



The Friends of Colchester Museums

Registered Charity No. 310669

Summer Newsletter &
Seventy First Annual Report
2019 - 2020

Officers

As Elected at The Annual General Meeting on 18th June 2019

President His Worship the Mayor, Councillor Nick Cope

Vice Presidents

Jean Baker	Peter Berridge
Jean Blowers	Peter Constable
Mark Davies	Patrick Denney
Barbara Napper	Andrew Phillips
Paul Spendlove	

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Vice Chairman Peter Jones

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Honorary Secretary Mary Dale (m.dale1955@live.co.uk)

Membership Secretary Roy Anderson (royandliz@outlook.com)

Programme Secretary Jenny Jones (jonesjp@outlook.com)

Newsletter Editor Ian Ahmet (ianahmet@gmail.com)

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Other Committee Members

Harry Carlo	Mark Davies
Chris Hall	Avril Lankester
Andrew Millar	Andrew Phillips

Ex Officio Frank Hargrave (*Colchester and Ipswich Museums and Arts Manager*)
Tom Hodgson (*Colchester Museums Manager*)
Philip Wise (*Heritage Manager*)

Honorary Auditor Roy Anderson

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Annual Report 2020

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

As reported in our March 2020 mailing we regrettably had to cancel all of our planned activities for the summer months. This included outings to Stow Maries Airfield and the East Anglian Museum of Rural Life, as well as our entire programme of spring and summer lectures, which included our Annual General Meeting which should have taken place on 16th June 2020.

We said at the time that we hoped to be able to continue with our autumn 2020 programme as planned on 8th September – which would also have included our delayed Annual General Meeting. However as I'm sure you are all aware, continuing Coronavirus restrictions mean that resuming our normal activities in the near future appear to be extremely unlikely and for that reason your committee has taken the decision to cancel all future meetings until further notice, which in effect means that nothing is likely to happen before 2021.

It was suggested that we could perhaps have held our Annual General Meeting via Zoom, but it was decided not to go ahead with this. So at this point in time we ask that you bear with us and we will keep you informed if and when things change, especially regarding our Annual General Meeting.

On a personal note I would like to confirm that it was always my intention to stand down as Chairman of the Society at our Annual General Meeting in June 2020 (as previously noted in the meeting agenda

which was mailed to the membership in March 2020.) By that time I would have completed three years in the post, and more than thirty years overall as a committee member in various positions, and I decided that it was time for a break. In view of the Coronavirus situation I was willing to continue for a few months longer until we could at least have held our Annual General Meeting (even a virtual one) but as this now seems unlikely to happen in the near future, I have decided to stand down from my role as Chairman before the end of the current year. I would like to take this opportunity of saying a big thank you to all members of the Society that I have had the pleasure of meeting over the years, and especially to both present and past committee members who have worked wonders to keep the Society running smoothly. I wish my successor, whether it be in a temporary role or a permanent position, the very best for the future.

Finally, and in view of the foregoing, the committee would very much like to hear from any members who feel that they could offer their services as a committee member, or indeed, have any suggestions as to who might be in a position to take on the role as Chairman. As the saying goes, many hands make light work, and any contribution that you could make in this regard would be greatly appreciated. If you are interested in learning more about what is involved, please contact either myself or any of the committee members listed on the inside cover of this newsletter.

Patrick Denney, *Chairman*
August 2020

NEW DIGITAL NEWSLETTER!

As our Autumn programme has had to be cancelled, we have decided to send a new Digital Newsletter to all of our members who have supplied us with their emails. This not only saves paper, but they are easier to read with high definition photographs and text - and we are even exploring an audio newsletter!

If you'd like to sign up for our New Digital Newsletters - please email:

friendsofcolchestermuseums@gmail.com

Ian Ahmet, *Newsletter Editor*

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

As can be seen from the figures below, our membership figures are down on the same period last year.

	August 2020	August 2019
Single	273	303
Couple	208	214
Family	93	102
Other	10	11
Total	584	630

Taking into account all categories this represents a total of around 1,050 members currently associated with the group.

