

**The Friends of  
Colchester Museums**

*Registered Charity No. 310669*

Newsletter and  
Sixty Fourth Annual Report  
2012-2013

# Len Drinkell

It is with sadness that we announce the death of Len Drinkell, who was the last surviving founder member of The Friends of Colchester Museums. But Len was so much more than that.

When his boss, the late Alderman Leonard Dansie, then Mayor of Colchester, and head of the town's leading auctioneers, thought up the formula for 'The Friends' in 1948, Len promptly joined.

Within a few years he became Assistant Secretary and then Secretary, a post he held for well over 30 years, (1956-1987), a longer stint than any Secretary has ever done.

As, in due time, Len himself became the senior partner in the firm of Reeman & Dansie, his wide range of contacts like Sir Roy Strong and Frank Carr, Director of the National Maritime Museum and saviour of the *Cutty Sark*, enabled Len to organise a string of memorable outings and special events.

He always kept a sharp eye out for Colchester-related items coming on to the auction market, not just in Colchester but in London at Christies, Sotheby's and the other leading houses. In this way many unique items were purchased by The

Friends and gifted to the Museum. When he finally retired as Secretary Len remained a key member of our Committee until his death.

For over 60 years – a record which will surely, never be broken – he was our eyes

and ears in the national auction market. He guided us not only in what to buy, but what to bid. One day, perhaps, we should consider an exhibition of items which Len 'rescued' for the town.

Educated at C.R.G.S., Len was Colchester through and through. He was for many years one of the most active of a small number of town guides when this duty fell mainly on The Friends.

As well as his work for The Friends, Len was a key figure in keeping the historic church of St Leonard's at the Hythe in its present restored condition and in the public eye. He was a long-standing member of Colchester Rotary, was a keen Freemason for over 60 years and was widely respected across the town.

Kindly, self-effacing, with a sometimes impish sense of humour, he was, above all, a Christian gentleman.

We shall not see his like again.



# Sixty Fourth Annual Report 2012-2013

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Annual general Meeting took place on Tuesday 18th June at Lion Walk Church, with the Mayor of Colchester, Councillor Colin Sykes in the chair. The audited accounts, (see pages 4 and 5) were presented and approved. Amongst the other items agreed was the election of Peter Berridge as a Vice President and the award of the British Empire Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours to Andrew Phillips for his services to history in Colchester was appreciatively recorded.

The meeting was followed by a most enlightening lecture by Dr Elizabeth Hall entitled 'Medical Women - An Irresistible Force', featuring Drs Ruth-Bensusan Butt, Jane Walker and Veronica Dawkins.

## **FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

Already this year we have enjoyed a number of activities that have been very well attended. Some 300 or so members came to see the empty Castle on 24th March, while our lecture series during the Spring term attracted an audience of nearly 140 on average. This reflects encouragingly both on our members' interest in the subjects presented and on the high quality of the speakers who kindly gave us such interesting talks. We are extremely grateful to all contributors and, as you will see on the back cover, there is an equally attractive lecture list lined up for the autumn term.

There is, however, one distinctly grey cloud that prevails at the time of writing with recent news of the death of Len Drinkell. His unstinting contribution to the success of our Friends' organisation and to Colchester's museums over all the years since 1948 is, in a word, incalculable. As the accompanying appreciation by Andrew Phillips rightly puts it, "We shall not see his like again." From my own

experience both within and outside the Museum service, I can easily say that there is no-one, apart from those with official responsibility, who has done more for Colchester's museums during the past 65 years than Len Drinkell. The many objects that he has helped acquire are his lasting memorial and our kindest thoughts go to Nora and the family at this time.

As to the future, the Castle Museum, though currently closed, will soon be re-opening in Spring 2014. Tom Hodgson's report (page 6) clearly shows there is much to look forward to in terms of a new look and innovative displays. The coming months, then, with Christmas not that far away, are a good time for us to think about who would benefit from membership of the Friends when the Castle doors are open again. Do you have family or friends, for example, for whom membership would make an ideal present? We now have a new application form to use or to pass on and it should also be possible to download it from our website ([www.TFOCM.com](http://www.TFOCM.com)).

