

## **The Friends of Colchester Museums**

*Registered Charity No. 310669*

Newsletter and  
Sixty Sixth Annual Report  
2014-2015

# Officers

AS ELECTED AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON 16TH JUNE 2015

<i>President</i>	Her Worship the Mayor, COUNCILLOR THERESA HIGGINS	
<i>Vice Presidents</i>	MRS JEAN BAKER MRS JEAN BLOWERS MRS BARBARA NAPPER PETER BERRIDGE	MARK DAVIES PATRICK DENNEY ANDREW PHILLIPS PAUL SPENDLOVE
<i>Chairman</i>	MARK DAVIES 19 Oxley Parker Drive Colchester CO4 5XQ Telephone 01206 842032 Email: gmarkrdavies@btinternet.com	
<i>Honorary Treasurer</i>	PETER EVANS 5 Grimston Road Colchester CO2 7RN Telephone 01206 540990 Email: peter.evans7978@btinternet.com	
<i>Honorary Secretary</i>	JANET FULFORD 301 Mile End Road Colchester CO4 5EA Telephone 01206 851593 Email: jif301@btinternet.com	
<i>Membership Secretary</i>	PATRICK DENNEY 247 Old Heath Road Colchester CO3 8BN Telephone 01206 796822 Email: patrick.denney@sky.com	
<i>Newsletter Editor</i>	PETER CONSTABLE 12 Claremont Heights Essex Hall Road Colchester CO1 1UZ Telephone 01206 517788 Email: design.constables@btinternet.com	
<i>Other Committee Members</i>	MRS MARY DALE MRS JENNY JONES MRS AVRIL LANKESTER PHILIP BEETON HARRY CARLO	CHRIS HALL ANDREW MILLAR ANDREW PHILLIPS DAVID WALTON
<i>Ex Officio</i>	BILL SEAMAN ( <i>Museums, Arts and Culture Manager</i> ) TOM HODGSON ( <i>Colchester Museums Manager</i> ) PHILIP WISE ( <i>Heritage Manager</i> )	
<i>Honorary Auditor</i>	ROY ANDERSON	
<i>Museum Office</i>	Museum Resource Centre 14 Ryegate Road Colchester CO1 1YG Telephone 01206 282931/2 www.cims.org.uk	

# Sixty Sixth Annual Report 2014-2015

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Annual General Meeting took place on Tuesday 16th June at Lion Walk Church, with the Mayor of Colchester, Councillor Theresa Higgins in the chair. The audited accounts, (see pages 4 and 5) were presented and approved. Amongst the other items agreed were the revised Constitution including the election of Mark Davies as Chairman and the election of Mrs Mary Dale and Philip Beeton as new Committee members, with all the Committee members now becoming Trustees.

The meeting was followed by Peter Jones' lecture entitled *Steam Driven Social Change* which explained the dawn of modern life with the coming of Railways.

## **FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

This year's Annual General Meeting, held on Tuesday 16th June 2015, was well attended and, in addition to the usual reports and elections, it included members giving approval to the amended version of the Constitution put forward by the Committee. While the name, objects, categories of membership and most procedures remain the same, the major change is that all the Officers and other Committee Members now become Trustees in accordance with the Charity Commissioners' current requirements.

I would particularly like to mention the well-deserved election of Mrs. Jean Blowers as a new Vice-President in recognition of her long service to the Society. She was until recently a very active Committee member for many years and her home in Priory Street regularly became a busy sorting office whenever mail had to be sent out to members.

Already this year the Committee has agreed to make two significant financial donations in support of Colchester's Museum Service. With a new Castle guide book being prepared, we

have agreed the sum of £2,000 to be used on a cut-away drawing of the Castle to illustrate how the building would have worked. We have also authorised £800 of match-funding for the purchase of two Merovingian gold coins brought to light near Colchester and declared Treasure. These coins relate to several others found nearby and are described in more detail on the inside back cover.

All six lectures in the first half of the current series have been well attended and the outings to Otley Hall and Bletchley Park proved especially popular. Arrangements are already well in hand for next year's talks and visits, but if members have any suitable suggestions or requests that they would like to make, these will always be welcome.

