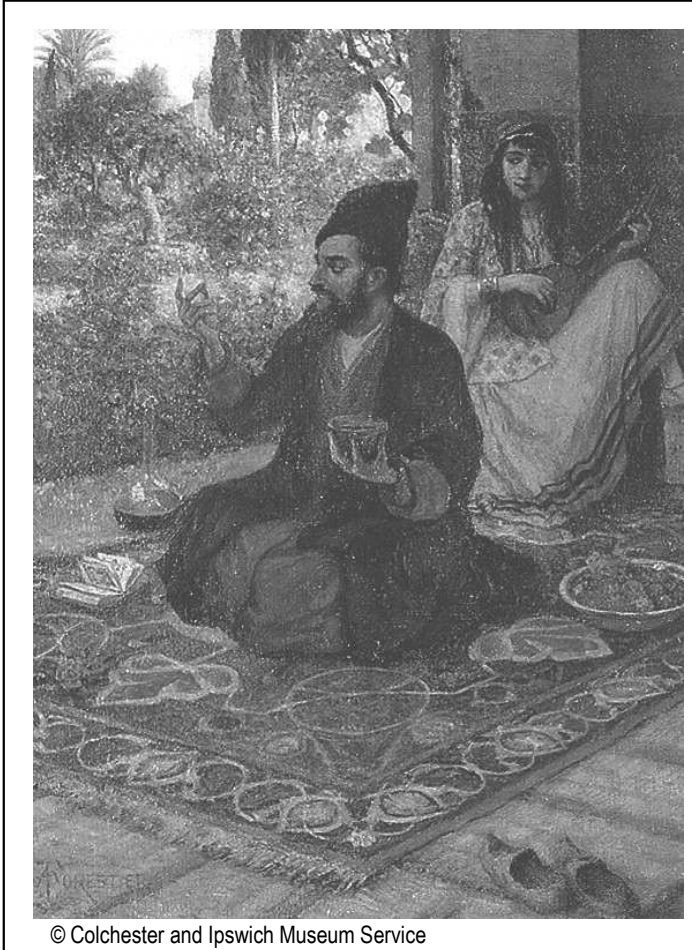


Summer 2009



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Ipswich Museums  
**Friends**  
**Newsletter**



The **Friends of the Ipswich Museums Newsletter** is published quarterly and distributed free to all members. The FOIM was set up in 1934 to support the work and development of the Ipswich Museums: Ipswich Museum in the High Street (including Gallery 3 at the Town Hall), Christchurch Mansion and the Wolsey Gallery in Christchurch Park. Since April 2007 the Ipswich Museums have been managed as part of the Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service.

Friends continue to provide financial support to the Ipswich Museums as well as acting as volunteers. The Friends run outings, lectures and other events for their members.

The Friends provide guided tours of both the Mansion and the Museum, including free taster tours of the Mansion on Wednesday afternoons during British Summer Time. Tours can be booked by contacting the Mansion (01473 433554).

FOIM is a member of the British Association of Friends of Museums and Ipswich Arts Association.

Contributions to the Autumn 2009 Newsletter should be sent to the editor by 3 August (address on back cover).

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**Cover Illustration:** Friends at Tullie House—see visit report on page 11 or Amédée Forestier, A Scene from Omar Khayyam

Please visit our website at [www.foim.org.uk](http://www.foim.org.uk). Jerry Latham would welcome your comments. We have already started to use the website to advertise events which are notified too late to be printed in the Newsletter (also see page 10).

## Editor's Notes

I must start by apologising to Valerie Irwin. She holds the copyright to the drawing shown on the front cover of the last issue. I incorrectly attributed the copyright to the Museum Service..

In this issue we welcome our new Chairman Mary Southwood who was elected at our AGM in April. There is also a summary of the decisions made at the AGM for those who were unable to come.

The Winter Lectures were not very well attended this year. This was very disappointing after all the hard work put in by Mary Hollis. The Council are considering what should be organised for the coming winter. Please let us know your views.

I have been talking to Lynette Burgess at Colchester about informing Friends about Museum events. Lynette tells me that the Museum Service will be sending the

Friends copies of the events list which Service publishes every three months. This means that I will not longer publish children's events. Starting with this issue I will only be including information about events which are of particular interest to adult members.

**Mary Halliwell**

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## Ipswich Arts Association Discounts

FOIM is a subscribing member of the Ipswich Arts Association and this entitles its individual members to discounts on certain events promoted by Ipswich Borough Council.

Paid-up members of societies affiliated to Ipswich Arts Association may receive special offers on some events promoted by Ipswich Borough Council. These events

will include the Ipswich Civic Concerts, and certain ballet and opera events at the Ipswich Regent Theatre. The concessions do not extend to other promoted events

To obtain these concessions, please produce a current membership card confirming your affiliation to FOIM when booking.

