

**The Friends of
Colchester Museums**

Registered Charity No. 310669

Newsletter and
Sixty Fifth Annual Report
2013-2014

Officers 2014

AS ELECTED AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON 17TH JUNE 2014

- President:* His Worship the Mayor, COUNCILLOR JOHN ELLIOT
- Vice Presidents:* MRS JEAN BAKER MRS BARBARA NAPPER
PETER BERRIDGE MARK DAVIES
PATRICK DENNEY ANDREW PHILLIPS BEM
PAUL SPENDLOVE
- Honorary Member:* MRS R J BRISTOW
- Honorary Treasurer:* PETER EVANS
5 Grimston Road, Colchester CO2 7RN
Telephone 01206 540990 Email: peter.evans7978@btinternet.com
- Honorary Secretary:* JANET FULFORD
301 Mile End Road, Colchester CO4 5EA
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- Newsletter Editor:* PETER CONSTABLE
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- Committee:* MARK DAVIES (*Chairman*)
MRS JENNY JONES MRS AVRIL LANKESTER
HARRY CARLO CHRIS HALL
ANDREW MILLAR ANDREW PHILLIPS BEM
DAVID WALTON
- Ex Officio:* BILL SEAMAN (*General Manager, Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service*)
TOM HODGSON (*Colchester Development Manager*)
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

Sixty Fifth Annual Report 2013-2014

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting took place on Tuesday 17th June at Lion Walk Church, with the Mayor of Colchester, Councillor John Elliot in the chair. The audited accounts, (see pages 4 and 5) were presented and approved. Amongst the other items agreed was the increase to the Annual Subscriptions as outlined in other sections of this Newsletter.

The meeting was followed by a very lively and entertaining lecture by Nigel Hildreth MBE entitled 'The Music Scene in Colchester Over the Last 30 Years', which featured several items of music and photographs.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

With the Castle Museum re- opened in May, some 350 Friends and guests booked for our special Open Evening on Wednesday 11th June 2014. These included a number of Colchester Civic Society members and a coach party of Ipswich Museum Friends who were able to join us. Everyone's high expectations were fully rewarded by the excellent quality of

the new displays, which were greatly appreciated by all, as were the more accessible internal views of the Castle itself.

Brief formalities included the presentation of a mammoth cheque for £30,000 (non-negotiable) to Bill Seaman (Museum, Arts and Culture Manager) and Tom Hodgson (Colchester Development Officer) in token of the third and final yearly payment of £10,000 that our organisation has made towards the Castle Redevelopment Project. As mentioned before, such a substantial sum was meant not just to reflect how significant the Friends felt this project to be for Colchester, but also to demonstrate the extent of committed local support, which in some measure helped secure the £3.25M grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Besides trying their hand at the chariot race and making use of the digital App, members were able to admire the very fine display case containing Roman glass in the East Gallery which serves as a lasting reminder of our contribution and its significance. A most



Mark Davies presenting the cheque for £30,000 to Tom Hodgson and Bill Seaman



Princess Anne talking with Mark Davies and Tom Hodgson at the Castle on 20th March

enjoyable evening was had by all and there was great praise for what the Museum staff and others had achieved under challenging circumstances. There is a useful account of what the Castle now has to offer under Museum News on page 6.

Because of CBC's current funding policy, the Museum Service needs more revenue income – over the counter, as it were. In recognition of which, the Committee has agreed to make a contribution of £2,400 for this calendar year and has offered to do something similar in future. It is hoped that members will use their current complimentary access to the Castle as much as possible, taking friends and relations with them and encouraging others do the same.

The modest increase in subscriptions, agreed for next year at our Annual General Meeting in May, will enable the Friends to meet rising costs and, more to the point, enable us to raise our level of financial support for Colchester's Museums. Exactly how this can be achieved remains to be determined and depends on future policy in relation to the Museum Service's most pressing needs. The

Council's updated policy on admissions, announced in April, is currently being clarified and discussed. We understand that the new entry system at the Castle will allow an accurate calculation of Friends' visits to be made. Once the first 6 months' figures are available it should then be possible to agree the best way forward.

At the AGM, I drew attention to the tireless efforts of the Officers and Committee on the Friends' behalf, for which we are most grateful. Someone who should be particularly mentioned, having now left the Committee after many years' service, is Jean Blowers whose home was long the main sorting office for Newsletter mailings. The Committee would like to mark her contribution in an appropriate way in due course.

MARK DAVIES *Chairman*

TREASURER'S TOPICS

At the Annual General Meeting, it was agreed that subscription rates will increase as follows from 1st January 2015. This is the first increase since 2004 and is necessary because of the increase in postage, printing and other

costs. Single members; £10.00 *previously* £7.50; Couples £15.00 *previously* £12.00; Families £21.00 *previously* £18.00.

