



# **The Friends of Colchester Museums**

*Registered Charity No: 310669*

## **Spring Newsletter 2024**

# OFFICERS

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	Jenny Jones	
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	Liz Anderson	Geoff Fenn
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<i>Honorary Auditor</i>	Roy Anderson	
<i>Museum Office</i>	Museum Resource Centre 40 Heckworth Close, Colchester, CO4 9TB Tel: 01206 282931 <a href="http://www.cimuseums.org.uk">www.cimuseums.org.uk</a>	

For up to date news and information, please visit the website for

The Friends of Colchester Museums

**[tfocm.org.uk](http://tfocm.org.uk)**

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As usual for winter this has been a quiet period since the last newsletter. However, we are now busy with some special preparations, because this year we celebrate the 75th anniversary of The Friends of Colchester Museums. The committee are considering how best to commemorate this, but further suggestions from members would be most welcome.

Looking back over the years, we have helped the Museums in various ways, particularly in funding the acquisition of objects and works of art. We have paid for many items for the Museum and are continuing to do this: recent purchases include a Constable sketch of St Botolph's Priory and a historic photograph of the High Street. We also agreed to fund their cleaning and restoration, which is now complete. Both of the items are looking much better for the specialist work undertaken by paper conservators.

The Friends have also contributed to the purchase of coins from what has become known as 'The Braintree Hoard.' Previous items have included gold rings, paintings, a gold pocket watch by a Colchester watchmaker, the shrine of St Helena from the Colchester pageant of 1909, historic photographs, and many others.

We have been honoured that former members have remembered us in their Wills. Most recently, Andrew Millar generously left a bequest to The Friends of Colchester Museums. We will be using some of that money to purchase the globe by Will Teather, which was on display last year. This was a popular exhibit, and there will be an acknowledgement that Andrew's bequest enabled it to be purchased.

TFoCM have taken responsibility for the funds of the Friends of Colchester Roman Wall, and members also help with the Museum's presence at the City's Roman Day.

Our chief regular activity is the series of talks held in Spring and Autumn on Tuesday evenings in Lion Walk Church. Details of the current season are in this newsletter and also on the newly refreshed website that carries a wealth of further information. Talks are well attended, but with room for more - so please spread the word; new members are always welcome! The entrance money for these is used to help fund Colchester Museums as they think best.

Further benefits to members include free entry to the Castle and Hollytrees Museums, half price entry to the talks, first opportunity to join our outings (three are arranged for this year) and an invitation to private viewings of exhibitions and other events at the museum.

It's a privilege to be involved with this society, which has helped Colchester's Museums for so many years. We look forwards to continuing to provide funds for acquisitions and to enjoy our activities while doing so.

*Ray Cantrell* Chairman

# LATEST NEWS: PRIVATE VIEWING

Colchester Castle Museum have kindly agreed for a private viewing of the current puppetry exhibition “Thunderbirds and Co. The Joy of Puppetry” for our members. On this occasion we will stretch ‘Members’ to include children and other family members.

The viewing will be on Tuesday 14th May at 6 p.m., with speeches at 6.30 and door closing at 8 p.m.

The Museum would like to have an estimate of numbers attending, so please could you let them know if you wish to be there by emailing me on raycantrell48@gmail.com by Saturday 12th May.

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## TREASURER’S REPORT

### Money Talks

If you have not paid the 2024 subscriptions, a reminder is enclosed.

We are still receiving subscriptions at the 2022 rate. If so, you will have received an email from me with details how to bring your payments into line. Please help me by doing this as soon as possible

Thank you for completing a gift aid form. By the end of March 2024, I hope to have reclaimed £4000 in gift aid from HM Customs and Revenues for subscriptions going back to 2020. We are paid interest on late claims. If you pay tax and are not sure if you have completed a gift aid for already, please check with me.

