

The Friends of Colchester Museums

Sixtieth Annual Report
2008-2009



The Friends of Colchester Museums

OFFICERS

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MRS BARBARA NAPPER
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Ex Officio PETER BERRIDGE (General Manager, Colchester & Ipswich Museums)
TOM HODGSON (Curator of Social History)
PHILIP WISE (Curator of Archaeology)

Museum Office Colchester Museums Resource Centre
14 Ryegate Road Colchester CO1 1TW

Sixtieth Annual Report 2008-2009

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM took place on Tuesday 23rd June at Lion Walk Church, under the chairmanship of the President, one of our members, His Worship the Mayor of Colchester, Councillor Henry Spyvee. Audited Accounts for the year were presented and approved and are featured on pages 8 and 9.

Following the business meeting, PATRICK DENNEY gave a lecture entitled *Starvation or Surrender: The Siege of Colchester*.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for 2009 became due on 1st January - single £7.50, couple £12, and family £18. If you pay by Standing Order, please check that you are paying the correct amount and make any adjustments with your bank as necessary.

Please contact the Treasurer, Peter Evans on 01206 540990 if you are not sure of the status of your membership.

GIFT AID

We continued to raise money from Gift Aid claimed on annual subscriptions for the year ended 31st March 2009. Most members have signed up for the scheme and it is hoped that more will do so in the future.

Once you have signed a Gift Aid form, you have no need to complete any other forms - and we can backdate claims to cover any contributions made since 2000 or the date that you joined.

To sign the form, you do need to be a UK tax payer, but apart from that, there are no other qualifications. The Friends hold your authority and can use this to claim back Gift Aid on all contributions on subscriptions. If you make donations at any time, we can claim on those as well. Many thanks.

PETER EVANS *Hon. Treasurer*



Our President, Councillor Henry Spyvee, pictured at his Mayor making ceremony

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE (as at July 2009)

The Society has continued to attract new members during the past year. At the present time we have 695 signed up members (including single, couple and family) which is about the same figure as that reported for the previous year. However, this does not necessarily mean that no new members have joined the Society during this period, but rather shows that about 40 new members have joined our ranks during the year whilst a similar number have resigned their membership.

Please remember to encourage your friends and others to join our ranks, and why not consider treating a family member or friend to a gift subscription.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

This year is the sixtieth anniversary of the Friends of Colchester Museums and one major way that such a significant milestone is being marked is by the current series of lectures on subjects of special local interest.

The first six lectures have all attracted large audiences, who have greatly appreciated the knowledge and expertise of our specialist speakers. There is clearly widespread on-going pride and interest in, as well as a healthy concern about, the cultural heritage of Colchester and its surrounding area, in which our museums play such a pivotal role.

Our museums care for our common heritage and they help to set standards for its appreciation, treatment and future availability – not just inside their own walls, but also on a wider basis.

However, in order to ensure continued success – particularly in difficult economic times – museums must be outward and forward looking. Hence the need for regularly updated permanent displays, attractive temporary exhibitions and a range of special activities, particularly for children and families. We are

very fortunate that all these services, and more, are currently available in Colchester and add significantly to the town's attraction.

As long-term supporters of our museums we ought from time to time to ask ourselves – and others – certain simple questions, such as these. Do you try to make fairly regular visits to Colchester's museums? (Remember free access to the Castle for Friends.) Do you take family, friends or visitors with you, when you go? Have you seen the Natural History Museum, for example, since it was re-displayed? Do you look out for the latest temporary exhibitions? Would any acquaintances be interested in attending our lectures or becoming members?

The Friends' Committee is constantly thinking about ways to make membership enjoyable, attractive and effective.

This newsletter contains reports and information which we hope you will find interesting. If you have any suggestions that might help to widen or improve the Friends' activities in support of our museums, the chairman or any member of the committee would be pleased to hear from you.

MARK DAVIES *Chairman*





VISIT TO BURY ST EDMUNDS

Tuesday, 16th June 2009

On 16th June a full coach of members enjoyed an excellent evening at Bury St Edmunds. We were met off our coach by a team of very able guides who divided us into three groups before proceeding to lead us on a walk of parts of the historic town.

Of particular interest were the remains of the great Benedictine Abbey which is said to have been one of the largest in Europe.

