked throughout the Club's 150 years to see it through difficult times and those who in more recent years especially undertook heavy responsibility and hard work in the interests of the Club and its members, thus to bring it to its present happy state. But no names have been disclosed, deserving though these stalwarts are of mention, for it would be invidious to do so, and how can one discriminate?

I hope those still with us will accept this as a tribute and not be too harsh on such shortcomings as they may find.

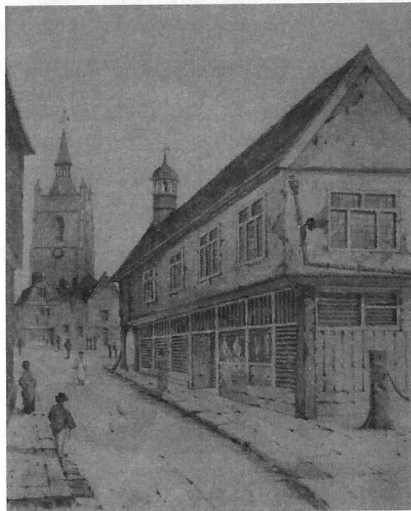
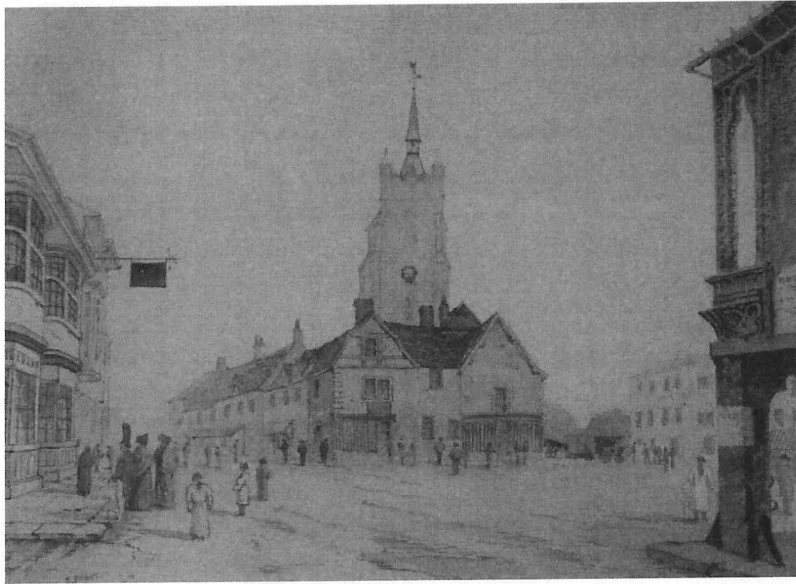
### Sydney Hyde

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**On November 3 1834**, thirteen people whose enthusiasms and interests had brought them together met in the 'new Town Hall' and formed what was to be called the 'Mechanics Institute' but which, judging from its early and subsequent Minutes, would today more likely be called the Sudbury Scientific and Literary Society. It is not easy to visualise what manner of people these were apart from the fact that they were what used to be termed well-to-do or middle class men whose ultimate aim was stated to be to educate the lower and working class men culturally. Indeed the initial Rules proclaimed this intention – "This shall be for the use of mechanics and others". Thus came about what is without doubt one of the oldest Clubs in East Anglia and indeed there is reason to believe it to be the oldest. It was, however, some time before any positive step was taken to fulfil their declared aim.

1834 as a date, apart from the fact that it was 150 years ago, may in itself convey little. Dates seldom do unless related to events. It might therefore be helpful to set the scene as to what was happening at this period and what sort of times they were into which the Club was born.

King William IV was still on the throne and it was another three years before the young Victoria was to become Queen. Lord Melbourne was Prime Minister and the Duke of Wellington was still active politically, his old foe, Napoleon, having died in exile long since. Familiar then, as



**Above:** Original watercolours of Market Hill, Sudbury by S. Prout, dated 1825, showing St. Peter's Church with a spire and houses in front.

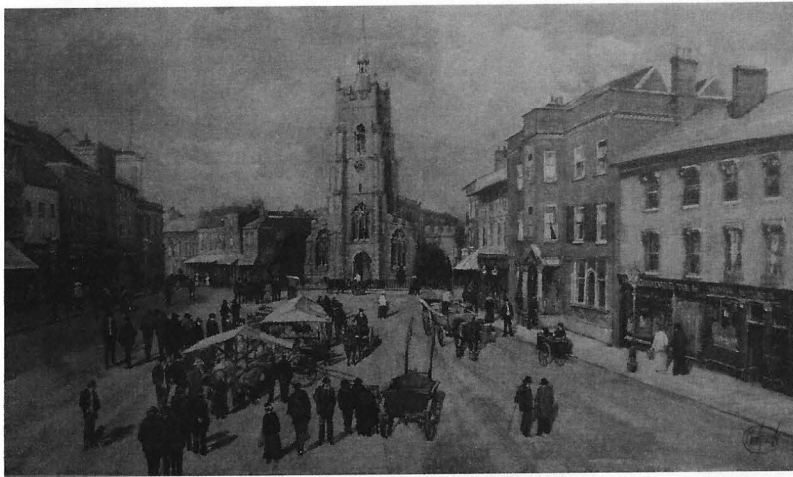
still today, was the squabbling inside the political parties and there was much talk of alliances though fortunately for the man in the street there was not television and he was spared much of the unsavoury verbiage to which we are submitted in our own times.

It was also the year of the Tolpuddle Martyrs. Steam trains had just about arrived on one or two routes but it was some time before one was to be seen in Sudbury; indeed 15 years. Steam as a motivating power had just begun to be adopted in some industries.

The British Museum was a long way from finding its home in Bloomsbury but Faraday had recently discovered self-induction electricity. It seems strange to relate that slavery in British colonies had only just been abolished in the previous year.

It was a period rich in literature and art. Shelley and Byron had been dead but a short time and Wordsworth was still writing. Charles Dickens was the rising star while the Brontes, Thackeray, Trollope, Browning and a host of other classic writers were popular or on their way to popularity. Turner was painting and so was Constable, though the latter was ailing. The great era of the Impressionists was yet to come but the signs were there in the work of their immediate predecessors. In music, Schumann, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky and Wagner were well established although this country had no composers to compare.

If this sounds a richly promising era, which in many ways it was, educationally it was a period in which the country could take little pride. True, it was the dawn of a wealthy era of expansion in many directions but the other side of the coin revealed great poverty. Only one in ten of the population had any education according to an official report published at the time. There were some voluntary and a few charity schools but it was not until 1836 that the Government made any grant towards education: £20,000 for voluntary schools. All this was, of course, widely commented upon by Charles Dickens in his novels and newspaper articles. Another official report about this time spoke of the "lamentable deficiency of the voluntary schools" and complained that "they were confined to towns while country districts are wells of ignorance". Children worked or roamed the streets and, difficult though



**Above:** Sudbury Market 1902 by Clive Madgwick, a local artist.

it may be to believe, some were still put up the chimneys to clean them.

**Another official report published in 1836** gave as an example that a typical budget for a working family of husband, wife and five children was 13/9d (69p) per week. Even by 1870 it had risen to only 18/- (80p). However, the demand for education and literacy was growing and gaining recognition; the living standards of the middle and upper classes were increasing and bringing with it great bursts of creative and cultural activity as well as industrial and commercial expansion. Thus the need for literacy was becoming not only popular but necessary.

Briefly and inadequately summed up, this then was the scene into which the Club was born.

But what of Sudbury itself? It is a picture not vastly different overall from the national scene. Life, it would seem, held few sensations. This is not to say it was a dull town. Its main industry was weaving, mat and matting, brewing and coopering. There were in fact four factories housing many looms, one of which employed 500 people and the numbers so employed for some time grew rapidly. Forty pubs brewed their own beer but, as may be imagined, there was little industry as such. As it was still an era of horse-drawn transport, carriage, coach and wagon manufacturing and repair thrived.

Soon after the Club was founded, a number of houses surrounding St. Peter's Church were demolished and in the space created came in due course the market. Another landmark, the Corn Exchange building (now the Library) was built in 1841.

Local educational facilities about matched those throughout the rest of the country although Sudbury seems to have had several private schools. Many poor children benefited by such charity schools that existed – some opened only on Sundays. A larger school was built at a cost of £954 and poor and middle class children attended at fees ranging from 2d (1p) to 1/- (5p) per week. The Grammar School, founded in 1491, was forced to close in 1827 for various somewhat complicated reasons but was re-opened after some years of legal wrangling in 1856. Alas it was to suffer fatally in 1972 when it was swallowed whole into the comprehensive system of which, as All Saints Middle School, it was a part. But though its traditions live on as memories, its own original character and individuality were inevitably stolen and have to remain as memories only. And perhaps in a way Sudbury lost a little of its dignity.

Barges navigated the River Stour and brought heavy loads in and out of town. Once again the horse was overtaken by steam when the first steam barge was seen in Sudbury in 1864. The last barge was seen in 1914.

**The steam train came to Sudbury in 1849** and it is noteworthy that the Institute was quick to make use of it. It organised an excursion to Chappel in 1849 and one to Ipswich in 1850. To these, townspeople were invited to take part in early anticipation of Away-Days! Before the coming of the Sudbury-Marks Tey line, travel was by coach and the town was served by two coaches from Norwich that passed through Sudbury. We know something of these coaches from Dickens.

It was earlier mentioned that the name of the Institute was something of a misnomer and this is borne out by the early Minutes written, as might be expected of that time, in the most superb handwriting. The range of the lectures staged and the books purchased for the Library reveal from the outset the catholic nature of its interests.



**Above:** Club member Terry Oban's painting of Sudbury Railway Station in the 60s when it still had a line through to Lavenham and Bury St Edmunds.



**Left:** Another Club member, David Spofforth, brought back this magnificent tribute to Australian cricket legends Rod Marsh and Dennis Lillee from Melbourne Cricket Club's Centenary Celebrations. It is signed "Best wishes to the President and members of The Sudbury Institute Club" by Lillee himself. David Spofforth's great grandfather was the first of Australia's great fast bowlers, F.R. Spofforth known as "The Demon".

The first President was the Rev. W. Wallis and the Committee Members, at least for some years, would appear to have been drawn from the 'respectable' strata of society – the Church, tradesmen, and professional or semi-professional citizens. The earlier meetings were mostly devoted to the approval of new books given or purchased for the Library and to the admission or rejection of new members.

**At the second meeting on November 10 1834**, an offer from a Mr. Siggins to let the Institute use part of his premises in North Street as a Library was discussed and agreed. Subsequently Mr. Siggins agreed to let the room and "discharge the office of Librarian" for the sum of £6.10.0d (£6.50) per annum and this seemed to include the furnishing of candles and fire as well as cleaning when necessary. However, the Institute was to be "at liberty to give up the room when they please".

The stay with Mr. Siggins was brief for soon he requested the Club to seek other accommodation, which they found in Gaol Lane after a Mr. Brown had driven a hard bargain, refusing to accept less than £10 per annum for the use of his room. Agreement was finally reached when, for £15 per annum, Mr. Brown accepted an arrangement by which he also served as Librarian and became responsible for the collection of subscriptions. Of course, as usual, candles and fire were to be supplied and included in the charge.

There is no indication of the actual membership of the Institute at this stage but new members were being admitted at an average rate of four or five at each Committee Meeting. Neither is there any record of the initial subscription rates, though we do know that in 1837 the rate was increased to 8/- (40p) for full membership and 4/- (20p) for non-readers. Just what the distinction was between members and non-readers and what their respective privileges were becomes clearer later.

**The first anniversary on November 3 1835** was held at the Swan Hotel. The Rules were revised but, as there was no recorded note of what they may have been, we are none the wiser. It appears that the revised rules were printed and distributed but no copies exist unhappily.

**It was on April 7 1836** that a major decision was taken that was to have a considerable bearing on the future activities of the Institute. It was agreed that the Rev. Wallis should be asked to give a public lecture at the new Town Hall, although of what the subject was to be there is no indication. The lecture was given on April 22 to an audience of 300. This was the first of many that became a very important feature of the Institute's activities over many years to come.