Season Tickets are still available for £20 or all 12 talks (saving £4 and the bother of bringing cash). These can be bought on the door at our talks or by sending me £20. Cheques payable to the Friends of Colchester Museums

*Peter Evans*

Hon Treasurer

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# THE FRIENDS WEBSITE

**tfocm.org.uk**

The website has undergone some recent changes, including updating content and making small improvements to structure, format, and navigation.

There is now a clearer division between items relating to the past and future. Animation has been added where possible, and lettering has been improved throughout by changing grey fonts to black.

The website contains a wealth of information about The Friends and more besides...

- Details of the present and earlier series of Tuesday talks
- Copies of all recent newsletters
- Information about excursions and events planned for 2024
- And links to a range of interesting sites including The Civic Society, Colchester Recalled, Colchester and Ipswich Museums and the East Anglian Film Archive.

It is certainly well worth a look!

Of course, suggestions for future improvements are very welcome and can be put forward to:

*Yvonne Abrams* Website Manager

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## A TRIBUTE TO DR CHRIS HALL

It was with great sadness that The Friends of Colchester Museums learnt of the death of Dr Chris Hall on January 29th. He had a keen interest in the history of Colchester and, with his wife Dr Liz Hall, was a member of The Friends for many years. Chris served on the Committee from 2011 until 2021; his calmness and wisdom were greatly valued at our meetings. On his resignation from the Committee, Chris was elected as a Vice President from 2022.

He was a Town Councillor for twenty-three years and Mayor of Colchester from 2003 to 2004. He worked here as a GP for fifty years, only retiring at the age of eighty. Chris had many interests beside local history, including singing with the Lexden Choral Society and cycling - he often used to arrive at Friends' meetings on his bike.

A kindly, accomplished and compassionate man, Chris will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

*Mary Dale*

## TFOCM MEMBERS' TRIPS 2024

We are planning three trips this year, due to the venues all having restricted numbers. In each case the maximum is approximately 20. By having three trips we hope that everyone who would like to, can enjoy at least one of these adventures!

Booking form for the trips is enclosed with this newsletter.

### **Thursday 27th June** *Hill Farm, Gestingthorpe, 2.30pm*

This remarkable site is a working farm owned by Mr Ashley Cooper, which his father took over in 1945. He noticed that one particular field was overgrown with weeds; attempts at growing crops failed and so deep digging was required. This unearthed a vast number of red tiles that were identified as Roman, by Rex Hull of Colchester Museum. For the following 25 years, further excavations took place revealing the site of a magnificent Roman Villa and several other Romano-British buildings.

To walk the site, discovering what the archaeology revealed and to see the wonderful array of artefacts found at Hill Farm, do take part in our visit to this fascinating location. There is also a magnificent 18th Century barn, set up as a farming museum.

We will spend approximately two hours at the site. Tea will be provided in the beautiful adjoining Victorian barn.

Cost: £20 Pick up 1.30pm East Hill opp. Greyfriars

### **Tuesday 23rd July** *Coggeshall Museum and guided walk*

You will have read the article about the museum in our last newsletter. This is an opportunity to visit and also have a guided tour of the town. We will have refreshments at one of the local cafes. Coggeshall museum is a little gem, full of local interest with an audio feature from the archives, great for the local accent.

We will arrive at approximately 10.30am, visit the museum, have a tour and enjoy local hospitality.

Cost: £25, including lunch

*Transport arrangements: Car share or independent travel. Please see booking form for further details*

### **Monday 2nd September**

We will enjoy a walking tour, 'Secrets of Long Melford,' led by a National Trust guide. The walk will be in the context of the history of the village, the architectural gems to be found and the famous people who have lived in or visited Long Melford.

The walk will start at about 10.30am and take approximately two hours. It is mainly a pavement walk but stout shoes or trainers are advised. There is no need for boots. However, there are a couple of places where access is difficult so unfortunately wheelchair users will have difficulty in managing the full visit. Although the Hall and Café are not open, we will be able to have refreshments in the village.

