

Spring 2019



Registered Charity 237885

This Newsletter has been edited
for The Colchester Civic Society by Peter Evans.

Opinions expressed by contributors
are not necessarily those of The Civic Society.

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ROOM WITH A VIEW

Having lived in the town centre for most of my life, I really do not worry about being out and about on my own, even at night. I have never felt frightened. I am not intimidated by aggressive drunks. I have had meaningful conversations with out of control revellers. I have intervened in fights. But I have finally met my match. This year, I have had several encounters which have made me feel distinctly uncomfortable and I know that I am not alone. So who is causing me discomfort? Beggars! No, not the blanket wrapped, hoodie wearing souls sitting in shop doorways, often accompanied by a bored dog, nor the scruffy, slightly threatening characters who lurk by cash machines. The beggars who disconcert me so much are quite different. They are the smartly dressed, fast moving and quick witted young men and women who appear from nowhere with a sob story.

'I am so sorry to bother you but I need your help! My grandmother in Clacton has had a fall and I need to get to her quickly. I have no money for the train ...'

or

'My children are just about to come out of school and I am supposed to be picking them up. I was going to walk home but I have been terribly delayed. I need to get a bus to Greenstead but I haven't got the fare.'

or

'I have just had my money for the night shelter stolen and I am going to have to spend the night out in the rain.'

Several times recently I have been accosted in Priory Street by such people, all with a completely plausible tale. They are normally incredibly polite, which is highly disconcerting. However, this is not always the case. I had one experience in the early summer which was really quite frightening. As I left my house and crossed the road to my car, parked in the Priory Street car park, I caught sight of a very respectably dressed couple walking along the road towards me. They

were chatting to each other and looked as though they were heading into town for a pleasant evening out. I got into my car, started the engine and drove slowly towards the car park exit, pausing to allow them to cross in front of me. Without any warning whatsoever, the woman, in her 30s, I suppose, suddenly ran up to my car window and rapped on it, demanding money for a train fare. I decided to ignore her and kept moving, whereupon she tried to open the back door of my car, which, thankfully, was locked. I managed to lock the front doors too and kept going. She clung on. I gathered speed. She continued to hang on, running beside the car, screaming at me. I was determined not to stop. She was determined not to let go. I was really worried about her tripping and going under my wheels. What to do? Luckily, she realised that she was onto a loser and finally took her hand off the car. I sped away whilst she stood in the middle of the road hurling abuse at me. Several months later, I still find myself checking the street when I leave the house in case she is about. How utterly stupid!

Another experience was one to note for a completely different reason. It taught me a lesson. One really hot evening, I returned to Priory Street and pulled up in the car park. There was nobody about. The car windows were all open and I sat for a moment, mustering the energy to move. Suddenly, a young man, nicely dressed, well spoken and extremely polite, stuck his head through the near side front window. Goodness knows where he had been hiding. I was given the fallen grandmother story. And I succumbed. Why? Because my handbag was on the seat beside me and his hands were within inches of it. Making a mental note to hide my bag in future, I picked it up, jammed it firmly between my knees and the steering wheel, opened it and found some small change. Handing it through the window to him, I commented that I didn't believe a word of his story. He grinned cheekily at me, thanked me profusely and walked swiftly away to look for his next victim.

It is in the most unlikely places that one comes across such people. One young woman recently approached me outside the shop in Drury Road. Again, she appeared from nowhere as I got out of my car. 'I haven't any money to feed my children' she said. As I continued on my way into the shop, I mentioned the Food Bank. She looked at me in utter horror and took off down the road. Seconds later, she was accosting someone else. I watched as she was given some loose change. She dashed off along the street again, disappearing into a side road, only to return to catch a young man climbing into his van. I left but passed the shop again a couple of hours later. She was still there, running backwards and forwards along the road. She had huge, quite unnatural, energy.

Why am I so bothered by such encounters I really don't know. Perhaps it is because they are so unexpected. Perhaps I feel vulnerable because I realise that I have failed to assess my surroundings properly; to recognise that all is not as it seems. No doubt I will eventually stop looking with deep suspicion at every poor, innocent young person who passes through Priory Street and return to being my normal laid back self. After all, what on earth is there to worry about?



A view from the Curzon Cinema

Absolutely nothing! Get a grip, woman!

Jo Edwards

CURZON CINEMA

The cinema has been open for a while, though the restaurants beneath them remain empty. The Cinema can, in any case, provide some refreshments. It is acceptable to take drinks etc into the auditoriums (there are three screens) and platforms are provided to put coffee cups on, in a very civilised way. It is normal for cinemas to provide a holder for a cup, but it can be difficult to get them out again, so this is very welcome.

The café is on the ground floor, with screen three on the next floor, and screens one and two above, with a generously sized bar, with seating both inside and out. The 180 degree views are well worth the climb, or lift, well worth the climb, or lift, (see photograph below), northwards to the Minorities and Greyfriars, then south, giving a splendid view of Firstsite, then to the Roman wall and Priory Street beyond, with views to the University. The choice of films was advertised as being different to the usual menu, but this does not seem to be wildly different. Time will tell.

Peter Evans



The Plaques Trail launch

THE PLAQUES TRAIL

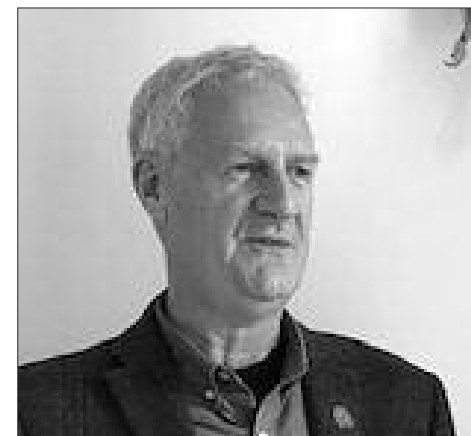
It was originally Society member, Alderman Henry Spyvee, who put forward the idea to list the town plaques, drawing them to the attention of local people and tourists. The Society has now made this information available to anyone who lives in Colchester or the wider world. The three maps are available to access; select the required map then click on a blue marker and this will reveal the history of the plaque and its photograph.

The mammoth project has taken almost two years to complete. It has been undertaken by Jo Edwards, Chair of the Society, Henry Spyvee and myself. Towards the end of the project other Society members contributed to the research and writing.

I contacted Placecheck, who specialise in using markers on an online map. The maps can be used on a smart phone, tablet or PC - at home or walking about the town. They are an incredible downloadable resource of information which can be used for many applications. The Society is grateful to Placecheck for allowing them to use their website and for their many hours of work making the final adjustments. Placecheck have agreed to add plaques as more are discovered or erected.

I hope that eventually we will have four plaque trails, but to begin with we are launching three. This plaque project has been a huge operation. We had to locate all the plaques in and around the town before photographing, researching and writing up the stories behind each one. When all the trails are completed there will be well over one hundred and twenty plaques for the public to access. The three Colchester plaque trails will be called: Military and Wartime; Town Centre; and Out Of Town

The most memorable moment for me was



Dave Monk at the Plaques Trail launch

photographing a plaque on the Loco Shed at Colchester North Station. A member of the station staff took me to the location, which was along the railway track - the plaque commemorates the Cromer Express crash, which took place in 1913. Members of the public will only be able to view the plaque from the train or by clicking on the map marker on our 'Out of Town Trail'. (Please see the leaflet provided with the last newsletter.)

In researching this, Henry was amazed at how many plaques there are in and around Colchester. Anyone using our maps will certainly find plaques they didn't know existed. Some plaques may appear more important than others but all are important to some people.