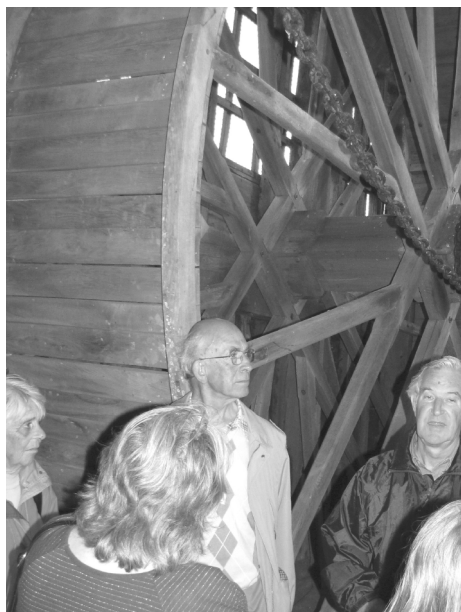
The walk concluded with a visit to the Tourist Information Centre where light refreshments were on hand to conclude a relaxed and friendly visit.

Captions to pictures

Opposite page: Friends assemble on Angle Hill at the start of their walking tour

Above: Tour guide Dee Sharpe and members of the group pictured at the entrance to the old Benedictine Abbey at Bury St Edmunds

Right: Tour guide Bernie Allen (on the right) shows members one of the two large treadwheels in the crane housing at Harwich



VISIT TO HARWICH TUESDAY

21st July 2009

Our second excursion for the year took us to Harwich where we were met off our coach by three members of the Harwich Society. Once again we were divided into three groups before setting off on what proved to be a most



interesting tour of the old town. Among the highlights of the evening was a visit to the old Electric Palace cinema, which is one of the oldest picture houses remaining in the country. Next we were treated to a look inside the old tread wheel crane which was originally installed in the old naval dockyard in 1667. The crane was moved to its present site on the Green in 1927. What is commonly referred to as the crane is actually a combination of crane

and wheelhouse, the latter being used for housing two large tread wheels which were used to work the crane. The wheels were turned by men walking on the inside of the rims which, in turn, operated a chain connected to the winding mechanism.

The evening concluded with a tour of the old Guildhall. One of the highlights of this experience was visiting the old gaol room where we shown various examples of graffiti, some of which appears to have left behind by French prisoners of war during the Napoleonic period.

PATRICK DENNEY *Hon
Secretary*

Captions to pictures

*Above: The old treadwheel crane on
Harwich Green*

*Left: An example of one of the ship
drawings in the old gaol room at the
Guildhall*

Photographs taken on the two evening visits
by PATRICK DENNEY



I am delighted to include the following item from our President, His Worship the Mayor Councillor Henry Spyvee.

Editor

COLCHESTER'S ROMAN WALL

Like most Colcestrians I am proud of our Roman heritage and the artefacts that we have been left. Prime among these is the Roman Wall which surrounds our Town Centre. However, I have to ask 'Are you happy with the present state and setting of our Roman Wall?' Many people who talk to me voice their discontent and ask for something to be done. As incoming Mayor of Colchester I am in a position to do something about it. At Mayor Making I announced that I intended to set up a body called provisionally 'Friends of Colchester Roman Wall.' The idea is to raise funds and grants to be spent on the Wall in a way that is not happening, nor has ever happened. This body would be on-going as long as people felt it was doing a useful job.

To be clear Colchester Borough Council has an obligation to monitor and maintain the Wall. This obligation is carried out well and will not change. Similarly the Council as Local Planning Authority can take the opportunities given to it to improve the setting of the Wall. Over time that has achieved quite a lot. That too will not change.

Over the years (not now!) the Wall has been built on and had advertisement hoardings placed on it or in front of it. There has been no programme to roll back that tide and make the Wall an object that the people of Colchester take pride in. This is where the Friends come in. Discussion with Council officers have proved fruitful but there are important details still to clarify. Once this has been done a Public meeting would be called and (if enough support is forthcoming) the Friends will be launched.

There will be publicity in the Press. But if

you want to be sure to know what is happening, please join my list of contacts. You can write to me, telling me your name, address, phone no. and email address at the Mayor, Town Hall or email me on spyveeh@googlemail.com

Your name can be removed from my list at any time if you so choose. I look forward to hearing from you.

HENRY SPYVEE *Mayor of Colchester*

BAFM EASTERN AREA CONFERENCE

On Saturday 28th March the Friends hosted the BAFM Eastern Area Conference in the Castle Museum. Over 30 delegates attended from all over the Eastern Area and were welcomed by our Chairman Mark Davies. The Conference was chaired by Alan Swerdlow, BAFM Area Co-ordinator and Vice President of the Friends of Ipswich Museums.

The first speaker was Simon Flood, Regional Training and Workforce Development Officer for Renaissance East of England, whose topic was *SHARE, (Support and Help from Renaissance East of England)*. This included news of £150 million being raised for the sector during the last four years with £8 million coming to our region. Fiscal and human resources were also featured.