There is a free car park at Melford Hall.

Cost: £25

*Transport arrangements: Car share or independent travel. Please see booking form for further details*

As all these visits are relatively local, we will be able to make arrangements for car sharing. Detailed maps will be provided if members prefer to travel independently

Regular information updates about the visits will be provided at the Tuesday talks and on the website.

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## THE CONSTABLE SKETCH OF ST BOTOLPH'S

This has now been restored by Museum Conservation Services in Duxford and 'Before and After' illustrations reveal just what a wonderful result has been achieved. The Services' expertise includes restoring old master drawings and historic photographs; they have also worked on the High Street photograph that The Friends purchased last year.

The sketch has been given treatment for general discolouration, stains and surface dirt. The marks left by damaging adhesives and masking tape have been minimised; and for the longer term, deacidification has been applied to inhibit any acidic decay.

Finally, it has been remounted in acid-free board then framed and fitted to museum standard. 'St Botolph's' is now a real asset to the Colchester Constable collection and we are proud to have sourced and funded this beautiful picture.



# COLCHESTER CIVIC SOCIETY TRIPS 2024

The Colchester Civic Society has kindly offered members of The Friends the opportunity to join them on a number of trips. More information on all of these is available from Jo Edwards, Colchester Civic Society on 07771 626561

## Saturday 11th May

Essex and Hertfordshire Air Ambulance Visitors Centre, Earls Colne to find out all about the Air Ambulance Service. If you have transport, the post code is CO6 2NS, otherwise please speak to Jo as lifts may be available. Donations to the Service are appreciated.

## Saturday 29th June

Silchester to see the remains of the Roman town of Calleva Atrebatum, which was abandoned by the 7th century. This has been arranged by the Friends of the Colchester Archaeological Trust and the guide of the well-preserved defences will be Mike Fulford, Professor of Archaeology at Reading University. Coach leaves Greyfriars at 9am Cost: £30.00

## Wednesday 17th July

Nymans, Haywards Heath. This is a National Trust property, a medieval Manor House, remodelled in the 1930s, now a ruin but with excellent gardens. Cost: £30 for NT members and £47 for non-members. Coach leaves Greyfriars at 8am

## Sunday 28th July 2024

St James the Great Church, East Hill, Colchester 2pm

A guided tour of one of Colchester's most beautiful churches. No charge but donations to the Church, please.

*Jo Edwards*

Chair, Civic Society



1B, 2A, 3C, 4A, 5C, 6C, 7B, 8A, 9B, 10B

Answers to Spring Quiz



## THE STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS OF ST LEONARD AT-THE-HYTHE

Among its many interesting and beautiful features, the redundant medieval church of St Leonard has a particularly fine collection of stained-glass windows.

Between the 1860s and the 1930s, St Leonard's was fortunate to have a series of rectors who were dedicated to improving all aspects of their parish church, as well as a number of similarly inclined wealthy benefactors. These included the Paxman family, who had very strong links with the Hythe and its population. The refurbishment of the church building reached its peak during the ministry of Canon H.F.V Carter, who was rector from 1896 until 1935. Canon Carter was a member of the Tractarian or Oxford Movement, which had a lasting impact on Anglican art and architecture. The designers working at the time were rediscovering traditional crafts including stained glass, intricate woodwork and stone carvings, all of which can be seen at St Leonard's.

However, they were not limited in their thinking and were not bound by strict adherence to historical replication. Enthusiasm for their projects stimulated meticulous attention to detail in their designs and this is particularly evident in the stained glass of the church.

The windows of the north and south aisles feature a number of saints and were designed by Heaton, Butler and Bayne, a successful English firm of stained-glass manufacturers. Clement Heaton founded his own stained-glass firm in 1852 and was joined by James Butler in 1855. The firm became known as Heaton, Butler & Bayne from 1862 when Robert Turnhill Bayne, a Pre-Raphaelite artist, became partner and chief designer. They designed and made windows for private homes as well as churches throughout Britain, the USA and Australia and were well known for the exceptionally fine range of coloured glass that they produced.