Jo Edwards researched the Quaker burial grounds. She had absolutely no idea that there was a Quaker burial ground under the car park immediately opposite her house, despite having lived there for 40 years. It was extraordinary that, when the graveyard was full, it was sold as building land and the houses built upon it had cellars!

The Society was pleased that Dave Monk, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Essex and from BBC Essex officially launched the trails at Greyfriars Hotel, Colchester on 5th November.

Rosemary Jewers

COLCHESTER BOOKS – SECRET COLCHESTER, BY PATRICK DENNEY - AND OTHERS

We are lucky to have a selection of local books published regularly. Last year, we had the latest book by Patrick Denney, published by Amberley Publishing, a strong supporter of local history.

Patrick's book visits the areas of town that we miss. There is some interesting information on Almshouses, all surviving ones being in Military or Old Heath Roads, and very active now.

There is mention of the Audley Chapel (see last newsletter as well) and of Colchester fountains, which are of interest to the Civic Society at

present. I must admit that I knew nothing about parish boundary stones, for example those along the wall in Priory Street, above the Priory. There are others around the town and I will watch out for them.

If you pass through Red Lion Yard, watch out for a rainwater hopper with Red Lion and the initials TG 1716. These relate to Thomas Great, who traded in Eringo root in the 18th century. The Eringo root is the badge of the Civic Society.

All this made me think of other hidden corners of Colchester. I came up with;

- The remains of the Colchester Tram garage – one end of the building in Military Road
- The houses in Beaconsfield Road with white bricks – really white tiles
- The Beehive on the building on the corner of Kendall Road and Newtown Road, once a Co-op shop and opposite the Co-op Bakery

Do you have any thoughts about other examples of secret Colchester? It would be interesting to include other ideas in the next edition.

Other books include *The Man Who Painted Colchester and Sudbury* – a selection of works by local artist Charles Debenham, almost another volume on secret Colchester. It is fascinating to see the modern town through an artist's eye.

Andrew Phillips has updated his definitive *History of Colchester* (Amberley Publishing) to include the latest events. Visit your favourite local bookshop for details of all these.

Liz White of the Lexden History Group has produced *Compelling Stories from the Avenue of Remembrance*, a summary of the stories behind the trees on the Bypass. It is published by the group.

If you attended Pop Festivals in earlier days or just wonder what happened, then you could find *The Great British Woodstock*, the story of the Weeley Festival 1971 by Ray Clark, published by the History Press, of interest. I bought my copy from the Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust.

There is, of course, also the Civic Society's own publication *The Historic High Street* by



Dave Stenning. This book is available from us (contact the editor) or from Red Lion Bookshop.

Peter Evans

TWITTER AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media was first embraced by the

Society when executive member, John Salmon launched our Facebook account. In September last year we cast the social media net a little wider, entering the realms of Twitter by spreading our Civic Society voice even further.

For those who know very little about how Twitter works, the original concept was to keep messages short, rather like texts. At times it was very frustrating, as it could be difficult to cram a complex message into 140 characters. Since Twitter increased the number of characters per tweet, now 280, most tweets are less problematic. The new limit is open to Twitter users in almost all 40 languages supported by Twitter. Apparently the new character length doesn't apply to Japanese, Korean or Chinese-language tweets, as those languages can convey twice as much information in less space!

In early February, Sheila and Jo spent an afternoon with me having a Twitter tutorial. With their lessons under their belts, they are joining me tweeting out the latest Society news. Not only are we tweeting to those in Colchester but also around the world - with others following our every word!

Rosemary Jewers

MAGDALEN STREET DEPOT

One of the first articles I wrote for the society's newsletter was about the loss of landmark wall, in Port Lane and Military Road. Now we must record the demolition of the former Colch-



Site of the Old Depot taken from Magdalen Street, showing rear of the remaining frontage in Military Road



Surviving frontage, Military Road



Military Road - site of some of the former Almshouses

ester Corporation Bus Depot, home to Colchester Trams from 1906 to 1927. It is strange to travel along Magdalen Street, once full of houses, pubs, workshops now so changed. The only surviving part of the building is the frontage in Military Road, with a plaque proclaiming *Colchester Corporation Transport 1906*.

The demolished buildings were in a sad state but there had been talk of retaining part of the entrance to the garage, which had some style. Other buildings included the offices, notably the cash office, where bus drivers would hand over their takings for checking.

Around the corner, in Military Road, some of the 1930's Almshouses, part of the Winnock's Charity, have been demolished to make way for more modern accommodation. These were attractive but basically single rooms so probably not up to modern standards. Nevertheless, a loss to the street scene.

Peter Evans

MEMBERSHIP

We welcome as new members Mary Dale, James Anderton and Michelle Wood, Howard

Davies, Adam Randall, Bridget Armstrong, Joseph Rudland, all of Colchester, John O'Donnell of West Mersea, Peter and Jenny Jones of Eight Ash Green. We also welcome the Right Rev. Roger Morris, Bishop of Colchester, as our Vice President.

The Executive Committee has been considering introducing a Corporate Membership scheme, as there has been some interest from firms of Architects and similar. In return for a fee, corporate members would be given similar rights as ordinary members for their staff. It is proposed that Corporate Members would be mentioned on our website, and in this newsletter. This will be presented to members at the AGM for consideration.

Peter Evans

THE PUMP HOUSE, BALKERNE HILL

This is the building to be found on the left hand side of Balkerne Hill, on the site that includes the Borough Council's home Rowan House. The Pump House is still owned by Anglian Water. Rowan House was originally owned by Anglian Water but subsequently leased, then sold to the Borough. The Pump House is still part



of the water supply system, though not really operational.

The building has fascinating decoration around the windows etc, as one might expect from the Victorian builders, and it is a pleasant property. As part of the 'Eyes and Ears' process, the deteriorating state of the building was noticed and reported to Anglian Water. The company was glad to be advised of this and have been proactive. We have recently received the following response from Grant Tufts, Engagement manager for Anglian Water;

"Good news, we are indeed starting on some renovation work at the pump house! We have been liaising with Colchester Borough Council and have agreed to restore the doors, windows, some pointing and rainwater goods (drainpipes etc.) back to original standard. This is being done to English Heritage Standard."

The results will easily be appreciated by all those travelling up and down the hill.

Peter Evans

THE PHONE BOX SAGA

Some members will know that the Society became aware of the poor state of many telephone boxes and decided to review them and see what could be done to improve them. The use of phone boxes has declined as mobile phones have become more available and indeed accessible. Even your editor has become converted to their advantages, although Dr Who remains an enthusiastic phone box user.

It proved more difficult than had been anticipated to identify the boxes. Jo Edwards wrote to the *Essex County Standard* to ask for help from the public, and at the end of the story wrote again to thank the public for their help, and to explain what had been discovered. The letter is reproduced below.

To the Editor, *Essex County Standard*,
February 2019 from Jo Edwards, Chair,
Colchester Civic Society

On behalf of Colchester Civic Society, I recently wrote to ask the town's residents for information about their local BT phone kiosks.

The Society, concerned by the condition of kiosks, had offered to check those within the old Borough Boundary if BT provided their locations.

We were amazed to discover that BT could not do so as this information is confidential! We were really pleased with the response from the people of Colchester who contacted us with information about kiosks throughout the town and, through your letters page, we would like to thank those who got in touch. Armed with the 'intelligence', we embarked on an audit of the kiosks. We found all 42 and compiled a detailed report. We checked whether the kiosks actually had a phone (several didn't and one was completely devoid of anything at all). In kiosks with a phone, we checked whether that phone was working. We reported damage to kiosks; the listed red box at East Bay had 46 panes of glass missing! We commented on general cleanliness, graffiti, fly posting, torn advertisements etc. The final report sent to BT included the information that only 12 out of 42

phone kiosks were fully operational.

