



**The Friends of
Colchester Museums**

Registered Charity No. 310669

Newsletter - January 2014

The Friends of Colchester Museums

OFFICERS as elected at the Annual General Meeting 2013

- President* His Worship the Mayor, COUNCILLOR CHRISTOPHER ARNOLD
- Vice Presidents* MRS JEAN BAKER PATRICK DENNEY
MRS BARBARA NAPPER ANDREW PHILLIPS
PETER BERRIDGE PAUL SPENDLOVE
MARK DAVIES
- Honorary Member* MRS R J BRISTOW
- Honorary Treasurer* PETER EVANS
5 Grimston Road Colchester CO2 7RN
Telephone 01206 540990 Email: peter.evans7978@btinternet.com
- Honorary Secretary* JANET FULFORD
301 Mile End Road Colchester CO4 5EA
Telephone 01206 851593 Email: jif301@btinternet.com
- Membership Secretary* PATRICK DENNEY
247 Old Heath Road Colchester CO3 8BN
Telephone 01206 796822 Email: patrick.denney@sky.com
- Newsletter Editor* PETER CONSTABLE
12 Claremont Heights, Essex Hall Road, Colchester CO1 1UZ
Telephone 01206 517788 Email: design.constables@btinternet.com
- Committee* MARK DAVIES (*Chairman*)
MRS AVRIL LANKESTER CHRIS HALL
MRS JEAN BLOWERS ANDREW MILLAR
MRS JENNY JONES ANDREW PHILLIPS
HARRY CARLO DAVID WALTON
- Ex Officio* BILL SEAMAN (*General Manager, Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service*)
TOM HODGSON (*Colchester Development Manager*)
PHILIP WISE (*Collections and Curatorial Manager*)
- Honorary Auditor* ROY ANDERSON
- Museum Office* Museum Resource Centre
14 Ryegate Road Colchester CO1 1YG
Telephone 01206 282931/2 www.cims.org.uk

Newsletter 2014

SUBSCRIPTIONS

YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD FOR 2014 IS ENCLOSED. PLEASE SEND PAYMENT NOW.

Subscriptions for 2014 are £7.50 for a single member, £12 for a couple and £18 for a family of 2 adults and 2 children. Please note that a remittance form to attach to your payment is enclosed with this Newsletter. It would greatly assist our Treasurer if members could send their payment promptly as this will lighten his workload considerably.

If you would like to begin paying your subscription by Standing Order (which also helps to reduce administration activities), please complete the enclosed Standing Order Form. Please send all payments, and any arrears, to the Treasurer, Peter Evans, at his address shown opposite.

If you no longer wish to remain a Friend of Colchester Museums, please return your Membership Card to the Treasurer.

Please note that all cheques should be made payable to **'The Friends of Colchester Museums'** both for subscriptions and fees for trips. Please do not make cheques payable to me or any other committee members.

P. S. If you have set up a Standing Order please ask the bank to quote your name on the credit. I cannot identify the payment without it. Many thanks.

PETER EVANS *Hon Treasurer*

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

During the past few months we have enjoyed another series of interesting lectures at which a consistently high level of attendance has been recorded. Our Open Evening at the Minorities in late September was attended by around 100 people and for this our thanks go to the Colchester School of Art and the Friends of the Minorities who arranged it. Many

members said how much they appreciated the opportunity to develop relations with these other local cultural bodies as well as being able to take advantage of the arts facilities and interests that they support.

On behalf of Colchester Museums, the Friends' Committee has been pleased to purchase an unusual Roman gold mount found locally. It resembles an amphora wine-jar with a garnet gem setting and may well have adorned a highly distinctive finger-ring (see description on page 8).

Careful thought has been given to the most appropriate way of marking the Friends' contribution of £30,000 to the Castle Redevelopment Project. The preferred option is for it to be associated with the new display case and exhibit of Roman glass. This, being one of the most outstanding collections of its kind in Britain, will serve not just to record the Friends' involvement in the project. It will also stand as a constant reminder of our support group's role in helping to preserve and interpret Colchester's heritage for the beneficial enjoyment of all.

As members will be aware, the Joint Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service has suffered a major loss of financial support as a result of the withdrawal of national Renaissance funding. Restructuring has had to be implemented and maintaining the necessarily high quality of input for major projects such as the Castle Redevelopment has been far from easy for the museum staff. I would like to record here our appreciation of all the work that they are doing on behalf of Colchester's residents and supporters.