If you pay your subscriptions by standing order, I have enclosed a note about the action that you need to take to correct your standing instructions at your bank. Please do this well before the standing order becomes payable on 1st January. We cannot contact the bank on your behalf. If you decide to change your membership status (for example from single to couple membership) you can do so now. Please advise Patrick Denney, the Membership Secretary, as soon as possible.

If you want to pay through your bank, please contact me for a standing order form.

With regard to our investments, I have written to THE TIMES for advice. I asked if any banks understood the needs of charities and if any offered decent rates. I was told - and I quote- "Not really" - but was given a lead that I will follow up.

PETER EVANS *Hon Treasurer*

TRIP TO IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM 6th OCTOBER 2014

The Imperial War Museum has just re-opened and The Friends of Colchester Museums have been invited to join the Colchester Civic Society to visit the new attractions, including a new atrium and 'terraces'. These include a reconstruction of a trench, with weapons, uniforms, photos and a Sopwith Camel swooping above. A Mark V tank looms over the edge. There is also the largest available exhibition of the art of World War 1 (Orpen, Nash, Nevinson). There is also a 'Horrible Histories' exhibit.

The Museum has a new café for lunch or tea or you can bring your own. The coach leaves East Hill at 9.15am opposite Greyfriars. Cost £25.

Cheques should be made payable to **Colchester Civic Society**, c/o Jo Edwards,

43 Priory Street, Colchester CO1 2QB.

If you need any more information please phone Jo on 01206 868254.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE 2014

Our membership figures currently total 716 across all categories. This represents a small decline from our 2013 total of 737, and indeed our 2012 high of 756. The current breakdown compared with our 2013 figures are as follows: Single 339 (334), Couples 243 (241), Family 125 (153) and other 9. It can thus be seen that the greater loss in numbers is from our family members - 28 fewer than last year. The Committee and I would like to thank the membership for their continued support during the recent period of Castle closure and hope that you have had time to view the new displays.

PATRICK DENNEY *Hon Membership Secretary*

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th 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

CHRISTMAS OPEN EVENING

This will take place on Wednesday 10th December from 3pm and will give members a chance to see round the Castle and enjoy the Yuletide festivities taking place.

TEA AND TALKS AT THE CASTLE

Due to losing my email database a few weeks ago, I apologise for being unable to contact those who volunteered their help on this project, which the Committee has decided not to proceed with.

With thanks for your understanding.

THE EDITOR

The Friends of Colchester Museum

Income and Expenditure Account

INCOME	2013/14 (£s)	2012/13 (£s)
Subscriptions	7000.50	6999.00
Lectures (net of expenses)	919.10	990.60
Trips (net profit - note 1 & 2)	52.81	1085.00
Interest	638.21	686.17
Donations	156.00	241.50
Special Open Evening (note 3)	85.00	77.47
Surplus of Expenditure over Income	3781.93	4154.63
	<u>£12633.55</u>	<u>14734.37</u>

Balance Sheet as at

ACCUMULATED FUND	(£s)	(£s)
Balance brought forward	33847.18	36789.81
Surplus/Loss for year	-3781.93	-4154.63
TOTAL	30065.25	33847.18
CREDITORS:		
Fees for Trips (note 2)	2793.00	935.00
	<u>32858.25</u>	<u>34782.18</u>

Notes to the Accounts

Note 1. Trips to Kentwell Hall and Dover

Note 2. Creditors for trips was understated for 2012/13. The correct figure was £1467. This means that the profit for trips was overstated by £532 in 2012/3 and understated in 2013/4.

Note 3. Net profit for Evening at The Minories, September 2013.

Note 4. Second payment of £10,000 towards Castle Refurbishment was paid in 2013/14.

Note 5. Payments made for the retirement of the Museum Manager Peter Berridge and the death of founder member Leonard Drinkell.

Museums Annual Accounts 2013-2014

For the year ended 31st March 2014

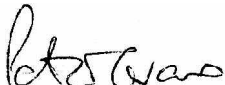
EXPENDITURE	2013/14 (£s)	2012/13 (£s)
Operating Expenses	2305.05	2344.37
Subscriptions and Insurance (British Association of Friends of Museums and British Association of Local History))	215.00	215.00
Events - Christmas Open Evening		
Purchases (Note 4)	10000.00	175.00
Presentations (Note 5)	113.50	12000.00
Surplus of Income over Expenditure	<u>£12633.55</u>	<u>14734,37</u>

at 31st March 2014

NET CURRENT ASSETS	(£s)	(£s)
Bank		
Current Account	3007.76	1805,90
Building Society	29850.49	32712.28
TOTAL	<u>£32858.25</u>	<u>34518.18</u>
DEBTORS: Room Hire	-	264.00
	<u>£32858.25</u>	<u>34782,18</u>

I have examined the accounts of The Friends of Colchester Museums for the year ended 31st March 2014 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: 9th May 2014.