Lucy Tetlow spoke on *Fund-raising Tools and Techniques for Small Groups*. Among the items featured were the need for careful planning, including having a fund-raising database and the retention of existing members as recruiting new ones was costly.

After question time, lunch was enjoyed as were tours of the Castle, including the vaults and foundations of the Temple of Claudius where Friends acted as guides, and Hollytrees Museum, where Tom Hodgson, Curator of Social History, was the guide.

Committee members of the Friends were on duty throughout and received much help, as usual, from the staff of Colchester Museums.

Museum News

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

There have been several notable new acquisitions over the last few months to the archaeology, natural history and community history collections. Possibly the most significant is the large Hazelton Collection of prehistoric flint artefacts, with some pottery and animal bone, from Dovercourt in Essex. Most is of Neolithic date, with some Bronze Age material. Gathered between 1976 and 1993 from the foreshore by two brothers, Eric and Gordon Hazelton, it is unlikely that a collection of comparable richness from the same environment will be created in the foreseeable future. As the flint artefacts have never been subject to agricultural disturbance, as might be the case with dry land finds, as they were buried in a wet environment, they have the appearance of being freshly made. Bearing in mind how few finds the museum service has from the submerged prehistoric landscape off the Essex coast, the Hazelton Collection is a significant addition to the museum's prehistoric material.

Also of prehistoric date are a group of Pleistocene (Ice Age) mammal bones, including a mammoth vertebra and tooth, dredged from the North Sea. These were donated by Les Brand of Dovercourt many of whose earlier donations form part of the new Geology and Climate Gallery displays in the Natural History Museum.

Turning to community history the museum was recently given two commemorative plaques awarded to Colchester Borough Council by the War Office and Air Ministry in recognition of the Council's fundraising efforts during War Savings Week in 1943 and 1944. There is also a collection of items from the Royal Eastern Counties Hospital pharmacy in Colchester which was used between the 1950s and 1990s and includes

various bottles, labels, scales, tablet counters, a pestle and mortar as well as information booklets about Turner Village and Essex Hall.

In a completely different vein is a toy model of the flying car Chitty Chitty Bang Bang which was purchased by the donor from the toy department of Boots on Head Street, Colchester in 1970 when he was aged six. It was his most prized toy and will shortly go on permanent display in Hollytrees Museum. Lastly there is a bead necklace made up of blue, grey, white and clear stone and glass beads made by Nickolas S. J. Rowe who has Asperger's Syndrome. It was specially commissioned for the 'Figuring Speech' exhibition in Hollytrees.

ROMAN CIRCUS UPDATE

At its meeting on 19th March the East of England Committee of the Heritage Lottery Fund decided not to offer a first-round pass for the Colchester Roman Circus Interpretation Project. The Committee recognised the heritage importance of the Roman Circus, noted the high level of public interest in the site and commended Colchester Borough Council's wish to improve access and interpretation. However, concerns were expressed relating to project budget and its sustainability. Following this decision the Museum Service is currently reviewing the options for the Circus project and has been in discussions with the project designers, Headland Design Associates, and the planning officer. A revised project is currently in preparation.

COLCHESTER URBAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATABASE

During April 2009 part of the Colchester Urban Archaeological Database (UAD) was put online via the Heritage Gateway website as a result of funding from English Heritage. This is a very exciting development for Colchester's

heritage as for the first time it is possible to view online information about 3,000 of the town's most significant archaeological sites. The Heritage Gateway website is an unparalleled project that aims to gather information from all the UADs and HERs (Historic Environment Records) in England and allows extensive cross-county searching of heritage records, a thing that was previously impossible.

COLCHESTER'S TOWN WALLS

Work started in late March 2009 on a programme of repairs to the stretch of the Town Wall behind the houses in Roman Road. Vegetation has been removed from the face and top of the wall and the top replaced and consolidated. Visitors and residents are now able to appreciate for the first time in many years the impressive size and scale of the wall at this point. The total cost of the project is estimated at £115,000 and the work is being funded by Colchester Borough Council and English Heritage who last year awarded a grant of £46,000. During the project we have learnt much about the history of this stretch of the wall; in some places it dates back to the Roman period, elsewhere there is evidence of 18th century and 20th century repairs. The current repairs are due to be completed by the beginning of August 2009.

NEW GALLERY OPENS AT NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM, COLCHESTER

On Tuesday 7th April 2009 a brand new gallery opened in the Natural History Museum, Colchester, which explores climate change and geology was developed thanks to Colchester Borough Council and a grant from the DCMS/Wolfson Foundation.