Another important step was taken on November 15 1836, when it was agreed that the following proposition be laid before the General Meeting, to be called for the purpose, on November 22. The proposition was that "it appears highly expedient to extend the benefits of the Mechanics Institute to persons whose means are limited and that the following Rule be adopted as Rule 23 – 'That journeymen, mechanics, weavers, apprentices, labourers and servants shall be admitted as Readers and have the privilege of reading the books subject to the Rules and Regulations of the Institute and proposing books for the Library and attending all lectures upon payment of 1/- (5p) per quarter in advance.'" This was confirmed and so the original object of the Mechanics Institute, as we suppose it to have been, was on the way to fulfilment.

Meanwhile books were being added to the Library at an increasing rate and it could be said that the Institute was beginning to make its mark on Sudbury and was increasingly to become accepted as a centre of culture as new and successful activities became part of its character and made a definite contribution to the life of the town.

Amusing in the light of later years but significant and perhaps typical of society at that stage is the following extract from the Minutes of an AGM held on November 3 1837 when it was resolved "that any subscriber may propose a work for purchase provided such book be not a novel or on controversial divinity or of an immoral or irreligious tendency". This is especially amusing as in fact Robinson Crusoe had just been added to the Library a few weeks previously and, if not a work of fiction, how else was it to be classified? Or was there some strange distinction between a novel and a work of fiction?

A year later came the offer of the use of part of a building that was about to be appropriated as an Infant School for the purpose of a Library and lecture room. The rent was to be £5 per annum and this was agreed. By now lectures had become a regular feature and non-subscribers were admitted to them at a charge of 6d (2½p).

She may not have been the first lady member but the first recorded female as a member was Isobella Nichols, admitted to membership on December 17 1838. This is deemed worth a mention because there was to be much time occupied by Committees and General Meetings throughout the years to come (indeed, the century or more to come) about the inclusion and exclusion of lady members.

**In 1839** came an instance of the Institute taking upon itself a role in public affairs, when the Secretary was instructed to send a petition to the Houses of Parliament that the passage of a bill then in process should be altered in order to approve Rowland Hill's plan for uniform rate of postage. In fact this became law in 1840 but it would be a bold man who claimed that the decision was influenced by the Institute! However, it is significant as an indication that the Institute was beginning to widen its horizons and assume a sense of authority. But still the inclusion of fiction was opposed and indeed this was to be the position for some long time to come. It was, and was to remain, a pretty earnest set-up.

Mr. Woolley was a fortunate man when he was appointed Librarian at £5 per annum plus £1 for collection of subscriptions. The Committee was considering "What better mode or plan can be adopted for extending the benefits of the Institution" after some six years of existence.

Proof that the Institute was regarded primarily as a Library came in the form of a letter from a group of Halstead residents seeking membership as "Halstead is in very much need of a Library". There being nothing in the Rules to exclude them, their application was approved.

At last there appeared some reference to the nature of the lectures, at least to three of them, on 'Bees', 'Hydraulics' and 'Elocution'.

Around this time reference can be made to the receiving of gifts or objects, mostly unspecified, of a scientific, archaeological, antique and natural history nature and a Museum came into being that was to be highly regarded in the years to come.

The Infant School now demanded that a charge of 1/- (5p) per week should be made for heating. The suggestion was somewhat churlishly refused as exorbitant and notice was given of the termination of the Institute's use of the premises. The 'exorbitant' demands of the Infant School, however, gave rise to a very important event in the Institute's history.

**In 1840** a building in Friars Street was offered for sale for £150 but the offer, for reasons unexplained and unrecorded, was swiftly withdrawn. However, in February 1841 the AGM approved the purchase of a Mr. Ely's premises in Friars Street for the sum of £299 and for the building on the site of "commodious apartments for the Institute, due provision being made for its probable extension". Authority was given for the raising of a sum of £500, an appeal being made to members to loan money to help finance the proposition. At the same time, the Committee was authorised to go ahead with plans for the erection of a new building on the site at a cost not to exceed £350. A mortgage was to be negotiated – and was subsequently granted – and the interest was not to exceed 4½%, with the building to be completed within one month, which apparently it was.

By now the Library possessed over 1000 books and during the year there had been 3,350 exchanges or books borrowed. Subjects ranged over a wide spectrum; for example, poetry, biography, history, belles-letters, travel, military exploits, natural history, mechanics and scientific subjects of a wide nature, exploration and many others. A Mr. May, who rented part of the building for £17.17.0d (£17.85p) per annum, with rates assessed as £10 per annum, had his Librarian's salary increased to no less than £8.8.0d (£8.40p) per annum in view of the increase in work undertaken, and his daughter was put in charge of the Reading Room at a fee of 21/- (£1.05p) for three months.

**In 1841** it was found necessary to secure a further loan of £150 and this was raised at "something less than 5%". The building was insured for £500 and the books, Museum specimens and furniture for £250. Incidentally, there is evidence that Museum specimens were being added at an increasing rate and included birds, about which more later.

Subscriptions were now 10/- (50p) per annum – and not without some opposition!

The papers supplied to the Reading Room were to increase rapidly but at this period only a few are mentioned. They were The Times, local papers and The Sun. No wrong or hasty conclusions are to be drawn from the inclusion of the last named. It did not boast a special feature on page 3 and was in fact a chronicle of Parliamentary affairs that appeared only while Parliament was in session.

Membership was now about 175 and it is interesting to read that classes were started in writing that were, in succeeding years, to expand into such subjects as History, Art, Drawing and Shorthand. It had clearly secured for itself a prominent place educationally as well as culturally in the town and its surrounding areas.

Recreation had begun to play a part too and chess and draughts were allowed in the Reading Room, although the decision was fairly speedily rescinded owing to the opposition it created from several members but, needless to say, it eventually became accepted before many years had passed.

As we have already seen, the steam train came to Sudbury in 1849 and the first excursions have been earlier noted. What has not been said was that the excursion in 1850 to Ipswich and Harwich cost 1/6d (7½p) per head – 1/- (5p) for the rail fare and 6d (2½p) for the boat trip from Ipswich to Harwich.

To the chagrin of many recent generations of very worthy and honorary Secretaries, the Secretary in 1852 was paid the princely sum of £4.4.0d (£4.20p) and it should be said the handwriting of those days in itself justified the fee. The composition of the Officers and Committee

numerically was much as it is today; they met on the second Tuesday of the month.

The big and most noteworthy event of that year was the change in name to the Sudbury Literary Institute and Museum.

In spite of recurring financial difficulties, which were with rare persistence overcome, the activities prospered. The Museum grew in size and range of content, the Library flourished, lectures continued to be popular and attract good audiences, and membership steadily, if unspectacularly, increased. More newspapers and by now many magazines were constantly being added to the Reading Room and, when read, were sold, indeed in some cases auctioned, to bring in a useful, if modest, revenue. For instance, at one point, the re-sale of newspapers and magazines were sold in advance at the rate of 2/- (10p) per week.

**In March 1853**, the Town Hall was booked for a stage play that the Sudbury Dramatic Society presented on behalf of the Institute's funds. There is, alas, no further information about this in the Institute's records. It would be interesting to know if there is more about it in those of the Dramatic Society.

It seems that the Institute, in its less austere nature of this period, was beginning to become involved in the various jollifications that had started to become a feature of town life. The Institute itself ran some evenings of 'musical entertainment' and, in one case at least, as much as £3.16.0d (£3.80p) was taken at the door, in addition, supposedly, to income from advance sale of tickets. A Mr. G. L. Andrews was responsible for this departure and was congratulated by the powers that were and promised any assistance. These musical evenings and the lectures appear regularly as monthly features, the lectures being so diverse now as to include cookery. The lecture hall was frequently let to outsiders and in fact for a period used by "the volunteers for drill". The Recreation Room too brought in some revenue from being let and was, for instance, used as a vaccination station at a rent of £4.00 per annum.

It is regrettable that we lack more detailed information about the programmes of the entertainment being provided apart from scant references in Minutes from which we glean, for instance, one evening an entertainment was provided by the Pickwick Historic Club. In the case of Mr. Benn's entertainment, no less than 110 double crown posters and 500 programmes were printed and this gives us some idea of the attendance and popularity of these evenings.

To give a fairly graphic picture of the cost of things then, or the costs the Club had to meet, it might be illuminating to reproduce this printer's quotation from Lewis & Lewis:

200	Crown folio bills for lecture.	4/6 (22½p) per 200
400	Members tickets, coloured, 3 sorts, printed both sides.	8/- (40p) (or 2/- per 100).
150	Lecture tickets, 3 sorts.	3/- (15p)
200	Lecture programmes.	2/- (10p)
75	Lists of members for AGM.	2/6d (12½p)
2000	Labels for books.	5/- (25p)
300	Musical entertainment bills.	6/- (30p)
200	Programmes, large post 4-to, coloured.	4/- (20p)
4	Cheque receipt books for members, 200 leaves each.	10/- (50p)

As will have been gathered from the previous references to a lecture on cookery, in 1877, it was resolved "that ladies be admitted as Library members to the Institute on annual payment of 5/- (25p)".

Since we have been talking of costs, it will make present members feel sick in their stomachs to know that they could have bought, as the Institute did, a ton of coal for 22/- (£1.10p). However, in 1878, things were going well and the Institute prospered, making a profit of £46.16.0d (£46.80p).

Much had been happening in the outside world during the 1860s, of course, while the absence of a Minute Book during the period limits our knowledge of details about much of the Club's work and progress. The Duke of Wellington had died in 1872, Charles Dickens had died, Lincoln had been assassinated and it was the start of the Disraeli-Gladstone saga in the House of Commons.

But some might say the real event was the build up of pressure in the Club to acquire a billiard table, although the first moves to this were frustrated. However, the setback was but temporary as we shall shortly see – and, as indeed, it was bound to be. Whether by way of consolation or compromise we do not know, but a Bagatelle table was introduced but apparently not greatly used.

The premises occupied by the Club in what was then Friars Street are those which form the lower part of Barclays Bank in what is now known as Market Hill and which to this day is distinguishable architecturally from the premises that were those of the Institute. In 1879 the adjoining premises, now Barclays Bank, were offered for sale to the Institute but the offer was refused, presumably on grounds of finance although this was not recorded.

Now, alas, a sad note. It was felt necessary to reprimand some members whose behaviour caused concern and consternation and the culprits were threatened with expulsion from the Institute. A Mr. Self in particular was singled out for using “bad language not in accordance with the usage of the Institute”. He was requested to watch his step. It seems he did. And, as indeed, members do now!

**In 1880** further improvements and additions were made to the building at a cost of £100; the Recreation Room that had been in use for a year or two, in particular, was given attention.

The Sudbury Dramatic Society gave two performances on behalf of the Club but the nature of them is unknown although once again some information about them may lie in the archives of the Society.

Came the anticipation of a recent great argument. Smoking was

banned in the Upper Reading Room; perhaps the early beginning of the debate that continues 100 years later. In this year, too, was born the Sudbury Institute Essay and Debating Society, which thrived for many years to come.

It must have been the subject of considerable discussion and concern, although no mention of it occurs in the Minutes, that the area suffered an earthquake in 1884 that shook the town and caused damage to St. Peter's Church.

**October 11 1889 was the big day** – the date of a memorable meeting. The acquisition of a billiard table was sanctioned at a cost “not exceeding £40”. This was duly accomplished but at a cost of £43 net cash, guaranteed for seven years. The alternative, that for a sum of £45 payment could be spread over three years, was rejected. Members who had paid an annual subscription of one guinea (£1.05p) in advance were entitled to the free use of the table; players were to mark for themselves or be allowed to bring in a marker and the guinea subscribers were privileged to invite “a friend or friends to play a game on payment of 6d (2½p) for 50, 1/- (5p) for 100 and for four-handed games, 1/- (5p) short or 2/- (10p) long” (whatever that may mean: it is quoted directly from the Minutes of the meeting.) “Members having played 50 must after 7 p.m. in the event of others waiting to play give up the table.” Echoes of this or something similar were to sound down the years and remain as familiar to many snooker players! Smoking was forbidden and damage to the cloth carried a penalty of one guinea. The Librarian's duties were extended to include “certain matters relating to the billiard room” and his salary was increased to £15 accordingly. The table and its accessories were insured for £50, the books for £200 and the building for £500, the latter two items at a premium of 17/6d (87½p). Soon a billiards handicap was arranged – entrance fee 1/- (5p); winner's prize, a billiard cue not exceeding 20/- (£1) in value. The need for a prize was hotly contested but the opposers lost the day. Steve Davis would find the prize on the mean side.