The next Friends' Open Evening will take place on Tuesday 24th September 2013 when we are joining forces with The Friends of the Minorities for a special combined event on their home ground. This coincides with an exhibition there of pottery from the Castle Museum and has other displays selected from the work of contemporary ceramic artists. There will also be several short talks, including one on The Minorities itself. Please see the enclosed insert for full details and a booking form, which needs to be returned by 17th September. I am sure this opportune meeting of the two Friends' groups will prove both congenial and interesting for all who can attend.

MARK DAVIES *Chairman*

## TREASURER'S TOPICS

Subscriptions are Single £7.50, Couples £12, Family £18. A reminder is enclosed for a few people who have not paid for 2013.

Cheques should be made payable to **The Friends of Colchester Museums**.

**P.S.** If you have set up a Standing Order please ask the bank to quote your name on the credit, as I cannot identify the payment without it. Many thanks.

## Giraffes

After our talks at Lion Walk Church, a number of members have stopped to admire the model giraffe in the car park. There are, of course, many multi-coloured giraffes sited throughout the town (and elsewhere) commemorating the 50th anniversary of Colchester Zoo and the project is called 'Stand Tall'. They are to be found inside buildings and one appeared to be running the shop in Firstsite.

The Zoo has an interesting display on its first 50 years and there is also a book available.

Next year it will be the 50th anniversary of Essex University. I wonder what they will come up with.

PETER EVANS *Hon Treasurer*

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

I am pleased to report that membership of the Friends now stands at a total of 737 across all the categories. This is a slight decrease over the year which was expected due to the closure of the Castle. The breakdown is as follows - Single 334, Couples 241, Family 153 and 9 others. I would like to thank all members for their continued support.

PATRICK DENNEY *Hon Membership Secretary*

## A NEW ADVANTAGE OF BEING A MEMBER OF THE FRIENDS OF COLCHESTER MUSEUMS

The Committee is pleased to announce a new advantage of membership. It is a discount of 10% on purchases by members at Mussi's Cafe/ Bar and a la carte menu in the restaurant in Museum Street. All you have to do is present your Membership Card when ordering. This offer does not cover daily 'Special' dishes or events like Christmas or St Valentine's Day parties.

## OUTINGS

### Kentwell Hall

The evening visit to Kentwell Hall on Tuesday 11th June was greatly enjoyed by all who attended. We were welcomed by the owner, Mr Patrick Phillips, who introduced us to the many facets of a fine moated Tudor house. We then divided into two parties who were shown around the house by either Mr or Mrs Phillips. This included the Tudor bakery, brew

house and apothecary's room. We were also able to look round the extensive gardens, which featured a dead tree to the right of the house which has been beautifully carved by Colin Wilbourn.

Our departure was a little delayed, but nevertheless, this did nothing to spoil our enjoyment.

PETER CONSTABLE

### Hampton Court Palace

On Wednesday 3rd July we joined forces with members of the Colchester Recalled Oral History Group for a most enjoyable visit to



*One of the Giraffes on display in Head Street*



*Friends gathered outside Kentwell Hall being introduced to the building by owner Patrick Phillips*

Hampton Court Palace and Gardens. We were amazed at how much there was to see and experience.

Beginning in the great courtyard which is surrounded by Tudor accommodation blocks, each with their own private privy, we explored the great kitchens – where up to 1200 meals were prepared daily, before viewing the various state apartments. Finally, we ventured outside to roam around the extensive gardens and maze.

We returned home at the end of the day feeling totally fulfilled and satisfied.

PATRICK DENNEY

### **Dover Castle**

On Tuesday 9th July members journeyed to Dover Castle for a most memorable day out in beautiful weather.

The historical features included the Great Tower, built between 1180 and 1185, now recreated as it would have been in King Henry II's day. Also to be seen were the Great Hall, the Royal Chapel, the armoury, kitchens and from the roof, the entire Castle complex could be viewed, including the Anglo Saxon church of

St Mary-in-Castro, the Roman pharos and spectacular views of Dover harbour, (built by Lord Cowdray's company in 1909). Not to be missed were the tunnels both ancient and modern, the medieval tunnels built to defend the Castle after the siege of 1216–17 and the more modern ones built to protect the nation from invasion in both World Wars. These tunnels were used by ex C.R.G.S. schoolboy Admiral Ramsay to co-ordinate the evacuation of over 350,000 allied troops from the beaches of Dunkirk.