Signed  PETER EVANS *FMAAT Hon. Treasurer*

Museum News

OPEN AGAIN!

After 16 months of closure, Colchester Castle re-opened to the public on 2nd May. That month visitor numbers were almost double the number expected and remained on target in June to deliver over 100,000 visitors in the first year.

A slower than anticipated timetable for the delivery of showcases, graphics and object mounts by our fit out contractors meant that the museum team worked to the wire installing objects in the new displays and preparing the Castle for its re-opening. Luckily the adrenalin flows when the deadline for such a big project looms - which was just as well when we worked into the small hours on the night before we opened.

There was a preview evening for VIP guests, including The Friends committee and representatives from the Heritage Lottery Fund, on 14th April. However, the most important guest in the weeks before opening was Princess Anne who visited the Castle on 20th March. She showed a great deal of interest in the project and spoke to many people involved in the installation work. The hour in the museum passed in a flash and I am happy to say that the Royal timetable was observed to the minute.

The new displays integrate showcases containing the museum's designated archaeology collections with hands-on interactives and audio visual exhibits to provide a sensory and object rich experience. They continue to tell the story of Colchester from its foundation over 2000 years ago to the Siege in 1648 during the English Civil War.

More of the history and features of Colchester Castle have been interpreted to give visitors a much better sense of the scale and importance of this unique building. The display arrangement of new glass cases with a minimal

use of panelling means that new sight lines along the walls and diagonals across the space to the first floor are constantly opening up as you progress through the building. It has a far more open feel than the old displays which quite a number of people have commented on.

There have been so many changes to the Castle over the years that it is now hard to picture how the interior would have looked when the Castle was newly built 900 years ago. The virtual reality film by Virtual Past, with a fly through of the rooms as they would have appeared in Norman times, works particularly well to recover these lost features. The digital App developed by Peel Heritage has been loaded onto tablets that can be hired for £1 at reception. As well as a 360 degree reconstruction of the Great Hall on the first floor, where the King entertained guests on his very occasional visits, it also has reconstructions of the royal apartments in the east gallery and the chapel, indicating how the plain white walls of this room might once have been richly decorated.

The internal dividing wall in the Castle now serves as a large screen for three dramatic light projections, created by The Projection Studio, which highlight incidents in the long history of the Castle site. The films are shown at intervals during the day and it is an innovative use of technology which is normally associated with outdoor, night-time son et lumieres. Each time the light goes down and one of the films starts it draws a crowd.

Other highlights in the new displays include:

The immersive AVs created by Spiral Productions to tell the 'it happened here' stories of the final stand of the Romans in the Temple of Claudius during the destruction of Colchester by Boudica and the fate of the Royalist commanders, held in the Lucas Vault



ABOVE: *The Light projection highlighting the long history of the Castle site.*

RIGHT: *The Roman Gallery showing a wonderful collection of Roman glassware.*

BELOW RIGHT: *The tactile relief of the Colchester Vase, the most famous pot from Roman Colchester.*



at the end of the Siege of Colchester.

The tombstones of Marcus Facilis and Longinus Sdapeze, interpreted through tactile replicas and the digital App, are also the starting point for a multimedia interview with a Roman soldier and a serving soldier in the British Army to compare and contrast their experiences of military life.

The display of Roman glassware, a collection which has been described by one expert as having ‘a very good claim to be the national Romano-British collection’, in a showcase with illuminated shelves for maximum visual impact.

The Colchester Vase, the most famous pot from Roman Colchester, brought closer to visually impaired visitors with a tactile relief of



ABOVE: *The Chariot Race, inspired by the Roman Circus, the only one found so far in Britain.*

the fighting gladiators and the hunting dogs that decorate the vase.

The chariot race, inspired by the discovery of Colchester's Roman Circus, where visitors can take up the reins and pit their wits against three other teams in an interactive AV.

The Castle may now be open, but the project continues until the end of September. A large scale model of the Castle will be installed later this Summer. It will be a key element of the schools learning programme and the audio descriptive tour that is currently being developed for visitors with visual impairments. The design of a suite of signs to interpret other historic sites in Colchester and the creation by Peel Heritage of a digital App that visitors can download and use to explore the town's wider heritage are also in preparation.

TOM HODGSON
Colchester Development Manager

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Upper Palaeolithic tanged point from Wrabness

This flint tool was found in 2006 by a man digging for bait on the foreshore of the Stour estuary at Wrabness. Tanged points are rare in Essex and East Anglia and this is therefore an important donation to the Colchester Museum

collections. No one knows how tanged points were used; one possibility is that these were awls used in the working of skins.