The financial pressures on our museums continue unabated with further savings having to be made with effect from April 2014 when the Castle Museum reopens. It is to be expected that visitor figures will increase, at

least in the short term, but we have been advised to be prepared for a change in the long standing concession of free entry for the Friends. Exact details remain to be determined and will be set within Colchester Borough Council's wider plan for increased income generation. However, we trust that the Friends will be able to maintain support for Colchester's Museums at least at the level we have previously been accustomed to, so members' continued support is vital.

One specific way that we have been asked to help is in the arrangement of the occasional lecture series, known as 'Tea and Talks.' As from November 2014, the Friends will be equal partners with the Museum in running these Saturday afternoon talks at the Castle and also sharing the profits. It would be much appreciated if a few volunteers could help our committee members in this. If you can spare an occasional Saturday afternoon, please contact Peter Constable (details on inside front cover).

By presenting ourselves successfully to a wider public through these talks, the increased income should help us to give Colchester Museums that little bit more support in time of need.

MARK DAVIES *Chairman*

TREASURER'S TOPICS

You will see that we always enclose your membership card with the January newsletter. Unless you pay by standing order, you will not have paid by then but we trust members to pay their fees as soon as possible when the newsletter arrives. If we were to wait until the subscription was received, it would be a big administrative job as you will see we have over 700 memberships to deal with and it would entail extra postage.

We have now made two payments to the Colchester Museums Service towards the cost of the refurbishment of the Castle, totalling £20,000. We will make the final contribution

in June 2014, to bring the total to the agreed amount of £30,000.

If, like me, you like going to Museums and other interesting buildings, you might think of Great Yarmouth, which has an excellent Museum about the life and homes of the fishing community called 'Time and Tide'. Both English Heritage and the National Trust have properties there, and there is a town wall, as well as the pier. Yarmouth itself has suffered like a number of seaside towns but it can be worth checking what else is there behind the obvious.

PETER EVANS *Hon Treasurer*

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

I am pleased to report that membership of the Friends now stands at a total of 740 across all the categories. The breakdown is as follows - Single 336, Couples 244, Family 151 and 9 others. The slight reduction in membership is almost certainly due to the present closure of the Castle, but hopefully this will be recovered when the Castle re-opens in 2014.

I would like to thank all members for their continued support.

PATRICK DENNEY *Hon Membership Secretary*

OUR LECTURES AND OUTINGS 2014

This year we are visiting a major stately home, Syon House in Middlesex, owned by the Duke of Northumberland. There are extensive gardens and a conservatory, whilst the house will be opened just for us.

Closer to home, we will visit another big house, near Chelmsford. We have been able to retain prices at the same level as last year.

Our talks cover a variety of subjects. As 2014 marks 100 years from the start of World War 1, our first and last talks reflect this. Godfrey Thomas will deal with local matters, while Taff Gillingham will draw on his vast knowledge of military matters. He has been advisor to 'Downton Abbey' and 'War Horse',

amongst others, and has recreated a First World War trench at Ipswich. For more information see <http://www.khakidevil.com>

As 2013 celebrated 50 years of Colchester Zoo, we will hear about the problems, successes and those giraffes. We will also hear about life at Layer Marney Towers, (Colchester's own stately home), local earthquakes and the adventures of Colchester sailors. As we heard about music in 18th century Colchester, it seems right to hear about more recent music. There will also be evenings devoted to Norman Colchester and the Dutch quarter, whilst Peter Berridge will update us on recent discoveries about the Castle and his new book.

Some of our speakers are members - our chairman Mark Davies will tell us about Colchester's oldest historic record and Patrick Denney about the problems of being a pauper.

OUR OUTINGS 2014

Tuesday 24th June

Evening Trip to Hylands Park, Chelmsford. Price £19 per person.

We depart from Sheepen Road car park by 6.05pm.

The cost includes travel, a guided tour of both the house and gardens and refreshments (tea/coffee and biscuits).

Hylands House is Grade II listed, built in 1730 situated in Hylands Park. Our tour of the house will be led by a Tour Guide who will explain the fascinating and interesting history of the house, its owners and restoration. The Head Gardener will give us an informative insight into the gardens at Hylands and will then take us on a tour of the Pleasure Gardens.