The gallery explores past climates, life forms and environments, focusing on the Colchester area and some of the events that have happened here. Climate change is also
continued on page11



Careful repair work takes place to a stretch of the town walls

The Friends of Colchester Museums

Income and Expenditure Account for

INCOME		2008/9	2007/8
Note		(£s)	(£s)
	Subscriptions	6881.00	6811.00
	Donations	198.50	193.50
	Lectures (net of expenses)	450.60	657.95
1.	Trips (net profit - note 1)	62.00	340.00
	Gift Aid	1705.42	1506.36
	Interest	763.41	891.20
	Sales	46.83	-
	Surplus of Expenditure over Income		4736.39
	TOTAL	£10,107.76	£10414.01

Balance Sheet as

ACCUMULATED FUND	(£s)	(£s)
Balance bought forward	30621.44	21907.81
Add: Surplus/Loss for year	6168.47	8713.63
	SUB TOTAL	36789.91 30621.44
CREDITORS: Fees for Trips	396.00	246.50
Other	-	300.00
	TOTAL	£37,185.91 £31167.94

Notes to the Accounts:

1. Trip to Gainsborough's House, Sudbury
2. Purchases

Annual Accounts 2008-2009

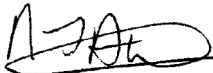
the year ended 31st March 2009

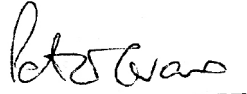
EXPENDITURE	2008/9 (£s)	2007/8 (£s)
Operating Expenses	1868.31	1300.38
Subscriptions and Insurance (BAFM)	515.98	300.00
Events (Christmas Open Evening)	100.00	150.00
Exhibition Launch	-	118.82
2. Purchases and Grants (note 2)	1000.00	-
Surplus of Income over Expenditure (6168.47	-8713.63
TOTAL	£10,107.01	£10,464.01

at 31st March 2009

NET CURRENT ASSETS	(£s)	(£s)
Cash at Bank		
Current Account	1949.08	1856.14
Building Society Account	34972.83	29071.80
SUB-TOTAL	36921.91	30927.94
DEBTOR: Room Hire	264.00	240.00
TOTAL	£37,185.91	£31167.94

I have examined the accounts of The Friends of Colchester Museums for the year ended 31st March 2009 and confirm that they appear to be in accordance with the Books of Account and Vouchers produced to me for the purpose of this audit.

Signed  ROY ANDERSON *Hon. Auditor* Dated: 23rd June 2009

Signed  PETER EVANS FMAAT *Hon. Treasurer*



continued from page 7

looked at and the gallery charts how in the past changes to the climate were natural, unlike today where the cause is mankind. Visitors can discover more about the Great Tide of 1953 and the Great Storm of 1987, hearing real life accounts of those that witnessed them.

The opening day for the new gallery was a great success and the museum was full of invited guests and members of the public as the ribbon was cut. Visitors and guests were able to enjoy celebratory rock cakes in honour of the museum's 50th anniversary and a variety of activities took place including fossil making and the chance to have fossils identified by a museum expert.

RARE LETTER FROM DARWIN DISCOVERED

In February 2009 a rare letter was discovered in the archives of Ipswich Museum. The letter, written by Charles Darwin, dated 29th August 1872 was in reply to a letter from

F W Harmer, an amateur geologist from Norwich.

In the letter Darwin apologises that Mr Harmer has become involved in controversy over an article on natural selection.

Charles Darwin has links with Ipswich Museum as his friend and mentor John Stevens Henslow was responsible for bringing most of the natural history collection to the museum. A portrait can be seen of John Stevens Henslow in the foyer of Ipswich Museum.

The letter is now on display in Ipswich Museum and visitors are able to read what the letter says in full.