**In October 1887**, ladies were admitted to the advantages of the Library and Institute for a maximum subscription of 4/- (20p). Thus the curious

flirtation and rejection throughout the Club's history regarding the part, if any, that ladies should play in the Club's activities continued.

Finally, they had to wait until 1983 before full membership was granted rather than Associate membership, although there was some outrage on the part of ladies that this would necessitate full membership fees but the stupidities of the Sex Discrimination Act left the Club with no choice but to abolish the membership category by means of which ladies paid a reduced subscription. But between these dates the subject remained a matter of frequent discussion with apparently one or two changes to the Rules. At one stage, the ladies for a brief period had a room of their own at the Club for meetings and repose but the running costs of £15 per annum after a capital outlay for equipment of £10.10.0d (£10.50p) proved too much for the finances considering the amount of use to which it was put. It also perhaps indicated that the ladies preferred the company of the gentlemen. Anyway, the Ladies Room had an existence of only three years.

Questions relating to the rules on the use of the billiard table persisted and matters of concern and complaint became strangely familiar over the years and will remain with us in various forms no doubt for time to come, but the popularity of billiards within the Institute was without doubt or question. When it came to suggestions for the acquisition of a second table in 1898, all manner of complications arose, largely to do with the structure of the building and, although the subject was, as we shall see, regularly raised and discussed, it was as regularly deferred over the ensuing 84 years.

The Bagatelle table was sold for £2.10.0d (£2.50p) to the Eastern Hotel and a new cloth for the billiard table had recently been purchased for £16 – or, rather, a second-hand cloth. But one of the more amusing episodes to those of us who have recently continued to argue over the installation of meters in the snooker room was the almost identical pros and cons being argued over some 80 years ago and which resulted in the purchase of an alarm clock at a cost of 2/6d (12½p) to be placed by the table to restrict possession of a table beyond a given time.

**By 1897** and thereafter we come to learn a little about the musical entertainments that have been established some few years earlier. Records now exist, and in some cases even copies of programmes, that give an idea of the varied nature of the entertainment. For instance, apart from a Gilbert & Sullivan Evening, there were programmes of “animated pictures” (one showing Ranji and Tom Hayward at the wicket), followed by songs and humorous duets by a Miss Maisie Riversdale, who seemed particularly popular judging by the several appearances she made, with various partners. There was, too, an Evening Concert: gems from comic operas with musical sketches. Prices of admission: 2/- (10p), 1/- (5p) and 6d (2½p). The lighter side of the Institute's activities were being revealed, therefore, in more directions than one and developing with some rapidity. One wonders whether the Rev. W. Wallis and his 12 Apostles of 1834 would have approved the behaviour of certain members which caused a notice to be posted forbidding members getting on the billiard table and deploring some instances of bad language in the billiard room. Members, then as now, learned to mutter under their breath! But apart from one occasion when the Institute was approached because of noise and nuisance, and one or two minor occurrences, the behaviour of members became as it remains to this day – exemplary!

A blow was struck for freedom, to the chagrin of today's ‘do-gooders’ and some, but not all, medics, when the ban on smoking in the Reading Room was lifted.

Ping-pong was introduced at this time and tournaments were organised and were held to be successful: one such producing a profit of £1.8.8d (£1.44p) and matches were played with other teams from outside.

It is now apparent that recreational activities were beginning to dominate, for not only was a Bridge Club formed and tournaments held, but Whist Drives had arrived and one such took place at the Town Hall to earn the Club a profit of no less than £1.19.0d (£1.95p), no mean contribution in those days to the Institute's finances. Another aspect of recreation, organised not entirely for the Club's benefit but the townspeople at large, was a Garden Fete in 1906, a great success by all

accounts and probably not unique. There is a hint that this was not the first or perhaps the last.

A Promenade Concert had been staged some years earlier in the cricket field and the Sudbury Volunteer Band was engaged for a fee of £3 or £1 "if the weather was inclement". Admission was 3d (1¼p) and the Institute profited to the extent of £2.5.0d (£2.25p). The result and the event were deemed "most satisfactory".

By the end of the century, the Library was beginning to limp somewhat and, despite a grant of £10, the position was not healthy and occasioned much discussions and some dissention.

**The major event** in the first decade of the 20th Century was undoubtedly the decision to adopt the name of The Sudbury Institute Club. This was passed in 1910 and, of course, so it has remained unchanged to this day. It was significant, too, of what we have seen to be the changes in the nature of the Club.

Its original purpose no longer was needed and over 70 years or so it had evolved into something vastly different, although much of its original intentions remained in greatly modified importance. The Library still existed but in less demand and with no likelihood of progress; the Museum persisted and so did the Debating Society; and, to diminishing audiences, the occasional lectures.

Outside the Club, big things had happened. Queen Victoria had died in 1901 and the Boer War had ended in 1902. Wireless telegraph messages had been exchanged between King Edward VII and Roosevelt, the American President, to inaugurate the new method of communication between the two countries. That was in 1903, the year of the first flight of a heavier than air machine but, as yet, there were no Old Age Pensions and it was not until 1909 that they were introduced. In the same year, Bleriot stunned everybody by his Cross Channel flight. As so much was happening so rapidly in the world around, with immense improvements in education and industry and commerce, it was obvious that the Institute Club would find its own character changing and the emphasis of its various activities shifting.

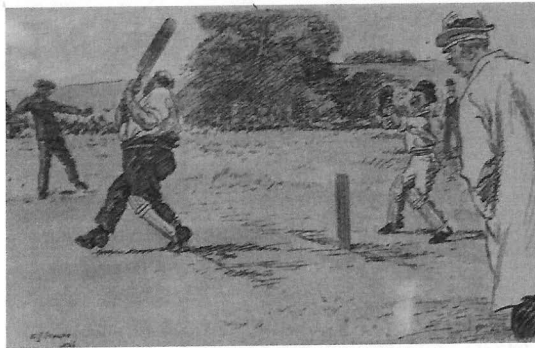
We have reason to be grateful to the year 1910 for in that year a bar was installed. A speaking tube was fixed to aid communication between the bar and the billiard room. Some such but more sophisticated method has since been discussed more than once. There is no record of the length of life of the speaking tube nor how the bar was originally run or by whom, only that the suggestion that Committee members undertook this duty on a rota basis was firmly rejected by the Committee itself.

Little happened in the affairs of the Club worth chronicling for the period of 1910 to 1914. Mostly its achievements, worthy enough in themselves, concerned improvements in furnishings and furniture for the comfort of members and general repairs. But while these discussions of no great moment were going on, the clouds were gathering and the war with Germany was approaching inevitably and was, of course, declared on August 3 1914. No immediate reference to this not unimportant event appeared in the Minutes until September 1915, when the Rev. R. B. Hoyle wrote to the Club suggesting that soldiers billeted in the town and neighbouring districts be allowed to use the Reading Room. This suggestion, believe it or not, was turned down at the time, although six months later other views prevailed and troops were invited to play billiards and bridge matches for the Club and, in July, members of the Forces were admitted as Honorary Members.

A special levy was imposed on members and realised the sum of £8.2.6d (£8.22½p) to offset a deficit of £8.18.9d (£8.94p).

Although the recreational activities were increasingly to dominate and the cultural side of things were on the retreat, books were still being purchased for the Library. Strangely, the Debating Society seemingly flourished. It could be said that it still does but somewhat less formally and round the bar!

One of the events that affected the town and its inhabitants but gave cause to no comment at any Committee Meeting – or at least nothing that was recorded, though it must have been the subject for considerable comment among the members generally – was the Zeppelin raid on East Anglia on March 31 1916. At 11 p.m. bombs fell on Sudbury near the Cemetery in East Street, Constitution Hill, Melford Road and



**Left:** An original 1926 cartoon from "Punch" magazine, emphasising the club's affection for and links with cricket. Sydney Hyde's cricket library is in the committee room.

elsewhere. In all, 30 bombs fell in Sudbury and its near surroundings. One Zeppelin was destroyed although the exact location of its execution is not recorded in the annals consulted.

The Club had appealed to the Carnegie Trust in 1918 for a grant for the Library but it was rejected in 1919. However, the Library continued to struggle on, although some books were sold.

The war years had passed without any great event of importance to the Club so far as the records show. There is nothing in them to indicate if any members lost their lives or were seriously wounded, or indeed if or to what extent the Armed Forces claimed Club members.

Subscriptions were now 15/6d (77½p) per annum or 8/- (40p) per half year, 4/6d (22½p) quarterly plus 2/- (10p) per annum for the use of the Recreation Room.

**In April 1920** 'Veritas' gave a concert for the Club's benefit at the Victoria Hall. The cost of the hall was £5 but the concert produced a profit of £18.13.5d (£18.67½p). Who or what was 'Veritas'? About this there is no clue; however, it, they, he or she must have been popular to produce such a good house.

While the Whist Drives continued to be well-attended and useful, once again the ladies tried to assert their rights by asking to hold their own Whist Drive. This was deferred owing to other entertainments but one could be forgiven for regarding the response as in the nature of a snub to which the ladies should by then have become well accustomed.

Certainly there is no indication that it ever took place.

**In 1923** the Club was in need of a new Steward and Stewardess and they were sought on the basis of £15 per annum with 5% commission on all subscriptions handled and processed, 5% commission on bar receipts and 2½% on receipts from the billiard table. After all, although it was true for a temporary period only, the Club's finances were in a healthy state with as much as £100 invested in War Loan and the bar doing well. Gold Flake cigarettes were in greatest demand at 11½d (5½p) for 20, whisky and gin 7d (3p) a measure, but although the actual price of a pint of beer seems never to be minuted, the numerous and vociferous complaints about a rise of 1d (½p) a pint were. All strangely familiar? Well, except for the prices!

Greene King generously presented the Club with a set of billiard shades in 1918 and yet again the decision on a second billiard table was deferred. The discussion was to go on for many years yet. Familiar, too, to present members was the complaint loudly voiced that the Billiard Handicap started in October 1927 was still not completed by October 1928 but the Committee showed firmness in decreeing that it be so by the end of the year.

With all the discussions about ladies membership that went on over the years (and were to continue to do so), a strange thing came to light only recently, although it is plainly recorded in the Minutes. A lady, Mrs. N. W. Barnardiston, was elected President in 1932 and was to serve as such until and including 1934. This came about, presumably, as a tribute to Major General Barnardiston, who had been a greatly respected President for 41 years until 1919 and who, in that capacity, had guided the Club through many a crisis and difficulty. It would be interesting to have some record of the conversations, opinions and discussions that must surely have preceded the election of Mrs. N. W. Barnardiston.

The new President took over at a difficult time when once again finances were at a low ebb and negotiations commenced to raise a loan on mortgage. Strangely, despite an offer of a loan of £800 from a Committee Member, Mr. Berry, at 5%, although it was recorded in the

Minutes, together with the fact that no decision was immediately taken, no further reference to the offer appears and it can be assumed that it was never taken up. However, the Building Society, while refusing an increase in the mortgage, reduced its interest rate on the existing loan from 5% to 4%. Following this, an appeal was made to members of loan shares to the extent of £150. This was on December 1 1933 and, by December 14th, £9 had been the response. What had prevented Mr. Berry from contributing? Even the reasons for refusing his offer in whole or in part remain a mystery.

A hoary old chestnut caused heated arguments at the AGM in 1934, as it has ever since, namely that if subscriptions were 12 months overdue, membership should be cancelled. This was resolved along these lines but did not prevent subsequent discussions through succeeding years and who would be brave enough to assert that there will be no more in the years to come?

Throughout the period since the end of the 1914-1918 War, the Club had flourished generally, if not always financially. Some activities had declined as we shall see but others prospered, notably in the field of recreation and social activity, by which we mean perhaps the bar! But while things went along relatively smoothly inside the Club, and Committees were occupied with arguments about dartboards, whist drives and bridge tables, events of some importance nationally and internationally were building up and casting a gloom over the country – or that part of it that was prepared to bother. A gentleman-painter by the name of Hitler entered the scene and became Chancellor of Germany. The country had other matters to distress it, too, for King George V died in 1936 and King Edward VIII abdicated a few months later. On a happier note for some 600 people, the salaries of Members of Parliament were raised from £400 to £600, held by many as gross overpayment. Some still hold the same view.