This is an opportunity to see how the house has been rescued from neglect and being restored to life.

We depart from Hylands House at 9.30pm for our return to Colchester.

Please complete the booking form and return, with your payment, to Peter Evans,

5 Grimston Road, Colchester CO2 7RN.

Tuesday 8th July

Day Excursion to Syon House and Park, Middlesex. Price £29 per person.

Pick up is at 9.00am by the old Odeon cinema in Crouch Street.

Syon House, still owned by the Duke of Northumberland, is ranked by Simon Jenkins in *England's Best Thousand Houses* as one of only twenty buildings awarded five stars. In the 1760s Robert Adam was instructed to retain the castellated exterior, which thus serves as a disguise for his splendid interior, ranked as one of Adam's finest creations. The front door opens directly onto the spectacular and breathtaking Great Hall, the Georgian ideal of a Roman senate house, and is furnished with copies of *The Dying Gaul* and the *Belvedere Apollo*.

The house has been used as a location for many TV series and films, including 'Poirot' and 'Gosford Park'.

The park was landscaped by Capability Brown and now includes 40 acres of gardens. Within these is the spectacular Great Conservatory, designed by Charles Fowler in the 1820s.

The House is normally closed on Tuesdays. However, special arrangements have been made to admit our party, so this promises to be a very special experience.

Please complete the booking form and return, with your payment, to Peter Evans, 5 Grimston Road, Colchester CO2 7RN.

Exhibition - Masterpieces: the Art of East Anglia, Sainsbury Centre, Norwich

We are invited to join the Colchester Civic Society on their trip on 15th February 2014 to see this exhibition of 270 works of art covering 1000 years. Pick ups are 9.40am at Tollgate and 10.00am at Greyfriars, High Street - other pick ups may be available. The cost is £24 per person and cheques (payable to

Colchester Civic Society) should be sent to Peter Evans - details on inside front cover. Tours must be prebooked if required for an extra £3 per head."

Colchester Recalled are also organising an outing and offering places to us.

When the details become available they will be featured in our Spring mailing or advised at our Lectures that begin in April.

Museum News

LATEST NEWS FROM THE CASTLE

The last few months have seen the Castle full of builders, and dust.

The roof has been insulated and the lanterns, which were a source of leaks, removed. We have retained the central light well and glazed its north side to allow more natural light into the Castle. However, roller shutters are to be fitted over these windows so that we have full control over the amount of light admitted.

In the last month all the other works to heating, electrics, floors, lift and toilets have advanced dramatically with visible changes daily. We were hoping that the building works by Hutton Construction and their sub-contractors would have been completed in September, so I am relieved that Beck Interiors, the main fit out contractors, will be on site from 18 November. Although, this is a nine week delay we are still on course for re-opening as planned in Spring 2014.

The scaffolding that you will have seen around the Castle has been for a separate project by Bakers of Danbury who have been cleaning and consolidating the external walls. The lengthy hot and dry spell we had earlier this year slowed up their work because the lime mortar could only be mixed in small quantities. As a result the south east corner of the Castle will have to be finished next summer.



Colchester Vase, 4th November

Vast amounts of e-mails have flown back and forth between the museum team and Redman Design finalising details of showcases, graphics and many more display items. This game of electronic ping-pong will continue to Christmas. The details of interactives and audio-visuals planned for the museum are currently being developed in liaison with the respective contractors Sirius and Spiral. All the clothing for Iron Age, Roman, Norman and Civil War dressing-up interactives has been finalised with Sirius and is now in production. The methodology of a number of the interactives was refined following a testing session with the project user forums, Portal access advisory panel and staff on 25 September.

Shirley Andersson started as Project Display Assistant on 31 July 2013. Her main tasks so far have been confirming the object lists and layouts for each showcase. She is now co-ordinating the writing of object labels and will then be a key member of the museum team installing objects from late January 2014.

The contract for light projections on the internal spine wall was advertised in September and The Projection Studio, who created the light shows on Buckingham Palace for the Diamond Jubilee and on the Houses of



Laser scanning the Colchester Vase, 4th November



East Gallery, building works completed, 14th November

Parliament for the 2012 Olympics, have been appointed. They will be creating three short films highlighting the Castle and its history that will play at regular intervals throughout the day.