Their response was almost instantaneous. Obviously horrified, they gathered a team of six engineers together and descended upon the town. In the days before and after Christmas, they visited every kiosk, repairing phones, replacing missing, discoloured or lichen covered Perspex or glass with new, replacing lights, cleaning etc. We think the work is now complete. They did an absolutely amazing job and we are very grateful to them. Some kiosks may be re-purposed - some might soon house defibrillators, for example. A small number might be removed altogether but not without a good deal of thought.

BT engineers no longer routinely check public telephone kiosks but they will respond very quickly when issues are reported to them. The Civic Society will check kiosks periodically but we would ask Colcestrians to take a couple of minutes to contact BT themselves if they notice a problem. To report a fault or damage to a BT Payphone please email BT with the telephone number and location of the faulty phone box, together with the nature of the fault and your contact details. Send your email to: customer.serv.payphones@bt.com

Jo Edwards and Peter Evans

JOHN BALL: YOU HAVE SEEN THE PLAQUE, NOW GET THE TEA TOWEL!

In the last edition, an article showed how Colchester Civic Society restored and resited a plaque to commemorate John Ball, a Colchester man, unveiled in the summer of 2018 by the Bishop of Colchester and Shami Chakrabarti as part of the town's John Ball Day events, commemorating the Peasants' Revolt 1381.

You can now commemorate John Ball with a tea towel from the Radical Tea Towel Company (www.radicalteatowel.co.uk, also on Twitter and Instagram). We do not usually advertise items for sale, (except for our own, of course), but these include a range of items illustrating Suffragettes and other social heroes, with also some 'radical

political' items as well.

Peter Evans

LICENSING ISSUES – MEETING WITH ESSEX POLICE

An unrelated email from Essex Police led to an opportunity to meet with Alan Beckett, Licensing Officer for Essex Police for Colchester, to discuss the current situation. This is timely, as we are concerned by the way in which the Borough Council is applying its own Licensing policy.

So on 22nd February, Jo Edwards, our Chair having knowledge of licensing in Colchester, Georgia Tamblyn, Licensing volunteer on the Civic Society's Executive Committee, and myself met with Alan and his colleague, Will, who is licensing officer for Tendring.

The Night Time Economy is less of a problem than it used to be, but this is down to the good work done in the past in ensuring that licenses are only granted under reasonable conditions. In addition, the Police have duties in ensuring that the various licensed premises are following all the regulations, relating to CCTV, soundproof doors, security measures, zero tolerance of drugs etc. It was comforting to hear that Alan, or a colleague, regularly visits the licensed premises to check their records and processes. They also visit in the evenings with a Borough Council representative.

There is generally a good and positive flow of communication between the Police and the licensed premises, but on occasion Alan has to use his powers. The Police also check that shops that can sell alcohol only do so under the conditions laid down by law, for example, that it is an offence to sell alcohol to a drunken person. Like us, the Police are keen that the much improved situation continues. It was pleasing to hear that Alan has been known to tell representatives of the licensed premises that the Civic Society may well protest at extensions of their licence provisions, and that this has an effect.

However, the Town Centre is changing and

there are many more people living in or near High Street - the former Kent Blaxill premises, Greytown House, Telephone House in West Stockwell Street, with other developments coming including Jacks and of course the proposed Queen Street development. It is the view of the Civic Society that people here, and those visiting the town's hotels, can expect a good night's sleep and a civilised town centre.

The Executive Committee is now going to consider the best approach to the Colchester Borough Council Licensing Committee. One option is to request the Licensing Committee consider establishing a Cumulative Impact Policy, which would strengthen their hand when reviewing applications, allowing the whole picture to be taken into consideration, not just the situation at any one location.



St Botolph's Church with scaffolding

We will keep in contact with the Police in the future over Licensing issues.

Peter Evans

FLYING THE FLAG

You may have noticed that St Botolph's Parish Church was surrounded by scaffolding (which cost £42,000) for half of 2018. This now been removed and repair works to the tower have been completed. Unfortunately, during the process, further repairs were found to be necessary, as often happens with such projects. These are being dealt with and the Church is operational for services and also for music and other events.

Every church is inspected every 5 years to prove that it is structurally sound - the quinquennial inspection by the diocese. The problems were identified in the 2014 inspection but the one



St Botolph's Church restored, with flagpole



Inside St Botolph's Church - note the decorative arcade of arches, matching the Priory outside

that has just been carried out in 2019 is likely to be all good news.

There is however a change to the way St Botolph's looks now. Pinnacles on the roof and above the entrance have been repaired and enhanced but a flag pole has been installed for the first time in 50 years, funded separately from the repairs. Flags will be flown for approved events in the Church of England timetable.

Peter Evans

2,000 EYESORES REMOVED

Over 2,000 plastic cable ties, those irritating little strips of plastic that are used to fix laminated paper notices to lamp and sign posts, have been removed during a campaign by Colchester Civic Society.

For some reason, the ties were left behind when temporary statutory notices about such things as road works, street closures, and parking

restrictions expired and the notices themselves were taken down – or fell off. Some posts had amassed as many as eight plastic ties, following repeated postings. This is difficult to understand since they are quick and simple to remove.

As well as removing the ties, members also removed a number of old notices left by Essex County Council, Colchester Borough Council and the North Essex Parking Partnership. One veteran notice erected by Essex County Council was dated in 2008 and was still adorning, or more accurately blighting, the street furniture on Cowdray Avenue until the Society came to its rescue in February 2019 – over ten years later. A record?

So far, the campaign has focused on removing ties from the streets in the town centre – a task now almost completed. But there is more, much more, to be done. Many of the streets outside the immediate town centre are still blighted by countless plastic ties and long expired notices. There

are hundreds of them out there - unnecessary and unsightly blots on Colchester's streetscape just waiting to be removed.

If any other Civic Society member would like to help with this initiative, please contact us at info@colchestercivicsociety.co.uk so that we can issue suitable cutters, keep a note of streets tackled and arrange collection of the ties so that we can not only keep an accurate count but also arrange appropriate disposal.

Who knows, we might even be able to beat the current records - maybe there is a post out there with more than eight defunct ties or still sporting a notice that expired longer than 10 years ago.

Sheila Anderton

PS Our Treasurer, Paul Weston, recently visited the Maldon Road underpass and noticed graffiti on one of the murals. Not realising Sheila was in



*How many ties can you count in this picture?
Executive Committee member'*

Sheila Anderton - our 'Eyes and Ears' - has been on a mission to remove the plastic ties from railings, posts etc in the town centre.

These have been left behind when outdated notices are removed. There are actually 2,000 here and Sheila is still counting!

South America on holiday he sent her an e-mail asking if she could contact the town rangers for advice as to how he could remove this without damaging the ceramics. She contacted them and told Paul they would go and have a look. Later in the day she sent a further message saying the Rangers had cleaned it off, which indeed they had. Well done Sheila - real devotion to duty! And congratulations to the Rangers.

Jo Edwards

STREET NAMING – COMMEMORATION OF FORMER MAYORS OF COLCHESTER

On Saturday 9th March, there was a ceremony to commemorate six former Mayors. Most of these – notably Mayor Aldridge, Mayor during World War 1 - have not had a road named for them previously. There had been a block of Council sheltered housing named for Reg Hilham, but this has been demolished. His son was insistent that Mayor Hilham he would preferred it to have been called 'Reg Hilham House' but his full name had been used as 'Reginald Hilham House'. The street has therefore been named as he requested, Reg Hilham Close.

