



**The Friends of
Colchester Museums**

Registered Charity No. 310669

Newsletter - January 2015

The Friends of Colchester Museums

OFFICERS as elected at the Annual General Meeting 2014

- President* His Worship the Mayor, COUNCILLOR JOHN ELLIOT
- Vice Presidents* MRS JEAN BAKER PATRICK DENNEY
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MRS JENNY JONES ANDREW MILLAR
MRS AVRIL LANKESTER ANDREW PHILLIPS
HARRY CARLO DAVID WALTON
CHRIS HALL
- Ex Officio* BILL SEAMAN (*General Manager, Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service*)
TOM HODGSON (*Colchester Development Manager*)
PHILIP WISE (*Collections and Curatorial Manager*)
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Newsletter January 2015

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Friends of Colchester Museums who regularly attend our fortnightly lectures will know how popular they have been in 2014. In fact, the average attendance for the twelve talks has been as high as 133, which is probably a record. The programme for 2015 is now published herein and the Committee has decided to offer members a season ticket at a slightly reduced rate, which should help speed up entry at the door, as well as providing a modest saving.

In addition to our well attended Open Evening at the Castle Museum last June, many Friends have visited on their own account as a benefit of membership. Despite the great success of the refurbished Castle and its new displays, though, with visitor figures exceeding expectations, our Museum Service remains under considerable financial constraint. Another structural review is currently in progress.

As is now well known, Colchester Borough Council has put greater emphasis on the need to generate revenue income, in which context the Friends' admission to the Castle has been identified for consideration. I am pleased to be able to report that as a result of further discussions the Portfolio-holder, Cllr. Tim Young, has agreed to a solution which will enable the Friends to continue visiting the Castle Museum as often as they wish without having to make any extra payment. This will be achieved by the society making an agreed annual contribution per member (currently £4.75), which 'in toto' will effectively purchase annual group entry for members at a special concessionary rate. The amount payable per member will be reviewed annually at the end of October.

This solution will guarantee CBC a substantial revenue contribution which could not be achieved in any other way: there is the

added advantage that VAT will not be payable. In choosing it the Council has indicated how it prefers the Friends to give their financial support to the Museum Service under current circumstances. There is, of course, the possible implication that the total amount of income available for acquisitions and new projects will be proportionately reduced, although the Friends still retain flexibility in how they wish to raise funds to support Colchester's museums.

The Committee is currently looking at potential new activities for our members and if you feel that you can help, particularly with social activities, I would be very pleased to hear from you.

MARK DAVIES *Chairman*

TREASURER'S TOPICS

As you know, the Annual Subscriptions were increased as follows at the Annual General Meeting in June 2014 -
Single membership £10.00 (*previously £7.50*)
Couple membership £15.00 (*£12.00*)
Family membership £21.00 (*£18.00*).

If you pay through a bank, you will have a Standing Order. A form to revise the amount of your Standing Order was enclosed with the Newsletter and Annual Report in August, so that should have been completed and forwarded to your bank in time for the January payment. We will not know the amounts paid into The Friends bank account until the statement is issued by the bank at the end of January, so if you are not sure if you have amended the amount of your payment, you will need to contact your bank.

When speaking to your bank, please be sure to say that you are asking about a Standing Order and **not** a direct debit. Direct debits are automated and organisations like ours cannot operate them. If you have any problems, please let me know.

If you want to make payments through your bank in future, please use the form enclosed.

Your annual Membership Card is also enclosed - please forward payment of your subscription to me.

As well as increasing Annual Subscriptions, we are also increasing the admission for the Lectures from £1 to £2 for members and from £2 to £4 for non-members. The rent at Lion Walk has been increased but had been at a very low rate for many years and admission seems to have last been increased in 1999. The new fee is low in comparison with other groups.

However, we are introducing a season ticket scheme, which means that you can save money if you are intending to attend most of the lectures. Please send £20 for a ticket giving admission to all 12 lectures and please enclose a stamped addressed envelope. Many thanks.

PETER EVANS *Hon Treasurer*

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Our numbers are slightly down on last year, with a total of 726 across all classifications as against 740. The breakdown as at November 2014 is as follows, with 2013 figures in italics -

Single	343	<i>336</i>
Couple	242	<i>244</i>
Family	127	<i>151</i>
Honorary	12	<i>7</i>
Life	2	<i>2</i>

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

PATRICK DENNEY *Hon Membership Secretary*

OUR LECTURES 2015

We have had very good attendances at our talks in 2014 and hope that members will enjoy those planned for 2015.

