

## FRIENDS OF COLCHESTER MUSEUMS 2022

All lectures take place at Lion Walk Church, Lion Walk, Colchester  
Admission £2 (members), £4 (non-members) or by season ticket

### EVENING LECTURES – Tuesday at 7.30 pm

12 April	<b>Essex Rock</b> <i>Geology beneath the Landscape</i>	Ian and Ros Mercer
26 April	<b>The Rise of Modern Colchester</b> 1940 – 1990	Andrew Phillips
10 May	<b>Scenes Past</b> <i>A History of Photography in North Essex</i>	Chris Farn dell
24 May	<b>The Friends to the Rescue</b> <i>25 years of acquisitions by Colchester Museums</i>	Philip Wise
7 June	<b>The Calm before the Storm</b> <i>Colchester 1938 - 1939</i>	Paul Rusecki
21 June AGM	<b>A Brief History of 45 Colchester Schools</b>	Sir Bob Russell
6 Sept	<b>Colchester in the 20th Century</b> <i>As recorded in old films</i>	Colchester Film Makers
20 Sept	<b>Colchester Cemetery</b>	Sharon Mooney
4 Oct	<b>Essex Lighthouses</b> <i>Maritime Safety off the East Coast of England</i>	Peter Jones
18 Oct	<b>The History of St Leonards-at-the-Hythe</b> <i>A Celebration of Christmas</i>	Joy Hopkinson
1 Nov	<b>The Changing Face of Ordnance Survey</b> <i>One Inch Maps of Essex</i>	Peter Walker
15 Nov	<b>Money Talks</b> <i>British history and daily life seen through coins</i>	Tom Hodgson

Further information from Jenny Jones, Programme Secretary

[jonesjp@outlook.com](mailto:jonesjp@outlook.com)



## The Friends of Colchester Museums

Registered Charity No. 310669

## Winter 2021

### OFFICERS

<i>President</i>	His Worship the Mayor, Councillor Robert Davidson	
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<i>Membership Secretary</i>	Roy Anderson ( <a href="mailto:royandliz@outlook.com">royandliz@outlook.com</a> )	
<i>Programme Secretary</i>	Jenny Jones ( <a href="mailto:jonesjp@outlook.com">jonesjp@outlook.com</a> )	
<i>Committee</i>	Bill Abbott	Ray Cantrell
	Harry Carlo	Michael Connell
	Mark Davies	Maureen Devenish
	Chris Farn dell	Geoff Fenn
	Chris Hall	Joy Hopkinson
	Avril Lankester	
<i>Ex Officio</i>	Frank Hargrave ( <i>Colchester and Ipswich Museums and Arts Manager</i> )	
	Pippa Pickles ( <i>Colchester Museums Manager</i> )	
	Philip Wise ( <i>Heritage Manager</i> )	
<i>Honorary Auditor</i>	Roy Anderson	
<i>Museum Office</i>	Museum Resource Centre 40 Heckworth Close, Colchester, CO4 9TB Tel: 01206 282931 <a href="http://www.cimuseums.org.uk">www.cimuseums.org.uk</a>	

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

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

We have had some favourable comments about the range of talks in the Autumn programme now concluded. For reports of these talks please see elsewhere in this issue. Unfortunately, they had to be by Zoom and on a Monday evening. This also involved a major revamp of the programme as some of the booked speakers were unable to do Zoom. Well done to Jenny, the programme secretary for organising and then reorganising the programme. We completed the Autumn season of talks and just when it looked as if we were getting back to some sort of normality a covid variant appeared on the horizon. This has implications for our long term plans. Another comprehensive programme of talks has been arranged for 2022 and we are hoping we can put these on in Lion Walk Church on Tuesday evenings. Options, rules, restrictions and the government's mind change so quickly that we can only wait and see how things are nearer the time.

For up to date information about our activities see our website [www.tfocm.org.uk](http://www.tfocm.org.uk)

We were able to manage one event in 2021 when we presented a picture of Colchester Gasworks to the Museum in the company of the Mayor of Colchester, Councillor Robert Davidson (our President). Although we were restricted on numbers and unable to serve refreshments it was good to meet up with members again.