LECTURES & OUTINGS

It is with regret that we have cancelled the FOCM lectures for the rest of 2020. This decision has been necessary as Lion Walk Church is not yet open for public meetings, plus we are an older group who still have to be careful when socialising.

We are planning for the 2020 programme to be rolled over to 2021, with the first lecture taking place on 13th April, when hopefully Adam Wightman will talk to us about '*Roman Public Baths and Town Houses*'.

The two trips to the Museum of East Anglian Life and Stow Maries Airfield will take place on the nearest dates of those planned for 2020. Booking money for these trips is still being held but if when the 2021 dates are published at the end of this year you are unable to come a refund will be available on request.

Details of all the lectures and trips for 2021 will be in the end of year newsletter and these plans are subject to COVID-19 restrictions being eased by then.

Best wishes to you all in these difficult times and I hope you are all managing to stay well and as mentally and physically active as possible. We look forward to when we can all meet again.

Jenny Jones, *Programme Secretary*

PURCHASE OF THE ROMAN WALL AT MIDDLEBOROUGH

As you will probably have seen in the press, the Council has agreed to buy a stretch of the Roman Wall at Middleborough from advertising firm JCDcaux with funding from several local heritage organisations including The Friends who have very generously offered **£1,500**.

As there has been some confusion over what is being sold, I would like to clarify that JCDcaux's ownership straddles the Roman Wall like a ribbon with land at its base, within the Wall itself and at the top. This is a potentially a unique situation as I am unaware of any other stretch of the Roman Wall in private ownership.

I can confirm on behalf of the Council that the Friends's donation is a one-off payment and neither yourselves nor any of the other funders would be liable for any ongoing costs or other responsibilities.

It is expected that the purchase of the land from JCDcaux will be completed very shortly.

FRIENDS OF COLCHESTER ROMAN WALL

After ten years, the Friends of Colchester Roman Wall (FOCRW) have completed their task of interpreting the Roman Wall and raising its profile amongst visitors and residents. Fourteen interpretation panels have now been erected around the course of the wall, paid for by FOCRW members and commercial and other sponsors. All costs relating to this work have now been met and there remains a balance of £5,120.02 in the FOCRW accounts.

At the final FOCRW committee meeting held at Colchester Castle on 11th August it was agreed that these remaining funds should be given to the Friends of Colchester Museums according to the following resolution:

‘The money in the Friends’s bank account is passed to the Friends of Colchester Museums on the understanding that it is applied to the repair and replacement of the Interpretation Boards erected by the Friends around the Colchester Roman Wall.’

I would like to be clear that this transfer of funds will not place any additional responsibilities on the Friends of Colchester Museums beyond that of maintaining its financial resources openly and accountably. Responsibility for the cleaning and maintenance, and, when necessary, repair and replacement of the interpretation panels lies with Colchester Borough Council and more particularly Colchester and Ipswich Museums.

The funds concerned are to be held by the Friends of Colchester Museums on behalf of the Museum Service against such a time when repairs and replacement of several of the interpretation panels are required.

The interpretation panels come with a ten-year guarantee against fading and, to date, there has only been an issue with the Balcerne Gate panel which is in full sun. Likewise there has only been one serious case of vandalism, again at Balcerne Gate, where

the panel was damaged beyond repair. Therefore in the short term I do not anticipate having to draw upon these funds, but looking ahead it is very helpful to know that the Museum Service has a dedicated sum of money for the interpretation panels readily available.

Philip Wise, *Heritage Manager*

POSTERS FOR 1950s DANCES



These 2 posters were found in a Charity Shop in Sudbury and have been accepted by the Castle Museum. They show events in Colchester in the 1950s, featuring George Rudge and the New Florida band. Mr Rudge's full time job was a dental technician, with a workshop in Military Road. The printing was done in colour by Manor Press Ltd, then based in Culver Street.

It was intended that they would be handed over to the Museum at the AGM in June. The £20 cost of the posters is included in the 2019/20 accounts.