The first talk will be given by Andrew Phillips, on local men of the law and we are also welcoming back several other popular

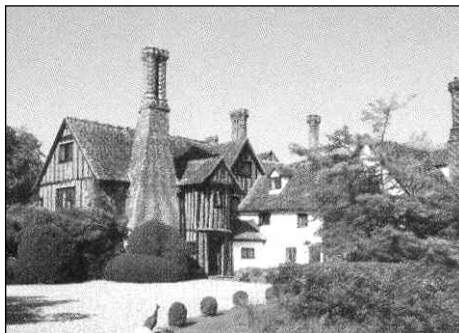
speakers. Jess Jephcott will be showing us some more local postcards. 2015 will be the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo, so we will be hearing from Will Tyler about Essex during the Napoleonic Wars. On the lighter side, John Enfield will tell us about the Colchester Operatic Society and there will be talks on other local institutions - the Colchester Royal Grammar School and the Colchester Oyster Fisheries. There will also be a special talk about local families with Huguenot connections, so a truly wide range of subjects will be covered.

OUR OUTINGS 2015

Tuesday 23rd June 2015

Evening trip to Otley Hall, Ipswich

£22 per person



We depart from Wyevale Garden Centre, Stanway, by 5.30pm with a further pick up near the old Odeon Cinema, Crouch Street, Colchester at 5.40pm.

The cost includes travel, a guided tour of the Hall, refreshments (tea/coffee and biscuits) and a tip for the driver.

Otley Hall is Grade 1 listed and privately owned by Dr Ian and Revd Catherine Beaumont. It retains a wealth of medieval architectural features and is rich in history. It is considered by experts to be one of the most interesting 15th and 16th century houses in Suffolk - an immaculate Tudor house. Our tour guide will tell us its history. There maybe a

little time to have a quick look at the gardens.

We depart Otley Hall at approximately 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

Note: We have obtained permission to park at Wyevale Garden Centre for those joining at this point.

AVRIL LANKESTER

Tuesday 7th July 2015
Trip to Bletchley Park
£32 per person



Leaving Wyevale Garden Centre at 8.45am - permission has been obtained for those joining here to park at the Garden Centre. Second pick up in Crouch Street at 9am. Return to Colchester by 7pm.

Bletchley Park is a world-class heritage site telling the incredible story of the World War II Code Breakers and how their dedication and ingenuity helped shorten the war by two years. You can visit the Code Breaking Huts and follow the intelligence production line approach to code breaking and see a range of galleries and displays about wartime Bletchley Park, including the Enigma collection, the Lorenz Gallery, Hitler's 'unbreakable' cipher machine and the fully operational 'Bombe Rebuild' which was an electro-mechanical machine that helped break coded messages from Y stations.

There is a gift shop and coffee shop and a range of hot and cold food can be had in Hut 4 (formerly WWII Naval Intelligence Code-breaking Hut). Multimedia guides are available and there will be an opportunity to join one of the hour long outdoor walking guided tours available on the day, at no extra cost. A discounted pre-booked Guidebook is available. Please add £3.50 to your trip price to reserve a copy.

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

JENNY JONES

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.

The Colchester Civic Society will also invite us to some of their trips, including one to another Museum in October.

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 2015
Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th 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 four days rather than the usual two.

PETER EVANS

The AGM of the Friends of Colchester Roman Wall is on Thursday 5th March 2015 at 7.30 pm in the Town Hall, followed by a talk *Recent Excavations in Colchester* (including Williams and Griffin) by Adam Wightman of Colchester Archaeological Trust.

Museum News

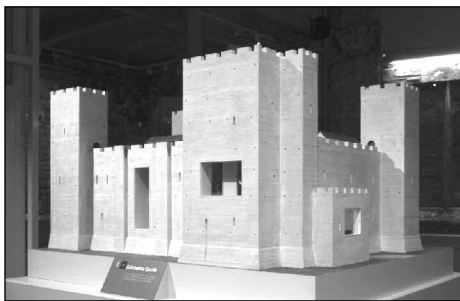
COLCHESTER CASTLE

By the time you are reading this article, the Castle redevelopment project will be officially finished and the Heritage Lottery Fund will have received the final project report as a Christmas present (the report will be too big to put inside a cracker). As well as the HLF, The Friends and Colchester Borough Council, the £4.2m redevelopment has also been financially supported by the European Regional Development Fund, the Arts Council, Essex Heritage Trust and the Friends of Colchester's Roman Wall.