Following the last Heritage Lottery Fund Review meeting on 18 September, approval was given for the appointment of a consultant to deliver the detailed interpretation required for the Castle elements of the display. Given the many years he has spent researching the Castle, the obvious choice has been our former Manager, Peter Berridge. He is currently advising on the creation of a large model of the Castle as it would have appeared when Henry II visited in 1157 and on the modelling of the Castle by Virtual Past for a computer generated film showing the development of the Castle from the Norman period to the present day, based on the latest thinking. This digital data will also be used to create a 360 degree panorama of the Great Hall of the Norman Castle which will form part of a digital app that will allow visitors to view this missing feature of the Castle in its exact context on the first floor. I was fortunate enough to attend a meeting of the EU Norman Connections project partners in Normandy in May where I used this technology to recreate missing features at Falaise Castle and Jumieges Abbey and relate them to the surviving fabric. The ICT cabling for a wifi network in the Castle that will support this digital development is close to completion.

The team of conservation volunteers, led by Ben Corcoran, have now almost completed the conservation of 2,000 objects for the new displays. The conservation work has been featured in exhibitions at Hollytrees and the Minorities. We are pleased to be working with the Colchester Film Makers Club who are making a film record of the project that was also feature of the exhibition at the Minorities.

The first display for the People's Choice

showcase will be developed from outreach work carried out through the museum's Unlocked project which is being funded by the Arts Council. Further outreach is currently being undertaken by Juliana Vandegrift whom we have appointed to carry out an oral history project looking at the lives of people with current and past connections to Colchester Garrison. The resulting filmed interviews will provide a modern reflection on the military presence in Colchester as a counterpoint to the Roman precedent almost 2,000 years ago.

The wider heritage panel at the Balkerne Gate was installed in August. A panel has been put in place for the Jumbo water tower and whilst not funded by this project it has been produced within the same guidelines, so is in keeping with the look and feel of the project panels. Initial work on a wider heritage app to link the sites together for mobile devices has been started and a brief has gone out to tender.

Regular electronic and hard mailings to schools and Teacher Advisory Panel (TAP) meetings have kept schools directly involved in the Castle project. The TAP meetings have provided an opportunity to test ideas with teachers and ensure programmes are tailored to schools requirements. Romans on the Road sessions have been offered throughout the closure period, taking new learning programmes into schools across the region. Sessions have been delivered to 29 classes between January and July 2013. Heritage Open Days in September were used as an opportunity to highlight the Castle project. Throughout the summer the museum service held outreach events at libraries throughout the county, tied in with Essex Libraries' own Summer Reading Challenge. As well as taking objects and activities to the sessions, this was also an opportunity to pilot new interactives being considered for the Castle.

*Tom Hodgson and Caroline Hammer
November 2013*



Ground floor, 14th November



Lift and new balustrade, 14th November

**RECENT ACQUISITION:
Roman gold mount from the
Wormingford/Bures area**

The recent purchase by the Museum Service of this 2011 Treasure case, a fragment of Roman gold jewellery, was fully funded by The Friends of Colchester Museums. The fragment is probably the bezel, or central part of a finger ring, and consists of a tiny gem-set gold mount in the form of a miniature amphora. The circular neck, flanked by looped handles of filigree wire, has an open mouth, probably originally set with a tiny gem. The vessel's body is in the form of a box with high sides, flat back and a pointed base. It is set with a tear-shaped, polished garnet. There is considerable evidence of scarring on the surface of the mount which suggests that it was once part of a larger object. The mount measures 11.9mm or 0.5in (approx), in height and weighs 0.92g or 0.03oz. Analysis of the metal composition conducted at the British Museum indicated a gold content of 95-97%



and silver content of 2-4%. The mount is broadly dated to the 1st to 4th centuries AD and it has not been possible to be more precise. It is very similar to the gem-set bezel of a gold finger-ring found in the River Thames at London which is in the collections of the British Museum.

The mount is an important addition to Colchester's internationally important Roman collection.

PHILIP WISE *Collections and Curatorial Manager*

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 2014

Saturday 13th/Sunday 14th September

This is the weekend when Colchester's interesting but usually inaccessible buildings are open to the public. If you feel that you can help by manning a building for a session (normally about 3 hours), please contact Ann Turner on 01206 250894 for details. Open Days take place throughout the country, for example, Ipswich and Norwich have buildings open for 4 days rather than the usual 2.