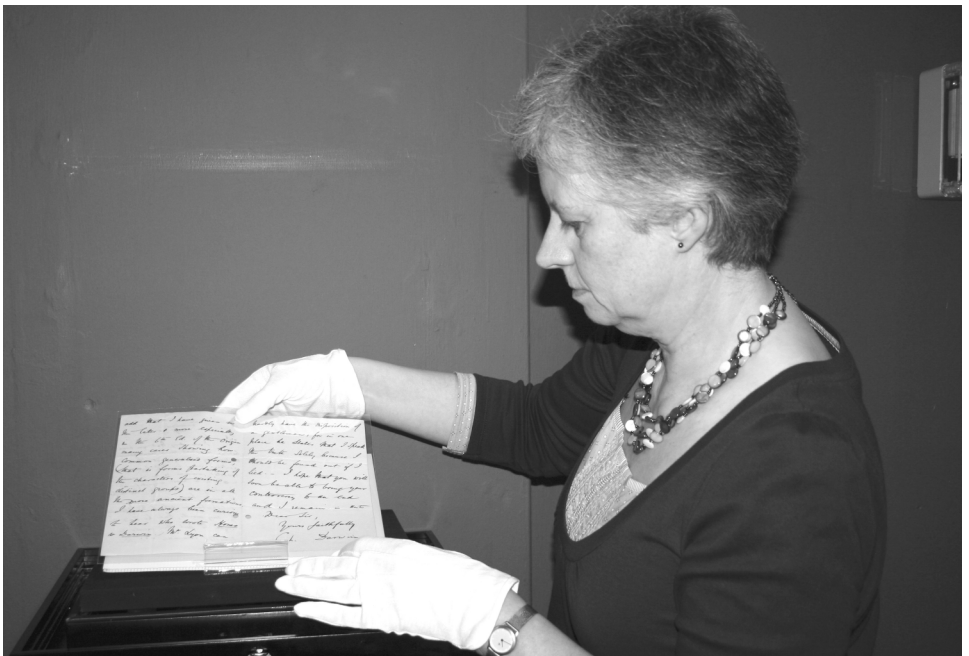
Captions to photographs

Opposite page:

Visitors enjoy the new gallery in the Natural History Museum, which features a giant shark jaw

Below:

Joan Lyall, Documentation Officer at Ipswich's Museums, carefully puts Darwin's letter on display



NEW SKILLS FOR LIFE RESOURCE BOX

Education staff at Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service have recently developed a brand new resource box, designed for literacy students of Skills for Life courses, containing many objects and activities designed to stimulate learning.

The objects can be worn and handled in many ways, and are a great source for descriptive writing and learning the spelling of various words. A full set of activities encourages students to use the objects to think of words, write short sentences and also a short story. Word cards are available to match with objects.

An archaeology exercise using real objects found in Colchester encourages students to fill out their own 'finds' sheet, just like real archaeologists. The sheets require the entering of quick information, such as shape, colour and what it is made of – a perfect exercise in word construction.

A copy of Colchester Castle's award-winning Roman Circus poster is also included, which is encouraged for use as a stimulus for computer design, or to write a descriptive piece on tourism in Colchester.

MUSEUMS FLOURISH!

Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service celebrated its second anniversary last April. The service continues to develop and expand its facilities and recent figures prove that visitors are on the rise – a wonderful anniversary gift.

The February 2009 half term saw special animal themed events at Ipswich Museum, High Street, which attracted more than 4,000 visitors. Thanks to many other special events that take place across Ipswich Museum and Christchurch Mansion, visitor figures are now soaring. Throughout the February 2009 half term more than 6,200 people visited Christchurch Mansion and Ipswich Museum – an increase of 1,000 compared to 2008 and

more than double the figure for 2007.

Here in Colchester, the Castle has also seen a surge in visitors. When looking at attendance from 1st April 2008 to the 28th February 2009, more than 101,000 people have attended – an increase of 19%. Throughout the same period Christchurch Mansion and Ipswich Museum too have seen rises of more than 2% and 5% respectively, proving that museums really are the place to be.

There has been a big jump in online visitors, too, and this trend is expected to continue when a new joint service website is launched later this year. More than a quarter of a million people logged on to the museums sections of Colchester and Ipswich's websites, a rise of more than 27% on the previous year.

ACCESS OFFICER VISITS LJUBLJANA

On the 20th April 2009 Sophie Weaver, Access Officer for Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service, went to Ljubljana in Slovenia to attend a seminar hosted by the Slovenian Museum Society. Sophie was invited to speak at the seminar for people who work in museums, called 'Museoforum'.

The trip was funded by the Slovenian Museum Society and the conference took place in the Congress and Cultural Centre Cankarjev dom in Ljubljana. Sophie delivered a 90 minute talk to a large group of delegates which covered different aspects of the Disability Discrimination Act and how it is implemented, as well as the difficulties faced by people with different impairments and the type of facilities that can be made available. Sophie also discussed the importance of consulting with disabled people and referred to the model set in Colchester with the work done with PORTAL.

Sophie also delivered a disability training workshop as an example of the type of disability awareness training that is available in the UK. The workshop gave delegates a greater understanding of visual, mobility and hearing

impairments through a range of practical activities.

MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT OFFICER STARTS IN POST

Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service has an excellent reputation and track record in the field of physical and sensory disability access. Further to this work a new Mental Health Project Officer, John Pollard, has started working for the service on a unique mental health project.

The first part of the project is a formal evaluation of mental health issues in relation to the museum service, involving ‘accessibility’ for people with mental health problems – this will include improving attitudes, understanding, knowledge, and skills within the staffing group. It will also involve an important ‘outreach’ approach, creating connections with local mental health service user groups and services and gauging attitudes towards museums and what barriers they perceive to be in terms of access.