The committee is also looking at the constitution, last updated in 2015. There are a few updates that we are considering but these can only be implemented by a vote at the AGM. If anyone has any thoughts or proposals please get in touch.

Talking of AGMs, at the last one I took on the role of chairman because there were no other candidates and I did not want to see the group close (the constitution requires us to have a chairman). I said that I would be chairman for a year. Following an appeal I made in a previous newsletter the number of committee members increased. I will not be standing for chairman at the next AGM so we need someone to take over. Please think about this as TFOCM cannot survive without a chairman. I am more than happy to discuss the chairman's role and any of the other committee posts. Please think about this as the future of the group is at risk.

On that cheerful note I would like to wish you all good health, a happy Christmas, a prosperous new year and I hope to see you all at our first talk in April.

Peter Jones, Chairman

#### Friends Photographic Library

We are intending to build up a library of Friends activities, if you have any photographs from any of our past events or activities and you are happy for us to include them in our library, please send copies by email to Chris Farn dell

[chris.farn dell@ntlworld.com](mailto:chris.farn dell@ntlworld.com)

## TREASURER'S TOPICS

Your membership card for 2022 is attached to this newsletter. If you do not pay your subscription by bank standing order, please forward payment either by cheque or through the bank within the next 6 weeks.

On behalf of myself and the Membership Secretary, please store your card carefully as we had a large number of lost membership cards in 2021 that needed to be posted out again.

We are having to put the annual subscription rates up from 2023 but this will be discussed at the Annual General Meeting in June 2022. Information about the proposed rates will be included in the next mailing. The last increase was in 2015 and expenses have risen since then. Our members' rate of £10 is now less than the adult admission to the Castle, currently £10.95.

It has been suggested that lower rates could be charged if members preferred to have their newsletters sent to them electronically. This would cut both printing and postage costs. If this would appeal to you, please let us know by emailing us at our website [www.tfocm.org.uk](http://www.tfocm.org.uk) so we can see if this would be worth investigating.

We will again be offering a season ticket for our 2022 evening talks. These are available at £20 for all 12 talks, a saving of £4 and might appeal now that we are using cash less frequently.

### Friends of the Roman Wall

This group was established about 10 years ago by Henry Spyvee, after his year as Mayor of Colchester. The object was to provide information boards at intervals around the Roman Wall and this was achieved a couple of years ago, just before Henry and his wife Vivien (both members of the Friends of Museums) retired to Guildford.

The charity was closed and it was arranged that the remaining funds, totalling £5538.02, would be handed over to the Friends of Colchester Museums, to be used to repair information boards when the cause arises. The Museum Service looks after the boards on a day to day basis, so it will not involve us in much work.

We have now received the money and it will be ring fenced in our accounts for Roman Wall purposes only.

*Peter Evans, Hon. Treasurer*



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## TALKS AUTUMN SEASON 2021

If you missed any of these talks please see below for committee members' reports. These talks were, of course, all on Monday evenings and via Zoom, a new experience for many of us. We are very grateful to Patrick for hosting and guiding us through the mysteries of Zoom.

### Georgian Colchester

6th September 2021

Patrick Denney launched the autumn programme of lectures with a pre-recorded video on "Genteel Class of Georgian Colchester and their Houses." Pre-recording avoided the problems of Zoom and gave a professional standard of presentation which was much appreciated and kept the audience engaged.

Patrick concentrated on six buildings, all on East Hill, which he described in detail, including their structure together with social history of the residents, many of whom were merchants in the town involved in the woollen trade. We pass these buildings daily. History is in front of our eyes. He detailed the changes to the old buildings to make them appear as they do today with brick facades and sash windows.

There was much to interest us in this lecture and many of the houses (some say mansions) deserve a longer and more detailed analysis.