Peter Jones, *Vice Chairman*

**Friends of Colchester Museums
Income and Expenditure Account
for the year ended 31st March 2020**

INCOME	2019/20	2018/19
Subscriptions	£7,967.50	£8,229.50
Lectures (evening)	£1,024.00	£1,185.10
Lectures (afternoon)	£222.10	£230.00
Trips (Net of expenses)	£559.65	£407.50
Adorn Evening	£232.75	
Interest	£660.76	£616.64
Donations	£620.00	£135.01
Castle Open Evening (Note 1)	£0.00	£0.00
Surplus of Expenditure over Income	£3,803.66	
	<u>£15,090.42</u>	<u>£10,803.75</u>

EXPENDITURE	2019/20	2018/19
Operating Expenses	£2,630.12	£3,734.78
Subscriptions and Insurance	£442.00	£437.00
Events - Christmas Open Evening	£0.00	£308.29
Purchases (Note 2)	£10,418.30	£15.00
Contribution to Museum (Note 3)	£1,600.00	£1,425.00
Surplus of income over expenditure		£4,883.68
	<u>£15,090.42</u>	<u>£10,803.75</u>

Notes to the Accounts

- Note 1. No payment was needed as it was possible to use stock purchased for 2018
- Note 2. Purchase of 2 Colchester posters from 1950s, contribution to Adorn Exhibition Town Hall silver trowel (part cost) and Silver Ring
- Note 3. Payment to Colchester Museums in lieu of admission

The Friends of Colchester Museums

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2020

ACCUMULATED FUND	2019/20	2018/19
Balance brought forward	£44,746.10	£39,862.42
Surplus/Loss for the year	£3,803.66	£4,883.68
TOTAL:	£40,942.44	£44,746.10
Reserve (B. Colbron)	£805.60	£805.60
CREDITORS:		
Fees for trips (Note 4)	£1,857.00	£1,284.00
Season Tickets (Note 5)	£260.00	£240.00
	<u>£43,865.04</u>	<u>£47,075.70</u>

NET CURRENT ASSETS	2019/20	2018/19
BANK:		
Current Account	£3,892.52	£6,673.94
Building Society	£39,872.52	£40,401.76
TOTAL:	£43,765.04	£47,075.70
Debtor - Lion Walk United Reform Church	£100.00	

Notes to the Accounts

- Note 4. Advance payments for excursions originally booked for 2020. Some have been refunded
- Note 5. Season tickets for 2020 paid in advance

I have examined the accounts of The Friends of Colchester Museums for the year ended 31st March 2020 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  Peter Evans, FMAAT, Hon. Treasurer

Signed  Roy Anderson, Hon. Auditor

1st August 2020

“A TURNER AT THE CASTLE”



Walton Bridges goes on display at Norwich Castle
Philip Wise, Heritage Manager and
Counsellor Julie Young

JMW Turner's 'Walton Bridges' (oil on canvas, 1806) will go on public display on 26th September 2020 at Colchester Castle. This masterpiece was in danger of leaving the country, following its sale to a foreign buyer, but a rescue bid involving Norfolk Museums Service and Colchester and Ipswich Museums has led to this nationally important work being saved for the East of England and the nation. The Friends' support was key to the success of this project and your generous funding of **£5,000** has ensured the painting is coming to Colchester as part of a regional tour. As well as Colchester Castle – the first venue – the painting will also be shown at Kings Lynn, Great Yarmouth and, in 2022, Christchurch Mansion in Ipswich.

As well as this presence of this wonderful painting at the Castle there will also be a supporting programme of events and activities. These include work with primary school age children and community events, both of which are now programmed for early 2021 as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

'Walton Bridges' is planned to be on display at Colchester Castle until 29 March 2021.

Philip Wise, *Heritage Manager*

AXIELL COLLECTIONS

At the end of 2019, Colchester Museums finished migrating from our old database to a new system called Axiell Collections. This new system is vastly superior, housing databases not only for our object records but also for exhibitions, loans, conservation and just in general looks a lot nicer and is far easier for users.

We use the system as a central repository for what we know about our collections, from their object name to who donated them and what their current location is. It is a critical tool for us so it is important that people can use it well and that the system is good.

We migrated over 200,000 object records (c. 127,000+ from Colchester alone) and some 60,000 images. We have plenty more images to be migrated, but we're getting there. There's a lot of data to go through – we only moved data from one system to another, it hasn't magically fixed all the issues unfortunately – but it's an exciting challenge.