This really was an action packed day which was again enjoyed to the full. Our thanks to those who organised both trips!

PETER CONSTABLE



*The impressive Dover Castle*

### **HERITAGE OPEN DAYS**

**Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th  
September**

This is the weekend when Colchester's interesting but inaccessible buildings are opened to the public. For details see the Colchester Museums Service website.

PETER EVANS

*Who also supplied the photographs on these pages*

# The Friends of Colchester Museums

## Income and Expenditure Account for

INCOME	2012/13 (£s)	2011/12 (£s)
Subscriptions	6999.00	7923.50
Lectures (net of expenses)	990.60	829.00
Trips (net profit - note 1)	1085.00	227.00
Interest	686.17	9.37
Donations	241.50	251.00
Special Open Evening (note 2)	547.47	
Surplus of Expenditure over Income	4154.63	
	<u>£14734.37</u>	<u>9239.87</u>

## Balance Sheet as at

ACCUMULATED FUND	(£s)	(£s)
Balance brought forward	38001.81	35836.73
Surplus/Loss for year	-4145.63	2165.08
TOTAL	33847.18	38001.81
CREDITORS:		
Fees for Trips	935.00	1593.00
	<u>34782.18</u>	<u>39594.81</u>

### Notes to the Accounts

Note 1. Trips to Quex House/Margate and Framlingham

Note 2. Open evenings at the Castle September and March (Empty Castle)

Note 3. First part of our agreed contribution to the Castle Renovation (total £30,000.00) and contribution towards the purchase of two paintings by Brian Graham

# Annual Accounts for 2012-2013

for the year ended 31st March 2013

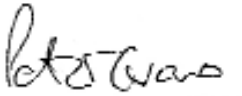
EXPENDITURE	2012/13 (£s)	2011/12 (£s)
Operating Expenses	2344.37	1795.46
Subscriptions and Insurance (British Association of Friends of Museum and British Association of Local History)	215.00	602.83
Events - Christmas Open Evening	175.00	150.00
Purchases (Note 3)	12000.00	4526.50
Surplus of Income over Expenditure		2165.08
	<u>£14734.37</u>	<u>9239.87.</u>

at 31st March 2013

NET CURRENT ASSETS	(£s)	(£s)
Bank		
Current Account	1805.90	1348.70
Building Society	32712.28	38026.11
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>39374.81</b>
DEBTORS: Room Hire	264.00	220.00
	<u>£34782.18</u>	<u>39594.81</u>

I have examined the accounts of The Friends of Colchester Museums for the year ended 31st March 2013 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: 5th May 2013

Signed  PETER EVANS FMAAT *Hon. Treasurer*

# Museum News

## COLCHESTER CASTLE – July 2013

The four week opening of the emptied Castle between 9th March and 7th April 2013 was a great success. The open days with tours and talks were well attended with very positive comments from visitors who were amazed at the sense of scale, especially of the Norman Great Hall on the first floor. The experts who attended the Castle study day on 12th March added greatly to our knowledge of how the Castle would have looked and functioned in the Norman period. A consensus was reached that the Castle, although probably conceived as a three storey building, was actually only completed with two storeys and so was only a little taller than it is today. This is a very important conclusion and is informing our briefing for a castle model and new illustrations.

There was an eclectic mix of other special events including a four day beer festival, a zombie invasion, an Elizabethan evening, a vintage fair, and a wedding reception. Students from the Colchester Institute performed *Julius Caesar*, played at the 'Castle Rock' music evening and supported the 'Knight School' event where school groups learnt about life in medieval times. 11,581 people visited in total which was a 56% increase on the equivalent



*The empty Castle*

period in the previous year. A rota of museum staff and volunteers covered all the events. During this period a detailed archaeological record and condition surveys of the internal Castle structure were also undertaken.

The local building firm, Huttons, who were appointed on 28th January to carry out the main building works at Colchester Castle, have insulated the roof and are currently preparing to install the under floor heating. Completion of the new lift and toilet block will follow. The scaffolding that has filled the inside of the Castle since April will shortly be taken down. At the same time scaffolding is going up outside as Bakers of Danbury begin the repairs to the north, east and south walls which will be completed in the Autumn.