## Chairman's Message



Thank you for making me Chairman of the Friends of the Ipswich Museums; It is a privilege.

I have been involved in the Museums since 2002, soon after I moved into Ipswich. A friend (in both senses) suggested joining the Friends would be a good way to meet a lot of really nice people and do something interesting; I took her advice and began training as a guide. This made me so curious that I was soon looking for extra information to answer my own and visitors' questions. As the research goes on I have, indeed, met many charming people and increased my circle of (F)riends. I have enjoyed many of Alan's well organised yet relaxed trips (though I was not able to go on the latest adventure, unfortunately). I have attended fascinating talks and relaxed at Christmas parties and other social events. My friend has some very good ideas!

It is now two years since the merger of Ipswich and Colchester Museums and clearly the result has been SUCCESS. The museums have continued to develop and expand and visitor numbers are rising. Everyone involved has worked very hard and there is still much to do. Christchurch Mansion looks splendid under a perfect new roof and the collection is safe from the weather. The Friends' web site is now up and running; here you can get interesting news about the museums and the activities of the Friends, so log on to [www.foim.org.uk](http://www.foim.org.uk).

Did you go to a Winter Lecture this year? Mary Hollis worked hard, but attendance was not good. Do you have any ideas about time, date, venue or subject that you think would make the lectures more attractive? If so, please let us know. The Lectures are for your enjoyment

This summer promises to be very exciting at Ipswich Museums. I am looking forward to the opera costumes and lots more, organised by the Museum Service. I do hope you enjoy the pleasures that Ipswich Museums offer. Please feel free to make suggestions for Friends activities; your membership is greatly appreciated. Thank you

**Mary Southwood**  
**Chairman**

## Peter Berridge's Column

### Our Joint Museum Service

As I am writing this it is in the latter part of May 2009 which means that we are now firmly into the third year of the operation of the joint museum service across Ipswich and Colchester. As the months and years go on the fact of the partnership arrangement and its ongoing success will be a matter of less and less comment, as it will just become part of the accepted way of doing things. For the present, however, it is still something that is very much on people's minds. On a national level this form of partnership, in the cultural sector, is still very rare though increasingly commonplace in many other aspects of Local Authority activity. This rarity places a value on the experience gained through the creation and management of our shared museum service to the extent that others are directly seeking advice as they consider similar partnerships themselves.

### Sharing our Experiences

Over the last couple of years there have been several enquiries which have involved discussions over the phone and sharing some of the various documents and reports that were written as part of the creation of Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service. Last year I gave a talk to share the experience of Colchester and Ipswich at an event in Birmingham, which was looking at governance arrangements in museums. In part, as a result of this last week I attended a meeting in Worcester in order to give some advice towards the creation of a merged museum service

between the county and the city. In terms of what they are looking to do they seem to be drawing very heavily on our model particularly in terms of the legal framework they are adopting. It will be very interesting to follow the progress of this initiative over the next few months. On the same issue of sharing our experience I have also been asked to give a talk about the Colchester and Ipswich model at the Museum Association's annual conference in October which this year is being held in London.

### Our National Profile

In creating the new museum service it was identified that one of the results would be an increased profile both regionally and nationally. From what I have just described it is clear that in terms of profile a positive result has been achieved. This is not simply a vain glorious exercise as it brings with it some real and clear benefits. Certainly various partnership projects have and are being developed because of this which in particular has led to various funding opportunities being opened up. Both I and other members of museum staff are also being asked to be part of various initiatives and bodies at both a regional and national level. For instance I have been asked to form part of a advisory group formed by the National Museum Directors Conference (an organisation that brings the nationals together) to look at enhancing national-regional partnerships. This not only shows that we are seen as a credible and influential partner for national

museums but the involvement itself opens up opportunities for partnership working.

### **Working with China**

As a direct result of our increased profile we now form part of a partnership project organised by the British Museum who have been given a grant from the DCMS to work with a number of regional museums under the theme of China. This funding (and the exact sum is still to be fully confirmed but we are perhaps looking at £25,000) will link into a major regional project called 'East meets East' which is the East of England's successful bid in relation to a national initiative called 'Stories of the World' which I mentioned in the last newsletter. When writing the last column we had already been told in confidence that the East of England's bid, of which we form the lead organisation, had been successful but we were embargoed from announcing it until a ministerial announcement which duly happened in late April at a national launch in London. There will be a lot more about Stories of the World over the coming months and years in the build up to 2012 as it is one of the major museum initiatives linked to the London games. In addition to the British Museum money we have already secured £46,000 to help initiate the project. All told the project may cost around £1m virtually all of which we expect to raise from various grant giving bodies and sponsorship. One of the benefits of being selected as one of the delivery partners for Stories of the World is that we will be provided with opportunities and support in approaching the major commercial organisations sponsoring the 2012 Olympics (and we are already on the

track of one of these). The overall project will see a wide range of activities from working with community groups, such as the Ipswich based children's Chinese Drum Ensemble, to mounting international loan exhibitions from China. While some of these will be one of events every opportunity will be taken to ensure that a lasting legacy is achieved whether it be investing in exhibition infrastructure in the museums or developing a community group. While there will be undeniably a lot of work developing and progressing this project it will be also be an exciting experience and one that will inevitably further raise the profile of Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service and in its turn open up other opportunities for the future.