Their windows in St Leonards include three English kings: the Saxon King Edmund, King Edward the Confessor and King Charles the Martyr.



There are so many accounts of the life of King Edmund that it has become something of a legend, but it is fairly certain that he died in 869AD during the Viking and Norse invasion. However, it is not known whether he died in battle or as a result of refusing to renounce his Christian faith; it is said that he was tied to a tree and shot full of arrows before being beheaded. The window, coloured richly in red, green and gold, shows the saint holding three arrows to represent his martyrdom.

Canonised at some time between 924 and 939, he was the

original patron saint of England until Edward III founded the Order of the Garter and promoted St George to be England's patron.

The second king is Edward the Confessor, who was the last king of the house of Wessex before the Norman Conquest and ruled from 1042 until his death in 1066. He was not martyred but titled "Confessor" because he had led a holy life. It is said that he gave a valuable ring to a beggar who had asked for alms. After many years it transpired that this beggar was none other than St John the Evangelist, who presented the ring to a pilgrim in Jerusalem and in due course it was returned to Edward. This legendary sapphire is reputed to be incorporated in the imperial state crown, used to this day. The window is predominantly in gold and blue, echoing the colours of the ring.



After his canonisation he was adopted as another of England's patron saints, but like Edmund he was dropped in favour of St George in the fourteenth century.

Incidentally, St George himself is depicted in the north aisle of St Leonard's where he is shown dressed as a Roman soldier, with the submissive dragon at his feet.



The final one is a particularly interesting inclusion, as King Charles I is the only individual ever to have been canonised by the Church of England. This was in 1649 after he refused to abdicate and so betray the belief that his authority had been God given. However, this canonisation was not recognised by Rome.

Images of Charles I in churches are far from common; very few windows are dedicated to him and certainly the St Leonard's window is unique in its size, detail and quality. The dominant colours are regal, red and gold; he wears robes with a crown and carries the orb and sceptre. The shading and details are particularly fine and his strong gaze almost follows the viewer.

Charles was, of course, the monarch whose troops used the church as a garrison in the Civil War, during the siege of Colchester.

Altogether there are twenty-one saints in the north and south aisles, portrayed at almost life size, and all with their own unique stories to tell, many of which are represented in the details of the stained glass. These include three Essex ladies, St Osyth, St Helena and St Ethelburga, who appear together in the middle window of the south aisle. More about these in a future newsletter...

There are so many extraordinary qualities in these windows that it would be unwise to try to describe them all in a single article. Suffice to say that within the stained glass of St Leonard's there is a multitude of interesting things to see. The more you look, the more there is. Patterns and textures within the various gowns and robes, mitres  
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in varied designs according to the period in which a bishop lived, croziers of different complexity and swords with the most astonishing detail. Possibly the most striking of all are the faces, portrayed with details of features and expression which makes them all appear as individual characters.

In other parts of the church there are yet more splendid windows. The South Chapel focuses on scenes relating to the nativity, with some beautiful effects being created by the use of vibrant colours and the prevailing light.

Without doubt, St Leonard at-the-Hythe has a spectacular display of stained glass, and every piece is of the highest quality. There can be few mediaeval churches in the country with such a wealth of Victorian and early twentieth century decorated windows.

Open on Tuesdays between 12 and 2pm and other times by appointment: (st.leonard.at.the.hythe@gmail.com)

Bus stop outside, S4 route.

Car parking: at The Hythe Community Centre and also an NCP car park two minutes away on Hythe Quayside (turn left at bottom of Maudlin Road)

*Jen Conquer*

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## **“TWINKLE, TWINKLE, LITTLE STAR” AND COLCHESTER**

Although we have all heard that Jane Taylor wrote this world-famous nursery rhyme as she sat in her attic bedroom in West Stockwell Street gazing at the stars, there have been rival claims as to its place of origin.