The former Mayors honoured were -

Allen Aldridge (1915/16 - Liberal) – Allen Aldridge Grove

Reg Hilham (1969/70 Conservative) – Reg Hilham Close

Westley Sandford (1996/97 Liberal Democrat) – Westley Sandford Road

Martin Hunt (1999/2000 Liberal Democrat) – Martin Hunt Drive

Christopher Garnett (2000/01 Conservative) - Christopher Garnett Chase

Peter Crowe (2008 Conservative – died in office) – Peter Crowe Approach.

The new Hampden Park Estate is still under development and is just outside the old Borough boundary near Tollgate and is geographically in Stanway Parish. We were pleased that the local Member of Parliament, Priti Patel, was able to



Deputy Mayor Nick Cope and Priti Patel MP with members of the families of the Mayors.

join relatives of some of the Mayors together with High Steward Sir Bob Russell and deputy Mayor Nick Cope, who performed the unveiling ceremony.

Peter Evans

THE ALUMNO PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE QUEENS STREET SITE

I am sure you will all be aware that the Alumno 336 bed student housing proposal coupled with a 83 bed Travelodge for the old Bus Station site behind Queen Street was rejected by a unanimous vote by the Planning Committee on the evening of the 28th of February. This was a most extra-ordinary evening with final success in the face of continued opposing argument from the Council Planning Officers in favour of the pro-

posal. That the vote was unanimous across the party members of the committee was quite probably unprecedented .

The Society has worked tirelessly to thwart this application from its first appearance with a continuous flow of letters to the *Gazette* and the *Standard* to explain the many problems and destructive elements of the design and plan to the reading public of the town. This has been the work of several of our members but most especially Sir Bob Russell; our President, John Burton (an architect); our Chair, Jo Edwards and Howard Davies.

As the time drew nearer to the vital Planning meeting we arranged a series of informal meetings with like minded opponents of the scheme across the town. We were determined to have a co-ordinated approach to the arguments against



John Burton presenting our case at the appeal



People attending the Alumno appeal

the application when the meeting came and to keep the scheme in the glare of public consciousness with letters to the paper.

We must acknowledge our grateful thanks to OMC Investments for their help and advice from their planning consultant, Kathryn Oelman of L.P.Partnership, in the lead up to the meeting.

It was unknown until the event just how many speakers would be permitted by the Chairman but

thanks to the intervention of Sir Bob Russell and OMCI, five were allowed. The speakers were Sir Bob to open, with Dorian Kelly followed by John Burton and then Kathryn Oelman, who gave a decisive professional appraisal of the problems. Catherine Francis' eloquent speech was the fifth. It was a winning innings with speeches from the local Ward Councillors, Simon Crow and Darius Laws.

If Alumno do not appeal then the great challenge for us all is to arrive at a new plan and solution for the use of the site which tries to satisfy the many aspirations for the town.

Watch this space

Bob Mercer

HERITAGE ISSUES - IRONWORK

Bob Mercer's survey of Ironwork in Colchester is now available to read and download on our website (www.colchestercivicsociety.co.uk).

Following on from this the Executive Committee is considering the establishment of a project to facilitate a restoration program for Colchester's cast iron lampposts. As has been explained in a previous edition of this newsletter these lampposts form a unique part of Colchester's Victorian and Edwardian heritage, having been made to a specific pattern by Colchester foundries throughout the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. Bob's survey tells us that there are now only 300

of these remaining and their condition is deteriorating. The reason for this is that since Essex County Highways took over responsibility for Colchester's roads and lighting in 2005 they have not had any maintenance work carried out on them. The project would consider how best to achieve restoration please contact John Salmon using this email address:

johnsalmon@colchestercivicsociety.co.uk

John Salmon

MERCURY RISING – AN UPDATE

Members will have noticed that the Mercury Rising project is moving. There have been excavations by the Archaeological Trust around the Theatre, finding various remains, including a body. I know some members took the opportunity to inspect the site. The Theatre has announced that during closure, they will be putting on shows in a large tent, 800 seater, on the Abbey Fields.

This will be where the 2019 Pantomime is performed, and also *Oliver*, by Colchester Operatic

Society CO2 group. Big names are being booked, we are given to understand.

The site of the tent is close to the old Arena centre site. You can access the parking area, also close to that site, and close to the new buildings on Abbey Fields, an extension to St John's Green School. In April 2019, the Mercury invited all residents who might be affected by the tent or who had a possible interest in the site to a meeting where problems could be raised and information given.

It is kind of them to move the theatre so close

OUR LATEST LITTER PICKING SESSION

In support of both national and local initiatives encouraging the community to maintain a clean environment, some of our members undertook another session of litter picking in April this year.

Below is a group of the litter pickers photographed on East Hill and overleaf is the proof

to my home. It is now about 5 minutes away! Do not be put off by the idea of a tent. I attended a performance in a tent in Chichester, when their theatre was having major works carried out, and it was a very sturdy and sophisticated construction. The theatre is going to considerable efforts to make sure that it is comfortable and has all facilities. They are intending to have a box office in the town centre, whilst the building is out of action

Peter Evans

of their endeavours.

It is hoped that in future more members will support this worthwhile venture, helping the town to improve its appeal to both visitors and residents alike..



Excavations at the Mercury site





*The result of that latest litter pick -
five sacks of rubbish and five oil containers, four cones and a load of buckets*

THE EARTHQUAKE PLAQUE



Below left: The plaque on the tower of Lion Walk United Reformed Church being unveiled by the Mayor; Councillor Peter Chillingworth, on 22nd April 2019

Above: Members of the Society with the Mayor and High Steward, Sir Bob Russell, outside the Lion Walk United Reformed Church at the unveiling

A WELCOME TO OUR NEW VICE-PRESIDENT

When the Society was first launched, the then Bishop of Colchester became a Vice President, as did his immediate successors. But one Bishop declined and, when he eventually left, I suspect that nobody thought to ask his replacement to join us. And that is how it remained until we all met Bishop Roger, the current incumbent, when he very kindly agreed to join Baroness Shami Chakrabarti in the unveiling of the John Ball plaque. It became immediately apparent on that occasion that Bishop Roger really cares about Colchester, not just its people but the place itself.

It was agreed that I should contact him and ask whether he would consider becoming a Vice President of the Colchester Civic Society. An appointment was made for me to visit him, which I did. We spent a whole morning chatting about the

town, about the work of the Society, our past achievements and our plans for the future.

We discovered a mutual interest in many of those plans and began to talk about possible ways to resolve issues. I was so pleased when he agreed to join us. He has already come to an Executive Committee meeting and had made a number of very interesting and useful suggestions we will pursue. He has also offered to help with a couple of projects, including another blue plaque. We are extremely lucky to have such an enthusiastic, energetic addition to our Society. Welcome Bishop Roger!

Jo Edwards

REPORTS OF SOCIAL EVENTS

LAUNCH OF WAR MEMORIAL WEBSITE

1st November 2018, Mayors Parlour, Town Hall

The Mayor and Mayoress, Councillor and Mrs Peter Chillingworth attended the launch of the War Memorial section of the Colchester Civic Society Website. This is the result of research by Paul Rusiecki, as described in the Autumn edition of this newsletter. Also attending was Sir Bob Russell, High Steward and Jo Edwards, Chair of the Civic Society together with the Garrison Commander and the recently retired Garrison Chaplin.



*Above:
The Mayor, Councillor
Peter Chillingworth
speaking at the
Launch*

*Left:
Paul Rusiecki about to
speak at the Launch*

*Below:
High Steward,
Sir Bob Russell
speaking at the
Launch*



Paul elected to talk about the history of the service of commemoration rather than the many Memorials themselves, as full details are available on the website. To start with, in 1919, there was no memorial to form a focus for the service and the service usually took place outside the Town Hall. When the memorial was built in the 1920's, huge crowds attended and clustered close around the memorial, but soon the service became more formalised, with the Mayor centre stage. In 1924, the second annual service was led by Catherine Alderton, the first Lady Mayor.



