

The Friends of Colchester Museums

Newsletter - January 2009



The Friends of Colchester Museums

OFFICERS

President His Worship the Mayor

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TOM HODGSON (Curator of Social History)
PHILIP WISE (Curator of Archaeology)

Museum Office Colchester Museums Resource Centre
14 Ryegate Road Colchester CO1 1TW

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for 2009 are now due for renewal. Current charges are £7.50 for a single member, £12 for a couple and £18 for a family. Please note that a remittance form is enclosed with this newsletter for your payment to be attached to. It would greatly assist our Treasurer if members could be prompt in sending their payment as this will lighten his workload considerably in the coming weeks.

For those who pay by standing order, please ensure that you are paying the correct amount. If you would like to begin paying your subscription by standing order (which again would help to reduce administration activities) please complete the enclosed Standing Order Form.

Please send all payments, and any arrears, to Mr Peter Evans at 5 Grimston Road, Colchester, CO2 7RN. Tel: 01206 540990.

PLEASE NOTE that your Membership Card for 2009, which allows free entry to the Castle Museum, is included with this newsletter, but remember please that payment for 2009 is still owing! If you no longer wish to remain a Friend of Colchester Museums, please return your membership card to the Treasurer.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The Friends of Colchester Museums continues to attract increasing interest among the community with nearly 700 individuals and families now associated with the group. The benefits of becoming a Friend are numerous, but being able to gain free access to the Castle Museum is a major enticement and the main reason why many become associated. However, the benefits do not stop there and other attractions such as a year long programme of talks and occasional visits to places of interest remain popular. And, as always, it is one of the most productive ways in which to support your

local museum service and we hope that all members will continue to enjoy their association and encourage others to join.

PATRICK DENNEY
Hon. Secretary

TREASURER'S TOPICS

Gift Aid News

We are awaiting payment from HM Revenue and Customs of our latest Gift Aid claim. This is our 8th claim and the total amount received is approaching £10,000. This represents the tax paid by Friends on their subscription, assuming that the Gift Aid certificate has been completed.

Many thanks to all those who have already completed the certificate. If you have not yet done so, information is enclosed with this newsletter. It really is easy to help the Friends in this manner and costs you nothing!

Donations

Many Friends also make donations in addition to paying their subscription. This is much appreciated and Gift Aid is also claimed on these.

Charity Commission

The Friends is a registered charity and our reference number is 310669. If you go online to www.charitycommission.gov.uk you can check our details. The information available gives the names of Committee members who are trustees and there are also details of our accounts which we have to file with the Commission every year.

Annual Accounts

We apologise that a line was missing from the Annual Accounts shown in the Annual Report 2007-2008. We also received £50 advertising income which increased the total income to £10,464.01 which balances with the expenditure. Apologies for this.

PETER EVANS
Hon. Treasurer

A NEW CHAIRMAN

At our Annual General Meeting held in June 2008 our Chairman, Andrew Phillips, decided to stand down from the position after 21 years service. During that time Andrew has steered the group through a successful period of growth and development and his knowledge



Andrew Phillips (left), receives book tokens from our new Chairman Mark Davies

and enthusiasm for the town's history has been instrumental in helping to achieve the Society's current status. In order to mark the occasion, and by way of thanking Andrew for his contribution to the Society of the last two decades, the Committee decided to present him with a gift of book tokens at our September meeting.

Mark Davies has since been appointed our new Chairman.

LECTURE SERIES 2009

The year 2009 marks the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the Friends of Colchester Museums and in order to help celebrate the occasion we have arranged for a special programme of talks to take place highlighting various aspects of Colchester's history. We have chosen our speakers carefully for their knowledge and expertise in their subject areas and look forward to learning about life in the

town from the earliest times through to the 20th century. All lectures will take place in Lion Walk Church on Tuesday evenings and further details of the programme can be found on the back cover of this newsletter.

OUTINGS 2009

**Visit to Bury St Edmunds Tuesday,
16 June 2009**

We have arranged for an evening visit to Bury St Edmunds on Tuesday, 16 June 2009. Upon arrival we will be met by qualified Bury tour guides who will lead us on a tour of the historic town. The tour is expected to last for about 90 minutes and will not be too arduous. This is a wonderful opportunity to become better acquainted with this historic town whilst in the company of other Friends.