Jane Taylor and her older sister Ann were born in London, Ann in 1782 and Jane, the following year. Their father wanted a better life for his family, so they moved to Lavenham in June 1786 and then to Colchester ten years later when Ann was 14 and Jane 13. From an early age both Ann and Jane were very creative and loved to write stories together and act them out for their family and friends. In 1799 Ann won a prize for a poem she submitted to the ‘Minors’ Pocket Book,’ a publication for younger readers that combined the function of a diary and an annual. Encouraged by her sister, Jane’s first appearance in print was in the Minors’ 1804 edition.

The sisters’ first book was called ‘Original Poems for Infant Minds’ to which each contributed 20 poems. This also appeared in 1804, was an instant success and was followed by a second volume eight months later. Three more commissions followed. Their third book, published in May 1806, was called ‘Rhymes for the Nursery’ and contained a poem called ‘The Star,’ better known to us as ‘Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.’

The girls went on to write many more books together and individually and became prolific and successful authors. Jane was very modest about her talents and did not even put her name to ‘The Star’. The only reason that we know she wrote it is that a nephew annotated his personal copy.

Lavenham has claimed that ‘The Star’ was written in the four months Jane was living in the town in 1803/4, when she and her younger siblings relocated in fear of a Napoleonic invasion. However, it seems highly improbable that Jane would have written something and put it to one side for 18 months while she wrote material for two other books. The volume in which the poem appeared was published on the 28th May 1806, meaning that it was most likely to have been written in the latter half of 1805 or early 1806. And the sisters only moved to the other alleged location, Ongar, in 1811 - five years later!

Jane was known to have a fascination for the stars and the night sky. In the early 19th century Colchester’s night sky would have appeared much more striking than it does today and there are accounts of the Northern Lights being seen in Colchester. Jane regarded her attic bedroom as her sanctum, telling a friend that all her poems were written there. Of herself Jane wrote, “I used to roam and revel mid the stars. When in my attic with untold delight I watched the changing splendours of the night.” In his memoirs, her brother wrote of Jane: “The window commanded a view of the country, and a ‘tract of sky’ as a field for that nightly soaring of fancy of which she was so fond”. Furthermore, the house where she was living in Lavenham in 1804 does not have any attic rooms...

So, there can be little doubt that Jane wrote the world-famous poem in the family house in West Stockwell Street. And, in the 200th anniversary year of Jane’s death, a statue is shortly to be unveiled of Jane and Ann in Colchester High Street.

*Peter Jones*



## **WHO DREW ‘DEDHAM CHURCH’?**

### **Recent research in the art collection**

As part of the preparation for the recent display in Colchester Castle of several views of local buildings by John Constable (1776-1837) an enigmatic drawing entitled ‘Dedham Church’ was re-assessed. This research was generously funded by The Friends and involved several specialists in the museum service and outside.

The drawing shows a distant church tower, approached by a winding path set between trees and bushes. It is thought to be a view of Dedham Church and, although unsigned, is attributed to John Constable. It is certainly possible that this is a view of Dedham Church, as the building has a tower rather than a spire. Also, the church is



*John Constable (attrib.) 'Dedham Church'*  
(COLEM:1976.129)

positioned on rising ground as would be the case if it were viewed from the south where, even today, there is open countryside. But the attribution to Constable is more difficult to support as the drawing was not included in the definitive catalogue of the artist's works prepared by the art historian Graham Reynolds in 1996.

The drawing has been examined closely by the paper conservator Nicholas Burnett who confirms that it is made with black chalk or very soft lump graphite on good quality laid paper. Sadly, there is no water mark on the paper which is often helpful in dating an artwork and even confirming the identity of the artist. The best that can be said is that the paper type matches that used by Constable.