The discovery last summer of Roman jewellery and coins associated with the Boudiccan Revolt on the site of Williams and Griffin's in High Street has created considerable public interest, which will in due course be met by these items being displayed in the Castle Museum, thanks to the good offices of Fenwick Ltd. I am very pleased to be able to give notice that, once the painstaking task of conservation has been completed and the formal arrangements for their transfer to the museum made, there will be a special Open Evening in the Castle Museum for the Friends and other guests to view these exciting finds.

MARK DAVIES *Chairman*

## **FROM THE MUSEUMS MANAGER**

Friends will note the excellent work in progress at the museums in Colchester from the contributions of my colleagues Tom Hodgson and Philip Wise. The capital development of the Castle, kindly supported by The Friends of Colchester Museums, continues to prove to have been a good investment as the

profile of the Colchester's museums grows and visitor numbers continue to exceed our targets. Colchester's remarkable heritage is at the heart of the Borough's new strategic plan 2015-18 and is recognised as a major contribution towards the regeneration of the town.

Following our re-structuring and the award of significant Arts Council funding for the next three years, we're looking forward to several new staff members joining us in the next few months. This will add capacity to the hard-working team and bring additional skills and experience to the service.

This is an aspirational service which has risen to the challenges of the last few years. It is now set to realise its full potential as a museum service of regional and national reach serving the people of Colchester and Ipswich and attracting many new visitors to the region.

BILL SEAMAN

*Museums, Arts and Culture Manager.*

Please also see Museum News on page 6.

*Editor*

## **TREASURERS'S TOPICS**

### **British Association of Friends of Museums(BAfM)**

We are affiliated to this group and have mentioned some of their activities in the past. They coordinate other groups like us and advise of matters of mutual interest.

Last year I attended one of their meetings and found that we needed to update our constitution to keep up to date with Charity Commission rules. Our Secretary, Janet Fulford, has supervised this process and the revised constitution is now in place. It is thanks to BAFM that we were made fully aware of how the changes affect us.

We will be letting you know of other issues that BAFM contact us about.

### **Season Tickets**

This year we started to issue season tickets

for attendance at lectures. The charge was £20 for a full series of 12 lectures (a saving of £4 as entry is £2 a session) and they have proved quite popular. If you want one to cover the autumn series of 6, you can buy one for £10 which will save £2. Please send me your cheque together with a stamped addressed envelope if you would like one.

### **Subscriptions**

If your subscription is not up to date, a reminder will be enclosed. In many cases, this may be because your standing order was paid at the wrong rate and you will need to get your bank to adjust the amount payable in January and settle the amount underpaid.

PETER EVANS *Hon Treasurer*

### **MEMBERSHIP UPDATE 2015**

Our membership figures currently total 701 across all categories. This represents a small decline from our 2014 total of 716, and indeed from our 2013 total of 737. The current breakdown compared with our 2014 figures are as follows:- Single 335 (339), Couples 235 (243), Family 119 (125) and other 12. The Committee and I would like to thank all members for their continued support.

PATRICK DENNEY *Membership Secretary*

### **TRIP TO OTLEY HALL**

#### **Tuesday 23rd June 2015**

The evening trip this year was to Otley Hall in Suffolk. We had a comfortable and trouble free coach journey through the lovely Suffolk countryside and arrived at the 15-16th century moated Hall to be greeted by the owner Ian Beaumont. After a brief introduction we split into two groups and our excellent guides showed us round and gave us a very interesting history of the rooms and the people who had owned the Hall and the part they played in its construction. There was time to wander round the beautiful gardens and to walk the

Labyrinth. The evening finished with a welcome and refreshing cup of tea.

AVRIL LANKESTER

## **TRIP TO BLETCHLEY PARK**

**Tuesday 7th July 2015**

Early in the morning members congregated at Kings Coaches Yard and Crouch Street to catch coaches to Bletchley Park. After a 2 hour journey we arrived at the gates of the Park and spent the next 5 hours happily immersed in the WW2 history of the site. We visited the lovely mansion which was converted to offices, and library etc during the war. The main code breaking activities took place in the numerous wooden huts that grew up around the mansion.