The year was outstanding perhaps for it heralded yet another innovation – the installation of electric lighting to the Club's premises.

More notable even than this was the sale of the Club's premises for £1,200 in 1934, a sum surmised by various references to this figure in

the Minutes though nowhere in the Minutes is there any confirmation that this was the final figure, nor are there any documents relating to the sale. The purchasers were Barclays Bank who leased the premises back to the Club for £60 per annum. The tenancy lasted for something more than 30 years but not, be it emphasised, at the same rental! Many structural improvements and alterations were carried out following the new situation.

The range of newspapers and magazines bought for the Reading Room was not very wide indeed, reflecting the changed nature of its members and the Club in general. Many at this time were of a comparatively light nature: even so, one doubts whether 'Mayfair' would have been sanctioned, although 'Lilliput' was, and 'Lilliput' in those days must have caused a few eyebrows to be raised. The list is too long to be quoted here but is of interest; but the time was to come when, sadly, it had to be severely cut.

The more relaxed atmosphere of the Club did not prevent a very definite 'thumbs down' to the suggestion of a pin-table, although a second dartboard was purchased, but it was discovered that there was insufficient room to house it and it was given away.

**On September 3 1939**, war was declared and much attention had to be given to blacking out the Club premises. The immediate tragedy to follow this was the news that the Club had lost £42 on the year and, in February 1940, efforts were being made to find ways and means of encouraging members of the Forces to make greater use of the Club's facilities. By the end of 1941, economies were being made, notable among them the reduction in the number of papers in the Reading Room. No fires were to be lit in the Reading Room which was subsequently closed and accommodation for reading was provided in the Bar. This may have been for reasons of Club economy or in the National Interest responding to the call for conservation of fuel but it presumably did some good to the bar takings. Meetings were again held in the Reading Room in the summer months but armchairs were sold so the end was certainly in sight and indeed came a few years later.

Little of moment occurred concerning Club affairs during the war and, as in World War I, there was no official mention of Club Members losing their lives or even of any indication of how the war affected membership through the call-up for the Forces.

**Peace in Europe came on May 7 1945**, to be followed on 14th August by the surrender of Japan. Very soon £200 was spent on Club improvements and alterations, although it would seem that subsequently more than this must eventually have been undertaken and spent. Indeed from a Minute some months later, it can be inferred that something more than £300 was agreed and quite a lot of work could be done for such a sum, even as late as 1947.

A small and presumably not unexpected cloud appeared in August 1948 when Barclays Bank requested an increase in the rental to £70, plus three quarters of the rates amounting to £28.18.5d (£28.92½p). Naturally this was not immediately acceptable to the Club and agreement was reached on the basis of £80 per annum, inclusive of rates, the lease to be renewed for five years without the option to renew further. Once again, and inevitably, subscriptions were increased to 15/- (75p).

For those of younger years or poor memories, it might interest them to have some indication of wages and salaries more or less typical of the times, say 40 years ago. The Steward was in 1949 paid at the rate of 2/3d (11p) per hour on the basis of a 30 hour week - £3.7.6d (£3.37½p) per week, with free accommodation, heat and light, worth, it might be reasonably estimated, about £4.10.0d (£4.50) per week in total. By no means handsome, it was by no means untypical.

Outings which included townspeople were still being held to such places as the Norfolk Broads, Hunstanton and Margate, but nothing quite as ambitious as the present-day outings to Boulogne, nor possibly, it would seem, as exciting.

**An event was organised on February 28 1950** that was to become accepted in following years as one of the most important annual entertainments in the Town's activities. A dance was held at the Town

Hall in aid of the Club funds. It was a financial success as well as being a big social success and was repeated in 1951 and annually thereafter for some considerable time. It is, of course, still a success and an important date in the calendar of many guests other than Club Members.

Although there were a few hundred pounds invested – just how much is not apparent – losses on the year's working still occurred and donations from Members continually sought. Indeed a raffle was instituted but with what results we do not know but as it seems not to have been repeated it was presumably not a notable success. Our very recent ventures in this respect tell a different story.

**At the AGM in 1951**, it was revealed that a proposed increase in the cost of a pint of beer would secure £40 per annum. The proposition was thrown out with some hint of indignation. No better fate awaited a suggestion that there should be a Ladies Night once monthly. This is perplexing because there is no record of the fact that ladies' membership had ceased officially although obviously at some time it had. The poor dears seem to have had a rough ride throughout the century. In this day and age, one could visualise a sort of Greenham Common protest outside 54 Station Road if the attitude had persisted!

**Queen Elizabeth became Queen on February 7 1952** on the death of King George VI; a new era for the country but not as yet for the Sudbury Institute Club.

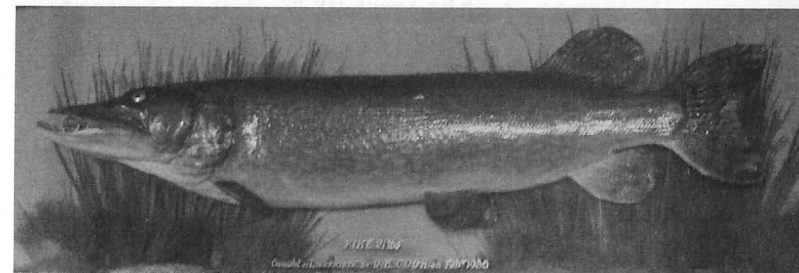
The Museum must have been disbanded by now but once again just when and how we do not know and the memories of members at the time and who are alive seem to falter on this unfortunate event. It is known that during its life it was regarded as a valued collection, including for instance 310 British and 350 foreign birds. What happened to them? It is thought they may have been given to the Ipswich Museum, together with many geological and archaeological specimens, coins, stamps and conceivably some old prints. Perhaps enquiries should be made as a matter of history through the Curator at the Ipswich Museum.

Similar mystery surrounds the disposal of the Library. For some long period, of course, the public Libraries had been in existence as well as subscription Libraries, in particular Mudies, W. H. Smith, from as early as 1860 and, much later, Boots, not to mention Harrods and The Times Book Club. It was inevitable that the Club's Library would fall into disuse in the face of competition but just when it closed and to whom it was given is not known and again even the memories of those alive at the time can give us no help. At one stage, W. H. Smith's had offered to buy the books but this offer was not accepted and the Library continued for a while subsequent to this. Sadly, it must be pondered on the value of many of the hundreds of books disposed of for no compensation. Some would undoubtedly be of value if disposed of commercially and particularly at today's prices in the antique and second-hand market. A case of spilt milk being no longer worth crying over.

**Officers became much occupied in 1958 and 1959** with a complete modernisation of the premises and a great deal of thought was given to re-carpeting and refurnishing, oil central heating, together with ideas for a new bar. Costs in this respect are interesting for we are now talking in terms of not so long ago: central heating £500, carpeting throughout £250, a new bar £250, decorations £75, furnishings £250. A very different picture from the one that emerged 25 years later! The scheme was not carried out in its entirety but the bulk of it was effected within a year and a Guest Night to mark the completion of the new work was held on May 4 1959.

There is mention of food at about this time but it had probably been provided for some time previously. Pork pies and cheese seem to have been much in favour plus, of course, pickles.

A new five-year lease was agreed with Barclays Bank at a rental of £90 plus rates in 1960 and central heating was installed. Facts about the Club's events between 1961-65 are sketchy to say the least owing to the absence of Minutes covering this period but it is obvious from information gathered from one source and another that it went through its customary tribulations about finances and, as always, survived. By now, too, the Debating Society had demised and similarly lectures



**Above:** The Pike - The Stuffed 21lb pike caught in 1936 by D.E. Cook is a reminder of the life that used to teem in our rivers.

had ceased so that, together with the closing of the Library and Museum, almost all its original character, and indeed the old mainstays of the Institute, had disappeared for the Reading Room, too, had shut down. What in effect had been left was a social and recreational club and a good one at that. As such it became notable for its spirit of friendship and comradeship, qualities that were to be preserved and fostered to become as they now are, much valued and recognised as the true basis of the Club's popularity.

Although there had, it seems been renewed discussion on further proposed improvements, these were hampered by the fact that the lease on the premises was to expire in March 1966 and approaches to Barclays regarding security of tenure revealed that, although the Bank had not yet programmed a scheme for alterations involving the part of their property occupied by the Club and that no start on any such plan would be made for at least 18 months, the writing was clearly on the wall. Thus, little in the way of alterations was attempted.

Having referred already to its development as a Social Club, it did not proceed without caution in that direction. Indeed, one of the more courageous Members was bold enough in 1966 to propose installing a "one-armed bandit" machine but the proposal was defeated. Outings and games tournaments were still a feature and the Dinner Dance remained a profitable and notable event.

**The bombshell duly arrived on August 30 1966** when Barclays gave warning that the termination of the lease was imminent as

possession was required by April 27 1968. While a long harangue ensued between the two parties regarding the time limit imposed and other matters concerning the premises, searches were hurriedly being made for alternative accommodation. One or two events took place at this time: subscriptions were raised to £2 per person and the Sudbury Bridge Club had, for their part, been given notice to quit their premises. It was suggested that the two Clubs combine. There was, it would appear, a little haggling over the manner of the marriage but in the final event the Sudbury Bridge Club was granted permission to use the Committee Room and given full facilities of the Club and ultimately, of course, were admitted as full members as they are now, operating happily and successfully as the Bridge Section of the Sudbury Institute Club. They meet regularly on Thursday afternoons in the Club's Committee Rooms and from the start made a useful contribution to the Club's life.

The previously despised gaming machine was installed for a trial period of four weeks and contributed £21. The machine remained and no subsequent Treasurer has regretted the decision.

The long drawn-out wrangle with Barclays ended in 1968 when the Club was offered £478 if vacation could be completed in six months or £578 if in three months. It proved impossible to take advantage of the more generous offer but vacation was completed within six months.

There are, of course, Members happily still with us who can well remember the trauma of those months and, for those of us who came later on the scene, it is not difficult to imagine the problems and disappointments before a solution was found.

The Chairman had purchased a property in Station Road for £5,000; necessary repairs and alterations would cost £2,000. It was offered to the Club on lease at a cost of £1,650 per annum.

The immediate problem of chief concern was to find the finance to secure and equip the new premises. Appeals were made to members and others too for loans and donations. The amount received was £2,150; a shortfall of £2,850 if the Club was to purchase the building and the situation, with only £800 in hand, was serious if not desperate.

A special meeting was called to consider the matter and bravely it was decided to go ahead and purchase the property in Station Road. Funds had climbed to a figure of £3,360 and the shortfall had been reduced to £1,700. It should be recorded with gratitude that the newly installed Bridge Section themselves contributed £250 as a loan over 12 months.

The Club moved into its new premises, formerly occupied by the Suffolk Free Press, at 54 Station Road – its present address – on July 8 1968. Members should not ever forget the courage and determination and, indeed, also the confidence shown by the Officers and Committee, supported by the Club Membership generally, that enabled the Club to surmount what must have seemed the insurmountable and, by so doing, put the Club on a route that has led to comparative prosperity and success and which enabled much good work to be undertaken in subsequent years.

Part of the upstairs floor was let at a rental of £250 per annum to a tenant who still occupies the space, though not, be it said, at the same rental. Electric storage heaters were installed and considerable alterations made, many of them structural, to meet the immediate needs of the Club for its proper functioning. Once again we have to give generous praise to a splendid volunteer force who shouldered the labour and responsibility involved. It would be good and in many ways right to mention the names of the labour force but it would also be invidious. Several are fortunately still with us and playing an active part; some, alas, have died but their endeavours are being enjoyed by us all.