In our old system, misspellings happened regularly and could go unchecked. While tidying the 'Production Period' field, we found that our imported records had 91 varieties of the term "Roman"! A real mess if you just wanted to search for all Roman items without having to run 91 different searches. Every improvement helps our colleagues navigate the system and find records easier.

The longer-term benefit of this is that we are working towards creating our online collections platform. This will mean our audiences can explore our collections from anywhere in the world! We're only at the early stages of this work but we're really excited about opening up our collections for all to see. If we're opening our records to many more people though, we of course want to make sure they look as good as possible and the records make sense. So that's where our attention will be in coming months.

Pippa Pickles, *Colchester Museums Manager*

TWINKLE, TWINKLE

In January 1796, two young teenage girls moved, with their family, into a house in Angel Lane Colchester. The eldest girl said of their new home —

"It was nearly in the centre of town, in a street which, though narrow and disagreeable at one end, became wider, and owned several excellent houses at the other end."

The girls were the Taylor sisters, Ann (14) and Jane (13), and the house still stands, in the street that we know today as West Stockwell Street. The girls were both exceptionally creative and loved to write. They both kept diaries and an extract from Ann's shortly after they moved in concerned the family's pet cat Beauty.

"Beauty became unwell a few weeks after our arrival that it was deemed best to consign her to a watery grave. She was taken down two or three lanes to the river and a brick tied around her neck and thrown into the stream. The next morning however, she appeared at our back door in excellent health, probably the earliest water cure on record."

Their father, Isaac Taylor was an engraver and his connections with the book trade helped Ann and Jane to get much of their work, prose and poetry published. One of their first collaborations, published in early 1804, was "Original Poems for Infant Minds" that contained 20 poems by Ann and 20 by Jane. A commission for another volume came in November 1804, to which Ann contributed 29 poems and Jane 23. Three books later in 1806 a poem by Jane was included in a book called "Rhymes for the Nursery" and that poem was "The Star" better known to us as "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star". At some point it was set to the music of an existing French folk tune and since then has become known the world over. Both the sisters were quite modest and never capitalised on their fame. But that verse written in an attic bedroom in West Stockwell Street has travelled from there to all around the world.



Sir Bob Russell, Mandy Pratt,
Emma Pugh & Rosie Burnside-Fitch (left-right)

To give Ann, Jane and Colchester the recognition they deserve Colchester High Steward Sir Bob Russell has commissioned a life size statue of the girls to stand in an, as yet undisclosed location.

The sculptor is local artist Mandy Pratt and the models are two friends from New Town, Colchester Sixth Form students, Rosie Burnside-Fitch (Jane) and Emma Pugh (Ann). Sir Bob does not want to use any taxpayers' money for the project preferring to raise money from donations and sponsorship and both he and Mandy Pratt will be donating the intellectual copyright to the Mayor of Colchester with any proceeds from future marketing to be distributed to good causes for children within the borough.

Sir Bob has been raising money for the statue through his Heritage Tours and giving talks for a donation to the fund. He is currently offering three walking tours each lasting about 2 hours for a donation of £5 per person.

All tours will observe the latest Coronavirus safety precautions. Pre-booking is essential either through Colchester Arts Centre (if open) or by email to:

sir.bob.russell@hotmail.com

Alternatively, donations can be sent to...

Sir Bob Russell, 35 Catchpool Road, Colchester, CO1 1XN

Cheques payable to "Twinkle Star Fund"

IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS ON COLCHESTER MUSEUMS

Coronavirus has impacted what was proving to be a very successful year for Colchester & Ipswich Museum Service. By the end of February 2020, visitor numbers were up 24% on the previous year across CIMS and income was also slightly above an ambitious target. With social distancing in place for the foreseeable future, visitor number and income targets will necessarily be significantly lower than previous years to ensure the safety of staff and visitors.