In these we saw office displays from the time of the war and exhibitions showing how the personnel attempted to break the codes. There were also electronic puzzles and conundrums to help us understand the laborious processes necessary to break the codes.



*The mansion at Bletchley Park*

Some of us went on a guided tour while others wandered around at their own pace. Everything was covered from the prototype computers (which were huge) to the brave men who as despatch riders took the top secret messages between Bletchley Park, London and other secret stations that intercepted the radio signals. They rode motor cycles at high speeds through the blackouts and in all weathers!

This was a thoroughly enjoyable and informative day. Many members expressed a desire to return as there was just too much to take in during one visit.

JENNY JONES

## **TRIP TO SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUMS**

**Friday 16th October 2015**

We have been invited by the Colchester Civic Society to join them on a visit to South Kensington Museums. You can choose whichever Museum you wish - Victoria and Albert or the Natural History Museum, or look at the other sites of South Kensington. The coach leaves the East Hill bus stop opposite Greyfriars at 8.30am and drops off near the Museums.

Inquiries and payment to Jo Edwards, 43 Priory Street, Colchester CO1 2QB. Telephone 01206 868254. Make cheques payable to Colchester Civic Society.

## **HERITAGE OPEN DAYS**

**Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th  
September 2015**

These are the days when Colchester's interesting but usually inaccessible buildings are open to the public. For details see the Colchester Museum Service website.

PETER EVANS

## **CHRISTMAS AT THE CASTLE**

**Wednesday 9th December**

This is the usual Open Evening when the general public are invited to attend between 3pm and 8pm. Mince pies and mulled wine will be available and all the usual festive fayre.

Help by Committee members and volunteers to man The Friends' stall will be appreciated. For details please contact the Editor (see inside front cover). It is intended helpers will only spend an hour on the stall.

THE EDITOR

# The Friends of Colchester Museums

## Income and Expenditure Account for the

INCOME	2014/15 (£s)	2013/14 (£s)
Subscriptions	8562.00	7000.50
Lectures (net of expenses)	903.65	919.10
Trips (net profit - note 1 & 2)	652.50	52.81
Interest	507.94	638.21
Donations	103.00	156.00
Special Open Evening (note 3)	1206.72	85.00
Surplus of Expenditure over Income	3794.20	3781.93
	<u>£15730.01</u>	<u>12633.55</u>

## Balance Sheet as at

ACCUMULATED FUND	(£s)	(£s)
Balance brought forward	30065.25	33847.18
Surplus/Loss for year	-3794.20	-3781.93
TOTAL	26271.05	30065.25
CREDITORS:		
Fees for Trips (note 2)	4117.50	2793.00
Season Tickets 2015	480.00	00.00
	<u>30868.55</u>	<u>32858.25</u>

### Notes to the Accounts

Note 1. Trips to Syon Park and Hylands Park.

Note 2. Prepaid fees for trips to Otley Hall and Bletchley Park.

Note 3. Net profit for re-opening event at The Castle.

Note 4. Final payment of grant towards Castle Refurbishment £10000

and contributions to purchase a gold ring and the William Wire plaque.

Note 5. Payments made of the retirement of the Museum Manager Peter Berridge and the death of founder member Leonard Drinkell during 2013/4.

# Annual Accounts 2014-2015

year ended 31st March 2015


	2014/15 (£s)	2013/14 (£s)
Operating Expenses	2463.51	2305.05
Subscriptions and Insurance (British Association of Friends of Museums and British Association of Local History))	215.00	215.00
Events - Christmas Open Evening	124.00	00.00
Purchases (Note 4)	10527.50	10000.00
Presentations (Note 5)	00.00	113.50
Payment to CBC for free admission	2400.00	00.00
Surplus of Income over Expenditure	<u>£15730.01</u>	<u>12633.55</u>

## 31st March 2015

NET CURRENT ASSETS	(£s)	(£s)
Bank		
Current Account	7600.12	3007.76
Building Society	22858.43	29850.49
TOTAL	<u>£30458.55</u>	<u>32858.25</u>
DEBTORS: Room Hire	410.00	000.00
	<u>£30868.55</u>	<u>32858.25</u>

I have examined the accounts of The Friends of Colchester Museums for the year ended 31st March 2015 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: 21st May 2015

Signed  PETER EVANS *FMAAT Hon. Treasurer*

# Museum News

## THE NEW MUSEUM STRUCTURE

As you may be aware, the museum service underwent a major restructure at the end of last year. The museum service still operates across both Colchester and Ipswich, but separate teams have been established for the two towns. I have been appointed to the post of Colchester Museums Manager with overall operational responsibility for the collections, museums and Visitor Information Centre in Colchester. My colleague, Jayne Austin has been appointed Ipswich Museums Manager.