*Chris Hall*

### Wills in Medieval Colchester

20 September 2021

Sue Howlett gave an enjoyable and interesting talk on the survey of wills which she had gathered from a wide range of local churches. The research was very impressive, especially when one takes account of the need to decipher medieval calligraphy. Sue was in full control of her subject and was able to explain the various terms used in wills. It was good to have a contribution from one of our members.

A very interesting topic – worthy of publication in some form.

*Harry Carlo*

### Gainsborough House

4th October 2021

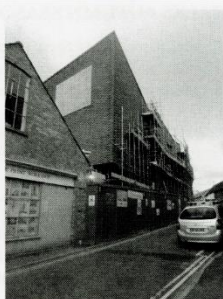
Emma Boyd from Gainsborough's House Museum, Sudbury, gave a talk about Gainsborough and the major development taking place at the Museum. This will be finished in Spring 2022 and will include new galleries, learning spaces, a new café and improved gardens. The Museum was opened in 1961 showing twenty Gainsborough paintings and the redevelopment started in 2019 with Lottery

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Funding and on land given by Babergh Council. Local materials have been used and the roof is copper. The house will now have a more domestic feel and include a room showing how Gainsborough became an artist and rooms dedicated to John Constable, Cedric Morris and the British silk industry. The shop will be resited and the garden has been replanted with the 400 year old mulberry tree remaining.

An interesting and informative talk which will encourage us all to visit the Sudbury site.

*Avril Lancaster*



### The History of Perrywood

18th October 2021

Hannah Powell gave a very interesting talk about the history and development of Perrywood Garden Centre and Nurseries. Her grandparents bought four acres of land beside Perry's Wood (hence Perrywood) in 1955 for £832 7s 5d. It is now a thriving family business with glasshouses, a production nursery and a shop and café, but plants are still at the heart of the business. Perrywood is third in UK top 100 Garden Centre League Table and has a yearly £11 million turnover.

In 2018 the company bought a 35 acre site in Sudbury and they plan to turn this into a garden centre on the same lines as the 22 acre Tiptree Perrywood.

*Jenny Jones*

### The Corner Shop Killings

1st November 2021

For the fifth lecture in our Autumn series our speaker was Paul Stickler. As a police Chief Superintendent he was a specialist in murder cases, and following his retirement he has continued to research old cases.

He spoke on the "Corner Shop Killings", the apparent murder of a shopkeeper and her dog in 1919, for which nobody was ever convicted. He gave a most interesting talk, covering not only the killing but also contrasting the approach of the police then with present practice and how he managed to obtain more information about those involved.

*Ray Cantrell*

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### Sutton Hoo Developments

15 November 2021

Laura Howarth, Archaeology and Engagement Manager, gave a fascinating talk on the National Trust's recent £4 million reinterpretation project. She started with a brief history of the excavation of the site when the fossil of a 27m ship burial was unearthed. Thought to be of the East Anglian Anglo-Saxon King Raedwald (c560-624), it contained over 200 objects, including the famous helmet (now in the British Museum). She mentioned the film 'The Dig' (story of the 1939 excavation) released in January 2021 that has generated a lot of renewed interest in the site. Comparison with the Prittlewell Prince burial in Southend was also covered.

Visitors can now see a full-size sculptural representation of the burial ship and refurbished Exhibition Hall showing items and replicas enlivened with drama and theatre. Tranmer House (1939 home of Edith Pretty) contains colour photographs of the 1939 and subsequent excavations at Sutton Hoo. The site can now be viewed from a new 17m observation tower.

Today the seventh century is seen as cultured, sophisticated and vibrant, in many ways due to Sutton Hoo.

*Mary Dale*

For all up to date information on talks and trips please visit our website.

[tfocm@org.uk](mailto:tfocm@org.uk)

## LECTURES AND TRIPS

We are pleased to announce that from 12 April 2022 we will be holding our evening lectures in Lion Walk Church again. Lion Walk Church adheres to the government guidance on protection against Covid and at the moment the seating in the Sanctuary is greatly reduced and spread out. While the Zoom meetings during the last year have been a good thing with interesting subjects, we realise that some of you have been unable to attend. It will be good for us all to get back to normal meetings where the speaker is in the room with us and the images are displayed on a large screen that we can all see. The list of lectures is on the back page of the newsletter. This is obviously subject to the future Covid restrictions but we are hopeful that these arrangements will go ahead.