After six months of being open again we have welcomed 71,000 visitors to the Castle of whom nine and a half thousand have been schoolchildren. 3,000 people visited on our Heritage Open Day in September and we are expecting a similar number for Christmas at the Castle on 10th December. We are certainly on course to exceed our target of 100,000 visitors by the end of March.

There has been an overwhelmingly positive response to the new displays, the increased use of digital interpretation and the light projection on the main internal wall. Many people have also commented on the fact that they can now see more of the Castle structure itself which is very gratifying as that has been one of the main intentions of the new design.

In September the much-awaited model of the Castle was delivered. It now stands in the centre of the ground floor. The model shows



The Castle model, made in Hebden Bridge, Yorkshire

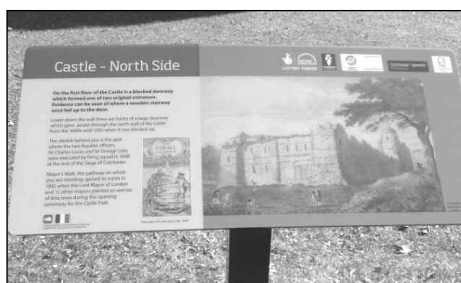


The model opened up

how the Castle probably appeared in 1157 at the time of the visit by Henry II and Thomas Becket. There are cutaways in the walls and the whole north wall can be opened out and the Roman foundations revealed. The model is the starting point for school visits and will serve the same purpose for blind and visually impaired visitors who use the audio descriptive tour which has now been written and recorded by ATS Heritage.

Peel Heritage have continued to add new features to the digital tablet, including an animation of the figures on the Colchester Vase. 5,000 people have already hired the digital tablet to enhance their visit.

The exterior of the Castle has not been ignored in the new development and a suite of six panels can be found in the Castle Park on the south, east and north sides of the Castle. Further interpretive panels to interpret the town's wider heritage will appear from November to augment those that already stand at Balkerne Gate and Duncan's Gate. Peel Heritage are also producing a further App that can be downloaded onto people's mobile devices so that they can take a self guided tour of Colchester's main Roman and Medieval sites.



Interpretive panel on the North side of the Castle

CASTLE WINS AWARD

On 22nd October the Castle won the Main Attraction category at the Essex Tourism and Hospitality Awards. The awards evening was organised by the *Essex Chronicle* in

association with Visit Essex. The Castle now goes on to compete for a Visit England sponsored national award.

TOM HODGSON Colchester Development Manager



Bill Seaman and Tom Hodgson receiving the award from Jonathan Denby of Abellio-Greater Anglia.

MANAGING COLCHESTER'S HERITAGE

Following a pilot phase last year, further heritage panels have been commissioned for six sites in the borough as part of the Colchester Castle and Wider Heritage HLFund project. The sites are: St John's Abbey, St Botolph's Priory, Lexden Mount, Gosbecks Archaeological Park, Holy Trinity Church and Gryme's Dyke. It is hoped that these and a further panel at East Gate should all be in place for the start of the 2015 tourist season.

The Museum Service is also continuing to work in partnership with the Friends of Colchester's Roman Wall on a wall walk and a further ten panels are in preparation to accompany the three already installed or commissioned.

The long standing Local Management

Agreement with English Heritage remains in place and a particular focus at present is improving access at St John's Abbey Gatehouse where a metal handrail will be installed shortly. Also at the Gatehouse, the Museum Service continues to support the Colchester Catholic Heritage Group who have taken a particular interest in this historic site.

Repair work at Mersea Barrow, funded by English Heritage and coordinated by the Museum Service, has seen electric light installed inside the entrance passage of this Roman burial mound and close working continues with Mersea Island Museum who organise regular guided tours of the site. In July 2014 the finds from Mersea Barrow were lent to Mersea Island Museum and are now on display, thereby increasing public access to an important part of the island's heritage.

Heritage Open Days in September 2014, coordinated in Colchester by the Museum Service, saw a record number of visitors to the borough's heritage attractions, many of which are not regularly open. The total number was

13,261 for the thirty sites and events, including Peake's House in East Stockwell Street, Mersea Barrow, Audley Chapel and a guided walk around the Town Wall.

NEW ACQUISITION: LATE BRONZE AGE HOARD FROM BURNHAM ON CROUCH, ESSEX.

This remarkable hoard of ancient metalwork includes 214 pieces of bronze plus sherds from a pottery vessel; in total some eight boxes of finds. It dates to 1200BC - 700BC and was found on farmland near Burnham on Crouch by four metal detectorists during August and September 2010.