The second part will be to design and implement activities and events that relate to people with mental health problems. The project is in the early stages of development but one initial idea that the officer has started to explore is related to football and the positive impact that both playing and watching can have on mental health. This could potentially involve exhibitions of memorabilia from both Colchester United and Ipswich Town, displays related to supporters’ and players’ thoughts on the emotional and psychological benefits of playing and watching (both from the clubs and service user groups), and a football tournament.

The overall aim of the year long project will be to ‘measurably’ improve understanding and knowledge of mental health issues within the museum service and the local community, combating stigma and prejudice, and promoting positive attitudes towards mental health. Our

intention is that this project will also have positive therapeutic outcomes in terms of improving emotional well being, including that of the organisation as a whole and the service users that we have engaged with.

A comprehensive report and evaluation will be completed early next year, at the end of the project.

PICK AND MIX OBJECT LIBRARY

Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service has launched a new scheme allowing visitors to make their own memory box to take away. The free of charge ‘Pick and Mix’ object library has been developed by the social history team and has already proved very popular.

With the help of museum staff, visitors can pick out a variety of objects and memorabilia including clothes, photographs, domestic items etc. The items can then be placed into a memory box and borrowed, free of charge, for an agreed amount of time. Handling objects is a sociable activity and offers the chance for people to share memories, stories and engage with the past. The scheme has already been enjoyed by two journalists who featured their experiences in local newspapers and boxes have so far been created by a variety of visitors.

STORIES OF THE WORLD

Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service, along with Essex County Council, The Fitzwilliam Museum, Norfolk Museum & Archaeology Service and Luton Museums will be taking part in *Stories of the World*, one of ten major projects at the heart of the cultural Olympiad. The project will be led by the Museums, Libraries and Archive Council (MLA) in partnership with the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG).

Stories of the World will entail a series of exhibitions country wide featuring collections reinterpreted by communities, historians, artists

and other fresh voices.

The regional initiative, led by Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service, called 'East Meets East' will be an over-arching project involving communities from China and South Asia. It will have six main threads including an oral history project with Chinese elders, international loan exhibitions, engaging artists from abroad with local communities, displays in non-traditional spaces, working with young people in the fostering system and community engagement including involvement in festivals and celebrations.

CUSTOMERS COME FIRST AT MUSEUMS!

Two members of staff from Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service are celebrating after successfully passing modules from the National Institute of Customer Service.

Ken Drew, Gallery Services Manager and Noelle Bartlett, Museum Assistant both worked towards their respective modules by spending time gathering evidence towards their awards.

As Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service develops, the views of the museums' customers is paramount to the long term improvement and project work taking place across the whole service. The service prides itself on providing excellent educational resources, special events and good value days out for families and all kinds of groups.

Ken completed the 'Solutions' module within 12 months. This looked at finding effective solutions to customer service problems, identifying user trends and needs, reacting to immediate situations and addressing staff performance.

Noelle completed the 'Communications' module within 6 months. This focused on the issues surrounding effective communication with staff and users, taking a look at the variety of methods available including face to face and written communication.

EXHIBITIONS

The Sixties Seen: Art, Music and Fashion 13th June – 1st November Colchester Castle

Take a trip back to the swinging sixties and discover the art, music and fashion of the time. See highlights from this innovative decade and discover just how much design influenced everyday life.

Enjoy beautiful examples of fashion from the new boutiques and young designers of the time with pieces by Biba, Mary Quant and John Stephens. With gorgeous dresses, denim suits, coats, kaftans and more you will love this nostalgic look at some of the most memorable fashion of the time.

Discover the art of the time with fabulous pieces of Op-Art by Bridget Riley and Victor Vasarely, who influenced textile design and enjoy pieces by Margaret Mellis, John Howlin and others. Not forgetting the music of the



Carolann Jackson, of hit 60s show Ready Steady Go, opens The Sixties Seen exhibition

time such as The Who and Jimi Hendrix, there will be fan magazines, posters, album covers and much more.

The Sixties Seen will be accompanied by a fabulous special events programme, where there will be something for everyone – so keep a look out!

A Cast of Thousands:

The 1909 Colchester Pageant

3rd July – 27th September

Hollytrees Museum

Marking the centenary of the Colchester Pageant, this special exhibition will show some unique items from Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service's collection.

The 1909 Colchester Pageant celebrated nearly 2,000 years of the town's history. Taking two years to organise, involving thousands of people and hundreds of costumes. The nerve centre of the pageant was Hollytrees Museum.