See the back cover for the full programme.

We will not be organising any trips in June/July 2022 as we are still not happy about travelling in close proximity in a coach. Apologies to anyone who was looking forward to these trips but hopefully they will be reintroduced in 2023.

*Jenny Jones, Programme Secretary*

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## COLCHESTER'S HERITAGE UPDATE

### Heritage Open Days

This year, Heritage Open Days took place between Friday 10 and Sunday 19 September with Colchester's contributions almost solely on the two weekends. In total there were 27 participating venues or guided walks. In addition, there were two short films specially made for Heritage Open Days following the successful introduction of a virtual component to the festival in 2020. The total number of visitors was 3,692.

As in previous years, there was a mix of venues, some having opened regularly for Heritage Open Days for many years and others being new to the event. Amongst the long-standing venues were St John's Abbey Gatehouse, the Roman Circus, St Leonard-at-the-Hythe and the Town Hall. New for 2021 were Cannock Mill in Old Heath, Gosbecks Archaeological Park and Gray's Summerhouse in Castle Park.

Heritage Open Days could not happen without the support of volunteers from the Colchester Civic Society, the Colchester Town Guides Association, the Colchester Catholic Heritage Group and individual venues.

### Heritage Sites

Work has continued on a number of projects in recent months, including the Roman Circus and St Botolph's Churchyard, where new interpretation panels were erected earlier in the Summer. At the latter, planning is now in an advanced stage with the conservation of the Victorian gravestone of Capt. Jesse Jones, who was wounded at the battle of Waterloo, and the installation of a new brass memorial scheduled for early in the New Year. This work is being undertaken with funding and support from the Colchester Civic Society.

Following the receipt of funding from Essex County Council's 'Pathway to Prosperity' initiative, work was undertaken on improving the Town to Port Trail which runs from East Bay to the Hythe. Repairs have been undertaken to some of the seating and several interpretation panels replaced.

There are several other projects where significant progress has been made. These include the Roman Circus where a series of three new interpretation panels are currently in preparation with the assistance of the Colchester Archaeological Trust. At Berechurch Dyke, an Iron Age defensive earthwork, a further interpretation panel is planned at one of Colchester's lesser-known archaeological sites. This work is being undertaken in partnership with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation.

Looking ahead, there are plans to erect an interpretation panel at St Michael's Church, Myland using funding provided by Myland Community Council. St Michael's has an interesting history and has not previously been interpreted on site. Finally, work is planned to replace the four interpretation panels at Hilly Fields which have now reached the end of their useful life.

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## Portable Antiquities and Treasure

At the beginning of 2021 the Essex Finds Liaison Officer (FLO) Sophie Flynn resigned after having been in the role for almost four years. Her replacement as FLO is Dr Carolina Lima and she is joined by Lisa Pitt-Jones who has particular responsibility for archaeological finds covered by the Treasure Act.

This has been another busy year for Treasure finds from Essex. Up to the end of November there had been 28 finds reported to the Museum Service. These have been mainly finger rings of Roman, Medieval and Post-Medieval date. Work has also been progressing on completing the reports on Treasure finds made in 2020, when despite the lockdown caused by Covid, over 50 finds were reported. These included a very rare Tudor gold aglet, or metal cover, used at the end of a lace to secure an item of clothing, as seen in portraits by Hans Holbein at the beginning of the 16th century.

Philip Wise, Heritage Manager Colchester Museums Service

## MEMORIES OF THE COLCHESTER GASWORKS, HYTHE HILL

In our last newsletter, we published a photograph of a picture by Henry Collins of a view of Hythe Hill, which the Friends of Colchester Museums have presented to the Colchester Museum. We asked for any memories and received the following letter from a member :



"My mother grew up at the Colchester Gas Works site where her family had a house just inside the main entrance. My grandfather worked at the Gas Works until he retired, taking on different roles as the Works adapted to change. Grandfather, who had previously worked as a groom at St.Osyth Priory, took on a similar job at the Gas Works in 1911. He would have been married and aged 25. He remained working and living at the Works until he retired 40 years later.