**Visit to Harwich
Tuesday 21 July 2009**

Our second excursion for 2009 will take us to Harwich where we will be guests of the Harwich Society. This promises to be a most interesting event and a great opportunity of learning more about this historic maritime town. We will be treated to a walking tour of the historic quarter with planned stops at the famous Treadwheel Crane, Electric Palace Cinema and the Guildhall.

Each trip will cost £12.00 per person inclusive of all travel and guiding fees. Cheques should be made payable to the Friends of Colchester Museums. To book places on either or both outings, please contact Patrick Denney, 247 Old Heath Road, Colchester CO2 8BN. Tel: 01206 796822.

Coaches will depart from the Sheepen Road car park at 6pm and return between 9.30-10pm. We will also be arranging for a pick up point somewhere near to North Station.

PATRICK DENNEY
Hon. Secretary

Museum News

COLCHESTER AND IPSWICH MUSEUM SERVICE

'Guardians to the King' Exhibition Comes to an End

The 'Guardians to the King' exhibition came to a close on Sunday 2nd November after three and a half exciting months.

The exhibition featured 43 miniature terracotta figures from China that dated to over 2,000 years old. These figures had never been to the UK before and their visit certainly was a coup for Colchester and indeed the region.

Visitors came from far and wide to enjoy the exhibition and the castle boasted visits from London, Wales, Bedfordshire, Birmingham and Hertfordshire to name a few. Throughout the exhibition 54,879 visitors came to the Castle to see the figures – an increase of 21,043 visitors when compared to the same period last year!

Just like the arrival of the figures, their journey back to Jiangsu province in China was under the watchful eye of a team of staff from both the Museum Service and Xuzhou Museum. The team of three staff from Xuzhou Museum arrived in the UK on 31st October and spent 6 days enjoying local sites as well, of course, as carefully taking the exhibition down and getting the figures ready for their long journey back. During their short stay in Colchester the guests enjoyed day trips to London and Cambridge, as well as some good shopping in Colchester town centre.

Round 1 of Roman Circus Heritage Lottery Fund Bid Submitted

The Round 1 submission of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Bid for the Roman Circus Interpretation Project was submitted on Tuesday 2nd December 2008. The submission was hand delivered by Philip Wise, Heritage Manager for Colchester and Ipswich Museum



Adrian Pritchard signing the submission with Philip Wise looking on

Service, to Adrian Pritchard, Chief Executive of Colchester Borough Council, who signed the submission.

Discovered in 2004, during archaeological excavations within the Colchester Garrison, the Roman Circus, or chariot-racing track, is a unique archaeological monument in Britain. At the time of the discovery it hit the headlines across the country and was heralded as one of the most exciting Roman finds in decades. Colchester is one of only six locations in northwest Europe where a Roman circus has been securely identified. The Roman Circus in Colchester has Scheduled Ancient Monument status.

The Roman Circus Interpretation Project seeks to interpret and conserve the site with a cover building, offering both residents of Colchester and tourists a new attraction to enjoy in the town. The project will raise the public's awareness of Colchester's rich heritage and provide a focus and resource for educational activities. The Round 1 submission seeks external to council funding of £950,000,

and in March 2009 it will be announced if the submission has been a success, after which a Round 2 submission will be prepared.

All Change for Climate Change!

It's all change at the Natural History Museum as natural history and display staff work on the new Geology and Climate Change Exhibition which opens on the 7th April 2009.

Occupying the eastern end of the museum, this will be a permanent redisplay using grant money from The Wolfson Foundation. Modern new cases will replace those dating from the sixties and will give us a chance to show more of the fascinating fossils and other material currently in store.

As well as exploring the evidence for past geological periods and climates, there will be sections on the earthquake of 1884, the Great Tide of 1953 and the 'hurricane' of 1987.

The last part of the exhibition deals with present day climate change and how we can halt or slow it down, as well as predicting what might happen if we do nothing!

We will be taking our usual multi-sensory, interactive approach, but still leaving room for what museums do best: plenty of real specimens!

Colchester Castle Receives Sandford Award for Education

The Education team at Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service were delighted recently when Colchester Castle Museum was given a Sandford Award for Heritage Education 2008. The award was given to the museum in recognition of the quality education packages offered and delivered at the Castle.