The Wrabness point measures 87.2mm or $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches in length.

Early Bronze Age miniature axe from Little Clacton

The axe dates from between 1900 and 1700 BC in a period known as the Willerby Wold phase of Bronze Age metalwork. Early Bronze Age objects such as this are rare finds in Essex. The axe measures 64mm or $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long by 34mm or 1 inch wide and weighs 79g or approximately 3 oz. This metal-detector find was donated by the finder and landowner.

17th-century gold posy ring from Tolleshunt Knights

The small size of this gold finger ring suggests that it was worn by a young woman.

The outside is decorated with a band of foliage in black and white enamel while the



inside of the ring is inscribed, with black enamel remaining in most of the lettering. The inscription reads: IF THIS THEN MEE followed by the letter M. A similar ring in the British Museum collections has the inscription: IF THIS THEN ME I P. This comparison suggests that the letter M indicates the giver of the ring. The ring has a diameter of 14mm or $\frac{7}{8}$ inch and a weight of 1.4g.

Posy rings derive their name from the word 'posy' or 'Poesy' – a derivative of poetry meaning short rhyme. The rings were popular from the late medieval period onwards and were primarily used to communicate secret messages of love between the giver and the recipient. The wearing of words against the skin was believed to increase their poignancy.

PHILIP WISE AND PAUL SEALEY

Colchester Recalled 2014/2015

Listed below is Colchester's Oral History Group's new programme of meetings until the end of February 2015.

SEPTEMBER 18th

The Unknown Constable Country.

SIMON GALLOP.

An illustrated talk. Simon is an expert on the local history of the Dedham district.

OCTOBER 16th

An Oral History of Severalls Hospital.

ANDY STEVENS.

Andy was able to record memories of life at Severalls long ago, when the hospital was still a very large institution.

NOVEMBER 13th

An Evening with Neil Langham and Beryl Cowan.

NEIL is an expert on the lost world of rural Suffolk, its folklore and folk music. BERYL is a singer and musician from that old tradition.

This evening follows our successful 'Evening

with the drummer Crissy Lee'.

DECEMBER 11th

Our usual Christmas Evening
with a picture quiz, video and refreshments.

JANUARY 15th

The extraordinary History of Jumbo the Water Tower.

An illustrated talk by BRIAN LIGHT who is an authority on Colchester's industrial icon.

FEBRUARY 12th

Zeppelins and Colchester in World War 1

An illustrated talk by PETER JONES.

Meetings are on Thursday evenings at 7pm. at the Colchester Institute, Sheepen Road, Room K357, Third Floor, Music Block.

Admission is £1 per person per evening. All are welcome. Annual subscriptions are £7 per person or £12 for a couple.

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



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 Specials in the Restaurant - simply produce your Membership Card.

MUSSI'S CAFE BAR & RESTAURANT
5-7 Museum Street | Colchester | Essex | CO1 1TN
t: 01206 762000 | e. info@mussis.co.uk
www.mussis.co.uk

*Please note: This offer does not include Chef's Choice or any special events

The Conclusion of The Friends' Lecture Series 2014

SEPTEMBER

2nd THE REAL OLIVER TWIST
*The Harsh Reality of Life
as a Parish Pauper*
Patrick Denney

16th GROWING UP IN THE DUTCH
QUARTER
Roy Waters

30th THE HISTORY OF COLCHESTER
CASTLE
*New Discoveries, New Ideas
and Some Surprises!*
Peter Berridge

OCTOBER

14th LAYER MARNEY TOWER –
Past and Present
Nicholas Charrington

28th COLCHESTER AND ITS EARLIEST
HISTORIC RECORD
Mark Davies

NOVEMBER

11th COLCHESTER'S LINKS WITH WAR
Godfrey Thomas

All at Lion Walk Church at 7.30pm

Admission per lecture:

Members £1. Non members £2.

Further details from: David Walton,
The Friends of Colchester Museums
14 Ryegate Road, Colchester CO1 1YG
email: waltodav@gmail.com
Telephone: 0779 659 2296.

Local and Family History Classes Autumn 2014

Wilson Marriage Centre

MEETING YOUR ANCESTORS (Part 1)

Thursday afternoons for 10 weeks.

Code EWM4B09

HISTORY OF COLCHESTER (Part 1)

Friday afternoons for 10 weeks.

Code EWM5B08

Telephone 01206 789488 or visit

www.essex.gov.uk/Education-Schools/Adult-Learning/Course-Search/Pages/Course-search.aspx

University of Essex

FAMILY & COMMUNITY HISTORY

Accreditation optional

MEETING YOUR ANCESTORS (Part 3)

Monday evening for 10 weeks.

Code HR 190

For details contact Lisa Willis

on 01206 872190 or visit

www.essex.ac.uk/history/certificate/default.aspx