



The Friends of Colchester Museums

Registered Charity No. 310669

Newsletter
January 2017

Officers

AS ELECTED AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON 21ST JUNE 2016

<i>President</i>	Her Worship the Mayor, COUNCILLOR JULIE YOUNG	
<i>Vice Presidents</i>	MRS JEAN BAKER MRS JEAN BLOWERS MRS BARBARA NAPPER PETER BERRIDGE	MARK DAVIES PATRICK DENNEY ANDREW PHILLIPS PAUL SPENDLOVE
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<i>Newsletter Editor</i>	Vacant	
<i>Other Committee Members</i>	MARY DALE JENNY JONES AVRIL LANKESTER JANITA LE FEVRE PHILIP BEETON PETER CONSTABLE	HARRY CARLO CHRIS HALL ANDREW MILLAR ANDREW PHILLIPS DAVID WALTON
<i>Ex Officio</i>	BILL SEAMAN (<i>Museums, Arts and Culture Manager</i>) TOM HODGSON (<i>Colchester Museums Manager</i>) PHILIP WISE (<i>Heritage Manager</i>)	
<i>Honorary Auditor</i>	ROY ANDERSON	
<i>Museum Office</i>	Museum Resource Centre 14 Ryegate Road Colchester CO1 1YG Telephone 01206 282931/2 www.cims.org.uk	

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

As the Friends enter a new year of activities, we look forward to another full round of lectures, daytime and afternoon outings and other events for members to enjoy. Early booking for the outings is strongly recommended, as they tend to be very popular, while season tickets for the lectures are again being offered at a slightly reduced rate overall.

Our first event of the year is a special Open Evening for Friends and their guests at the Castle Museum on Thursday 23rd March 2017. This is being themed to coincide with the launch of a new audio-visual presentation for the Castle prisons, which will be the subject of a short presentation. Light refreshments will be provided as normal, but could I please appeal on behalf of the Committee for offers of a little help with serving them so that all the work does not fall on too few shoulders? The Castle presents a distinctly special atmosphere out of normal opening hours, so this will be a good opportunity to meet the Museum staff, especially the newly appointed ones, as well as a pleasant occasion to enjoy the new displays in the company of other Friends. The Museum Service's development plan provides for consultation on certain aspects of future policy, which we much appreciate. In November 2016 we were invited to respond to a short questionnaire about preferred directions, and many members did so. On this occasion, however, because of a tight timescale there was insufficient opportunity for either the members or the Committee to discuss the relevant issues before responding individually. Several members have raised this concern. The other major point to mention is that answers had to be given by email, which not all our members have.

If you do have an email address that has not yet been divulged, or if you need to notify one that has changed, please ensure that you let the Treasurer know when renewing your subscription. If you pay by standing order, please send us an email. We may need to contact you urgently.

Our latest acquisition for Colchester Museum consists of two interlinked gold composite 'rings' of a type usually dated to the period c.1275-1140 BC within the Middle Bronze Age. They were found near Great Totham by a metal detectorist in February 2014 and have been declared Treasure, after recording through the Portable Antiquities Scheme. The Friends have agreed to provide matching funds of £400 to enable their acquisition to the museum's small collection of eight similar gold items. These include four bracelets, three of which were found at Woodham Walter in 1991, a find from Tendring in 2012 and three gold-covered shale beads from the Rochford burial of 1914.

Colchester's museums are highly valued as prime attractions for local heritage and tourism, and justifiably so. Until recent years the Museum Service had eight historic buildings to look after in the town centre, five of them used as museums for displaying the collections. Within the next twelve months only the Castle, Hollytrees and the Natural History Museum will remain.

No suitable replacement has been found for the Museum Resource Centre where all-important support services and other centralised functions, such as laboratories, specialist storage, publicly accessible research facilities and offices, have been housed next to the Castle for the past thirty-five years. As its original creation was funded by accumulated admission charges to the Castle Museum contributed by the public, it is reasonable to expect that all proceeds from its sale will be

returned to the museum service. During 2017, while some of the collections are rationalised and bulk archaeological material sent to the Cheshire salt mines, many of the essential activities are to be transferred some three miles out of town to the main store at Severalls Industrial Park to which a small extension will be added.

