

# Saffron Walden on the Map

A resource pack from the Essex Record  
Office



## **Saffron Walden on the Map: teachers' notes**

This resource pack from the Essex Record Office (ERO) consists of these notes and a PowerPoint presentation containing images of three historic maps of Saffron Walden from the ERO's collections.

It follows two events held by ERO in Saffron Walden in 2012 and 2014 in which the original copies of these maps, along with other archival material, were displayed in Saffron Walden Town Hall.

The focus of the suggested activities here is to compare the town of today with the town of the past – what has stayed the same, and what has changed?

In the classroom, you could work from the PowerPoint or print out the images of the maps on the slides so pupils can work with paper copies. You can work through all the slides in the order given, or pick and mix the ones you want to use.

A classroom session could be followed with a walking tour, using a print of one or more of the historic maps to navigate around the town and spot similarities and differences.

We hope that you find this pack useful, and that you and your pupils enjoy exploring Saffron Walden's past.

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## National Curriculum links

This pack is intended primary for use with Key Stage 2 pupils but it could be used with older or younger students if desired. It should help to support your delivery of the History National Curriculum in a number of ways, especially:

- A local history study
- Understanding some of the ways in which we find out about the past; understanding how our knowledge of the past is constructed from a range of sources
- Understanding historical concepts such as continuity and change
- Making connections, drawing contrasts, addressing and devising historically valid questions
- Gaining historical perspective by placing growing knowledge into different contexts; understanding the connections between local, regional and national and international history
- Developing a chronologically secure knowledge and understanding of British, local and world history
- Noting connections, contrasts and trends over time

## Before you start

- Talk about how we access maps today – e.g. online maps, SatNav etc.
- Compare this with how maps would have been made/accessed in the past – e.g. the land would have been surveyed and measured, and a map drawn by hand or printed on a printing press. Maps would have been expensive, and not available to everyone
- Look at a modern map of Saffron Walden and point out key features such as road patterns, the castle, the church, the market square etc.
- Talk about how historic maps can tell us a lot about the past – how a town was laid out, focal points such as churches and markets, how places were connected together by roads and rivers (and later railways), where buildings were and how big they were – we can get a real impression of a community and how it worked from looking at maps
- Maps help us to look at change over time as well, as we can compare maps of the same place in different years to see what changes and what stays the same

## Notes and suggested activities for each slide in accompanying PowerPoint presentation

Slide no.	Notes/suggested activities
1	Title slide
2	<p>Photograph of the Essex Record Office, where all these maps are kept  This is the county archive for Essex, and looks after nearly 1,000 years' worth of Essex documents, maps, images, and sound and video recordings  The ERO Headquarters, pictured here, is in Chelmsford, but there are also Archive Access Points in Saffron Walden, Harlow, Colchester and Southend</p>
3	<p>The ERO has a large public Searchroom where members of the public can come and look at the records that we look after  They might be interested in researching their family tree, or their house history, or their local history</p>
4	<p>The ERO has several special storerooms to look after records  If we took all of our shelves and laid them end to end, they would stretch for over 7 miles  The storerooms are kept cold, like big fridges. This helps to slow down the decay process of the documents, just like fridges do for your food</p>
5	<p>This is the earliest surviving map of Saffron Walden, made in 1757 by a map maker called Edward John Eyre  It was lost for many years and found in a farm outbuilding in 2012  It looked so scruffy it was nearly thrown on a bonfire  When people realised how special it was it was sent to the ERO to look after</p> <p><u>Things to talk about</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The map is very dark, but can the students make out the roads and buildings?</li> <li>• Do they think the map has been well looked after? Why/why not? (Look out for any holes, any mould, and how dark it is – this is the result of a layer of varnish which has discoloured over time). The corner that is missing has been eaten away by rodents</li> <li>• The map is drawn onto parchment. What do they think parchment is made of? (sheepskin or goatskin)</li> <li>• Today, we always draw maps with north at the top of the page. People in the past, though, did not always do this. This map does not have north at the top of the page – can they spot the compass rose and work out which way is north? (When you click to go forward in the PPT a North arrow will appear in red)</li> <li>• The map was made in 1757. How old is it?</li> </ul>

6	The following slides show some of the damage that the map had suffered over the years It had holes and tears in it
7	It is on two sheets of parchment with a linen backing, which were all coming apart from each other
8	It had suffered from lots of outbreaks of mould from being kept somewhere damp
9	The map spent several weeks being treated by experts in the ERO's Conservation Studio. Conservation means looking after something and repairing it. Here it is shown being flattened under a sheet of Perspex with lots of heavy weights on top.
10	The map was also stretched to flatten it out. This may look brutal but it mimics the way that the parchment would have been made originally by stretching the animal skin. The map was left like this for several days.
11	Holes were filled in using new parchment stuck down with an animal-based glue. This will strengthen the map and stop the holes from getting worse.
12	This is a zoomed in section of the map showing the town centre. It has also been rotated so that north is at the top of the page.  <u>Can the students spot...</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main road running north to south</li> <li>• The church</li> <li>• The castle</li> <li>• The market place</li> <li>• Any other features</li> </ul> (You could always compare this with a modern map to help spot the shapes).
13	This map was made in 1758, just a year later than the first map, also by Edward John Eyre as part of the same project to make maps of Saffron Walden and the farmland around the town. This image shows the map unrolled on one of the map tables in the ERO Searchroom, which gives you a sense of its size. It is usually kept rolled up in one of our storerooms. The town is just to the left of the middle of the map, and the surrounding area is all farmland.  <u>Things to talk about</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the differences between this map and the 1757 map? (bigger, in colour, in much better condition, shows the town and surrounding farmland rather than just the town)</li> </ul>