The old, old question about the admission of ladies once again reared its head and after a Committee had been set up yet again to make recommendations, on April 15 1970, it was resolved ladies "be admitted to the bar for a trial period of one month". Just what was to be learned from that period is not very obvious but one suspects that the tactics were employed to cover a graceful retreat on the part of some or to provide 'a foot in the door' on the part of others to ensure that admission became a certainty. Once again, one has cause to ponder why the admission or participation of ladies arose so often and was several times positively passed and recorded yet never in the Minutes is there any

mention of these decisions being rescinded. However, be that as it may, ladies were accepted as Associate Members in 1971 and their presence has graced the Club ever since without further argument. And now they have the Sex Discrimination Act on their side!

In spite of much voluntary work, some alterations had to be done professionally of course, and Percy Brown & Son undertook these at a "probable" cost of £930. Whether that proved to be the final cost is not recorded but the Company "agreed to come to some arrangement about payment" and it would seem that the arrangement was both agreeable and generous. The general layout of the Club was much as many will remember it to have been until 1981. The rear room was used for snooker, the front room at first the bar but later a Committee Room and Card Room, the main room accommodated the bar.

**In 1969** the whole was insured for £8,250, of which £250 was cover for stock. The bar itself was making a monthly profit of around £50. When the bar was moved, as indicated above, from the front to the main room in 1970, the cost was £225.

To supplement income and help in the repayment of debts, "surplus effects" were sold for £17.15.6d (£17.77½p), while the sale of prints that mostly had been in the possession of the Club (and part of the Museum?) sold for £133.19.0d (£133.95p). Some of the prints were retained and are on display today.

Suggestions for the conversion and better use of the premises were made from time to time, some ingenious and some ingenuous. One that made much sense on the surface and was repeated from time to time and, indeed, may possibly one day be accomplished, was that the upstairs room be converted into a games room. Though it may not in the light of subsequent events be needed as a games room, there are other uses to which it might well be put at some future date and become the basis of the next stage of development.

A demand for table tennis became apparent in 1971 but was rejected. Indeed one cannot see how it could have been otherwise given the accommodation then available. Wine and Cheese Parties were held and

were successful and undoubtedly the newly enfranchised ladies had a hand in the provision of food, as they did frequently and generously for the special evening functions.

By now the Club boasted a bank balance of £1,700. Bar billiards was installed but proved a failure and, although after a lapse of time, table tennis was approved and the upper floor made ready for it, the implementation was postponed.

Loans to the extent of £1,015 were repaid in July 1973 and this was increased to £1,125 as the Club's finances began to prosper and its balance crept up to £3,225. At the AGM in November 1973, the President was able to report that, of the £5,000 loan, £2,000 was to be regarded as gifts.

By now the bar was open at lunch times on Thursdays, the machine was making significant contributions and the bar profits were in the nature of £150 per month, and a further £485 of debts had been repaid.

The question of a second snooker table was strongly engaging the thoughts of the Committee and considerable pressure was being exerted on them by playing members. Professional opinion was sought and it was agreed that the upstairs room was strong enough to support it. This is hardly surprising since it has been learned that the Suffolk Free Press housed printing plant on the floor. However, no immediate move was made in this connection. A billiard table had, however, been offered to the Club on hire at a cost of £1 per annum but the cost of alterations to the upstairs room to convert it for the purpose of snooker would have been £1,000 minimum.

**In 1974** the Club received an offer from an M. Allen that he purchase the site and sell the Club that part of it that it might require for its own purpose. It was thought the sale price could be £16,000 and the Club's part of the new premises could be purchased for £4,000 plus the cost of alterations. Present members are much indebted to those Members who, at the time and on the recommendation of their Committee, rejected the offer. By this time the loan had been reduced to £600.

In March 1974, the Club moved boldly into the 20th Century and installed the telephone. It has been said that the telephone number was not published in the Directory at the time as some chauvinistic, or maybe cowardly, males feared that their wives might interrupt their snooker or their drinking to call them home – or, more likely, to warn them that the Sunday joint was spoiling.

Subscriptions now jumped to £3 and there were by now 172 Members and 59 Associates.

It was agreed that the second billiard table be hired from the Gainsborough and Cornard Club for a minimum period of five years at the already accepted hire fee of £1 per annum, with the thought then still alive that it might be installed upstairs, although there remained considerable opposition. £400 in loans had been promised from various sources to help towards the high cost of conversion. At the AGM it was agreed that £1,200 be repaid to Members who had made loans.

During the next two or three years, the Club made uneventful progress but gained members steadily. However, a vitally important decision was taken at an Extraordinary Meeting in January 1978 when, on the recommendation of the Committee, it was agreed to purchase the adjoining vacant property with a view to making improvements to the Club at some future date. There had been discussion about this possibility for some time but the asking price was beyond reach. However, when the property was finally offered to the Club for £4,500 freehold, it became a proposition worth close consideration.

There was, however, a condition that the Club must give a speedy decision and thus the matter became one of urgency. At the meeting, the pros and cons were thoroughly thrashed out. It was opposed in particular by a substantial number of Members who quite reasonably held that the Club should better exploit the space it already possessed upstairs. Others wondered if it could be afforded. Thus the decision to proceed was by no means unanimously passed but there was a healthy majority in favour. The purchase was to be largely subsidised by loans from members whose response was generous. What had the Club bought? On the face of it, a hideously dirty derelict building, the only

occupants being pigeons, dead and alive, became, as it was bound to do, a constant headache from the maintenance point of view. Indeed, so dilapidated was it that some regarded it as a health hazard. But the Club had bought a site that would allow for development and was of such a nature that it offered several options when the time came to make use of it. As the months passed, it also occasioned a certain amount of criticism that the Club had bought a white elephant (an unfortunate phrase perhaps) as there were few signs of fulfilling the original intention of using it for the benefit of the Club. These criticisms were somewhat unfair and impatient, for the next step had to be a serious and costly one.

**In 1980**, the derelict structure was demolished. The Club could now more than double its size if it so wished for there was vacant usable space at the side and rear of the Club's premises. In the same year plans were drawn up by an architect making use of much of the space available. The primary consideration was to provide accommodation for a second billiard table but other improvements had been included. Estimates were obtained but, by then, the national economy had become shaky and the future uncertain, with interest rates still climbing. The project was reluctantly postponed but it became clear to members that the ideas had not been abandoned.

In 1982 the economic scene had not greatly improved but had steadied somewhat and it was felt that, if a step forward was not taken at that stage, the postponement would become indefinite and more likely the project would never get off the ground. Moreover, the pressure on the snooker table was increasing and, if the Club was not losing Members, many were using the Club less because the opportunities of a game were decreasing. Also competition had established itself in the town, both in terms of snooker opportunities and the success of a smart social club.

The Committee therefore gave the Officers authority to seek new plans and estimates without commitment. A small working party, comprising of the Chairman and Officers, together with two old and valued Members who were also Vice Chairmen, was set up to examine every aspect of the proposal and, in particular, its profitability. The plans submitted were better and more ambitious than the previous ones and

not only allowed for greater expansion than before but increased comfort for Members generally.

The Treasurer and Chairman went deeply into the financial aspects and the Treasurer produced projections of anticipated revenue and expenditure covering a five year period, bearing in mind, of course, the relevant factors of inflation and the increased membership and benefits that would arise from the much improved facilities. The Club itself was in a healthy financial position but had to face probably capital expenditure of some £30,000 and no way had it resources of its own to meet such a sum.

Greene King & Co was approached and offered the Club a loan of £7,500 repayable over 10 years at the low interest rate of 5%. A good beginning. Then a very helpful Bank Manager was prepared to make us a loan of rather more than we needed. To what extent our Treasurer influenced the Bank's generosity we do not know or ask, but it was a good piece of negotiation. The Club funds were also in a position to contribute a healthy sum.

The plan doubled the area of the existing Club, allowed for a recreation room that amply held two snooker tables and still left as such (and indeed more) room for spectator accommodation and other recreational or social facilities and functions. The wall dividing the old billiard room and the bar was replaced by a wide archway and the former was well furnished to become a comfortable and attractive lounge. The toilets were enlarged and much improved, the kitchen was expanded and re-equipped and the cellar brought up to standard.

The scheme was unanimously approved at the AGM in November 1981 and the work was substantially completed by the summer of 1982 and officially opened at a celebratory party on September 3 1982 and the party, as may be imagined, made a splendid start to improved bar takings!

Let it be said that predictions made by the Sub-committee and heartily supported by the General Committee have been more than realised. Although the work was carried out by Percy Brown & Son and sub-contractors, several members did sterling work with regard to fixtures

and fittings.

It should be re-emphasised, as it was at the time, that one major factor borne in mind throughout was that the character and nature of the Club must not alter with the physical changes. Nor have they.

It had been the intention to introduce food and this was made possible with the appointment of Mr. Len Barrell as Steward and through the splendid co-operation and enthusiasm of his wife, Doris, who became involved with all the activities. The bar is in good hands indeed and, from September 3 1982, was opened up from noon to 2 p.m. every day of the week.

**An innovation in 1982** was to combine the customary Christmas Draw jollifications with carol singing. The Sudbury Choral Society and the Long Melford Silver Band very happily supported the evening and it is hoped that these evenings will become established as a notable annual Christmas event.

Since the changes, the Social and Entertainments Committee have become a very active body, both on the social and recreational sides, and much credit and thanks are due to them. The Club has greatly benefited by their enthusiasm and energy.

Every Club, Institution and Association is dependent upon its nucleus of devotees to expend their energies and enthusiasm and to accept responsibility for the good of the many who gladly enjoy the fruits of such endeavour. It is evident throughout the various stages through which the Sudbury Institute Club has passed that it was certainly no exception to the rule and that it, too, always had its band of such devotees. It is no less true of more recent times and, in particular, since 1968, and in its marked progress of the last two decades. It is also heartening that it still has today such enthusiasms allied to some very wise heads who are in the splendid tradition, and that there are those who can be discerned who will continue to lead the Club into even better things and at the same time preserve its special nature. The Sudbury Institute Club in its 150th anniversary year is in good hands.

## 1984-2009

At the AGM on 30th October 1984 the Secretary, Alan Wheeler, reported on the hiring of the Town Hall for a 150th anniversary dinner and dance. In addition he reported 'a new automatic loft ladder (was) installed after once seeing the Steward (Len Barrell) swinging, without a parachute, from the loft opening'. During the past year the Membership Committee 'interviewed and recommended 48 applicants for election'. There were now 317 members, including 56 associates.

During the year, the charges for using the snooker table were discussed and payment was raised to the exalted heights of 10p for six minutes or £1 an hour.

In April it was reported to the Committee that the President, Sydney Hyde, was seriously ill in St. Edmundsbury Nursing Home at Bury St. Edmunds, where he subsequently died.

At the same meeting, Ted Cornish reported on the fixture list for the Club's cricket team, for which six matches had been arranged.

At the Club's AGM held in October 1985, the new President, John Wardman, compared the Club to a first class meal, the 'real meat of the Club', the Secretary, Alan Wheeler and Treasurer, Martin Walker, being compared to 'roast beef and Yorkshire pudding'. Photos of the two immediate past Presidents, Leslie Francis and Sydney Hyde, were to be framed and hung opposite the bar.

In the Secretary's report mention was made of the Club's social activities – a Dinner Dance, the Christmas Draw evening, the New Year's Eve party plus snooker singles and doubles competitions and a horse racing evening, plus the traditional Fruit and Veg Show in September. Recently Sydney Hyde's widow, Diane, had donated her late husband's 'treasured collection of cricket books' to be displayed securely in the Club for members' enjoyment.



**Above:** Around the club's two snooker tables are four humorous prints by Arthur Sarnoff of which this is one. They were to be found in many snooker clubs in the 1980s.

A Special General Meeting, called for 22nd April 1986, discussed the oft recurring subject of poor support from a large proportion of members and a drop in bar takings over the previous year. The Steward was spoken to on the subject.

Redecoration of the outside of the Club had been completed and a team of volunteers redecorated the Club lounge and games room during the year. The bar was to be open 'for a trial period' from 7.00 p.m. to 10.30 p.m. on Sunday evenings, mainly for the benefit of Club cricketers returning from matches but to be manned by volunteers. Tony Robinson suggested an 'Open Evening' so that 'friends of Members could come and see what the Club had to offer'.