At Colchester, Ciara Canning is the Senior Curator for the Collections and Learning Team. The curatorial and learning roles have been combined and we are about to welcome two new members to the team, Emma Reeve and Jess Dowdell, who will join Sophie Stevens as Collections and Learning Curators. Steve Yates continues as our Collections and Information Officer and Emma Hogarth is our Conservation Officer. Pippa Pickles remains Senior Duty Officer in charge of the visitor services team in Colchester Castle and the Natural History Museum and the growing business of hiring events at the Castle. Claire Taylor is Visitor Information Centre Manager with responsibility for the daily operation of Hollytrees Museum.

The Display Team and Joint Services Team, comprising retail and business support, operate across the whole service.

TOM HODGSON *Colchester Museums Manager*

## COLCHESTER CASTLE

I am pleased to report that the Castle had a very good year since re-opening. In the first full year to 1st May 2015 the Castle has received 113,334 visitors, compared with 88,296 in 2011-12 before the redevelopment. 20,261 of these visitors were schoolchildren, compared with 17,717 in 2011-12.

More than 7,000 visitors have hired a digital tablet with its augmented reality reconstructions of how the Castle would have looked in Norman times. Tours of the Roman Vaults, Norman Great Stair and roof have proved very popular with over 10,000 visitors taking the tour. The Easter Egg trail for families proved very popular with 734 trail sheets being sold. It added to a successful Easter in general for the Castle.

Over 76% of respondents on TripAdvisor rate their visit as very good or excellent. The Castle has recently been recommended by Professor Mary Beard in the *Sunday Times* on 3rd May 2015 as one of her 'Best of Britain' top ten greatest ancient sites to visit.

We are not resting on our laurels as we must work hard to keep the visitor numbers over 100,000 this year. So far we are on target to achieve this.

Some of you will have noticed the work currently underway to replace the Castle bridge. This should be completed by mid-July. One new feature that will come into its own at the darker times of the year is the lighting built into the main timbers. I am looking forward to seeing the effect it creates for 'Christmas at the Castle' which will be on Wednesday 9th December.



We have invested in a red carpet for the bridge. It will strengthen the wedding package that we can offer, demand for which has grown substantially since we invested in a marriage and civil ceremony licence and installed a high



quality PA system as part of the Castle redevelopment. I must also add that our success in this area is because of the professionalism of the Castle visitor services team in managing customers and hosting events.

In March 2015 new interpretation panels were installed at Middleborough to mark the site of Colchester's North Gate and at Gosbecks Archaeological Park. Further signs are in preparation for Priory Street and Scheregate and will be installed later this year.

Further content will be added over the coming months to the digital app for the Castle and Colchester's wider heritage. The app is available for free download from the Apple Store and Google Play.