No official service took place during World War II from 1939 to 1945, and indeed such events were discouraged for security reasons. The 1938 service was overshadowed by the coming of war. Paul pointed out that the War Memorial has become the site for protests (which one person present admitted to attending) and commemorations, such as the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

Paul was asked to name his favourite accessible memorial, which is at St Leonard's Church, Lexden, whilst the memorial at St Marys-at-the-Walls, (the Art Centre) is another favourite but is now an office. Art Centre staff will display on request.

There is no doubt that the Colchester War Memorial is one of the nation's best and a photograph was used for a national campaign for the year of memorials. It is ideally sited for services. I just try not to think of the fascinating row of merchant houses and other buildings that Lord Cowdray, High Steward of the time, purchased and demolished and presented to the town.

The Memorial itself, designed by Mr C H Fehr, the eminent sculptor, was paid for by public subscription.

NEW YEAR LUNCH 2019 Sunday 20th January 2019 Greyfriars Hotel, East Hill, Colchester

The Civic Society is always made very welcome at Greyfriars and having been given a special offer for meals for individual members in November, some of us returned to celebrate the New Year on 20th January. It is pleasant surroundings – we were given our own room – and excellent food. We were not rushed to finish and be off, it was a very relaxing event.



SOCIAL PROGRAMME FOR THE REST OF 2019 - AND SOMETHING FOR 2020, TOO

Before I begin, I know that a good number of you are looking forward to our walk around the decorative gates of the Old Heath Recreation Ground with historian Andrew Phillips. This had to be postponed last year because road works in the immediate area caused huge disruption. I intended to include a new date in this Newsletter but it was not to be. Two of the gates have been badly damaged and are undergoing lengthy repairs. Although they are supposed to be back in May, there are no guarantees. There seems little point in booking a date until we know that work is complete and they are back in situ. I will keep an eye on the situation and keep all who were interested informed. I can still take names for this event, by the way. These are the details:

This is another event requested by members. The gates have been in situ for a little while now and there are interpretation panels but there is nothing like a guided tour by local historian of great renown, Andrew Phillips (who wrote the information for the boards!). The gates were designed by artist Tim Ward from Circling the Square in collaboration with local residents. The work was funded by a Heritage Lottery Fund grant. Each highly decorated gate depicts aspects of the area, military connections, Paxman's and the Co-Op, sport, leisure, retirement and New Town. Andrew will expand on the information on the boards, telling us about the history of the Old Heath Rec, of New Town and the surrounding area. He is incredibly knowledgeable and very entertaining. The cost is £5.

PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU READ THE WHOLE OF THE PROGRAMME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. IT INCLUDES EVENTS NOT PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED BUT ALSO DETAILS OF A VISIT IN 2020 WHICH NEEDS TO BE PAID FOR WELL IN ADVANCE IF YOU WISH TO COME.

Meanwhile, it has come to our attention that our insurance policy (arranged through Civic

Voice) no longer fully covers non members. Although welcome guests to all our events, we must explain that this is entirely at their own risk!

Monday 3rd June 2019 Meet at Greyfriars at 10am Coffee Morning

For those new to the Society, our Coffee Mornings actually take the form of a discussion group, with coffee and Greyfriars' delicious little shortbread biscuits, at which anything and everything about the town can be raised, be it a concern, something worthy of praise, an enquiry or an explanation. There is no agenda. Everyone is free to speak or just listen if they prefer. It is all very informal. We are prepared to take up issues but we also use the benefit of our own experience to help members deal with some themselves. Some are an ongoing battle but we have an enormous amount of success overall. As always, Greyfriars hotel car park is available if coming by car. Press the intercom on the post by the wrought iron gates on the right hand side of the public car park opposite the *Forester's Arms* and the receptionist will open the gate for you.

Cost? Free, but donations towards the work of the Society welcomed

Wednesday 5th June 2019 Meet at the gate to Fingringhoe Wick Nature Reserve at time to be notified (still not available!) for the first of this year's Badger Watching Evenings

THIS EVENING IS FULLY BOOKED BUT I HAVE LIMITED PLACES ON SATURDAY 6th JULY, 21st AUGUST AND 25th SEPTEMBER.

A magical evening sitting in comfortable seats in an easily accessible hide, watching badgers as they emerge from their sett to find the peanuts so thoughtfully scattered by Tom, our guide, who knows and loves this family so much. Lifts can be arranged. Please bring warm clothing and re-

member that we need to keep even whispered conversation to a minimum!

Cost? £10.00

Friday 7th June 2019 Meet at the Colchester English Study Centre at 19 Lexden Road at 2.20 pm for the Unveiling of our next Blue Plaque

I wonder how many Colcestrians are aware of the fact that the first woman to be Prime Minister of the U.K. lived in Colchester. Margaret Thatcher was here in the 1940s whilst working at BX Plastics in Brantham. 19, Lexden Road was one of the three places where she had lodgings during her years in the town. The others were Cambridge Road and Maldon Road, close to the junction with Hamilton Road. Foreign students attending the Study Centre are generally extremely proud to know that Margaret Thatcher lived in the building where they are studying so the erection of a plaque will provide a perfect subject for selfies! By the way, I must remind you all that the Civic Society is completely apolitical.

Cost? Free

Tuesday 11th June 2019 Meet at Greyfriars at 6.55pm for our Annual General Meeting

Greyfriars have offered us the use of their main restaurant for our AGM which means that we won't be so cramped as we were this year. I still can't get over how many people came! Far more than usual, which was great! The meeting will start at 7pm. We will break for coffee before our AGM speaker, David Balcombe from the Colchester and North East Essex Building Preservation Trust, takes the floor. The Trust has recently been deeply involved in finding potentially acceptable uses for Jumbo and is currently working to save Birch Church from demolition. I think you will find this a very interesting insight into what they do. Lifts can be arranged. There is plenty of parking available in the hotel car park. Please let us know if you are coming to give

Greyfriars some idea of seating requirements.

Cost? Free

Monday 17th June 2019 Meet outside Greyfriars on East Hill at 10.30am for our next Litter Pick

Although the Zone Operatives and others are working really hard to clear the town of litter, there is still lots about as can be evidenced by the 21 bags we found in a couple of hours when we did a litter pick for the Great British Spring Clean. This time, perhaps some of us can target some of the town's footpaths and folleys. We will borrow litter pickers from the Council and will provide rubbish bags and latex gloves. And there will be refreshments at Greyfriars at the end of the session. Please come and help us. It really does make a difference and it also raises awareness of the Society as members of the public often stop us to say thanks or to ask who we are.

Wednesday 19th June 2019 (Alternative date Thursday 15th August at 11.50am) Meet at the Chandlers at Titchmarsh Marina, Walton, at 1.50pm for the first of our Wildlife Cruises on Hamford Water aboard the Karina

We will be boarding *Karina*, a converted lifeboat, to explore Hamford Water, close to Walton on the Naze, a magical place where seals and seabirds abound, for a two hour cruise with Tony Haggis, who knows the backwaters like the back of his hand and who is an authority on the wildlife in the area. I understand that there are about 400 seals at the moment. Please let me know on the reply slip which of the two dates you would prefer and whether you need or can offer a lift. If the demand for this event is high, I may arrange a third cruise, so if neither date is suitable, please let me know so I can add your name to a waiting list. *Karina* is an open boat, so please bring appropriate clothing and wear flat shoes. Maps are available on request.