The exhibition includes an original pageant programme and script, as well as numerous black and white photographs. An autograph book signed by the performers and one of the original costumes is also on display.

The exhibition also includes a modern recording of music written for the Pageant, possibly the first time it has been heard in a century.

The exhibition was the inspiration for an outreach project working with Tiptree KYDS youth drama group and their work is on display.

Holding Back the Tide

10th October 2009 – 3rd January 2010

Hollytrees Museum

Exploring the stories of coastal communities from East Anglia, *Holding Back the Tide* discovers changes to the heritage of the East Anglian coast over the last 50 years.

The exhibition features oral histories and photographs, including the communities from

Great Yarmouth, Aldeburgh and Felixstowe.

Produced by CoastNet, the exhibition aims to increase understanding of what coastal heritage means within East Anglia.

Visitors to the exhibition can also see a variety of objects from Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service's collection related to maritime life, including model ships and prints, rarely seen in public before.

EVENTS

Throughout the year the museum service continues to host a broad variety of special events at all seven of its sites.

This year a special programme for adults has been devised and a leaflet on the programme is now available in all the museums. It features information on the popular 'Tea and Talks' series, so pick one up today.

DIARY HIGHLIGHTS:

The Sixties Seen Exhibition Tour

Colchester Castle

Tuesday 13th October

Enjoy a fabulous guided tour of *The Sixties Seen* exhibition, with the Curator of Costume and find out more about the pieces on show.

Free after normal Castle admission. The tour starts at 2pm. No need to book.

The tour will be British Sign Language Interpreted.

'Out of the Box' presents The 1960s

Hollytrees Museum, Colchester

Thursday 22nd October

Visit Hollytrees Museum and celebrate *The Sixties Seen* exhibition by discovering 1960s items from behind the scenes at the museum, with the Curator of Costume.

Free. Drop-in 1pm – 3pm. No need to book.

Meet Bernard Mason

Tymperleys Clock Museum, Colchester Tuesday 27th - Wednesday 28th October

Take a fascinating guided tour of Tymperleys Clock Museum with our costumed guide as Bernard Mason, former owner of the house.

£1 per person. Tours take place at 11am and 12 noon. No need to book. (This tour is ideal for adults, but also suitable for children, with worksheets to use while on the tour).

Dark Tours of Colchester Castle

Colchester Castle

Thursday 29th October

Hear stories of Colchester Castle's darkest days – after closing time. During this unique guided tour you can discover more about the Castle's prison, death, disease and more! The tour includes the Roman vaults, the Great Stairs, the Castle roof and much more.

Tours will take place at 6pm, 7pm and 8pm, and last 45–60 minutes. Tickets cost £3. Please book in advance at Hollytrees Museum or call 01206 282940. Places must be paid for in advance. This event is for ages 16 and over.

Meet Birds of Prey

Natural History Museum, Colchester

Friday 30th October

Come and meet some beautiful birds of prey. Meet a kestrel, a buzzard and more and learn about their habitat in the wild. (Species mentioned are subject to change).

£1.50 per person. Set shows at 12pm, 1.15pm and 2.30pm. No need to book. No entry to the museum after the start of each show.

Deck the Halls

Hollytrees Museum, Colchester

Sunday 13th December

Get into the festive spirit and make some beautiful Christmas decorations to take home.

You can enjoy making five different decorations in this fun and jolly session.

£2.00 per person. Drop-in 12.30pm – 4pm. No need to book. Suitable for all ages, young children should bring an adult helper.

Christmas Open Evening and Market

Colchester Castle

Wednesday 16th December

Enjoy a special event in association with Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service, the Castle Park Rangers and the VisitColchester information centre. Enjoy entertainment in the Castle with carols, Father Christmas in his special grotto and much more. Stock up on festive treats with a walk around the Christmas market in the grounds of Castle Park and enjoy activities throughout the day at the VisitColchester information centre.

Meet Father Christmas in his grotto – £2.00 per person (includes a gift). All other activities are free. Castle open for Christmas fun 3pm – 8.30pm. Christmas Market 11am – 9pm. VisitColchester Information Centre 10am – 8pm.

Please note: the museum will close at 2.30pm to allow time to prepare for the 3pm free opening. No need to book.

A British Sign Language interpreter will be available from 3pm–8.30pm.

DEPOT

The Mercury Theatre Company is staging a special production on 23rd September to 11th October 2009 in the former Magdalen Street bus garage, based on stories from across Colchester's history – including a scientist who makes electrifying discoveries and 2 tramps who found a simpler way of existing. Contact The Mercury Theatre Box Office for details on 01206 573948.