Membership had declined to 243 by the time of the 1986 AGM, of which 46 were associates. At the AGM it was noted that the Club's single wicket cricket competition was won in 'monsoon weather' by Stephen Cornish 'probably because, being quite tall, he could keep

his head above water'. One hundred tickets were sold for the Annual Dinner Dance held at Lucas CAV's Social Centre in October and 'the Club made a small profit'. A decline of 20% in bar takings over the past four years was cause for concern.

At the December committee meeting, it was reported that malt whisky was now available 'at 65p per tot'. For 1987 the new Secretary, Colin Jordan, had drawn up a proposed year plan, detailing projected events which were inserted in the minutes. It makes the Club look a hive of activity!

A pool table came into operation in early 1987 and the need for an 'extractor fan for the Sports Hall' was discussed. A fixture list for the cricket section of the Club shows an ambitious 31 fixtures arranged for Wednesdays and Sundays throughout the summer.

Bar takings were reported as 'very good – particularly on Sunday evenings when our Cricketers were entertaining their 'victors' (victims?)'.

The winner of a cycle ride to Bury St. Edmunds on 21st June was Ted Cornish with a time of 2 hours 38 minutes. The Minutes add 'the fact that W. E. Cornish was also the timekeeper had no significance, it was said'.

At the November AGM it was agreed that the subscription should be increased to £10, together with a £5 joining fee from 1st January 1988. Perhaps reflecting the influence of inflation, at the 1989 AGM a further increase in subscriptions to £15 was passed, although pensioners would only be asked for £10. The President reported on the donation and installation of the late Sydney Hyde's cricket library 'while the Bar Committee have juggled the figures yet again to make this one of the cheapest places in town to have a drink'. The Secretary announced the winners of various Club tournaments which included Snooker (Singles and Doubles), Table Tennis, Darts, Pool, Single Wicket, and Fruit and Veg Show winners.

In 1989, the then President, John Wardman, decided that 'enough is enough' and proposed Martin Walker as the Club's next President.

Events of that year were reported on by the Secretary, including a Spring Dinner attended by 60 members and the Annual Dinner Dance which attracted 107 members and friends. There had also been 'regular Quiz Evenings ..... Treasure Hunt ..... a Valentine's Party, a 60s Evening and a Tramps Night'.

**By the 1990 AGM** the President was thanking 'our Genial Steward, Paddy' (Paddy Fitzpatrick) who had taken over bar duties during the year. The 'upstairs offices have been occupied by Sudbury Duplicating since last January' and were bringing in much appreciated revenue. Bar takings were reported as 'now reaching figures of £750 per week'; by the following year that had risen to an average of £865. Speaking of increases, members today will wince when they read that, in August 1991, because of brewery increases, the price of a pint rose by 7p to £1.12. A 'Fifty Club' was in operation and was attracting new members.

Alterations to the bar and kitchen had been completed, mostly by volunteer labour, by the AGM of 1992 but it was noted that recession was having an impact on the Club's fortunes. By 1993 a deficit of £4,000 had increased to £5,000, partly due to two burglaries the Club had experienced during the year when the contents of the two gaming machines had been the primary targets.

**Minutes of the AGM for 1996** being absent from the records, we pass on to 1998 at which 20 members were present. Membership had declined to 178. Further break-ins during 1998 prompted the President, Martin Walker, to declare the year an 'Annus Horribilis', echoing the Queen's recent comments about the fire at Windsor Castle.

**By 2002** the inclusion of postal voting for members unable to attend the AGM was being considered and eventually passed. A Beer Festival had become established as a regular event in May; it was to prove a great success and, with the stability behind the bar, membership and takings began to increase steadily.

A weekly quiz had also established itself on a Sunday night, with Brian Starling acting as Quiz Master. This was inherited by the Club from The Boat House and gradually quiz participants became Club members.

**During May 2004** a new Steward was being sought after the resignation of the previous incumbent, Mrs. Pauline Hooper, and her Deputy, Nigel Simpson. Neil Garnham was interviewed and started work on 21st June 2004 ushering in a new era for the Club. A bar rota was set up in August consisting of Neil, Peter Lockyer and Paddy Fitzpatrick.



**Above:** The Sudbury Institute Club 2009

The Beer Festival, now becoming a tradition in the Club, that year recorded a profit of £1,198. At the AGM in 2004 the Club had 468 members, bringing in a revenue from subscriptions of £4,124. Since then a day at Newmarket Races and a Golf Day have become regular events enjoyed by quite a lot of the membership.

**In 2007** Alex Jagger was elected onto an all-male committee and in 2008 Jenny Batley took over as Secretary of the Club whilst Ben King became the third member of an effective and efficient bar staff consisting of Neil Garnham and Peter Lockyer.

This brings the Club firmly up-to-date in its 175th birthday year. It seems in good shape to face the future, whatever it may hold.

**Philip Walker,**  
July 2009

## PRESIDENTS OF THE INSTITUTE CLUB

1834-1840	Rev WILLIAM WALLIS.
1840-1841	Mr WILLIAM DOUBLEDAY KING.
-1842	Col THOMAS FENN ADDISON.
-1843	Mr ROBERT RANSOM.
-1844	Mr NATHANIEL BARNARDISTON.
-1845	Mr JOHN KING.
-1846	Dr ARTHUR SKRIMSHIRE.
-1847	Dr CHARLES MURRAY.
-1848	Mr SAMUEL HIGGS.
-1849	Mr CALODON DUPRE ALEXANDER.
1850-1852	Mr DAVID BADHAM.
1852-1858	Rev EDWARD BULL.
1858-1876	Rev EDWIN SIDNEY.
-1877	Mr JAMES St GEORGE BURKE.
1878-1916	Col NATHANIEL BARNARDISTON.
1916-1919	Maj Gen NATHANIEL W BARNARDISTON.
1919-1932	Mr ALFRED F HITCHCOCK.
1932-1936	Mrs NATHANIEL BARNARDISTON.
1936-1943	Mr HAROLD DEANE.
1943-1953	Mr BENJAMIN BARR.
1953-1963	Mr ERNEST EADY.
1963-1971	Mr EDWARD E EADY.
1971-1981	Mr PETER M CLAYTON.
1981-1982	Mr DOUGLAS E KEY.
1982-1984	Mr LESLIE C FRANCIS.
1984-1985	Mr SIDNEY HYDE.
1985-1989	Mr JOHN E B WARDMAN.
1989-1999	Mr J H MARTIN WALKER.
1999-	Mr JAMES TRAVIS.

## PRESIDENT 1834-1840

Rev William Wallis

Born: 26 2 1797 s/o Joseph & Mary at Colchester.  
Bapt: 2 5 1797 Lion Walk Meeting House-Independent.  
Married: 1826 to Elizabeth ?? Born 1796 Gt Bentley Essex.  
(Found no marriages for Friars Street Chapel)  
Died: -

(Family had moved from Sudbury post 1861 pre 1871).  
1841 Living In Friars Street, Sudbury.  
Independent Minister of the Friars Street Congregational Chapel.  
(Two houses before Quay Lane)  
3 Sons 3 Daughters.  
1824 - 1837 Assistant Minister.

1837 - post 1861 Full Minister.  
Was the founding father of the Mechanics Institute in Sudbury.  
He had been in contact with the Bury St Edmunds Mechanics Institute founded 1824/25, having lectured there.

## PRESIDENT 1840-1841

William Doubleday King

Born: 11 6 1801 s/o John King & Hannah nee Doubleday, Sudbury.  
Married: 13 7 1830 To Susannah Grubb at Stoke Newington, London.  
Born 11 8 1806 d/o John & Sarah nee Lynes at Clonmel Tipperary Ireland.  
Died: 15 12 1870 Sudbury.

Younger brother to John King.  
Helped finance the building of the gas works in 1836.  
Director of the Sudbury Gas and Coke Company Party to an agreement to install gas street lighting in Sudbury in 1840.  
Living at the Red House Friars Green off Bullocks Lane. Agent for The Phoenix & Provident Insurance, The Suffolk Amicable Insurance, Palladium Insurance.  
Agent for Alexanders & Co Bankers Barnets and Hoare & Co Bankers London.  
Later Oakes & Bevan, Moor & Bevan

Market Hill Sudbury, Barclays & Bevan London 1846. Started the Museum of Natural History with the Mechanics and Literary Institute.  
1847 was its first curator.  
The Mechanics Institute had provided Sudbury with its first Library and now had provided the first Museum in Sudbury.  
Another first was Hannah Grubb mother in law to William D King as the first lady member.

## PRESIDENT - 1842

Colonel Thomas Fenn Addison

Born: 14 2 1773 s/o John & Mary.  
Bapt: 16 4 1773 Friars Street Chapel Sudbury.  
Married: 1841 census wife Anna b 1816 (late or a second marriage four young children).  
Died: -

1851 Census Listed as a widower. With two sons Thomas born 1836 and Charles Born 1839.  
Military career.  
4 May 1800 Lieutenant Thomas Fenn Addison 94th Regt known as the "Scotch Regt" In the North American Wars. At Nova Scotia 1st Dragoon Guards  
17 February 1802 Lieutenant Thomas Fenn Addison 1st Dragoon Guards at Staff Head Quarters To Sir John Sherbrooke, Soldier/Governor/ Administrator of the Northern frontiers. (This was in the time that the French had Quebec and the relations with the new American states were not good. A strong measure of military diplomacy was required to maintain Britain's interests).

In Nova Scotia there is a school named after Thomas Fenn Addison.  
Lived at Chilton Lodge.  
An Army career man. A retired Major General.  
Connections with The Fenn Addison Bank in Sudbury 1820-1830  
Archive details with Lloyds bank archives. 1844 Listed as a Justice of the Peace  
A road named after the family off Northern Rd.  
National archives have the reference to access the details. In Lloyds TSB archives details GB/NNAF/C 96601. In Lloyds TSB archives. Tel 020 7489 3946.  
Princess House, 1 Suffolk Lane, London, EC4R OHX

## PRESIDENT - 1843

Robert Ransom

Born: 25 4 1823 s/o Robert (Solicitor) & Sarah at Sudbury  
Bapt: 8 10 1823 St Peters Sudbury  
Married: Emma Jane Pratt 15 8 1849 at St Peters Sudbury.  
( born 1828 Daughter of Benjamin Pratt, Gent) (died 4 3 1899)  
Died: 19 10 1895 Sudbury

1841 Living with parents and 2 brothers and 1 sister.  
After marriage lived in All Saints part of

Friars Street, four houses before Quay Lane. near Rev Wallis. To this day the house is called Ransoms.

Family four sons three daughters.  
 An active committee man. Did a lot of solicitor's work for the Institute free of charge. Introduced members who could help the Institute in many ways  
 His firm of Solicitors still in business in 1937.  
 Solicitor of 16 Friars Street. Master Extra in Chancery. Insurance agent for Atlas Insurance  
 Civic duties:

1864 An Alderman.  
 1873 Town Clerk and Clerk to the Municipal Charities Clerk to the burial board. A staunch Liberal, ardently opposed to the Tory councillors.  
 Mayor of Sudbury 1835 & 1838.  
 Father of William Bayley Ransom.  
 A life long member of the Institute Club.  
 Ending up as a Trustee and a Vice President. Died in 1951 aged 91.

### PRESIDENT - 1844 Nathaniel Clark Barnardiston

**Born:** 5 11 1799 at Long Melford s/o Nathaniel and Elizabeth Bapt.  
**Married:** 1 3 1826 to Sophia Eyres.  
**Died:** 9 8 1883 At The Ryes Lt Henney.

A modern agriculturalist pioneering new farming methods. A Justice of the Peace for Suffolk & Essex.  
 Related to General Sir George Digby-Barker and Lady May of Clare Priory, which was the Barnardiston home in the 18th century.  
 One of the main movers in getting the Corn Exchange built.  
 1840 Thomas Goldsmith sells the old coffee house to a group listed as "The Sudbury Market House Company" headed by Nathaniel Clark Barnardiston with William Wright, William Back, Joseph Hale, James Dalton and Michael Aidham This purchase was to become the new Corn Exchange. Following the purchase there were stables, a yard and brew house adjacent all at the rear of the Coffee House but belonging to the Swan Inn next door and an Edmund Stedman owned one parcel of land that

was purchased who was also member of the Literary Institute. He declined the Presidency in 1845 These three portions were purchased to enlarge the site of the new Corn Exchange, at the rear.  
 Also the President of the Sudbury Horticultural Society whose history goes back to 1804 Head of the family that saw three further Barnardistons as Presidents of the Institute Club:

- 1 - Son Nathaniel Barnardiston.
- 2 - Grandson Major General Nathaniel Walter Barnardiston.
- 3 - Mrs Nathaniel Barnardiston (widow of Major/General Nathaniel Walter Barnardiston).