This represents a sea change in the provision of our museum services, in which our highly committed museum staff deserve full support in meeting the challenges ahead. It is fairly easy to see how in the present financial climate these decisions have come to be made. Whether this is what Colchester deserves in the long run, as the town continues to expand, remains to be seen or perhaps circumstances will eventually change for the better. What real value do we put on our museums?

MARK DAVIES
Chairman

TREASURERS TOPICS

Subscription rates for membership for 2017 are unchanged. They are;

Single Membership	£10.00
Couple	£15.00
Family	£21.00

Your membership card for 2017 is enclosed but please send your subscription payment now. A subscription form is enclosed and you can arrange to pay standing order if you wish.

We have 200 memberships paid by standing order but a few of these are being paid at the 2014 rates. If this is the case a note is enclosed. We do not have the authority to make these changes so please contact your bank.

Please remember that all cheques for subscriptions, trips or events should be made payable to FRIENDS OF COLCHESTER MUSEUMS and not to me or any other officer.

PETER EVANS
Hon Treasurer

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

As can be seen from the figures presented below, our membership numbers have taken a bit of an upward turn since we last reported in August Annual Report. Although not quite back to our 2015 levels, the recent upturn in membership applications is encouraging.

So please continue to spread the word about the benefits of being a Friend of Colchester Museums and perhaps consider treating someone to a gift membership.

For membership rates, please see Treasurer's Topics above.

	Nov 2016	July 2016	Nov 2015
Single	327	318	341
Couple	237	232	242
Family	114	112	121
Other	11	11	12
Total	689	673	716

PATRICK DENNEY
Hon Membership Secretary

MUSEUM REPORT

GLYNN DAVIS

Glynn has recently been appointed as the Senior Collections & Learning Curator at Colchester Museums. This new role manages the curatorial team in delivering all content: from events and learning to exhibitions and digital access across the museum's three public sites.

Glynn previously worked for the Museum of London for over seven years where he created, developed and delivered award-winning volunteer and community projects that engaged the public with the MOL's enormous stored archaeology collections.

He has a passion for archaeology, especially of the Western Roman provinces, and is thrilled to be working with Colchester's nationally significant collections. With a background in Classical Archaeology, he completed an MA in Museum Studies at UCL where he is also an Honorary Research Assistant at the Institute of Archaeology.

MUSEUM EVENTS

For information on forthcoming museum events, please check our website: <http://www.cimuseums.org.uk/whatson>

FAREWELL TO THE MUSEUM RESOURCE CENTRE

By this time next year the museum service will have relocated from the Museum Resource Centre in Ryegate Road to the museum stores building at Heckworth Close on Severalls Industrial Estate. The curatorial, display and business support teams will be accommodated in an extension that is currently in the planning stages. The Museum Resource Centre is being sold for development.

The move will be quite a change after over thirty years in the MRC and everyone will be working flat out to achieve the considerable amount of work required. Being at Heckworth will unite the bulk of the stored collections and the curatorial team in the same building.

Regular town centre working days and full use of digital communication will help keep the visitor services and behind the scenes teams working as one.

TOM HODGSON
Colchester Museums Manager

TRANSFORMING PEOPLE CONFERENCE

On Thursday 29 and Friday 30 September, Colchester + Ipswich Museums hosted a national conference entitled *Transforming People to Transforming Museums: Nurturing a Culture of Change*. Over the 2 days, we welcomed around 130 delegates to Colchester Castle, hearing from a range of inspiring speakers and engaging in some lively debates.



Through presentations, workshops and marketplaces, arts and heritage organisations from across the UK shared innovative projects that are helping to transform ways of working. Keynotes were delivered by senior figures at Arts Council England, with

presenters including researchers, artists and representatives from the British Museum, British Red Cross, Firstsite, Heritage Lottery Fund, Kensington Palace, the Kent and Medway Museums Partnership, Kettle's Yard, Museums Association, Museum of London, National Museums Wales, New Wolsey Theatre, Norfolk Museums Service, Pitt Rivers Museum, the RNIB and Royal Pavilion and Museums, Brighton.