Cost? £15.00

Monday 24th June 2019

Meet at the Curzon Cinema in Queen Street at 10.30am for a Guided Tour - and a coffee

I was aware of the fact that several members felt slightly intimidated by the slightly unusual ground floor of the Curzon but I was amazed when it became apparent that some didn't know that the cinema was actually up and running! Time for a visit! One of the joys of the building is the top floor balcony (yes, there is a lift) from where there are wonderful views across Firstsite and the east and south of the town. These are views that will disappear if Alumno win their planning appeal and build student flats on the Cultural Quarter site. We will see the three screens, visit a projection room with state of the art equipment, discover the VIP Lounge, and that balcony, and will be given information about booking a seat, including details of the various packages available. Incidentally, the cinema is completely wheelchair friendly. Coffee will be provided.

Cost? £2.50

Monday 1st July 2019

Meet at Greyfriars at 10am Coffee Morning

Saturday 6th July

Meet at the gate to Fingringhoe Wick Nature Reserve at time to be notified (still not available) for the second of our Badger Watching Evenings

A further visit to see the Badgers at Fingringhoe Wick. Details above.

Cost? £10.00

Wednesday 10th July 2019

Meet by the Interpretation Board in the Butt Road Car Park (accessed via Le Cateau Road off Butt Road opposite Beaconsfield Avenue) at 12.55pm for a visit to the Garrison Water Tower

The Civic Society helped the Balcerne Tower Trust with the cost of an interpretation board for

this delightful little water tower and were represented at the unveiling by some of the Executive Committee. It gave us the opportunity to have a look inside and I immediately asked whether I could arrange a visit for you all. The whole complex is amazing. The Garrison Water Tower dates from the 1870s. It replaces an earlier tower built a few years before which was less successful in providing the huge water supply needed for the hundreds of horses stabled at the new Cavalry Barracks. Each horse needed upwards of 12 gallons of water a day! This one was built for the Royal Horse Artillery, who expanded the barracks in 1873-75. We can only access the ground floor, but that is quite enough as it is a simply beautiful space. The water tower was recently converted and restored by Lexden Restorations, who really excelled themselves as they added office buildings to the tower to provide premises for Ellisons, the solicitors. I am sure we will be able to have a quick peek at those, too, if we ask nicely. Please don't be late as we are visiting during the office lunch break.

Cost? Free, but donations welcomed. Please be aware that there is a charge for the CBC Butt Road Car Park.

Sunday 14th July 2019

Meet at the bus stop at the top of East Hill (opposite Greyfriars) at 12.00 noon for our second visit to Foulness

THIS VISIT IS NOW FULL BUT I AM TAKING NAMES FOR A WAITING LIST. IF I HAVE ENOUGH INTEREST, I WILL ARRANGE A THIRD VISIT NEXT YEAR, THEREFORE, PLEASE COMPLETE THE SLIP IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GO.

The first group of Civic Society members who finally got to Foulness last summer sweltered in the heat. The second group didn't get there because the weather was so bad we had to postpone their visit! Torrential, prolonged rain and high winds would have made the experience singularly unpleasant and even dangerous. I have rebooked!

They can only take 30 people at a time, hence the need for two, or possibly, three visits. I am repeating what I wrote in the Newsletter earlier this year for the benefit of new members.

I am not going to spoil the afternoon by telling you much about the place now. All I will say is that it is another world. Owned by the MOD and used, for decades, to test missiles, it is a large, flat island, 6 feet above sea level at its highest point. Access is through Army checkpoints. Security is taken very seriously at Foulness. The church is closed and structurally unsafe. The pub has shut. The school shut several years ago when the number of pupils dropped to 11. The school building is now a quaint little museum and heritage centre. That's enough. I shall say no more apart from to tell you that it is an incredibly interesting and atmospheric place and I know you will enjoy your time here.

Peter Carr, a local farmer, will take you on a tour of the island, mostly following the sea wall, in a big and easily accessible trailer pulled by a tractor (there are steps up into it but even I could manage them). It has seats and is fairly comfortable. Peter's knowledge of the island is second to none; its history, its wildlife, its people. It is a fascinating experience. Tour complete, it is back to the heritage centre for a cup of tea and cake and free time to look at all the little museum has to offer. I am afraid that it is the tour or nothing. Visitors to the island must not explore by themselves, for both security and safety reasons. Cameras are allowed but you may be asked not to photograph certain things. Binoculars are OK. Mobile phones must be switched off whilst on the island. Please bring a packed lunch to eat on the coach and, however warm it seems, bring a jumper or light jacket. The sea breeze can be quite strong. And before you ask, there are loos at the heritage centre - and on the coach.

Cost? £35.00 to include guided tour, and tea and cake.

Tuesday 30th July 2019

Meet at Colchester Castle Museum at 6.30 pm for a Private View of the 'Adorn' exhibition

We are invited by the Friends of Colchester Museums to join them at a private viewing of this major exhibition, originally referred to as 'Bling'. The exhibition opens to the public on 27th July 2019, with the theme of jewellery throughout the ages, showcasing the Museum's own extensive collection but also supplemented by examples from other collections, including the British Museum. Museum staff will be on hand and there will be light refreshments.

Cost, including both admission and refreshments is £5.00 payable to the Friends of Colchester Museums, c/o Peter Evans, Hon. Treasurer, 5 Grimston Road, Colchester CO2 7RN

5th August 2019

Meet at Greyfriars at 10am Coffee Morning

Thursday 8th August 2019

Meet at the bus stop at the top of East Hill, opposite Greyfriars at 7.45am for a visit to Farley Farm and Ditchling Museum and Art Gallery in Sussex

Following last year's visit to Charleston Farmhouse and Monk's House in Sussex, I have been asked for a visit to both Farley Farm and the Ditchling Museum and Art Gallery, also in Sussex. Your wish is my command - well, sometimes! Farley Farm? It is another extraordinary house. Its exterior is nothing out of the ordinary, although it is very attractive, but, inside, it is something else! With rambling corridors and brightly coloured walls filled with works by such artists as Picasso, Miro, Man Ray and Ernst, all of whom visited the house, it is a sight to behold! The house was bought by Lee Miller and Roland Penrose in 1949 and they lived there for the rest of their lives.

Lee Miller was born in New York. She became a model for *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair* before

moving to Paris to study photography with Man Ray, setting up her own photographic studios in Paris and New York prior to marrying and moving to Cairo. After meeting Ronald Penrose, she moved to London at the beginning of the Second World War. Her surrealist images, portraits and extraordinary World War II photographs have earned her a place in the History of Art. Rowland Penhurst was born in London but spent much of his life in France where he became friends with many artists within the surrealist movement. He was, himself, a surrealist painter but also a photographer, poet and the biographer of Picasso, Miro, Man Ray and Tapes. He co-founded the Institute of Contemporary Arts and was a major promoter and collector of modern art.

We will have a guided tour of this amazing family home. Then, in the afternoon, we visit the Ditchling Museum of Art and Craft. Ditchling! Where do I start? The village was home to many artists, including Frank Brangwyn, the extraordinarily prolific artist-craftsman, Eric Gill, sculptor, typeface designer and printmaker, Charles Knight, landscape painter, David Jones, artist, wood engraver and poet, Edward Johnson, the calligrapher who designed the typeface used throughout the London Underground and Ethel Mairet, hand loom weaver. Why were they all there? Eric Gill moved to the village in 1907 with his apprentice, Joseph Cribb. Other craftsmen followed. In 1921, Gill, Hilary Pepler, the printer and Desmond Chute, stone carver, founded the Guild of Saint Joseph and Saint Dominic, a Roman Catholic community of artists and craftsmen inspired by the ideas of mediaeval guilds and the Arts and Crafts Movement. The community had its own workshops and a chapel. It survived until the late 1980s. In 1985, two elderly sisters bought the former school in Ditchling and opened it as a museum. They had known those artists when they were children and wanted to recognise the importance of their presence in the village. By 2007, the old school was in a poor state. The decision was made to raise funds to not only re-

store the building but also to extend it. The redevelopment cost £2.3m but it was worth every penny. The architects, Adam Richards, won a number of very prestigious awards for their work and the museum was a finalist in the Art Fund Museum of the Year in 2014. So our visit is not just to see the amazing art collection at the museum but to see the building itself. There will be a guided walk around the village during which we will learn a lot more about the artists who lived in Ditchling whose work is now on display in the museum.