Research in The National Gallery Research Centre by archivist Hannah Stovin has uncovered evidence of the previous ownership of the drawing before it was bequeathed to Colchester Museums in 1976. Using an auction house label stuck on the back of the drawing's frame it has been possible to trace the sale history back to 26 June 1946 when it was sold at Sotheby's (lot 71) as 'part of an album of Constable sketches.' On the face of it this would appear to be conclusive evidence of the drawing being the work of John Constable but the situation is not that straightforward as, unfortunately, there is a rival artist to consider.

George Frost (1744/5-1821), who lived in Ipswich for much of his life, was a friend of John Constable and, at least for a time, the two artists' works are very similar. A case in point is the drawing 'Road to Greenwich Farm, Ipswich' of 1808 by Frost in the Day Collection (East Anglian Traditional Art Centre).



*George Frost 'Road to Greenwich Farm, Ipswich'*  
(Day Collection, East Anglian Traditional Art Centre)

A comparison with the 'Dedham Church' drawing reveals several similarities, particularly in the way that the path is shown and the handling of the bushes and vegetation. So, the drawing of Dedham Church could be by Frost, but it could also be Constable imitating Frost, as he did in the early 1800's. The situation is complicated even further by the fact that

it is known that Constable and Frost gave each other their drawings and, as a result, Constable had a collection of Frost's work. So perhaps the album that was auctioned in 1946 was really an album of Frost's drawings and not those of Constable.

My colleague Emma Roodhouse adds, 'A number of scholars confused the two artists because of the similarities of early Constable to Frost. Of course, he quickly broke away from the Frost style, forging ahead on his own terms.'

So, it has not proved possible to provide a definitive answer to the question 'Who drew Dedham Church?' However, with thanks to the Friends, we have learnt new information about the drawing which will benefit future researchers.

With thanks to Nicholas Burnett, Hannah Stovin and Emma Roodhouse.

*Philip Wise*

Heritage Manager

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## NEWS FROM THE MUSEUMS

### ADMISSIONS AND FINANCES

As we head towards the end of March the last financial year has been both successful and challenging for Colchester Museums, as we move from Covid recovery into a cost-of-living crisis. Our visitor and income targets were stretching and, at the time of drafting this report, we have met some of these and nearly met others.

Schools have been returning in high numbers and have exceeded our expected figures.

General visitors are down slightly, and income from this is likely to be just below our target.

Activities and events have met the target this year, thanks again to the hard work and long hours that the front of house team deliver - from Murder Mysteries and birthday parties, to sleep overs.

Tours are a success story, and the reviews are always lovely to read.

There were 162 Friends' visits recorded this year.

Colchester City Council have asked services to look at options for a 25% decrease in expenditure or increase in income and Museums are looking at options to meet this expectation, including charging entry for Hollytrees from April 1st.

In addressing the concerns around the cost-of-living crisis we have kept admission increases to a minimum, with school prices remaining the same. We are introducing



half-price child entry for more than one child, both in the Castle and Hollytrees. What was the Castle Pass now becomes a Colchester Museums Pass, allowing unlimited entry to Castle and Hollytrees year-round. The Natural History Museum will remain free entry for all.

## **BUILDINGS**

The Castle walls and roof immediate concerns are being addressed, with longer term plans and developments subject to funding applications. Colchester City Council are now starting to review all of their Heritage sites

Work on Hollytrees roof is progressing and tenders for the contract to start work are now in.

We have also looked at added value for Hollytrees visitors, including more toys and interactives for children, and more information on the history of the building available in digital form - along with fun facts, games and suchlike.

The Natural History Museum National Lottery Heritage Fund application will be submitted again this summer, with added content following their guidelines. We very much hope for success this time.

## **EXHIBITIONS**

“Gladiators” will be touring with the British Museum in 2025, including content from Colchester. This will certainly enhance and promote what Colchester has to offer and it is exciting to work with them.