**Peter Berridge**  
**Museum Service Manager**

## AGM REPORT

*The AGM was held at Chritchurch Mansion on Tuesday 8 April 2009.*

Gay Strutt (President) was in the Chair and 57 members of the Friends Jayne Austin, Tom Hodgson, Caroline MacDonald and Emma Roodhouse (Colchester & Ipswich Museum Service) were present.

**Apologies for absence** were received from Peter Berridge (Colchester & Ipswich Museums Service), Cllr. Judy Terry (Ipswich Borough Council) and 14 Friends.

**Minutes of the AGM of 18 April 2008** had been circulated to all members. They were approved and signed without amendment.

**Matters arising.** None

### **Chairman's Report**

Paul Bruce introduced Gay Strutt, who had accepted an invitation to become our President during the past year. In reviewing events since the last AGM, he expressed the Friends' satisfaction that all the outstanding posts had now been filled and the Service was once again fully staffed. A recent notable event was that both the Museum and the Mansion had received full accreditation from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, with commendations for the efficient implementation of the merger and for extending to Ipswich the PORTAL scheme for links with disability groups. Repairs to the roof of the Mansion had led to a reappraisal, with many improvements, of the storage of artworks in the attics. There had been few opportunities for

acquisitions, apart from some works by the late John Western at a cost of approximately £2,000. Council had approved a grant of £16,000 towards the creation of the new Egyptian Gallery at the Museum. Friends' day trips, holiday visits and lunchtime lectures continued to be very successful and in many cases oversubscribed. Attendance at the Winter Lectures, however, had fallen off and the causes of this would be examined. We had heard with great pleasure that our Vice President, Alan Swerdlow, had been awarded the MBE in the New Year's honours list for his services to the arts. On retiring at the end of his five-year term, the Chairman expressed his gratitude for the help and support he had received from the Friends, the Council and the staff at both the Museum and the Mansion and from his wife, Sue. He thanked the retiring Treasurer, Roy Suttle, who had agreed to act as Treasurer for a few months and had stayed in the post for nearly four years.

### **Trustees' Report and Annual Accounts**

The accounts having been circulated, the Treasurer commented that the figure for tax refunds for the year to 31 Dec 2008 would be added to that for the following year. After deducting the amount of the Lady Dorothy Foot Bequest, our assets stood at over £80,000. The accounts were adopted by a show of hands. A gift was presented to the Treasurer in recognition of his work over the past years. Ken

Wilson had stated his willingness to continue to act as our Independent Examiner

### **Report of the Membership Secretary**

Membership had again increased and the 375 individual, joint and family subscriptions represented some 600 members. Since the last AGM four new corporate members had joined. Donations to the chests in the Mansion and the Museum had risen markedly and totalled over £5,000 for the past twelve months.

**Report of the Museums Service** Tom Hodgson presented a report on behalf of the Museum Service.

### **President's Address**

The President expressed her pleasure at being invited to be associated with the Friends and to share in the work of promoting our beautiful collections. It was clear that the merger with Colchester had brought great benefits, not least that of being part of a regional Hub together with Norwich, Luton and the Fitzwilliam Museum. She thanked the retiring Chairman for the energy and dedication he had shown in office.

### **Appointment of a second Vice President**

The Council had invited Paul Bruce, on his retirement as Chairman, to become a Vice President of the Friends and he had accepted. By a show of hands, the meeting endorsed this appointment. Mary Southwood, the incoming Chairman, thanked him on behalf of the Friends for his exceptional service during the past five years, and made a presentation to him

from his colleagues on the Council

### **Election of Officers of the Association and Members of the Council**

The following had been nominated and seconded:

Chairman - Mary Southwood

Vice-Chairman -Jeremy Latham

Treasurer - David Kergon

Secretary - Kathleen Daniel

Council Members - Barbara Cole, Mary Halliwell, Siobhan Steel

It was proposed, seconded and agreed by the meeting that all the above be elected.

### **Any Other Business**

In reply to questions from the floor, Tom Hodgson said that there was no intention to change the present policy of free admission to both sites. The provision of catering facilities at the Mansion during winter months was a vexed question. The number of visitors using the café between October and March was so small that a sizeable loss would inevitably be made. It was proposed to provide a high quality vending machine, from which visitors could obtain hot drinks, during the winter and to extend the length of the franchise to 3 years for provision of full café facilities during the summer.