The hoard's discovery was reported to Laura McLean, the then Essex Finds Liaison Officer, and she organised an archaeological excavation to recover any items remaining in the ground. The excavation in October 2010 was carried out by Laura McLean, a freelance archaeologist Kate Orr (now Clover) and three members of staff from the British Museum with the assistance of the four finders. It



included the lifting of a soil block containing a damaged pottery vessel and further metalwork. Examination of the pottery vessel and the removal of its contents were carried out in the Museum Service's conservation laboratory in Colchester.

The hoard includes socketed axes, spearheads, knives, gouges, sickles, swords and horse harness fittings as well as ingots and pieces of casting waste. As it contains both actual objects and raw materials it is likely that this hoard was buried by a bronzesmith rather than as a religious offering, although we may never know for certain. This is undoubtedly the largest hoard of Bronze Age metalwork to have entered the Colchester Museum collection in the last fifteen years.

PHILIP WISE

Collections and Curatorial Manager

CHILDRENS' EVENTS

Colchester Castle

Tuesday 17th and Thursday 19th February

MEDIEVAL STORYTELLING

Hear some stories from the days of yore in this Medieval Castle. Sessions at 10.30am, 11.30am, 12.30pm, 2pm and 3pm.

Free event after normal Castle admission.

Saturday 21 March

BATTLE THROUGH THE AGES!

Colchester Castle and Castle Park. 10.30am-4pm. From Romans to the present day, this fun-packed day shows how warfare has changed over the last 2000 years. You will also get a chance to shoot arrows and take part in other fun activities, with re-enactors and military vehicles.

Attractions in the park (around the Castle) are free. Small charge for archery. Activities and attractions in the Castle are subject to normal Castle entry charge.

Saturday 28th March - Sunday 12th April

EASTER EGG TRAIL

Hunt around the Castle for the Easter eggs, then enter your quiz sheet into the prize draw for a chance to win a fantastic Easter egg. 50p per sheet after normal Castle admission

Monday 30th, Tuesday 31st March and Wednesday 1st April

DRESSING THE KNIGHT

Meet the knight as he gets his armour and weapons prepared. He will show you how the armour works, and how he can move around when fully kitted up. Sessions at 10.30am, 11.30am, 12.30pm, 2pm and 3pm.

Free event after normal admission to the Castle.

Friday 10th April

THE EARLIEST BRITONS – STONE AGE TO BRONZE AGE

Meet one of Britain's very earliest inhabitants as he talks about what life was like long ago.

You will also get a chance to see objects from this amazing time. Sessions at 10.30am, 11.30am, 12.30pm, 2pm and 3pm.

Free event after normal admission to the Castle.

Natural History Museum

Tuesday 17th February

SOCK-IDERMY

Natural History Museum. The animals you see on display are here due to the art of taxidermy. Now you can have a go, using a sock to create your own stuffed creature.

£3 per person. Sessions at 10.30am, 11.30am, 12.30pm, 2pm and 3pm. Booking required, please call 01206 282941

Wednesday 18th February

GO LIVE! CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

A wide selection of animals will be on display today, many of which you would rarely see or

get close to in the wild.

£3 per child and adult, ages 2 and under free.

Drop-in 12pm-4pm

Tuesday 31st March

GO LIVE! A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

A wide selection of animals will be on display today, many of which you would rarely see or get close to in the wild.

£3 per child and adult, ages 2 and under free

Drop-in 12pm - 4pm

Tuesday 7th April

CAVE PAINTING

Do some cave painting just like our long-ago ancestors, using sandpaper and chalk.

£2 per person. Drop-in 10.30am-12.30pm,

1.30pm-3.30pm

Hollytrees Museum

Monday 16th February

COLCHESTER 3D PICTURE POSTCARDS

Get inspired by our collection of postcards

from the past to create your own 3D

Colchester postcard. Sessions at 10.30am,

11.30am, 12.30pm, 2pm and 3pm.

£3 per child and adult, ages 2 and under free.

Booking required, please call 01206 282941.

Thursday 19th and Friday 20th February

KEEP CALM AND CREATE YOUR OWN SLOGAN T-SHIRTS

You will be given ideas and have original slogans to develop yourself and put on your shirt using specialist pens. Sessions at 10.30am, 11.30am, 12.30pm, 2pm and 3pm.

£4 per person. Booking required, please call 01206 282941

Wednesday 1st and Thursday 2nd April

CLAY SUNDIALS

To celebrate the clock collection in Hollytrees, and the coming of the sun, make your own sundial out of clay, so you can tell the time just like our ancestors.