Cost? £48.50 to include afternoon cup of tea and slice of cake.

Thursday 15th August 2019
Meet at the Chandlers at Titchmarsh Marina, Walton, at 11.50am for the second of our Cruises on Hamford Water

Details as previous.

Sunday 18th August 2019
Meet at Wiston Mill, near Nayland, at 2.30pm for Afternoon Tea

We are incredibly lucky! Civic Society member, Suki Cohen, has offered her beautiful home as a venue for afternoon tea. Situated on the bank of the River Stour, the huge timber-framed and weatherboarded watermill dates from the 18th and 19th centuries, although a mill has been on the site since the 16th century and the mill race, over which the mill is built contains Tudor brickwork. Attached to the mill is a 16th century house which was, some while ago, cottages. The mill is set in a large garden, where, weather permitting, we can eat. If the weather is bad, never fear, we will go indoors! I really hope you can come. Please let me know whether you need or can offer a lift. Maps available. Gluten free sandwiches and cakes will be available.

Cost? £9.00

Wednesday 21st August 2019
Meet at the gate to Fingringhoe Wick Nature

Reserve at time to be notified (still unknown) for our third Badger Watching Evening

Details as previous.

Monday 2nd September 2019
Meet at Greyfriars 10am Coffee Morning
Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th September 2019 Heritage Open Days

May I thank those members who have offered to act as stewards at the buildings open to the public during the HODs weekend. Although we now have enough to cover the sites, it is always good to have someone in reserve, so if you are prepared to volunteer, please let us know.

Thursday 19th September 2019
Meet at the bus stop at the top of East Hill outside East Hill House at 10am for a visit to West Stow Anglo Saxon Village.

I intend to get to Stow, in the beautiful Brecklands, via a circuitous route that those without cars might particularly enjoy, with a stop for coffee on the way. West Stow has huge archaeological importance. It is the site of an early Anglo-Saxon village, occupied from AD 420 to AD650, 400 years before the Norman Conquest. We will have a guided tour which will give us an insight into the lives of those who lived there but we will not have to strain our imagination too much as there are now eight reconstructed buildings on the site including a farmer's house, the hall building and a weaving house. Indoor galleries nearby house some of the artefacts found during excavations. We will arrive in time for lunch - there is a cafe on site and a picnic area so you can bring a packed lunch if you prefer. The site is surrounded by a country park - featuring heathland and coniferous woodland so typical of this area - and you may decide to follow at least part of the Beowulf and Grendel interpretive trail! There will be time for a cup of tea before we leave.

Cost? £30.00 to include morning coffee

Saturday 21st September 2019
Meet at St Botolph's Priory for Colchester Borough Council's Open Day and Public Consultation. All day from 10am

Colchester Borough Council wants to encourage more people to use St Botolph's Priory as public open space but, in order to do so, they need to discourage the antisocial behaviour on the site. They have decided to hold an open day and public consultation event to kick start future action. The Museum Service will be providing some activities and the Colchester Blue Badge Guides will be there, too. They have asked whether we can support this day by having a stand. It seems the ideal opportunity to bring out our Wishing Wall again! For those that have never come across the Wishing Wall, it is normally a section of Herras fencing to which members of the public attach their wishes for Colchester, written on brightly coloured luggage labels. The wishes, when collated, provide an absolutely fascinating snapshot of current issues and opinions, giving the Society a very valuable insight. We forward those wishes on to ECC and CBC too. We would really appreciate offers of help with our stand, please. But, even if you can't help us, do come along. CBC need all the help they can get to reclaim this lovely oasis in the town centre. More details of the event will be available on request later.

Saturday 5th October 2019
Mee at Firstsite for Civic Voice East of England Networking Event.

Colchester Civic Society is hosting the next East of England Civic Voice event at Firstsite on Saturday October 5th. This will be a full day event in which our Society will be outlining the work we are doing to a gathering of representatives from societies across the East of England. It will also include a workshop on the theme 'Building For Life'.

Building for Life is a tool for assessing the design quality of homes and neighbourhoods in England. It comprises of 20 questions, or criteria,

to assess the design quality of new housing developments, resulting in a numerical score. The criteria reflect the importance of functionality, attractiveness and sustainability in well-designed homes and neighbourhood.

If you are interested in playing a part in this event please contact John Salmon, email johnsalmon@colchestercivicsociety.co.uk or complete the reply slip.

Monday 7th October 2019
Meet at Greyfriars at 10am Coffee Morning

Sunday 20th October 2019
The Great Stink. Meet at the bus stop at the top of East Hill outside East Hill House at 8am for a visit to London to find out about the Great Stink and Sir Joseph Bazalgette's answer to the problem.

THIS VISIT WAS FULLY BOOKED BUT SOME PEOPLE MAY NO LONGER BE ABLE TO GO, SO I AM HAPPY TO START A WAITING LIST. PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.

This visit was another that hit the buffers in 2018, not, this time, because of the weather, but because asbestos was discovered in the 'Cathedral of Sewage' and all visits were stopped whilst the authorities set to work to remove it! We understand that work should be complete by April but I have taken that with a sizeable pinch of salt and have asked whether we can rebook later in the year. Hopefully I will have some news in time for the next Newsletter. For new members intrigued by the nature of this visit, it is a look at the history of sewage disposal in London. Here with the details:

We begin our day in Chancery Lane in a pub with extraordinary loos! Here we have coffee and meet our guide for the day before starting our journey of discovery. The Romans had a sophisticated sewage system. They even had a Goddess of Sewers, Cloacina!! After they left, everything went out of the window, quite literally! The hid-

den rivers of London provided water for wells but, as the Thames became more and more of an open sewer, the wells became polluted and so, eventually, began the reign of King Cholera. It was the long, hot summer of 1858 that really brought matters to a head. The smell from the Thames became so bad that Parliament could not sit. The Great Stink meant that something had to be done.

Enter Sir Joseph Bazalgette. Today you will find out about his amazing feats of engineering and will visit his spectacular Cathedral of Sewage, aka his pumping station, at Crossness. It is one of the most astounding buildings in London. But I am getting ahead of myself. The morning will be spent discovering the history of spending a penny in the capital. Some of the exploration will be on foot but most in the coach. By lunchtime, we will be in Westminster, boarding a boat for a cruise down the Thames to Greenwich. There is a bar on board but no food so we will need to bring a packed lunch. I would bring a drink, too, as a trip to the bar will mean the loss of valuable sightseeing time! Rejoining the coach at Greenwich, we make our way to Crossness. I would advise strong, flat shoes for the visit to the pumping station. To explore fully, there is a need to climb a spiral staircase, but fear not. There are alternatives for the less ambulant. Tea and biscuits will be served at the end of the afternoon.

Cost? £52.50

Monday 4th November 2019
Meet at Greyfriars 10am Coffee Morning

Sunday 17th November 2019
Meet at the bus stop at the top of East Hill, opposite Greyfriars, at 8am for our reconvened visit to the Museum of Brands and a whole lot more!