The work of Colchester + Ipswich Museums was showcased throughout, from The Training Museum project to the Castle app.

Feedback from the event has been incredibly positive, with 97% saying that they would recommend it to a colleague. The welcoming atmosphere and range of subjects were commended, as well as the opportunities for discussion. The debate continued online with our #transformmuseums reaching over 22,000 Twitter accounts. One tweet in particular really summed up the 2 days:

“Off to transform a museum after great conference @ColMuseums excellent speakers, challenging ideas, food for thought #TransformMuseums”

Further details can be found on our website: www.cimuseums.org.uk/transformmmuseums

LIB FOX
Training Museum Project Officer

TRAINING MUSEUM TRAINEES

In September, Colchester + Ipswich Museums welcomed 4 new Trainees, Esme, Mark, Michael and Tim. As with our first group, they will be supporting all the departments across our museums, developing skills in a wide range of areas. From now until the end of January, one day a week is set aside for training. They are well under way already, having covered exhibition design, collections documentation and how to label and safely pack objects.



As well as their programme of formal learning, the new recruits are involved in core projects across both towns. In Colchester, this will include gathering visitor feedback, supporting public events and helping with the collections documentation work linked to our move.

On a sad note, we will soon be saying goodbye to the 2015 - 16 cohort of Trainees, who are due to finish their year with us in November. Two have already moved on to pastures new, applying their museum experience to new roles. Scott is furthering his knowledge of film and media at a local production company, while Alex will be using his event management skills in a learning post.

You can follow what all our Trainees are doing via their blog: www.trainingmuseum.wordpress.com/

TRIPS AND EXCURSIONS FOR 2017

This year we have three excursions, two by coach as usual and one where those partaking will need to use their own transport. You may be able to share transport with someone else if you are not a car owner – please indicate this requirement at the time of booking.

If you are parking at the Marks Tey Hotel we MUST have your car registration number at the time of booking, as well as the £1 car parking fee. You will need to register your car number at Reception on arrival at the Hotel.

Usually we have been happy for payment of subscriptions, trips and any other items on one cheque but as numbers will be limited on the Bata and New Hall trips, please send separate cheques for them. The fees include the drivers tips. Please use the order form for all events and make your cheque payable to FRIENDS OF COLCHESTER MUSEUMS. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope so we can confirm your bookings.

JENNY JONES
Executive Committee
(telephone 01206 768252)

**VISIT TO BATA HERITAGE
CENTRE, EAST TILBURY**
Wednesday 5th July 2017 afternoon
visit £19 per person

Tomas Bata started his first shoe company in Zlin in Czechoslovakia and at one time the Bata Shoe Company claimed to be “Shoemakers of the World”. Tomas Bata purchased land in east Tilbury and

the first factory buildings were opened in 1933. The Bata Estate was constructed in the tradition of garden villages of Port Sunlight, Bourneville and Letchworth. The estate and factory form a conversation area set up by Thurrock Council in 1993 because of the importance of the architecture, and the Bata Centre and Museum is in a purpose built area within the East Tilbury Library.



Our visit will consist of a short talk in the Centre, opportunity for to look around the Museum exhibits and a guided tour of the village with its shop (in the old ballroom), Old Cinema and swimming pool and factory buildings. This is a snapshot of life in the 1930/1940s and not be missed.

The coach will pick up in Crouch Street at 12.30 pm and at Marks Tey Hotel at 12.45 pm. The maximum number for this visit is limited to 45 so make sure you book in plenty of time. **Please indicate on the booking form where you will be boarding the coach.**

**BATTLE ABBEY AND
HASTINGS**
Tuesday 18 July 2017 £30 per person

The Battle of Hastings fought on 14 October 1066 is one of the best known events in English history, with William of Normandy defeating the army of King Harold of England. Battle Abbey

was founded on the site of the battle as a penance for the bloodshed. Little remains of the original Norman abbey but many later monastic buildings survive including the great gatehouse and the east range with its fine vaulted undercroft. Much of the battlefield became part of the Abbey's Great Park which formed the core of a country estate after the Abbey's suppression in 1538. During our time there you will have the opportunity to visit the 1066 battlefield, the Abbey ruins, the walled garden and icehouse and the dairy built in 1818 and rethatched in 2016. There is a café serving light lunches and afternoon teas and an informative visitors' centre where an interesting video is shown.