### THE WONDERHOUSE

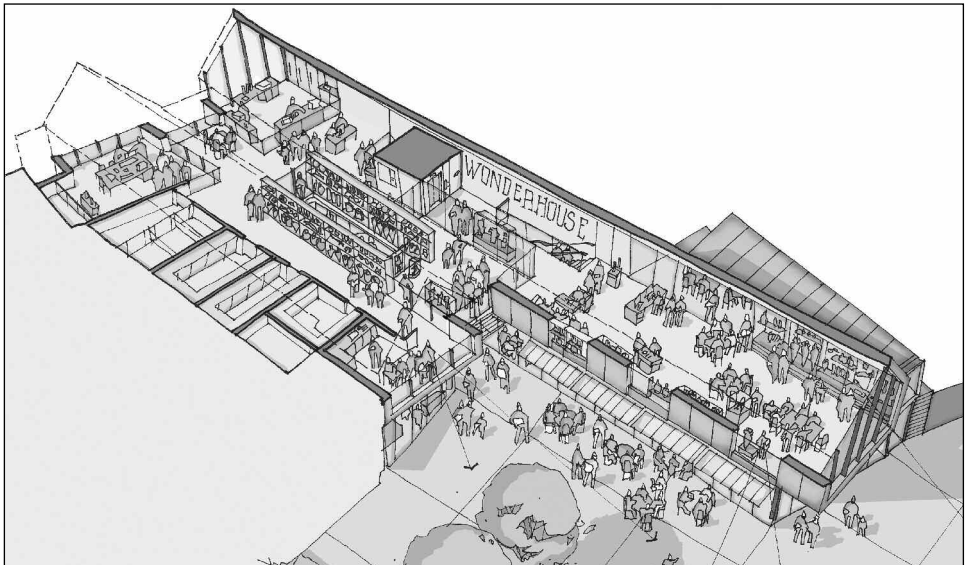
We are now embarking on another major project to move out of the current Museum Resource Centre in Ryegate Road to purpose-built accommodation on the site of the former bus depot in Queen Street which is scheduled for demolition.

The project working title, 'The Wonderhouse', is a translation of the original

German name for the early European museum collections. These cabinets of curiosities were intriguing places of fascination and inspiration. This new development updates that idea and will provide an exciting opportunity to develop a dynamic relationship between heritage and contemporary art giving greater access than is currently possible to Colchester's magnificent collections for students, artists, schools, researchers and the wider public. It will also strengthen the existing relationships with the town's oral history society, Colchester Recalled, with Essex University and with University Campus Suffolk.

The new building will include: public areas containing storage on display and digital access to collections information and the museum archive; a conservation laboratory; display studio; work space for museum staff, student trainees, Colchester Recalled and other volunteers. The ground floor will be arranged around an arcade giving a pedestrian route from Queen Street into the St Botolph's cultural quarter.

The project will also allow us to uncover, interpret and floodlight historic elements of





*The view from the South East*

the ancient Town Wall, including the interior of a medieval bastion, that have been concealed from public view in the bus depot since the 1930s. The work will include creating a new public access route through the Town Wall (using an existing doorway) that connects the Wonderhouse with Priory Street car park, St Botolph's Priory and Colchester Town railway station.

A Stage 1 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund was submitted on 18th June for a decision at the end of September. The cost for delivery of the project is about £3.5m with 75% of the cost being sought from the HLF – so we are keeping our fingers crossed!

TOM HODGSON *Colchester Museums Manager*

## **MEMORIAL TO WILLIAM WIRE UNVEILED**

On Thursday 23rd April 2015 a memorial to William Wire was unveiled in Castle Park, in the rose border close to the entrance bridge to the Castle Museum. This project was initiated

and led by local historian Jennie Guthrie-Stevens and funded by grants from the Friends of Colchester Museums and the Essex Heritage Trust. The Museum Service and the Borough Council's Parks team provided advice and encouragement.

William Wire (1804-1857) was a watchmaker in Victorian Colchester whose passion was archaeology and who established the first museum in the town in 1840. This was in the building in High Street now occupied by Robert Dyas, next to the Red Lion Hotel. Sadly Wire's venture was very short lived, but he continued to campaign tirelessly for many years for a museum to be created in Colchester. This combined with his archaeological research means that he may be rightly regarded as the first champion of Colchester's heritage.

For nearly 15 years Wire kept a diary of contemporary events and his archaeological discoveries in Colchester. 23rd April was selected for the unveiling of Wire's memorial

because it is the date of the very first entry in 1842. This reads: 'Mr Roy Master of the Union House refused to furnish me with gross numbers of Paupers in the House upon my applying to him. Died at the Hythe aged one hundred years Mr. Garland. Mr. William Coleman Head Street Churchwarden of St. Mary atte Walls informs me that he has in his possession a manuscript document of Mr Morant's collecting containing the receipts and expenditure of the rebuilding of the said church'.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Mark Pertwee (of Essex Heritage Trust), Jennie Guthrie Stevens, Janet Fulford (of The Friends of Colchester Museums) and myself at the unveiling of the Wire memorial.