*The very popular 4 day Beer Festival*



*The building work starts*



We have continued to look at the use of digital technology in the Castle and to interpret Colchester's wider heritage. Virtual Past, who were appointed through the EU Norman Connections project and are working on the 3D modelling of the Castle, have produced the initial draft models showing how the Castle would have appeared in Norman times. We are looking forward to seeing the worked-up models very soon. Our HLF Mentor, Karen Knight, attended a meeting to discuss and develop our interpretive approach to Colchester's wider heritage. The meeting was very useful in identifying how traditional signage, existing tours and trails, and digital technology could be combined to produce a coherent whole which has opportunities for local participation and interest for visitors to the town. Our ICT partner at Colchester Borough Council has given us technical advice on the provision of a wi-fi hotspot in the Castle. Given the increasing significance of digital provision we are looking to ensure a strong wireless broadband signal throughout the Castle and the infrastructure is now being put in place.

The use of light projection onto the internal spine wall of the Castle has been investigated and proved to be technically possible. The light projection will consist of short films highlighting the dramatic events in the Castle's history and will be shown at intervals during the day. When the films are not playing the wall will be fully visible. The use of such large scale light projection as a regular interpretive element in this way will be innovative.

Beck Interiors were appointed as the main fit out contractors and Spiral Productions were awarded the AV and multimedia contract at the end of May. Both firms will be receiving detailed information from the museum via our designers, Redman Design, throughout the Summer and Autumn so that they can create all



*Ben conserving the Mount Bures firedog*

the elements of the new displays. This is a lot of work and we are delighted to have been able to appoint Shirley Harvey, from the museum front of house team, as Project Display Assistant. Shirley starts on 30th July and will help with the delivery of the detailed graphics information required for the display fit out. She will also assist with the installation of the objects in the new displays and will support the development of the light projection and digital Apps packages.

A small exhibition about the Castle project was installed in Hollytrees Museum in early June and an exhibition will open in the Garden Room at the Minorities on 28th August which will feature the work of the volunteer team in conserving objects for the new displays in the Castle. Colchester Film Makers Club approached the Museum in January about creating a film record of the project and this is now underway.

The existing schools story tours and packages were reviewed with Teacher's Advisory Panel on 23rd April and the format and content of new schools packages and resources available, both on site and for use in school, were discussed. Feedback was gained from 'Knight School days' in the empty Castle and used to inform plans for this new learning package.

On 11th June 60 Year 6 pupils from Hamilton Primary School and 13 year 8 Gifted and Talented pupils from Stanway School visited the site of Roman Circus in Colchester. During the visit they talked to archaeologist about the site, interpreting evidence, took part in archaeological dig and learnt about the site and issues around plans to preserve this significant site. Pupils worked on Podcast and Powerpoint presentations following the visit.

Planning consent has been received for three of the wider heritage interpretation panels around the Town Wall. The panel at Duncan's Gate was unveiled by the Mayor on 12th June and panels at the Roman Theatre

and at Balcerne Gate will follow in the next couple of months.

To find out more visit our website [www.cimuseums.org.uk](http://www.cimuseums.org.uk) or subscribe to our regular e-newsletter and receive news directly to your inbox, sign up at [www.cimuseums.org.uk/eneews](http://www.cimuseums.org.uk/eneews)

The new-look Colchester Castle will re-open for Spring 2014. You can follow the project's progress on our website <http://www.cimuseums.org.uk/major-projects.html>

TOM HODGSON  
*Colchester Development Manager*

## Colchester Recalled 2013

Colchester's Oral History Group restart their programme on **Thursday September 19th** at Colchester Institute when ANNE PARRY talks on *George Ewart Evans - the Suffolk writer and oral history pioneer*. This is an illustrated talk about one of the founders of British oral history, back in the 1960s, when rural Suffolk was really rural. We hope to play some of his early recordings.

On **Thursday 16th October**, BRIDGET HANLEY's subject is *Ipswich and its 'Caribbean Experience'*. This illustrated major oral history project sets out to record the origins of Ipswich's substantial West Indian Community, from leaving home to settling in Ipswich.