In the second half of the day we will visit the nearby seaside town of Hastings. There are a lot of interesting things to do and see in Hastings. We plan to drive along the front passed the recently rebuilt pier and make our way to East Beach. There you will find the Shipwreck Museum, the Blue Reef Aquarium, the Jerwood Art Gallery, the True Crime Museum situated in the seafront caves and the East Hill Funicular Lift. There are boats bobbing in the sea and the beach to relax on in a deckchair. You may also wish to visit the Norman ruins of Hastings Castle, once home to William the Conqueror. TV's "Foyle's War" was filmed in the old town. There are

cafes and restaurants where you can get refreshments.

The first coach will leave from Crouch Street at 8.00 am and the second coach will leave from Marks Tey Hotel at 8.30 am. They will return to Colchester at about 7.30 pm. **Please indicate on the booking form where you will be boarding the coach.**

VISIT TO NEW HALL, BOREHAM

Tuesday 25 July 2017 at 2pm
£5 per person

Following the interesting talk given to us in 2016 by Tony Tuckwell we have organised an afternoon trip to New Hall, the only Royal Palace in Essex. The estate on which the Palace was built was originally granted to the Canons of Waltham Abbey in 1062. In 1516 New Hall was sold by Thomas Boleyn to Henry VIII for £1000. The King rebuilt the house for £17,000 and gave it the name of Beaulieu. This now remembered in the name of a nearby housing estate – Beaulieu Park. Tony will show us around the grounds and the hall of New Hall, which is now a school. The visit will finish with refreshments.

Anyone wishing to go on the trip will need to make their own way there. Those without transport could possibly share with a car user. The maximum number for this trip is 40, so please make sure you book early.



LECTURE SERIES 2017

Attendance at 2016 talks averaged 92.5. Our 2017 talks will start on 11th April 2017 at Lion Walk Church and admission charges are still £2 for members. Season tickets are available at £20 for all 12 talks which gives a saving of £4 per member which does make it easier at meetings for members and officers alike.

Over the last couple of years we have had several talks on military subjects but this year we have an art theme. The lectures are all locally based and include Major Bale, who seemed to paint every possible view of Colchester about 100 years ago, and John Constable. We also have Leonard Squirrell and Harry Becker, local artists who recorded their times, some on railway posters. The Friends purchased a painting of the High Street by Squirrell five years ago and it will be interesting to find out more about him.

PETER EVANS

Leonard Squirrell High Street Painting



FRIENDS OF THE ROMAN WALL

The Friends of the Roman Wall will hold their Annual General Meeting at 7.30pm on 2nd March 2017 in the Town Hall.

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

These will take place on 9th & 10th September 2017.

INVITATION TO JOIN THE COLCHESTER CIVIC SOCIETY ON A TRIP TO THE DOCKLANDS MUSEUM

The Museum is part of the Museum of London and is staging an exhibition on the finds from the excavations that took place in the construction of the Crossrail project. The exhibition starts in February and ends in September. Permanent exhibitions include London Sugar and Slavery, Docklands at War and recreated Sailortown, so much to see apart from the many Crossrail exhibits.

Colchester Civic Society is planning a visit and invites the Friends of Museums to join them. The Society is arranging a date with the Museum and details will be provided in the next mailing.

**COLCHESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP
WINTER LECTURE PROGRAMME 2017**

At Roman Circus House, (full address) at 7.30 pm.
Admission £2 members (£4 non-members)

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| 16 th January | “Serfs you were and serfs you will remain”
<i>The Peasants Revolt in Essex and Suffolk</i> | Dr Herbert Eiden
Assistant Editor, VCH Essex |
| 23 rd January | Camulodunum and its Villas | John Shepherd
Director of Archaeology in Andante Travels |
| 30 th January | London’s First Voices - <i>writing tablets from Bloomberg excavations 2010-2014</i> | Sadie Watson
Project Officer, Museum of London Archaeology |
| 6 th February | The Mildenhall Treasure and Fine Dining in Roman Britain | Richard Hobbs Curator, Romano-British Collections, British Museum |
| 13 th February | Mud and Monuments; <i>Archaeology of the East Coast</i> | Ellen Heppell
Senior Archaeologist, Archaeology South-East UCL |
| 20 th February | Members activities - <i>short presentations on projects undertaken by group members</i> | |
| 27 th February | Built to impress and intimidate
<i>Colchester’s giant Roman monumental arcade</i> | Philip Crummy
Colchester Archaeological Trust |
| 6 th March | Recording of Colchester’s Historic Buildings | Jess Tipper & Dave Stenning |