I do apologise for the further postponement of this visit, caused by the unexpected announcement that the whole area we were visiting was to

be closed to traffic because of a half marathon! I am trying yet again! We meet our guide in the City where we stop for coffee before rejoining the coach to explore the history of marketing. I often smile to myself as I write details of our visits and imagine your faces as you read and this is one such occasion. Marketing? Why on earth would we be interested in that? But you will be fascinated, I promise. Our guide, who has a professional marketing background but is now one of the best blue badge guides in London, will take us on a journey through the streets of the City looking at the visual clues to the ways that businesses have sought to empty our pockets throughout the ages. Mediaeval street names, branding by the powerful Livery Companies, hanging signs featuring pictures rather than words to entice the illiterate; all feature in the tour. We then make our way to Kensington where we are free for lunch close to the new Design Museum, well worth a visit, before spending the rest of the afternoon at the Museum of Brands, housing Robert Opie's incredible collection of packaging. This has been described as 'ten thousand memories in one afternoon' and I challenge anyone not to wallow in nostalgia! There will be time for tea and cake before leaving for Colchester.

Cost? £54.00 to include morning coffee and afternoon tea and cake.

Monday 11th November 2019
Meet at Greyfriars at 7.30pm for our Burning Issues Meeting.

This is the second evening meeting during 2019 for you to come and discuss issues concerning our town. Lifts can be arranged. Coffee and/or tea will be served. Lifts can be arranged.

Cost? Free but donations welcomed

Probably November 2019
Tree Planting

Some of you will be wondering what has happened to our proposed tree planting. We were

hoping to plant a tree at St Botolph's Priory to commemorate Ann and John Crook Williams, tireless workers for the Society. Unfortunately, weather conditions were against us and then we were too short of time to arrange for Ann and John's two sons to come, one from a great distance, before the contractor was unexpectedly called away for the rest of the planting season. We decided to plant the tree, a lime we had bought to replace one that had died, without ceremony, and start again with another tree in memory of the stalwart couple. I am not yet sure where the new tree will be. If you would still like to attend the planting, please fill in the slip and I will let you know when and where.

Monday 2nd December 2019
Meet at Greyfriars 10am Coffee Morning

AND A DATE FOR 2020!

PLEASE READ THIS NOW AS, UNUSUALLY, I WILL NEED TO PAY UPFRONT BY THE 15th OCTOBER, SO WILL NEED CONFIRMED BOOKINGS BY THEN

Wednesday 25th March 2020
Meet at the bus stop at the top of East Hill at 9.30am for a visit to London to discover the connection between Tutankhamun and the Roaring Twenties!

The discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb was made just at the beginning of the Roaring Twenties, when new forms of mass media, newsreel and telephone, meant that up to the minute information about the excavation and the extraordinary finds could quickly reach a huge audience. The discovery of the tomb gripped the nation and the cultural influence was unprecedented. Ancient Egyptian design fed the Art Deco style. Architecture, fashion and make up followed the trend for all things Egyptian, travel to the Middle East with Thomas Cook became popular, cinema, music halls and literature (Agatha Christie) all jumped on the bandwagon.

Our afternoon begins at the National Army

Museum Cafe where we can buy lunch and where we meet our guide. There follows a coach tour through Kensington and Chelsea, during which we will discover so much about the King Tut effect whilst looking at some of the architecture influenced by the discovery of the treasure and, incidentally, find out where Howard Carter lived and died. There will be a quick break for a cup of tea and then we are off to the Saatchi Gallery, which is hosting the last amazing exhibition of

finds from the tomb of Tutankhamun before they are all finally returned to their new, purpose built gallery in the Grand Egyptian Museum in Cairo. Over 150 incredible tomb objects will be on display, 60 of which will be out of Egypt for the first time. This is an unmissable afternoon.

Cost? £55.00

PLEASE NOTE THAT I MUST HAVE PAYMENT BY 15th OCTOBER 2019 IF YOU WISH TO COME

If you take part in any of the events mentioned in the Social Programme, please consider writing a review to go into the next Newsletter. It need not be long. It can be sent to me, as editor, either by email or in writing by post.

Address details are on the inside cover.

Photographs are welcomed, but not essential.

Peter Evans

The Objects of The Civic Society are to:

- a) Encourage high standards of architecture and town planning in the Borough of Colchester.
- b) Stimulate public interest in and care for the beauty, history and character of the area of the town of Colchester and its surroundings.
- c) Encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general public amenity and of public interest.
- d) Pursue these ends by means of meetings, exhibitions, lectures, publications, other forms of instruction and publicity and the promotion of schemes of a charitable nature.
- e) Co-operate with other local, regional and national organisations in the pursuit of the same objects on a broader geographical basis.

CURRENT OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: **John Burton** MBE
VICE PRESIDENTS: **Right Reverend Roger Morris**, Bishop of Colchester

Mr B A Barton

Mr K Cooke

CHAIR AND PROGRAMME ORGANISER:

Jo Edwards, 43 Priory Street, Colchester CO1 2QB
01206 868254 josiemedwards@hotmail.com

VICE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:

Ann Turner, 1 Robin Close, Great Bentley CO7 8QH
01206 250894 ann@hollytreehouse.com

TREASURER: **Paul Weston**, 46 Wordsworth Road, Colchester CO3 4HR
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SECRETARY: **Mike Fitt**, 31 Roman Road, Colchester CO1 1UR

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: **Peter Evans**, 5 Grimston Road, Colchester CO2 7RN
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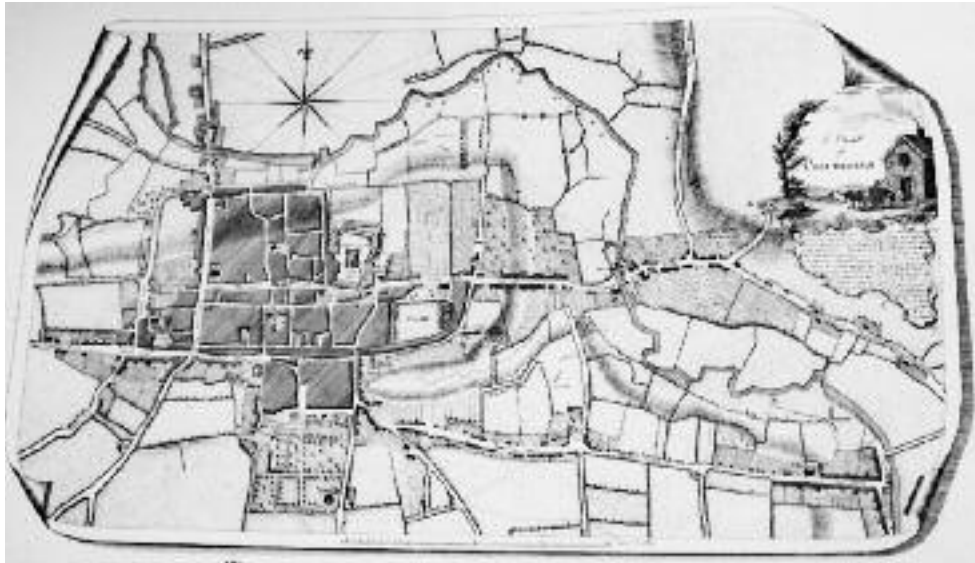
OTHER ELECTED MEMBERS: **Sheila Anderton**, 30 Rosebery Avenue, Colchester

Bob Mercer, 59 Shrub End Road, Colchester CO3 4RA

Jayne Richardson, 59 Byron Avenue, Colchester CO3 4HQ

John Salmon, 68 Castle Road, Colchester CO1 1UN

Henry Spyvee, 16 Wakefield Close, Colchester CO1 2SD



**The Map of Colchester
circa 1767
by Chapman & Andre**