Total number of years there has been a member of the Barnardiston family as a President is 46 years.

### PRESIDENT - 1845 John King

**Born:** 21 10 1787 s/o John King & Hannah nee Doubleday.  
**Married:** 1861 census declared Un Married aged 73 Living in Friars Street.  
**Died:** 31 3 1863.

Being declared unmarried in a census return indicates a bachelor.  
 In the trade directories John is listed as a bankers and Insurance agent working from Holgate which is opposite the Chaucer estate in Melford Rd Worked with his younger brother William Doubleday, as an agent for Oakes & Bevan.  
 Older brother to William Doubleday King President 1840.

Was instrumental in getting Institute accommodation in North Street School in 1837. Maybe it was the North Street School where the Girling Street car park is.  
 Helped his brother William D King a great deal in starting the Natural History Museum which was part of the Mechanics and Literary Institute.

### PRESIDENT - 1846 Arthur Skrimshire

**Born:** 1814 Peterborough s/o Fennwick and Charlotte.  
**Married:** Emily Eaton b Sudbury 1812.  
**Died:**

1841 - Living with the Smith family in Sepulchre Street (now Gainsborough Street). Un married by 1848 he was married to Emily a Sudbury girl and had a son Arthur b 1846. Sometimes referred to as Doctor. Maybe not in the medical field. Graduate of Edinburgh university reading Medicine. Found no occupation in Sudbury, if he ever graduated in medicine.  
 1851 - Living with his family in the main part of Friars Street  
 (Listed as the Borough Magistrate, as a paid magistrate or the Borough solicitor)  
 1849 - Mayor of Sudbury.

1855 - A Justice of the Peace. Also an Alderman.  
 1861 - Living with his family at Peterborough as a Clergyman.  
 1871 - Vicar of Longthorpe, Peterborough. Also wife Emily.  
 1881 - No trace nationally.  
 Arthur had arrived in Sudbury a single man. Married had one son and then returned to Peterborough. Did not do much in the Institute before or after his Presidency Clearly an educated man but did not seem to have completed or followed his medical University training.

Entered the Church post leaving Sudbury.  
Found no further trace of Arthur and his wife Emily after 1871.

1881 His son Arthur Skrimshire b 1846 Sudbury Now the Vicar of Longthorpe, Peterborough.

### PRESIDENT - 1847 Dr Charles Murray

Born: 1796 Scotland.

Married: Christina Anderson at St Gregorys Sudbury on 24 August 1824.  
(b 10 7 1796 Sudbury d/o Robert and Helena Bentley)

Died:

Family one son Charles b 1828.  
Living in Sepulchre Street (now Gainsborough Street) Member of the College of Surgeons.  
Had a Doctors practice in Sudbury.  
Did not do much in the Institute pre to the Presidency was a committee man for little while afterwards. This was during

the Institutes financial crisis and Samuel Higgs over shadowed all.  
In 1852 He resigned his membership, and moved to Shepton Mallet, Somerset. Left the medical profession and went into land and property with his son Charles born 1828 in Sudbury.

### PRESIDENT - 1848 Samuel Higgs

Born: 1817 s/o William and Elizabeth nee Strange, at Upton Gloucester.

Married: 1840/1842 Maria Hibble Sudbury (b 2 1 1811 d/o Thomas and Margaret) (died 26 4 1865 Sudbury).

Died: 25 7 1884 Sudbury.

Had two sons and three daughters.  
Living North Street Sudbury, two doors from the White Horse towards East Street  
Second Home The Moat Top end of Wells Hall Rd Gt Cornard.  
In the later years of his life he resided at the Moat Farm, settling down to his farming interests. At this time he was a

widower. Post Office Directory 1865 listed as the Governor of the Court of Guardians  
1855 an Alderman again in 1883 an Alderman Mayor of Sudbury 1860, 1861, 1862, 1864, 1865, 1867 & 1868.  
On his election as the Mayor of Sudbury in 1860 some unknown author wrote a 64 verse poem on Samuel Higgs.

The celebration feast was afterwards in the Corn Exchange.

1879 Samuel Higgs a Justice of the Peace. Agent for the Norfolk and East Anglian Coal Distribution Company. Samuel Higgs Had the franchise for all coal off loaded at the Quay (this was before the railways became competitive in coal transportation) Also ran his own coal business. A major customer was the New Gas works. Samuel Higgs had a wool staplers industry in North Street. He owned a small bunting company, making flags for the navy. Also had a maltings. A wealthy man.

Before, during and after his Presidency Samuel Higgs did a great deal of work for the Institute. During the Institute's financial crisis of 1840, he saw ways of raising capital to keep the Institute solvent. He headed a committee to raise capital, chase up outstanding subscriptions and in this field he had a good measure of success.

With his connections with the River Stour Navigation he arranged barge trips to Bures in the Summer months. In 1849 the railway had only been in Sudbury a year and Samuel hired a train and advertised a trip to see the newly completed railway viaduct at Chappel which was a feat of undreamt splendour, 1,066 feet long, 32 arches, seven million bricks and two years to build. Samuel's train was crowded and he made a good profit for the Institute. It was run again the following year at a profit. Rail trips continued to Maningtree and Harwich with a boat trip up the River Orwell. This was done for three summers. In the winter season additional lectures were arranged, some given gratuitously to encourage an increase in the membership and retain existing members. Membership had increased to over 150. Rooms were let to other clubs and commercial business such as insurance. Samuel Higgs was an outstanding member, committee man and President. What he did, he did well.

### PRESIDENT - 1849 Calodon Dupre Alexander

Born: 1818 Hanover Square London.

Married: Caroline circa 1845 (b 1823 in the East Indies).

Died: -

Gentry living at the Aubries, Bulmer.  
Farmed 600 acres employing 19 men and 12 boys. Family son Calodon, Mary, Louisa and Janet daughters all born at Bulmer.  
1881 census living at Calcot House,

Tilehurst, Berkshire.  
Running a brewery business.  
At Needham Market the present Barclays Bank was previously an Alexander Bank when it started in 1754. Run by Quaker families. Barclays took this over in the

*Continued >*

mid 19th century. Sudbury Barclays as we know it was not built until the 1870's. Maybe Alexanders Bank was Friars Street or elsewhere on the Market Hill.

Not mentioned a great deal in any committees before or after his Presidency. The Institute still in financial crisis. Again Samuel Higgs still the driving force.

## PRESIDENT - 1850 - 1852 David Badham

Born: 1784 at Bulmer Essex.  
Married: 12 10 1802 at Bulmer to Rebecca Pung.  
Died: 20 11 1865 at Bulmer.

Born: 1784 at Bulmer Essex.  
Married: 12 10 1802 at Bulmer to Rebecca Pung.  
Died: 20 11 1865 at Bulmer.  
Rebecca Pung: Born 1775 at Bulmer, daughter of Thomas Pung. Died 24 4 1826 at Bulmer.  
Family of two sons and three daughters:  
George David b 17 5 1807.  
Charles b 28 7 1814 Later to be Vicar of All Saints Sudbury.  
Mary b 29 6 1809 Died aged 16.  
Eliza b 15 8 1816.  
Alice b 28 2 1819.

1841 Census David described as Independent.  
1851 Census David was a Magistrate.  
1861 Census David was the Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Essex.  
David never remarried.  
There were always two house servants employed.  
Alice stayed with her father until his death in 1865.  
1881 Alice was still single and living in Lemington Priors, Warwickshire.

## PRESIDENT - 1852 - 1858 Rev Edward Bull

Born: 1805 son of Rev Edward Bull.  
Married: Bachelor.  
Died: 1871.

Rector of Pentlow Essex 1834 to his death in 1871.  
Took over as Rector from his father, another Edward Bull, in 1834  
Civic duties.

1864 was the chairman of the Sudbury Union (workhouse) now Walnutree Hospital.  
A Justice of the Peace.  
A farmer.

Little is recorded of work done for the Institute before his Presidency or afterwards.  
He had built the local famed Bull Tower at Pentlow seen for many miles,

high on the horizon like a giant chimney. Built to the memory of his parents. Owned today by Paul Fennick an Institute member.

## PRESIDENT - 1858 - 1876 Rev Edwin Sidney

Born: 19 3 1815 s/o Michael and Louisa nee Scott Born in Gloucestershire.  
Married: Eliza ? Born 1795 in Shropshire.  
Died: 29 10 1872 Lt Cornard.  
His last re corded Church register entry was a burial five weeks earlier.

Rector of Lt Cornard 1847-1872  
A friend of Farraday, well versed of the science of the day. Did talks on scientific subjects. In 1849 while as Rector at Lt Cornard he wrote a treatise on "Philosophy of Food and Nutrition in Plants and Animals".  
Had a very keen interest in magic lanterns in the 1860s, and did many magic lantern shows at the Mechanics and Literary Institute and the Town Hall. Many were for the children. His shows were at the

front edge of this new technology and could do simple movements when all of his slides were of painted glass. A man of very wide ranging ideas, from his faith as a clergyman, to the views of the new Darwin era on the survival of the species and how animals and plants use food and nutrients to sustain growth. Nationally known as an authority on geology and how the landscape had been formed by the ice ages.

## PRESIDENT - 1877 James St George Burke

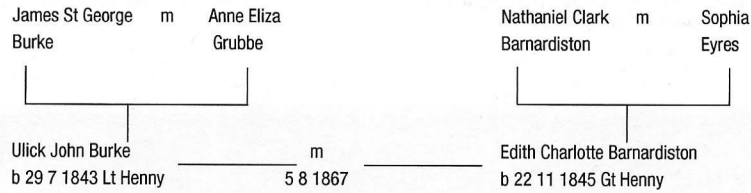
Born: 20 12 1804 Lisbon Portugal. British Embassy Recorded birth s/o John French Burke and Catherine Sarah nee Thorne.  
Married: 3 12 1835 Anne Eliza Grubbe (b 1807 d/o John Grubbe d 16 11 1855).  
Died: 25 2 1881 London.

Family five daughters and eight sons.  
The sons that survived infancy went onto Military and Legal careers.  
Practicing solicitor in 1831.

Admitted to the Middle Temple as a barrister. made a Queens Council in 1863 (QC).

Purchased the Aubries. Bulmer in 1857 as his home.

Burke Family Married into the Barnardiston Family:



The above family connection Barnardiston and Burke is in some measure inevitable as they were neighbours. The Reys and the Auberies are very close together.

James St George Burke's father in law was one John Grubbe I have found no connection with this John Grubbe and the Joseph Grubbe, who loaned the £200 interest free when the Mechanics Institute built their first premises in 1841 at 36 Market Hill. Another Grubb family member appears as the bride to William D King, one Susanna Grubb.

It was Susanna's mother Hannah who was the first honorary female member of the Mechanics Institute. Although Susanna was born in Ireland, she does not confirm as a native Irish. In these times English families enjoyed privilege in administering the governance of law, politics and commerce. After doing their "stint" they returned home.

James St George Burke was not mentioned in Clubs day to day working. Most of the Presidents were figure heads

### PRESIDENT - 1878 - 1916 Colonel Nathaniel Barnardiston

Born: 24 4 1832 s/o Nathaniel Clark Barnardiston and Sophia.  
 Married: 11 12 1858 Lady Florence Legge ( b 3 8 1838 d/o Sir William and Lady Frances Legge, Lewisham Kent. d 27 3 1917 The Reys Lt Henny)  
 Died: March 1916.

Army career, retired a colonel.  
 Father of Major General Nathaniel Walter Barnardiston.  
 An absentee President.  
 In the Army:  
 1878 - 1880 A Captain.  
 1881 - 1886 A Major.

1887 - 1889 Leave or temporarily resigned from the Army  
 1890 - 1892 A Major  
 1893 - 1916 A Colonel Most likely retired as a Major but enjoyed the retired rank of a Colonel on his 60th birthday in 1892.