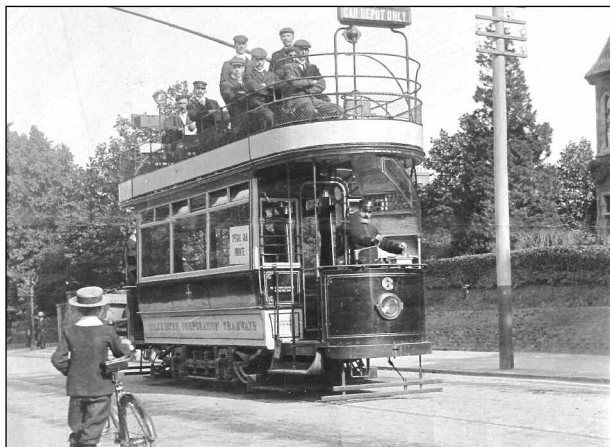
£3 per person. Sessions at 10.30am, 11.30am, 12.30pm, 2pm and 3pm. Booking required, please call 01206 282941.

Tuesday 7th and Wednesday 8th April

VICTORIAN EXPLORER'S BOOK

Victorians loved exploring! Make your own notebook with themed cover and pencil, then explore the museum to find your favourite things.

£3 per person. Sessions at 10.30am, 11.30am, 12.30pm, 2pm and 3pm. Booking required, please call 01206 282941.



LEFT: *Tramcar No 6 seen here approaching Lexden, c.1904. The destination board at the front says 'Car Depot Only' and this may have been one of the early trial runs prior to the official opening.*

THANK YOU!

The Editor would like to thank Committee members and others who kindly assisted on The Friends' stall at both the Heritage Day and Open Evening

Colchester Recalled Lectures 2015

JANUARY 15th 2015

The Origins and History of 'Jumbo' -
the Water Tower

BRIAN LIGHT

*Brian has devoted much time to Colchester's
industrial heritage icon. An illustrated talk.*

FEBRUARY 12th

Zeppelins and Colchester in World War 1

PETER JONES

An illustrated talk.

MARCH 12th

The dramatic story of Harwich in the First
World War

DAVID WHITTLE

An illustrated talk.

APRIL 16th

Members Evening

*Three more members give short talks on memorable
events in their lives.*

MAY 14th

The Rise of Modern Colchester 1940-1990

ANDREW PHILLIPS

An illustrated talk.

JUNE 18th

Annual General Meeting followed by
Memories of the Last Days of Sailing Barges

JIM LAWRENCE

Another illustrated talk by the last of the bargemen.

Meetings are on Thursday evenings at 7pm.
at the Colchester Institute, Sheepen Road,
Room K357, Third Floor, Music Block,
at the rear of the Campus.

All are welcome.

Admission is £1 per person per evening.

Further details are available from
ANDREW PHILLIPS, telephone 01206 546775



Welcomes all members of The Friends of Colchester Museums
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 CAFÉ 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 2015

All at Lion Walk Church at 7.30pm

Admission per lecture: Members £2.

Season ticket available price £20 - see page 1.

Non members £4.

7th APRIL

200 Years of Colchester Lawyers

ANDREW PHILLIPS

21st APRIL

Colchester from Old Postcards

JEFF JEPHCOTT

5th MAY

Essex University: The Pioneering Years

PAUL THOMPSON

19th MAY

Redeveloping Colchester Castle Museum

TOM HODGSON

2nd JUNE

From the Grande to the Mercury

The history of Colchester Operatic Society

JOHN ENFIELD

16th JUNE

Annual General Meeting at 7pm

followed by **Steam Driven Social Change**

The dawn of modern life with the coming of the Railway

PETER JONES

8th SEPTEMBER

Forgotten Huguenots of Colchester

CHARLIE DE WET

22nd SEPTEMBER

To Fetch a Pail of Water

A serious, and sometimes hilarious look at water supply and drainage through the ages

PATRICK DENNEY

6th OCTOBER

450 Years History of Colchester Royal Grammar School

TREVOR HEARN

20th OCTOBER

The History of the Oysters of the Colne

ROGER TABOR

3rd NOVEMBER

Essex During the Napoleonic Wars

WILL TYLER

17th NOVEMBER

People of Roman Colchester

MARK DAVIES

Further details from:

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The Friends of Colchester Museums

14 Ryegate Road Colchester CO1 1YG or

Telephone: 07796 592296.

Email: davidpatrickwalton@gmail.com