Local and Family History Courses starting September 2009

STUDY FAMILY HISTORY WITH CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY

Meeting Your Ancestors Part 1

The course will cover all the basics of family history research and allow learners to examine a variety of primary sources. Topics for discussion will include - Census Returns, Parish Registers, Civil Registration, Oral History, Wills and Probate, Maps and Tithe records. Also included a visit to the Local Studies Library and the Essex Record Office.

Tutor: PATRICK DENNEY
Time: 10 meetings, Thursdays at 7pm
Start date: Thursday, 24th September 2009.
Venue: The Adult Community College,
Wilson Marriage Centre,
Colchester
Enrolment: Wilson Marriage Centre
on 01206 798488
Course code: EWM4C01

Family History Using the Internet

A course designed to provide the learner with a knowledge of the main computer-based sources available for researching family history. Although primarily aimed at the beginner, the course should also be of interest to more experienced family historians who would like to gain experience using computer-based sources.

Tutor: PATRICK DENNEY
Time: 10 meetings, Saturday at 10am
Start date: Saturday, 26th September 2009.
Venue: The Adult Community College,
Wilson Marriage Centre,
Colchester
Enrolment: Wilson Marriage Centre
on 01206 798488
Course Code: EWM6A06

An Introduction to Reading Old Handwriting

This course is aimed very much at the complete beginner who wishes to get to grips with reading the handwriting encountered in many old family history documents, particularly from the 16-18 centuries.

Tutor: PATRICK DENNEY
Time: 10 meetings, Thursday at 1pm
Start date: Thursday 14th January 2010
Venue: The Adult Community College,
Wilson Marriage Centre,
Colchester
Enrolment: Wilson Marriage Centre
on 01206 798488
Course Code: EWM4B45

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX LOCAL HISTORY CENTRE

History of Colchester

A 10 course covering all major aspects of the town's history from the time of the Romans to the present day.

Tutor: PATRICK DENNEY
Time: 10 meetings, Mondays at 7pm
Start date: Monday 12th October 2009
Venue: University of Essex
Enrolment: Contact Lisa West
on 01206 872190
Course Code: HR110

British Prehistory: The Prehistoric Archaeology of Essex and East Anglia

A course examining the prehistoric archaeology of Essex and East Anglia

Tutor: HOWARD BROOKS
Time: 10 meetings, Tuesdays at 7pm
Start date: Tuesday 13th October 2009
Venue: University of Essex
Enrolment: Contact Lisa West
on 01206 872190
Course Code HR150

Concluding The Friends' Lecture Series 2009

THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY LECTURES

all at Lion Walk Church at 7.30pm

Tuesday 8th September

JESS JEPHCOTT

The Inns, Taverns and Pubs of Colchester

Tuesday 22nd September

JERRY BOWDREY

*Climate of Change? Species New to Britain
in the Last 60 Years*

Tuesday 6th October

PATRICK DENNEY

The Great Colchester Pageant and Buffalo Bill

Tuesday 27th October

ANDREW PHILLIPS

Colchester at War (1914/1945)

Tuesday 3rd November

COLCHESTER FILM MAKERS CLUB

Remembering Colchester on Film (part two)

Tuesday 17th November

SHANI D' CRUZE

Colchester in the 18th Century

Admission prices per lecture:

Members £1 - Non Members £2.

For details contact:

PATRICK DENNEY on 01206 796822

COLCHESTER RECALLED

Colchester's Oral History Group continues its monthly meeting on Thursday 17th September 2009 in the Board Room at Colchester Institute, Sheepen Road, at 7pm, when IRENE KETTLE is giving a talk entitled *From the Editor's Chair: Running Colchester's Two Newspapers*.

On Thursday 15th October ROBERT MEAD's talk is entitled *With the Troops in Afghanistan*.

All are welcome.

Complete programme and Membership details are available from ANDREW PHILLIPS telephone 01206 546775.

SOME ADDITIONAL INTERESTING DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Colchester Civic Society

The Society has organised trips for the Autumn. Please contact Jo Edwards, Chairman and Programme Organiser on Colchester 868254 or josiemedwards@hotmail.com for details and general information.

7th November - Rainham

Visit to RSPB Nature Reserve and its new visitors centre which is something of an architectural masterpiece with several innovative green features. Cost £22.

5th December - Food, Glorious Food - visiting Borough Market, Covent Garden, Fortnum & Mason, and ending with the Christmas Lights. Cost £26.

The Society is also organising a **holiday in and around Manchester 21st-25th September**. For more information please contact Jo Edwards.

The Civic Society are providing stewards for the very popular Heritage Open Days on 12th and 13th September. If you can help, please contact me.

PETER EVANS Telephone 01206 540990