### PRESIDENT - 1916 - 1919 Major General Nathaniel Walter Barnardiston

Born: 20 11 1858 s/o Nathaniel and Lady Florence nee Lady Florence Legge daughter of the Fourth Earl of Dartmouth. Grandson of Nathaniel Clark Barnardiston.  
 Married: Sarah Floyd-Jones, 28 6 1892 at Massapegua, Nassua, New York  
 (b 18 9 1857 d/o David & Mary nee Stanton at Massapegua).  
 (d The Ryes Lt Henny).  
 Died: 19 8 1919 At Felixstowe.



Educated at Merton College Oxford  
 Lived at The Ryes Lt Henny Extensive military career see enclosed material. An absentee President. Very old Suffolk family. A village named after them Nr Haverhill See the previous family History of the Barnardistons. Attached is The Major Generals Military career.

Nathaniel Walter Barnardiston was an English soldier. He was born in 1858 and died in 1919. Educated at Merton College, Oxford, he entered the army in 1878

joining the 77th Regiment and later the Middlesex Regiment, afterwards serving as a staff officer from 1894 to 1901. He fought in the South African War from 1901 until 1902. From 1902 until 1906 he was military attache at The Hague and from 1906 until 1910 was assistant commandant. From 1910 until 1914 he was assistant director of military training at the War Office. On the outbreak of the War he was in command of the small British contingent from Wei-hei-Wei that co-operated in the capture of Tsingtao.

### PRESIDENT - 1919 - 1932 Mr Alfred F Hitchcock

Born: 3 3 1839 son of William and Eliza. Bapt at All Sts Sudbury.  
 One of eight children.  
 Married: about 1860 to Emma Lived in Hospitalers Yard (now the Boat House yard).  
 Died: 14 4 1932 aged 93.

Alfred was Baptised at All Sts Church. Could not find his marriage as it may have been a Chapel wedding. His funeral at the Congregational Trinity Chapel would indicate that Alfred followed his wife Emma's church.

As a young man was employed as a sawyer as his father was. Lived in New Street when he and his wife Emma started their family Later had his own business as a coal and timber merchant.

Lived at 43 Station Rd Sudbury.  
 Family of five daughters and two sons.  
 From his membership Alfred was very much involved with the Institute Club covering over sixty years. Was a very generous man and the first to support any fund raising or help in material ways in time of materials needed. His coal supplies to the Institute were always heavily discounted.  
 His business carried on down through his sons.

Civic duties: Justice of the Peace 1916-1929.  
 At his funeral which was held at the Congregational Trinity Chapel there were a large number of mourners from many sections of the community. Many trades people, customers, the police, the magistrates panel, Borough councillors. Officers and members of the Institute Club. Other clubs and organisations he had been engaged with over his very long life were all represented.

### PRESIDENT - 1932 - 1936 Mrs Nathaniel Walter Barnardiston

**Wife of the Late Major General Nathaniel Walter Barnardiston of the Ryes Lt Henny.**  
 Born: Sarah Hall Floyd-Jones, on 18 9 1857, Massapegua, Nassau, New York.  
 Daughter of David Richard and Mary Louisa, nee Stanton.  
 Married: Nathaniel Walter Barnardiston on 28 6 1892 at Massapegua, Nassau, New York.  
 Died: -

In 1937 Mrs Barnardiston, as the senior member of the Barnardiston family celebrated a memorial service at Kedington Church which was the manorial family home in fifteenth century.  
 Listed as Mrs N Barnardiston The Reyes Lt Henny in the trade directories.  
 President for four years aged 75 to 78.  
 The minute books for these years 1922 to 1951 are missing. The Presidency is

confirmed in Mr S T Hyde's History of the Mechanics Institute to the Institute Club written in 1984 for the 150th Anniversary of the Institute Club.

Full details of the Barnardiston family difficult to trace as they were a military family and were abroad a great deal.

### PRESIDENT 1936-1943 Mr Harold Deane

Born: 1879 s/o James and Julia Clapham London.  
 Father James a Pharmaceutical Chemist Marr 1910 Georgina Elizabeth Freeborn d/o John and Julia Born Walthamstow 1882.  
 Died: -

1901 A student analytical Chemist.  
 1911 Works chemist for Stafford Allen at Long Melford.  
 1911 Private address St Olaves Priory Road Sudbury.  
 Private Resident 1916 -1943.  
 Later lived at Inward House Melford Road.

Trained as an analytical Chemist (A chemist for Stafford Allen at Long Melford Stafford Allens main office were near at Finsbury/ Clapham)  
 Involved with the Institute Club as a committee man and later as President.

### PRESIDENT 1943 -1953 Mr Benjamin W Barr

Born 1882 s/o Benjamin A Barr b 1857 and Eliza A b 1858 nee Hibbs (marr 1876-1881 WivenhoeMarr Maude Elizabeth Higley 1910 (b 1881 Bristol).  
 Died -

Son Brian aged 6 months in 1911.  
 Parents in the inshore fishing industry.  
 As a young man was a fisherman's assistant (1901)

Enjoyed a superb reputation as a billiard player in the Institute Club, having as much as a 100 handicap set against him in a match with his contemporaries.

1911 census Listed as a civil servant.  
 The Trade directories 1912 Was now a junior Customs and Excise Officer in the weights and measures section, having responsibilities for the Sudbury area Trade directories. Benjamin was the senior Inspector of weights and measures, Customs and Excise 66 Friars Street. In 1916. At 12 Friars Street in 1929 Later the office moved to Curds Lane (now Weavers Lane) Recorded there in 1937, Benjamin's private address was York Road 1916—1937

The weights and measures inspectorate entailed checking that all drinking glasses were of the correct measure and were stamped, taking samples of spirits etc to check that the alcohol level was correct (watering of Spirits happened from time to time). The weights used on scales retained the stamped leaded inserts which ensured that the weight was accurate. Offending trades people would be prosecuted by the weights and measures inspectorate.

## PRESIDENT 1953 - 1963

Mr Ernest William Eady

Born: In Sudbury.

Bapt: 27 4 1879 in Long Melford son of Mary Ann Eady 1881 census gives living with g/parents William and Eliza Eady at Gt Cornard.

Married: Laura Morrissey b Halstead 1871 lived at 46 Station Road Sudbury most of her life with aunt and uncle Abraham and Mary Reeve. A Dress Maker.

Died: 1963.



Father of Edward E Eady who followed as President.  
Managed Pawnbrokers and Gentlemans Outfitters owned by Day & Harrison. Corner Station Road/Friars Street.  
Also at 52 & 56 Station Road.  
Furniture Dept at 85 North Street.  
In Sudbury 1906 -1937 at least.

1901 lived at 26 East Street.  
1911 lived at 5 Backfield (now Hyde Road).  
Later lived in Chelsea Road.  
Current committee member Alex Jagger is granddaughter of E.W. Eady and niece to Edward Eady.

## PRESIDENT 1963 - 1971

Mr Edward E. Eady

Born: 1901 Sudbury s/o Ernest and Laura Eady.

Married: -

Died: July 1973.

Son of Ernest Eady the previous President.



Auctioneer, estate agent and partner of Boardman and Oliver, Market Hill, Sudbury.  
Lived in Chelsea Road.  
During the Second World War was the Commandant of the Special Constables.  
A member of the Rotary Club.  
A very keen fisherman.

Oversaw the move from Barclays Bank at 36, Market Hill to the present premises in Station Road in July 1968.  
This was a very difficult time for the Institute Club, finance being the major concern. An excellent President and committee man who saw the Club survive.

## PRESIDENT 1971 - 1981

Mr P M Clayton

Born: 1895 in Derbyshire.

Married: Married in 1924 His bride also being in Banking was dismissed from her post as married ladies were not expected to work.  
Died: 1981.



Always known as P M.

Joined the Midland Bank as a junior in Alfreton. In the First World War was a dispatch rider.

1924 moved to Sudbury. All was in darkness. The street lights were all turned off. This was over some dispute.

1924 Joined the Institute Club In 1930 he left Sudbury. The Institute presented an aneroid barometer and a scroll of the members. (A copy of this scroll was presented to the Institute Club in 2008 by P M's son, Peter). Part of P M 's daily routine was to tap the Barometer each morning to give an indication of the weather. The Barometer is still in the family and is tapped daily by P M's son Peter.

1944 The family returned to Sudbury and rejoined the Institute Club.

P M was bank manager for the Midland Bank, Sudbury.

Ensured that the Club outings were stocked with a generous supply of beverages. The coach wheels were chalked with numbers. On stopping which ever number that was in a predetermined position gave cause for celebration or a free drink for the lucky number holder.

He was not to keen on the ladies joining, however after the Club had moved to Station Road P M stood by the door and graciously welcomed the ladies who joined, and spent time with the ladies on that special day.

P M loved the Club with his contemporaries, and it was affectionately referred to as his second home.  
Home address 2 Bullocks Lane.  
Sons Tony and Peter. Peter is still a member.

### PRESIDENT 1981 - 1982

Mr Douglas E. Key

Born: -  
Married: Jessie.  
Died: -



Superintendent of Police Sudbury 1961 to approx 1966.  
After retirement worked for Steed & Steed as a partner to Dick Marshall, blind solicitor.  
Home address 3, Malborough Drive.

Was the man who got the purchase of the next door property at a very good bargain price which was later to become the means of extending the Club with a two table snooker room and a large lounge area which we have today.

### PRESIDENT 1982 - 1984

Mr Leslie C. Francis

Born: post 1911 census.  
Married: - Eileen.  
Died: -



Leslie C Francis was the proprietor of Dixons Motors in Station Road.

Private address 8 Chelsea Road.  
On retirement moved to Dovercourt  
They both have passed on.

### PRESIDENT 1984 - 1985

Mr Sidney T Hyde

Born: -  
Married: Diane.  
Died: 1985.



Retired Director of W H Smith's in London.  
Lived in Harefields, Long Melford.

A very keen Cricket supporter.  
Left all his Cricket library to the Institute Club.

### PRESIDENT 1985 - 1989

Mr John EB Wardman

Born: 26 10 1925 Sudbury.  
Married: Audrey.  
Died: September 2003.



Educated at Culford School. Joined the Royal Air Force trained as an aircrew navigator. After leaving the R A F in 1951, went to Leicester and trained as a pharmacist.

1954 to 1975 Wardman & Son Market Hill. Thence East Street Sudbury.

1929—1937 Did locums work and was Chairman of the Family Practitioners Committee Home address Ballingdon Street, and later Meadow Lane.

John's other interests:  
Started the Round Table 41 Club.  
Chairman of the of Chamber of Commerce.

Promoting and directing exhibitions for the Chamber of Commerce  
Chairman of the Common Lands Charities 1986-2003.  
The Project Director of the Christopher Centre 1994

Wrote a book "The Sudbury Common Lands" to celebrate the centenary in 1996.

For the Institute Club: a long standing committee member who did a huge amount of work in the move from the Market Hill to Station Road the Clubs present home. Then shaping, building and creating the Club we enjoy today. Holding posts as Secretary, Treasurer and Chairman. Later to be made President.

## PRESIDENT 1989 - 1999

Mr J H Martin Walker

Born: - 30 November 1918

Married: - Biddy Hughes 17 July 1945

Died: -



- Joined Lloyds Bank Feb 1938,  
Dewsbury, Yorkshire.

- Served in R.A.M.C. in war, finishing with  
the rank of Staff Sergeant 1940 -1946  
in this country and France, Belgium and  
Germany.

- Rejoined Lloyds Bank in June 1946,  
Maidstone Branch.

- First managership, Royston Herts 1960.

- Manager of Lloyds, Sudbury 1970.

- Retired 1978.

- Served on the club committee, treasurer  
and chairman 1970s to 1990s.

Private address Hill House at the top of  
Belle Vue Rd.

Thank you to Walter Perry for his research into the history of The Sudbury Institute Club.

## PRESIDENT 1999 - Present

Mr James Travis

Born: - 3 September 1926

Married: - Audrey, January 1952

Died: -



- Joined the Foreign Service in 1949  
and served in Bahrain, Germany, Prague,  
Athens, Puerto Rico, Bangladesh and  
New Zealand.

- Retired in 1986 as Consul Commercial  
in Auckland.

- Awarded the O.B.E. in 1985.