“Thunderbirds and Co., The Joy of Puppetry” opened at the end of March and will run until 30th June. It is a nostalgic journey through the enchanting world of puppets and celebrates the art and legacy of early television puppeteers. These include local legend Joy Laurey and the renowned Gerry and Sylvia Anderson. The exhibition features a diverse collection, from Joy Laurey’s beloved Mr Turnip to the Anderson Productions characters, including the captivating Lady Penelope.

A Big TV Weekend of events will take place, where we will be joined by Big Finish television productions and guests such as Ronnie Le Drew - the voice of Zippy!

We are supporting Headway Essex with donations and fund-raising during the run.

Work is also underway with planning our next large exhibition in 2025; more news on this in a future newsletter.

*Pippa Pickles*

Colchester Museums Manager

# THE HALSTEAD HERITAGE MUSEUM

The Museum, located at the Queens Hall, Chipping Hill, Halstead, is the latest, but not the first location occupied by Halstead and District Local History Society for a museum, since its formation in 1976.



The history starts in 1980 when, through the generosity of Evans Electro Selenium Limited (EEL), the Society was given the use of 23, Parsonage Street. This was previously an empty cottage near the entrance to the former Evans car park. It consisted of two floors with a large ground floor room, set up as a museum, but it was never called a museum and was always known as the Headquarters.

The opening ceremony took place in September 1980, attended by Arthur and Phyllis Evans, who travelled from their home in the Channel Islands, Ted Hall, also a Director of EEL and a Vice President of the History Society and our first President, Sir Ronald Long, who later became our first Patron. A few years later new management at EEL, by then called Corning Medical, asked the History Society to vacate its Headquarters because they wanted to convert it back to a dwelling for an employee.

The Society then occupied part of the first floor of the former King's Head Public House in Colchester Road for storage and some committee meetings were held there. The occupation of this second building was only temporary until the Society moved into the Brewery Chapel, Adams Court, off Trinity Street in 1985.



The Chapel was the first real museum and was known as the 'Brewery Chapel Museum'. This was conveniently situated near to the workshops of

Halstead Retirement Industries, who carried out much useful work in the museum, including the construction of shelving and a new wooden floor. The occupation of the Chapel was made possible through the generosity of Halstead Town Council, following lengthy negotiations between Adrian Corder-Birch and two successive Mayors namely Tony DeFrates and Michael Gage. The Town Council owned the freehold and allowed the History Society to occupy it at a peppercorn rent - namely five pence a year! A



grand opening took place in 1985 performed by Victor Gray, then County Archivist for Essex. The Brewery Chapel Museum flourished for many years with numerous different exhibitions relating to the history of Halstead and District. However, the Society was required to vacate the Chapel when the lease expired in 2006.

The collection was then placed in storage at the former Town Council Offices at the Mill House in The Causeway, where there was significant storage space in the attics. By 2008 the Town Council allowed the use of a room on the ground floor for a museum and in April 2009, Halstead Heritage Museum opened and this location very proved successful. Unfortunately, in 2016 Halstead Town Council were given notice to vacate the Mill House by early 2018, which included the museum.

Following careful consideration, the Town Council decided to convert part of the Queens Hall into council offices, a museum and storage area. The work was completed by late November and the museum collection was moved to its present premises during December 2017. The museum was officially opened by Shirley Diver (Mayor of Halstead) on Saturday 3rd February 2018.

During the last forty years many members of Halstead and District Local History Society have been active in looking after its collections, including both archives and artefacts and also arranging exhibitions. These members have included Albert Cross, Alan Woodfield, Graham Slimming, Anne Stockill, Brian Turner, Penny Hill and Jim Davis. They have been supported with much practical hard work by a body of staunch and dedicated members. The Museum has also benefited from curatorial advice from Jean Grice and Robert Rose of Braintree District Museum. It is through the hard work, long and loyal service of these and other members that the collections of the Halstead and District Local History Society have grown and been preserved during the last forty years for the benefit of Halstead and District.