In November Caroline Hammer, Senior Learning Officer and Lynette Burgess, Learning and Marketing Manager, attended the presentation ceremony at Hampton Court where the Duke of Buccleuch presented the

prestigious award.

Submissions for Sandford Awards are assessed by a panel of independent judges. The current panel of judges is drawn from professional educationalists including OFSTED Inspectors, former head teachers, education consultants and heritage property based education officers.

The judge's final report of the education services at Colchester Castle stated:

"In Colchester Castle Museum, the sessions offered take advantage of the best that the site has to offer and the result is a highly desirable service with many repeat visits and a full timetable. In the museum displays, local objects of national significance help to reinforce



Caroline Hammer with the Duke of Buccleuch and the Sandford Award

for the children that their local historic site and museum have real national significance. The service to schools supports and enhances work done in school. The activities support classroom learning and they successfully achieve the aim of providing an approach which could not be used in the classroom. ”



Poet Martin Newell pictured at the Open Evening of 17 in Print at Colchester Castle.

17 In Print Exhibition Opens

On Saturday 29th November a brand new exhibition opened at Colchester Castle Museum. 17 in Print proudly showcases prints from 17 different artists associated with the eastern region. Spanning more than 80 years the prints cover a rich diversity of themes and include etchings, engravings, wood cuts and lino cuts.

The 17 artists celebrated in the exhibition have all been drawn to the beauty of the eastern region and the exhibition includes prints by the world famous Eduardo Paolozzi who was a visiting lecturer at Colchester Art School. Additionally the exhibition includes pieces by Barry Woodcock, who trained at Ipswich Art School, Blair Hughes Stanton, illustrator for D H Lawrence, and Valerie Thornton whose work includes an engraving of the Roman pots in Colchester Castle.

This unique collection of prints has been gathered over the past 12 years by the Museum Service and looks at a rich diversity of themes including landscapes, maritime, nature and animals, storytelling and mythology and the

abstract. Many of the works have never been seen in public in the museums before, so don't miss out on this beautiful celebration of regional art which can be enjoyed free as part of the Colchester Castle experience.

Empire of Care – New Exhibition in Hollytrees Museum, Colchester until March 1st 2009

The National Health Service celebrates its 60th Anniversary this year and Hollytrees Museum will be hosting an exhibition about the lives and stories of the nurses who came to Colchester to work for the NHS, recruited from other countries throughout the Commonwealth Empire.

Following the Second World War there was a huge shortage of medical staff in the UK and the NHS began actively recruiting from Europe, Africa, West Indies, Malaysia and China. Colchester's hospitals became a centre for new nurses from overseas with some of them choosing to settle in Colchester and the surrounding area.

This fascinating exhibition displays objects, stories, photographs and press cuttings to bring the story of Colchester's overseas nurses to life. Insightful interviews capture the pioneering spirit of these trainee nurses; their journeys, experiences, the uniforms and the friends they met along the way.

This exhibition can be enjoyed free of charge in the beautiful surroundings of Hollytrees Museum.

For Valour

On 7th November Colchester Borough Council unveiled Blue Plaques to two soldiers from Colchester who were awarded the Victoria Cross. The museum service has marked this event with the small exhibition, For Valour, in Colchester Castle Museum.

The Victoria Cross is the most important of all British medals and decorations. It was

introduced by Queen Victoria in 1856 for exceptional bravery in battle.

The exhibition, which runs from 7th November 2008 to 8th February 2009 features the original Victoria Cross and other medals won by Colonel James Colvin. We only have a replica of the VC awarded to Colour Sergeant Edmund Fowler – you'll have to go to the Cameronians' Museum in Hamilton, Scotland to see the real thing!

Both soldiers served in the heyday of the British Empire when the army was called on to fight many campaigns, large and small, to maintain and expand the imperial realm.

Colour Sergeant Edmund Fowler was born in Ireland and joined the Perthshire Light Infantry, later merged with the Cameronians. He won his Victoria Cross, when still at the rank of Private, in 1879 during the Zulu War in South Africa. He and two others charged into a cave, under fire at point blank range, to clear it of Zulu defenders. This event was described by Sir Evelyn Wood, himself a VC winner, as the bravest action he had seen. Fowler retired from the army and moved to Colchester where he became landlord of the Cups Hotel Tap. When he died in 1926 he was buried with full military honours at Colchester Cemetery.