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*In the early 1970s grandfather did a recorded interview which is now held in The British Library Sound Archive. In it he described his working day as groom to the works manager. He only had one horse and trap to look after compared to The Priory where there had been 6 horses and several carriages. He considered himself to be very fortunate to have got such a good job with a rent free house attached. He was paid eighteen shillings a week, plus all the coal and gas he wanted. He and the foreman were the only people who lived on site. His working day started at 6am when he fed the horse, cleaned the stable, and groomed the horse. He returned home for breakfast, then after harnessing the horse and trap he went to collect the manager from his house at 9 o'clock to take him to his office at the works. The manager was then taken home for lunch at 12.30pm and collected again at 2pm. Sometimes he'd go for a drive round in the afternoon. "It was quite a comfortable little job for me, it was." The working day finished after taking the manager home again at 5pm. This comfortable arrangement continued for 2 years.*

*All the men at the works belonged to The General Workers Union. Apparently there was a dispute between the men and the manager which resulted in strike action, where all the workers gathered in the road one lunchtime. Grandfather went to collect the manager after lunch as usual, but instead of returning to the works the manager went to see the directors in town. The directors and union official then came to the works, a meeting was held, and the manager was asked to resign immediately.*

*The new manager owned a 2 seater Morgan. The days of a horse and trap ended and grandfather started delivering gas stoves around the town in a horse and van for 3 years, after which time he had a motor van. He doesn't mention what happened during the First World War, but according to my mother he was temporarily transferred to the retort in the Gas Works so that he was in a reserved occupation and avoided joining up.*

*Grandfather met the directors regularly when he delivered the 'books' from the Gas Works to their fortnightly meetings in the High Street. He mentioned well known local names - Gurney Benham, Thompson Smith, Marshall (solicitor), Daniels (house agent), Bloomfield (ironmonger).*

*He described how friendly the working men were at the Gas Works. Some came in daily from the country. Grandfather became good friends with some men who lived in the Ardleigh and Crockleford area. They would go rabbiting together - a lifelong 'sport' for grandfather. He held a licence at Ardleigh Park Farm and later at Shaw's farm on the Ardleigh Road. The Gas Works Bowls and Sports Club was opened about 1922, which offered a meeting place for the workers. Another pastime was gardening on his allotment garden at the back of the Works, as there was only a backyard attached to the house.*

*My family appear to have kept themselves separate from a lot of things that went on at the Hythe where it was "very rough....drinking and fighting and that - there was always a lot of trouble down the Hythe".*

Angela Hammond

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## WORDSEARCH

C	O	L	E	Y	A	B	T	A	S	E	Y
H	C	T	A	B	E	L	D	L	A	N	E
U	K	L	S	M	R	X	Q	G	L	A	H
R	A	S	T	O	C	K	W	E	L	L	I
C	B	W	H	U	F	V	N	G	E	S	L
H	J	U	I	N	T	A	B	O	D	E	R
W	A	H	L	O	L	N	O	D	E	P	G
A	R	X	L	D	S	I	O	K	H	O	U
L	I	O	N	W	A	L	K	N	T	P	L
K	M	A	Y	A	W	S	T	R	O	P	S
B	L	R	V	C	Z	G	H	F	P	R	J
E	T	A	G	E	N	R	E	K	L	A	B

For your amusement we present another wordsearch. All of the Colchester place names listed below are in the table except one can you work out which one it is?

East Hill	Eld Lane	Southway
The Dell	Land Lane	East Bay
Stockwell	Brooklands	Sportsway
Lion Walk	Church Walk	Popes Lane
Balkerne Gate		

Words run in straight lines and can run from left to right, right to left or diagonally up or down.

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