COLCHESTER RECALLED TALKS SPRING 2017

Held at 7pm, the Lecture Theatre, Colchester Institute, Sheepen Road, Colchester
Admission £2. For more information contact Andrew Phillips 01206 540990

- 12th January Henry VIII & the last days of St John's Abbey **Jennie Guthrie Stevens**
- 16th February Revolt of the Field **Ted Woodgate**
how the downtrodden Essex farm worker fought back through the Great Depression
- 16th March An evening with **Anthony Roberts**, director of Colchester Arts Centre
who was parachuted in to rescue Firstsite Gallery
- 13th April The future of Wild Essex – *disaster or opportunity?* **John Hall**
recently retired from 28 years running Essex Wildlife Trust
- 11th May Members evening – *3 more members recount memories of their earlier life*
- 15th June Life being Mayor of Colchester and AGM **Councillor Julie Young**

LOCAL & FAMILY HISTORY CLASSES SPRING 2017

Wilson Marriage Centre
Barrack Street, Colchester, CO1 2LR

HISTORY OF COLCHESTER

(PART 2)

Wednesday evenings for 10 weeks

(7-9pm) **Code: EWM5B09Y16**

FAMILY HISTORY ON THE INTERNET (PART 2)

Friday afternoons for 10 weeks (2-4pm)

Code: EWM5B05Y16

To join telephone 03330 0133 257

Or visit <http://www.essex.gov.uk/adult-learning/Pages/>

COLCHESTER WEA

Castle Methodist Church,
Maidenburgh Street
Colchester, CO1 1TT

INTRODUCTION TO READING OLD HANDWRITING

Friday mornings for 10 weeks
(10.15am-12.15pm).

First session 10am-12.30pm.

Code: C2223529

To join contact:

Jane Powell on 01206 564363

Or visit www.weacolchester.org.uk



FRIENDS OF COLCHESTER MUSEUMS SPRING AND AUTUMN LECTURE SERIES 2017

**All lectures held at Lion Walk Church, Lion Walk, Colchester at 7.30pm
Admission £2 (members), £4 (non-members) or by season ticket**

11 th April	Old Heath Recreation Ground's new gates <i>History of the "Rec" as shown on the newly designed gates installed 2016</i>	Andrew Phillips
25 th April	John Ball – <i>Colchester's most significant son?</i>	David Grocott
9 th May	Time on his hands – <i>Bernard Mason and his 200 clocks</i>	Tom Hodgson Colchester & Ipswich Museums
23 rd May	John Constable in Colchester <i>Local connections to one of Britain's greatest artists</i>	Bob Finch
6 th June	50 years of Adult Education in Colchester including <i>Greyfriars update</i>	Alan Skinner
20 th June	AGM starts at 7pm, lecture 7.30pm <i>Martello Towers keeping the French from the shore</i>	Peter Jones
5 th September	A message from Colchester – <i>local history through local postcards</i>	Patrick Denney
19 th September	The History and future of the Mercury Theatre	Liz Tuthill
3 rd October	My Early Days Barging – <i>direct from one of our last bargemen</i>	Jim Lawrence
17 th October	Two Local Artists on the Rails <i>Leonard Squirrel & Harry Becker paintings & railway posters</i>	Emma Roodhouse Colchester & Ipswich Museums
31 st October	Seaside Entertainment at Clacton	Norman Jacobs
14 th November	The works of Major Bale <i>An artist's lasting legacy to Edwardian Colchester</i>	Mark Davies

Further information from David Walton, davidpatrickwalton@gmail.com or
c/o Friends of Colchester Museums, Museum Resource Centre