Colonel James Colvin was born in India where his father worked for the Bengal Civil Service. He joined the Royal Engineers and was awarded his VC for action in 1897 on the North West Frontier of what is now Pakistan. With echoes of the present day fighting against the Taliban, a British force which had been on a mission to destroy enemy positions was itself attacked. The soldiers were pinned down and, over the course of many hours into the night, Lieutenant Colvin led a series of counter-attacks to try and relieve their position before another British column arrived. Colvin married Katherine Way of Spaynes Hall, near Great Yeldham Essex in 1904 and, after serving

with the army in India, retired to Catchbells in Stanway where he died in 1945.

New Assistant Curator of Community History – Cat Newley

Despite previously never having been to Colchester, I'd heard lots about it, and particularly about the work that Colchester and Ipswich Museums were doing. I'm originally from the South West, but I've lived in Birmingham, Leicester and Cardiff, so I've done a fair bit of moving around! After spending some time volunteering in several museums in Bristol, I decided that museums were where I wanted to be and I went back to university last year to complete a Masters degree in Museum Studies. It was towards the end of this course that I saw the advert for an Assistant Curator here in Colchester. I applied and I was lucky enough to get the job. I've been here for 3 months now and I've found it really easy to settle in. The people are welcoming, the town and its buildings are beautiful, and it rains a lot less here! I'm finding the job very rewarding too. I enjoy getting to spend lots of time with the collections and talking to people about their memories. Right now, I'm working on developing a 'lending library' collection of museum handling objects for reminiscence work, which I hope will lead me to find out even more about Colchester and its residents.

MUSEUM EVENTS IN EARLY 2009 IN COLCHESTER

The Saxons and the Normans at Colchester Castle

Monday 16th – Friday 20th February

Take a step back in history and discover how the Saxons and the Normans changed Britain forever! In the battle of 1066 the Normans defeated the Saxons to become the rulers of Britain. In this fascinating and interactive event you can see some of the weapons that were used by each side as well as

hear more about the famous battle. Our costumed storytellers will take you through some wonderful stories in this event that is fun for all the family.

Performances at 11am, 12pm, 1pm, 2.30pm and 3.30pm. No need to book. Free after normal Castle admission charge

Make Your Own Dolls House at Hollytrees Museum, Colchester

Monday 16th – Friday 20th February

Discover what life was like in Hollytrees House in Victorian times by coming along and taking a peek inside the beautiful dolls house. What will you discover and what will inspire you? After you have had a look at the dolls house get your design skills flowing by making your very own dolls house out of cardboard. You won't be short of ideas with so many fantastic things to discover in Hollytrees Museum!

Booked sessions, 11am, 12pm, 1pm, 2.30pm and 3.30pm. Book in advance on 01206 282940 or call into Hollytrees Museum. Sorry, we are unable to take large group bookings.. £1.50 per person, suitable for ages 5 and over.

Print Demonstrations at Colchester Castle Saturday 21st February

Come along to Colchester Castle and enjoy print demonstrations with artist Ron Sims. Throughout the day you can enjoy seeing demonstrations of a variety of print methods including Dry-point at 11am, Etching at 12pm, Lino-cut at 2pm and Woodcut at 3pm. Whilst you are at the Castle why not enjoy the 17 in Print exhibition as part of your visit, which displays prints from 17 of the region's finest artists.

Sessions at 11am, 12pm, 2pm, 3pm. No need to book. Free after normal admission charge to Colchester Castle

Guided Tour of '17 in Print'

at Colchester Castle

**Saturday 28th February, Tuesday 7th April
and Thursday 9th April**

Meet Colchester and Ipswich Museum's Curator of Art in this insightful event and enjoy a guided tour of the 17 in Print exhibition. The Art Curator will talk about some of the prints in the exhibition and discuss how the museum service came to have the collection of prints over the last 12 years.

Tours at 11.30am and 2.30pm. Tour lasts approximately 45 minutes. Free tour after normal admission charge to the Castle.