The new Halstead Heritage Museum will continue in the tradition set during the last forty years. Under the guidance and encouragement of Jim Davis and other volunteers, the considerable value of this important resource will undoubtedly continue to grow and prosper.



A wealth of exhibits is on display, including artefacts linked to the Colne Valley Railway and the weaving industry that has been so important to the town. There

is also a fascinating collection of cast iron stoves made by the Tortoise Foundry Company and memorabilia from two major local breweries.

The museum holds a large collection of documents, both original and facsimile and there is a library of local history books and publications.

The Heritage Museum is in The Queens Hall, Chipping Hill, Halstead CO9 2BY. This is a turning off the Colchester Road (opposite St Andrew's Church) and close to its junction with the A131, Head Street.

Opening hours are 13.30 to 16.00 on Wednesday and Sunday, February to November. Entry to the museum is free.



# THE SPRING QUIZ

*By Gill Bird*

1. When did Boudica attack Colchester?

- A 50AD
- B 60AD
- C 70AD

2. When did King Henry I visit Colchester?

- A 1132
- B 1183
- C 1201

3. When did James Parnell die in Colchester Castle?

- A 1632
- B 1643
- C 1656

4. When was the first Lord Lieutenant of Essex, appointed?

- A 1798
- B 1812
- C 1825

5. When did Oscar Wilde give a lecture in the old Town Hall?

- A 1879
- B 1882
- C 1884

6. When was the old Town Hall demolished?

- A 1888
- B 1897
- C 1902

7. When was the first aeroplane seen over Colchester?

- A 1910
- B 1912
- C 1914

8. When did the first Colchester Bypass open?

- A 1933
- B 1935
- C 1937

9. When did the FirstSite building open?

- A 1991
- B 1993
- C 1995

10. When was Colchester Castle closed for refurbishment?

- A 2012
- B 2013
- C 2014



Answers on page eight



# THE FRIENDS OF COLCHESTER MUSEUMS

## Spring & Autumn 2024 Lecture Series

£2 per talk (£4 for non-members)

EVENING LECTURES at Lion Walk Church – Tuesday at 7.30 pm

9 April	<b>Colchester Non-Conformists:</b> <i>Seven Hundred Years of Awkward Colcestrians....</i>	<i>Ray Cantrell</i>
23 April	<b>Theatre in Colchester</b> <i>Lost but not forgotten</i>	<i>Dorian Kelly</i>
7 May	<b>A history of bell ringing and the bells of Colchester churches</b>	<i>Matthew Brown</i>
21 May	<b>Boudica: Myth and Legend</b>	<i>Richard Bale</i>
4 June	<b>Colchester Medical Society 250th Anniversary (i)</b>	<i>Dr Fabrizio Casale</i>
18 June	<b>Colchester Voices</b> <i>War time memories from the archive 1939-1945</i>	<i>Patrick Denney</i>
2 July	<b>AGM at 7pm</b> followed by <b>The Taylor Maids</b> <i>The story of Ann &amp; Jane Taylor and Twinkle Twinkle</i>	<i>Peter Jones</i>
3 Sept	<b>Colchester Medical Society 250th Anniversary (ii)</b>	<i>Dr Richard Todd</i>
17 Sept	<b>The life of Charles Haddon Spurgeon:</b> <i>Preacher and Teacher</i>	<i>Peter Tervet</i>
1 Oct	<b>The Braintree Hoard and late Saxon Essex</b>	<i>Philip Wise</i>
15 Oct	<b>The Cinque Port of Brightlingsea:</b> <i>Blessing of the Waters</i>	<i>Roger Tabor</i>
29 Oct	<b>The Mark Davies Memorial lecture</b>	<i>Glynn Davis</i>

Further information from Joy Hopkinson, Programme Secretary  
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