The programme continues on **Thursday 21st November** with DR. XUN ZHOU's *Mao's Chinese Famine*. Oral History is starting to

uncover one of the great tragedies of the 20th century. During China's so-called 'Great Leap Forward' under Chairman Mao some 45 million Chinese died and Communist officials just let it happen. This is an item of world news and Dr Zhou, now of Essex University, is giving this talk following publication of her book. She was able to go to remote parts of China and actually film and interview some very elderly survivors who remember it all. Video extracts will be shown. Not to be missed. THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD AT LION WALK CHURCH.

Finally, on **Thursday 12th December** we have our usual Christmas programme, with a quiz, video and refreshments.

Further details are available from ANDREW PHILLIPS, telephone 01206 546775.

# The Friends of Colchester Museums Officers 2013

*President:* His Worship the Mayor,  
COUNCILLOR COLIN SYKES

*Vice Presidents:*

MRS JEAN BAKER      MRS BARBARA NAPPER  
PETER BERRIDGE      MARK DAVIES  
PATRICK DENNEY      ANDREW PHILLIPS BEM  
PAUL SPENDLOVE

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CHRIS HALL      ANDREW MILLAR  
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and Ipswich Museum Service)  
TOM HODGSON (Colchester Development  
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PHILIP WISE (Collections and Curatorial  
Manager)

*Honorary Auditor:* ROY ANDERSON

*Museum Office:* Museum Resource Centre  
14 Ryegate Road, Colchester CO1 1YG  
Telephone 01206 282931/2  
www.cims.org.uk



Welcomes all members of The Friends with a 10% discount on all purchases\*  
in the Cafe Bar, including breakfast, the á la carte menu and Chef's Daily  
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*\*Please note: This offer does not include Chef's Choice or any special events*

# Concluding The Friends' Lecture Series 2013

## SEPTEMBER

**3rd** COLCHESTER AT WAR -  
Life on the Home front  
Patrick Denney

**17th** LOOKING FOR RICHARD III  
An update on the project  
John Ashdown-Hill

## OCTOBER

**1st** PRESENTING TV HISTORY  
Behind the scenes with  
the famous BBC presenter  
Dr Pamela Cox

**15th** GREY FRIARS -  
Colchester's forgotten corner  
and newest hotel  
Alan Skinner/Joan Gurney

**29th** SAVED FOR COLCHESTER -  
Significant acquisitions by  
The Friends of Colchester  
Museums  
Mark Davies

## NOVEMBER

**12th** A YOUNG COLCESTRIAN -  
A life sacrificed for his country  
Geoffrey Markham

**All at Lion Walk Church at 7.30pm**

Admission per lecture:

Members £1. Non members £2.

Further details from: David Walton,

Friends of Colchester Museums

14 Ryegate Road, Colchester CO1 1YG

email: davidpatrickwalton@gmail.com

Telephone: 0779 659 2296.

## Local and Family History Courses Starting September 2013

### Wilson Marriage Centre

#### HISTORY OF COLCHESTER (Part 1)

Friday afternoons for 10 weeks.

Code EWM5B06

#### MEETING YOUR ANCESTORS (Part 2)

Tuesday evenings for 10 weeks.

Code EWM2C14

#### FAMILY HISTORY ON THE INTERNET (Part 1)

Thursday afternoons for 10 weeks.

Code EWM4B43

#### READING OLD HANDWRITING

##### (an introduction) (Part 1)

Saturday mornings 10am-12pm for 10 weeks.

Code EWM6A10

Telephone 01206 789488 or view  
[www.essex.gov.uk/adultlearning](http://www.essex.gov.uk/adultlearning)

### Colchester WEA - Castle Methodist Church

#### MEETING YOUR ANCESTORS (Part 3)

Friday mornings for 10 weeks.

Code A5 PD

Telephone Frank Black on 01206 543083

### University of Essex

#### PALAEOGRAPHY FOR FAMILY HISTORIANS

##### (Part 2)

Monday evenings, 7-9pm for 10 weeks

This is an accredited course.

For further details contact Lisa Willis  
on 01206 872190