Medieval Day at Colchester Castle Saturday 7th March

Take a journey back in time and discover Medieval Colchester in a fun day packed full of exciting events and activities. Meet costumed characters and learn more about Colchester Castle's secrets and how it was built. Why not try your hand at archery or find out about herbal remedies with the medieval Nun who will treat all kinds of wounds and illnesses. Discover more about the awful conditions of the Castle's prisons with the Gaoler and his wife at fun performances throughout the day and find out how the Castle was built with our Saxon builder. You can also make a medieval style catapult and test it out!

Costumed guided tours 11am, 12pm, 1pm, 2pm, 3pm. Archery 50p for 3 arrows 10am – 12.30pm & 1pm – 4pm. Gaoler and his wife performances 11.15am, 12.15pm, 1.15pm, 2.15pm, 3.15pm, 4.15pm. Saxon builder performances 10.45am, 11.45am, 12.45pm, 1.45pm, 2.45pm, 3.45pm. Make a catapult drop-in 10.30am – 12.30pm & 1.30pm – 4pm

No need to book. Free activities after normal Castle admission charge (excludes archery).

**Printing Workshop
at Colchester Castle
Saturday 14th March**

This one day course introduces an exciting printmaking technique that is ideal for anyone who enjoys art. Participants will work with perspex, aluminium or paper to produce plates that give the effect of etchings but are made quite quickly without using acid. Over the day, different ways of drawing into a plate will be experimented with, before moving on to inking up and printing techniques. Materials will be provided, including specialist papers and etching inks.

The session will be hosted by an experienced printmaker from Gainsborough's House Print Workshop in Sudbury. Participants are recommended to bring a favourite postcard or drawing with them, maximum size 210 x 15cm, and to be aware that etching ink can stain clothes.

10am-2pm (with a short break for lunch). Book your place by 31st January and pay only £22 (£25 thereafter) Payment must be made in advance. Only 10 places! Includes entry to the Castle, workshop, materials, tea/coffee and sandwich lunch. Only 10 places! Book in advance on 01206 282940 or call into Hollytrees Museum. Suitable for age 15 and above.

**A Spring Sunday
at Hollytrees Museum, Colchester
Sunday 22nd March**

Spring is in the air, so why not come along to Hollytrees Museum and celebrate? Children can get creative by painting their own design on a plate or bowl and there is plenty to see in Hollytrees Museum to offer inspiration! Children can also create a spring scene with tulips and daffodils and meet the Victorian maid by the Hollytrees dolls house to hear all about life at the time.

The whole family can enjoy the rare chance to see objects from the museum's stores

with a curator and if you celebrate Mother's Day come along and enjoy this special event.

Drop-in 1pm-4pm. Meet the maid 1.30pm and 3pm. £1.50 per person. No need to book. Sorry, we are unable to accommodate large groups

**Making an Impression
at Colchester Castle**

Monday 6th – Thursday 9th April

Get your creative skills flowing and don't miss your chance to take up these one and a half hour sessions which introduce printmaking. Working on perspex plates, textures and colour will be used to make lively monoprints. All materials for the sessions are provided, including specialist papers and ink. The sessions are hosted by an experienced printmaker from Gainsborough's House Print Workshop in Sudbury, so come along, get creative and have a great souvenir to take home.

Booked sessions 11am – 12.30pm and 1.30pm – 3pm. Only 10 places per session. £3 per person, after normal Castle admission charge, includes workshop and materials. Book in advance on 01206 282940 or call into Hollytrees Museum. Sorry, we cannot accept large group bookings. Aprons will be available as ink can stain clothing.

**Victorian Toys
at Hollytrees Museum, Colchester
Tuesday 14th – Friday 17th April**

Come along to Hollytrees Museum this Easter and find out how Victorian children amused themselves by exploring a range of fabulous toys. Throughout the week you can explore different toys each day and even have the chance to make your own to take home.

On Tuesday you can discover moving pictures with zoetropes and flick books and choose your favourite to make. Wednesday will offer you the chance to look at moving toys with a Jacobs ladder and acrobats, with the choice to make one of your own. Try out your

skills on Thursday with a cup and ball and yo-yos and then make your own, and on Friday enjoy spinning tops and thaumotopes with the chance to make one of your own.

Booked sessions at 11am, 12pm, 1pm, 2.30pm and 3.30pm each day. £1.50 per person per session. Book in advance by phoning 01206 282940 or by calling into Hollytrees Museum. Sorry, we are unable to accept large group bookings. Free entry to Hollytrees Museum.