PETER EVANS

Local History Courses at the University of Essex

**Meeting Your Ancestors (Part 1):
Basic Sources for Family History**

MODULE CODE: HR180

TUTOR: PATRICK DENNEY

7-9pm, starting Monday 13th January 2014.

This module covers all the basics of family history research and allows students to examine a variety of key primary sources. Students will learn how to locate and interpret these sources, and how to use them in a family history study.

This module can be taken on its own or students may build on what they have learned by taking Meeting Your Ancestors Parts 2 and 3.

The module includes:

1. Introduction/Visit to Essex University Library
2. Census Returns.
3. Parish Registers
4. Civil Registration.
5. Oral History.
6. Wills and Probate Records.
7. Maps and Town Plans.
8. Tithe and Land Tax Records.
9. Photographs and Postcards.
10. Visit to Colchester Local Studies Library.

This is an accredited course covering all the basics of Family History research. For further information contact Lisa Willis on 01206 872190.

Colchester Recalled 2014

Thursday 16th January 2014

PETER JONES:

The Rise and Fall of Colchester's Trams

Peter is an expert on our trams and will show many original photos

Thursday 13th February

PAUL RUSIECKI:

*Colchester and Essex People
and The First World War*

Paul is author of a major book on this topic, as we approach the centenary of its outbreak

Thursday 13th March

An Evening With Crissy Lee

One of the area's most exciting residents, Crissy is a female drummer who worked with the Beatles and has had a long, colourful and successful career in the music industry. She will be interviewed by 'Michael Parkinson' a.k.a. Neil Darcy Jones,

Arts Editor of the 'Colchester Gazette'

DO NOT MISS THIS!

Further details are available from ANDREW PHILLIPS, telephone 01206 546775

Thursday 17th April

MARCIA WHITING:

Sir Alfred Munnings: His Life and House

One of the area's most exciting past residents told as never before by the Alfred Munning's Museum guide. A fascinating story, sumptuously illustrated

Thursday 15th May

MEMBERS' EVENING

Another trio of our members tell a 20 minute tale of their life and times

Thursday 12th June

A.G.M. and THE BOXTED AERODROME STORY.

Used by the US air force in World War II, its impact on the local area is told by the Museum's chairman, Richard Turner.

We'll play tapes we made of some of the 'Yanks' attending their final reunion in 1992

All in the Board Room,
Colchester Institute, Sheepen Road at 7pm.
Admission £1 including refreshments



Welcomes all members of The Friends with a 10% discount on all purchases* in the Cafe Bar, including breakfast, the á la carte menu and Chef's Daily Specials in the Restaurant - simply produce your Membership Card.

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

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



The Friends' New Lecture Series for 2014

APRIL

- 8th** REMEMBRANCE AND
THE GREAT WAR
A very British view
Taff Gillingham
- 22nd** A SAILOR'S LIFE IS A MERRY ONE
Life at sea for Colchester's Trafalgar men
Philip Lyons

MAY

- 6th** THE GREAT ESSEX EARTHQUAKE
Peter Jones
- 20th** NORMAN CONNECTIONS
Colchester Castle in its wider setting
Philip Wise

JUNE

- 3rd** THE HISTORY OF
COLCHESTER ZOO
The first 50 years
Rebecca Parry
- 17th** AGM (at 7pm) followed by
THE MUSIC SCENE IN COLCHESTER
OVER THE LAST 30 YEARS
Nigel Hildreth MBE

SEPTEMBER

- 2nd** THE REAL OLIVER TWIST
*The harsh reality of life
as a parish pauper*
Patrick Denney

SEPTEMBER

- 16th** GROWING UP IN THE DUTCH
QUARTER
Roy Waters
- 30th** NEW DISCOVERIES, NEW IDEAS
AND SOME SURPRISES!
The history of Colchester Castle
Peter Berridge

OCTOBER

- 14th** LAYER MARNEY TOWER –
Past and Present
Nicholas Charrington
- 28th** COLCHESTER AND ITS EARLIEST
HISTORIC RECORD
Mark Davies

NOVEMBER

- 11th** COLCHESTER'S LINKS WITH WAR
Godfrey Thomas

All at Lion Walk Church at 7.30pm

Admission per lecture:
Members £1. Non members £2.
Further details from: David Walton
Friends of Colchester Museums,
14 Ryegate Road,
Colchester CO1 1YG or
Email: waltodav@gmail.com
Telephone: 07796 592296.