14	<p>This is a section of the 1758 map showing the town</p> <p><u>Things to talk about</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is this easier to read/understand than the 1757 map? Why?</li> </ul> <p><u>Can the students spot...</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main road running north to south</li> <li>• The church</li> <li>• The castle</li> <li>• The market place</li> <li>• Any road names – are they the same or different to today?</li> </ul>
15	<p>A look in more detail at the Market Place in 1758 – how it was laid out and the labels which give us clues as to what was being sold there. Saffron Walden as had a market since 1141, and it's a very important part of the town's history.</p> <p><u>Things to talk about</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What happens in a market?</li> </ul> <p><u>What can the students spot...</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Butter Market</li> <li>• Pig Street</li> <li>• Butchers Row</li> <li>• Mercers Row (cloth dealers)</li> <li>• All of these are descriptions of the sorts of goods that would have been sold in those rows (with the exception of the row labelled 'Creepmouse', which we think was named as a joke for being such a narrow alleyway that only a mouse could creep through it!)</li> <li>• How does this compare with what's sold in the market today?</li> </ul>
16	<p>This image shows in more detail at some farmland near Saffron Walden The land was being farmed in strips rather than big fields This means that fields were divided up into long thin strips, and individual farmers would have had use of several strips in several different fields scattered around the area This way the good and bad land was shared out more equally, but it wasn't a very efficient way of farming It was a common system in the medieval period but Saffron Walden is unusual in Essex for still farming in this way in the 1750s</p> <p><u>Things to talk about</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does this compare to how we farm today?</li> <li>• In the 1700s lots of people would have been involved in farming. Is it still a common job today?</li> <li>• Most of the food people ate in the 1700s would have been grown locally. Where does our food come from today?</li> </ul>

17	<p>Windmill – at this stage of map making features such as windmills were usually shown through small drawings like this, rather than by using standard symbols as on later maps</p> <p><u>Things to talk about</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would we show a windmill on a map today?</li> <li>• Do the students know what windmills were used for in the past? (Grinding grain into flour to make bread.) Do they think windmills would have been important?</li> <li>• What powered windmills? (Wind making the sails go round, which turns the stones that grind the grain.) How does this compare to where we get our power from today? (Similarities with wind turbines, contrast with coal or nuclear power stations.)</li> </ul>
18/19	<p>These two slides compare sections of the 1757 and 1758 maps showing the town centre, with an overlay showing the outlines of the roads. Since it is hard to make out the details on the 1757 map this might be helpful in showing how the two maps relate to each other.</p>
20	<p>A later map from 1897</p> <p>This is an Ordnance Survey map – part of a public set of maps that cover the whole country, whereas the earlier maps we’ve been looking at are one-offs made privately for a landowner</p> <p>OS maps are standardised, and printed rather than drawn by hand</p> <p>Multiple copies would have been made</p> <p><u>Things to talk about</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the differences in how this map has been made and how the earlier maps were made?</li> <li>• Can they spot the same road layout that they’ve already been looking at?</li> <li>• Look for road names – are they still the same today?</li> <li>• Does the town look the same size or bigger than on the earlier maps?</li> <li>• Is it the same size today, or bigger?</li> <li>• The new streets appearing are straight and look planned – contrast with earlier more organic development</li> </ul> <p><u>Can the students spot...</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main road running north to south</li> <li>• The church</li> <li>• The castle</li> <li>• The market place</li> <li>• Butcher Row</li> <li>• Bank</li> <li>• Corn Exchange (where agricultural trading would have taken place; today it’s the library)</li> <li>• Schools (x2, and an infant school)</li> <li>• Museum</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waterworks</li> <li>• Brewery</li> <li>• There are several non-conformist buildings – Friends Meeting House, Congregational Chapel, Baptist Chapel, Methodist Chapel – Saffron Walden as a strong history of non-conformism</li> <li>• Police Station</li> <li>• At least two smithys (blacksmiths)</li> <li>• Nurseries – growing fruit, vegetables, or flowers</li> </ul> <p>As you look for these things you can talk about what they are, how important they might have been, if they appeared on the earlier maps, and if they still exist today.</p>
21	Close – summarise what you have covered, and introduce any follow up activities

### Follow up activities

- Use printed copies of one or more of the maps to navigate around the centre of town. Compare what is shown on the map with what is there now.
- Produce a timeline or ‘then and now’ display on what the students have learnt by comparing the different maps.
- Dig deeper into your local history using other records such as census returns and photographs. You can visit the ERO Archive Access Point in Saffron Walden or the ERO in Chelmsford in order to do this. A ‘Local History Detectives’ ERO school outreach visit would also include these sources. Please contact [heritage.education@essex.gov.uk](mailto:heritage.education@essex.gov.uk) or 03301 32500 for further information.
- School visits can be arranged to the Essex Record Office to see the original documents used in this pack, and for a behind-the-scenes tour to see how we look after the records of our county’s past. Please contact [heritage.education@essex.gov.uk](mailto:heritage.education@essex.gov.uk) or 03301 32500 for further information.

### What did you think?

We would really appreciate your feedback on this resource pack. Did you find this resource pack useful? What worked well and what could be improved? Could you sum up briefly how you used the resource pack?

If you could send any feedback to [heritage.education@essex.gov.uk](mailto:heritage.education@essex.gov.uk) it would be much appreciated.



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