A Medieval Feast at Colchester Castle

Tuesday 14th – Saturday 18th April

A medieval feast is being prepared in the

Castle, and you can come and see what sort of food would have been eaten here 400 years ago. Anyone fancy some healthy cabbage soup, or how about hedgehog with almonds?

Visitors can talk to the chefs and learn about food in the past, while also smelling and seeing the delights on the table.

Display will run 10am – 4pm each day. Free after normal admission to the Castle.

Note: The food is for display only, and cannot be touched or tasted.

SHARON CARTER
Assistant Marketing Officer
01206 282938
sharon.carter@colchester.gov.uk

University of Essex History Centre New 10-week Evening Courses 2009

Seaside Towns in 19th Century

North-East Essex

by ANDREW SENTER

begins Tuesday 13th January.

Infancy & Childhood in 19th Century

Colchester & Essex

by PAUL GLENISTER

begins Wednesday 14th January.

Witchcraft and the Persecution of

'Witches' in Essex

by ALISON ROWLAND

begins Tuesday 21st April.

Colchester Recalled

Colchester's Oral History Group, continues its monthly meetings in 2009 on Thursday 15th January in the Board Room at the Colchester Institute, Sheepen Road, at 7pm, when CHRIS MILLER'S talk is entitled *Breeding Suffolk Punches*.

The title on Thursday 12th February is *Experiencing the First Day of the Blitz* and is to

East Anglian Waterways:

River and Coastal Trade in North Essex and South Suffolk

by SEAN O'DELL,

begins Wednesday 22nd April.

To Book, or for more details,
contact: Lisa West,
History Department
Telephone: 01206 873333.

be given by Ken Hall.

The monthly meetings continue until 18th June, with talks about such varied subjects as *Anaesthetics in Colchester*, *The Story of BX Plastics* and *Fordham Recalled*.

If you would like to join this most fascinating group, just turn up. You will be made most welcome.

The Friends' Lecture Series 2009

THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY LECTURES

All at Lion Walk Church at 7.30pm

Tuesday 14th April

ANDREW PHILLIPS

Colchester Before Recorded History

Tuesday 28 April

PHILIP CRUMMY

*Postmen, Preachers, Soldiers and Teachers:
300 years of Roman Colchester*

Tuesday 12 May

PETER BERRIDGE/PHILIP WISE

*A Town Well Known To All Men:
Late Saxon and Norman Colchester*

Tuesday 26 May

LEIGH ALSTON

*The Cloth Trade in Colchester
and East Anglia*

Tuesday 9 June

JOHN ASHDOWN HILL

Lost Churches of Medieval Colchester

Tuesday 23 June

Annual General Meeting at 7pm followed by

PATRICK DENNEY

Starvation or Surrender: The Siege of Colchester

Tuesday 8 September

JESS JEPHCOTT

The Inns, Taverns and Pubs of Colchester

Tuesday 22 September

JERRY BOWDREY

*Climate of Change? Species New to Britain
in the Last 60 Years*

Tuesday 6 October

PATRICK DENNEY

The Great Colchester Pageant and Buffalo Bill

Tuesday 20 October

ANDREW PHILLIPS

Colchester at War (1914/1945)

Tuesday 3 November

COLCHESTER FILM MAKERS CLUB

Remembering Colchester on Film (part two)

Tuesday 17 November

SHANI D' CRUZE

Colchester in the 18th Century

Admission prices per lecture:

Members £1 - Non Members £2.

For details contact:

Patrick Denney on 01206 796822

The Mayor of Colchester's Lecture Series 2009

"Our Town: Its History, Development and Future".

Thursday 5 February

PATRICK DENNEY

2000 Years of History

Thursday 19 February

MARK BIELECKI

The Military Side of Colchester

Thursday 5 March

ANDREW PHILLIPS

A Manufacturing – and Trading – Town

Thursday 19 March

IAN MCMEEKAN

A Godly City

Talks start at 7.30pm in the Mayoral Suite at the Town Hall, High Street. Admission £5 each to include a glass of wine and nibbles.

Tickets obtainable from the Mayoral Officer, at the Town Hall. Tel: 01206 282206.