This has been another good opportunity to promote Colchester's heritage and in particular to recognise the pioneering contribution of a local man to the town's archaeology.

PHILIP WISE *Heritage Manager*

**RECENT ACQUISITION:  
TWO GOLD COINS FROM FRANCE**

The Friends have recently generously supported the acquisition of two gold coins minted in France in the late 6th or early 7th century. Known as tremisses, these small coins were produced by the Merovingian kings, contemporaries of the Anglo-Saxons, who took

their name from the founder of the dynasty Merovech and who ruled a large area of modern France and Germany for nearly three hundred years.

These coins are part of a small hoard found over several years by metal detectorists on farmland to the south-west of Colchester. Two of these coins were previously acquired by the Museum Service and are now on exhibition



in Colchester Castle as part of the permanent Anglo-Saxon displays.

*The first coin dates to the period AD 580-670. It is thought to have been minted in the town of Quentovic (modern Etaples, near Calais). Quentovic was a major mint and port, and coins from Quentovic are not unusual finds in England. On one side is a crude head and the letters VVICUS FIT and the other has a simple cross design. The coin weighs 1.29g.*

*The second coin is a copy of an official coin minted in the Byzantine, or Eastern Roman, Empire and dates to the late 6th or very early 7th century. The inscription is too badly executed to indicate which Byzantine emperor was being imitated, and the design on both sides is commonly found on both Byzantine and Merovingian coins. On one side*



*is the head of the emperor wearing a diadem and the letters \_N\_\_VICAPPAUG and on the other is a cross on steps motif with the letters \_\_VATA-GUS\_\_. The coin weighs 1.18g.*

It is intended that both coins will go on display in Colchester Castle in the near future.

PHILIP WISE *Heritage Manager*

# The Friends' Lecture Series

## Autumn 2015

### SEPTEMBER

**8th** THE COURTAULDS - A HUGUENOT  
SUCCESS STORY  
Charlie De Wet and Andrew Phillips

**22nd** TO FETCH A PAIL OF WATER  
*A serious and sometimes hilarious look back  
at water supply and damage through the ages*  
Patrick Denney

### OCTOBER

**6th** 450 YEARS HISTORY OF COLCHESTER  
ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL  
Trevor Hearn

**20th** THE HISTORY OF THE OYSTERS OF  
THE COLNE AND COLCHESTER  
OYSTER FISHERIES  
Roger Tabor

### NOVEMBER

**3rd** ESSEX DURING THE NAPOLEONIC  
WARS  
Will Tyler

**17th** PEOPLE OF ROMAN COLCHESTER  
Mark Davies

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

Admission per lecture:

**Members £2 Non members £4**

Further information from David Walton  
The Friends of Colchester Museums  
c/o The Museum Resource Centre  
Email: [waltoday@gmail.com](mailto:waltoday@gmail.com)

**Season tickets for the autumn series  
available at £10 each.**

## Colcheser Recalled Programme

### Autumn 2015

All to take place in the Lecture Theatre at  
Colchester Institute, Sheepen Road.  
All are welcome. Admission £2 per person.

#### **Thursday September 10th \***

THE 'GURKHA VOICES' PROJECT  
(in which we have been partners)  
*See website [www.gurkhastories.com](http://www.gurkhastories.com)*

#### **Thursday October 15th**

THE WARM AND TOASTY CLUB –  
an evening with Johnno Casson. *See website!*

#### **Thursday November 12th**

THE ESSEX COUNTY HOSPITAL CLOSES –  
198 Years of History. By Dr Casale.

#### **Thursday December 10th**

SEASONAL CHEER.  
A Quiz, a video, mince pies and wine  
(*as usual*). *Do not miss!*

Details of the programme for 2016 should be  
available at the Christmas at the Castle event  
on 9th December.

See details of this event on page 3.

\* Please note the new date

#### **STOP PRESS**

Friends of Colchester Museums will be able  
to purchase back numbers of Colchester Recalled  
magazine at 20p per copy at the lectures  
listed above - while stocks last.