ACTIVITY DURING LOCKDOWN

In response to the nationwide lockdown, CIMS commissioned activity packs in each town with contributions (in terms of content) from local cultural partners including Firstsite, Colchester Arts Centre, The Mercury Theatre, Signals, Colchester United and Colchester Zoo. Community 360, Colchester United and Royal Opera House bridge also offered to help distribute the packs to families.

CIMS have provided a webpage with home activities and have asked local people to share their experiences of lockdown. Initially

captured through social media, it is hoped some of the things people have been making or recording during lockdown will enter the museum collections.

COLCHESTER MUSEUMS DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

Colchester Museums have begun the implementation of a charitable trust, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). "CMDF" has been designed to support fund-raising opportunities that are currently unavailable to CIMS, and is a separate body, an adjunct to service. It's aims and purposes are;

1. The advancement of education for the public benefit particularly in the subjects of the arts, archaeology, history and science; and;
2. Promoting and developing Colchester Castle, Hollytrees Museum, the Natural History Museum and their collections and storage facilities, as well as supporting partner organisations to deliver related projects and activities.

Recruitment of trustees has taken some time, and we have been mindful of the importance to encourage applicants from a diverse range of personal and professional backgrounds.

SCHOOLS

Colchester Museums were already developing refreshed schools offers for Hollytrees Museum, and also examining the slight drop in school numbers to the Castle, when the lockdown began. In response to what is likely to be much reduced numbers of schools visiting from September we have secured funding to produce a digital substitute Roman educational visit to the Castle. A 360 degree film of the Castle and Roman Temple, along with a more traditional straight to camera narrated tour, complemented by a loans box that demonstrates physical evidence to support the story, will we hope reach schools unable

to travel to us whilst the pandemic remains a threat, and those children educated from home. Longer term we hope we will reach out much further geographically using this new resource.

VOLUNTEERS

2019/20 was a record breaking year for CIMS with regards to volunteer engagement. Approximately 150 different people contributed 7529 recorded hours, which is approximately 19% higher than 2018/19. As well as ongoing conservation, documentation and evaluation activities, the introduction of roles supporting 'Adorn' and 'Made In Suffolk' were key factors behind this increase. The service has endeavoured to retain those individuals and find new tasks for them to undertake. Looking ahead, CIMS staff hope to create new "help from home" volunteer roles to enable continued volunteer engagement whilst coronavirus prevents volunteering in the museum venues.

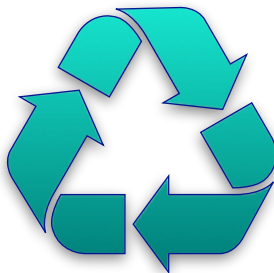
Pippa Pickles, *Colchester Museums Manager*

DIGITAL NEWSLETTER

Don't forget to sign up for our new Digital Newsletter by sending an email to:

friendsofcolchestermuseums@gmail.com

And including the name your membership is under.



Not only will you be saving paper and helping the environment, but you'll be among the first to receive our multi-media newsletters!

Ian Ahmet, *Newsletter Editor*

To The Friends of Colchester Museums,

Have you seen our website?

For all the latest news and updates please check:

tfocm.org.uk



Answers to Only Connect (Rear Cover)

Heaths around Colchester
Black, Fordham, Old, Parsons,

Town Hall Statues

Eudo Dapifer, William Gilderd,
Samuel Harsnett, St. Helena,

Schools

Charles Lucas, Stanway,

Thomas Lord Audley, Wilson Marriage

Names preceded by West

Bergholt, Mersa, Stockwell Street, Way

“Only Connect”

A little fun for our members

Inspired by the TV quiz show and given a Colchester bias, here is a puzzle to while away some of time you should have spent on FOCM events. This combines your knowledge of the area, wordplay and lateral thinking all intended to give your brain a workout.

Old	William Gilbert	Black	Eudo Dapifer
Thomas Lord Audley	Fordham	Charles Lucas	Mersea
St. Helena	Way	Bergholt	Wilson Marriage
Stanway	Parsons	Samuel Harsnett	Stockwell Street

How to Play

Sort out the 16 seemingly random names/words into four groups of 4 connected words. You may find that some clues fall into more than one category but there is only one complete solution.

(Answers can be found on the reverse of this cover)