**After the business meeting, members heard an entertaining address by Rupert Maas of the Antiques Roadshow.**



## Friends Events and News

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### Visit to the Museum of Norfolk Life, Gressenhall Farm Norfolk

Sat 22 August 2009



The 50 acre site includes riverside, rare breeds, atmospheric shops and homes from the past, and a Victorian Workhouse (in operation from 1777 to the 1940s).

Price: £19.00 per adult £18.00 per young person.

A booking form is included with this Newsletter.

### Questionnaires

Two questionnaires are included with this Newsletter. In the first our new Chairman, Mary Southwood, would like to know if any Friends would be willing to volunteer to help run our activities.

The second questionnaire is from Alan Swerdlow. He is keen to know where you would like to visit. This is your opportunity to tell him your views.

### From the Membership Secretary

There have been 9 new members since the last newsletter:-

Mr D Gascoyne	Mr G Brown
Mr C Vince	Mrs A Shead
Mrs S Spall	Mr & Mrs M Groom
Mrs C Bowles	Mrs W May
and	Miss C MacDonald

We extend a warm welcome to them all.  
Thank you all for your patience during my move to a new flat. The address is:

35 Pownall Road  
IPSWICH IP3 0DN

Telephone: 01473 287716

So it is business as usual now!

Several people have still not paid their subscription for 2009—you will find a reminder enclosed. I will be very pleased to hear from you.

Many Thanks

**Barbara Cole.**  
**Membership Secretary**

## Mansion Guides News

We are pleased to offer free taster tours on Wednesday afternoons again this Summer season. They last for half an hour and give a wonderful introduction to Christchurch Mansion and its contents. They are suitable for small groups and we meet in the Great Hall at 2.00 pm and 3.00 pm.

Full length tours for larger parties can still be booked for a modest fee. We offer a range of subjects and information can be found on the Friends website ([www.foim.org.uk](http://www.foim.org.uk)).

Lastly thanks to Joan Keene for all her hard work as a guide over the years. We welcome new guides Erica Burrows, Robert Burlinson, Marjorie Carter, Sarah Killick, Joan Munns and Jardine Thomas, all of whom start taking tours this season.

**Siobhan Steel**  
**Guides Co-ordinator**

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## From our Webmaster

### Do you want to receive timely news?

If you have an email address read on. There are some occasions when we have information that could be of interest to you. For example -

- An item of news falling between newsletters
- Reminders of an upcoming event that has spare capacity

These items will appear on the web site. We could be passive and hope you

regularly look at the site or we could be active and tell you via email.

So if we can send out a group email containing this timely news you will become aware of events you may otherwise have missed. It is immediate and it costs us nothing.

### Please tell us your e-mail address

You can send your e-mail address via our web site ([www.foim.org.uk](http://www.foim.org.uk)) – Click 'News updates by email' in the 'Contact Us' menu. Pease remember to include your membership name so we can link your name to your email address.

We will not inundate you with emails and will try our best to only send relevant and timely information. It will be a broadcast message so you may receive information that you already know. It is difficult for us to know what you know. If you later wish to be removed from the distribution list please let us know.

Presently I have 30 email addresses so only these few would receive breaking news.

**Jerry Latham**

## Friends visit to Cumbria, 22-26 April 2009

*Alan Swerdlow and Jerry Latham report on the Friends visit to Cumbria.*

### Wed 22 April

Unlike our politicians, one of our perspicacious party brought a briefcase for his tour literature. This was such a successful paparazzi countermeasure that I detected no published photos of our itinerary in any national papers. However, all can now be revealed.

First stop **Nostell Priory** near Wakefield, which houses England's best documented collections of Chippendale furniture, plus Robert Adam interiors and a splendid library. Even the room doors were a joy with their delicate carving and veneers. The exposed tenon end grain was veneered to disguise its existence and the hinges had brass covers presumably to hide the offensive screw heads from delicate ladies. Some of us were lucky to see the weekly winding of the 1717 John Harrison longcase clock. Right time right place again – how does Alan arrange it? This clock has a wooden movement which he thought would wear well and not require lubricating. I still think it needs more testing. 300 years is a little too short.

We then enjoyed the parkland before we continued on to **Carlisle** with Gareth, our driver, skilfully avoiding a major delay on the A66.

Our hotel by the Gothic railway station provided a good evening meal where the forty eight of us were able to unwind after the day's journey.

### Thursday 23 April

The weather changed for our drive through the Lake District to Coniston. We boarded a launch for a misty cruise to visit John Ruskin's **Brantwood**, his home for the latter years of his life. The collection is full of art and memorabilia connected with the artist, writer and thinker. I heard more than one of our party vowing to research this fascinating man.

In the afternoon **Blackwell** on Lake Windermere was a complete contrast with its elegant Arts and Crafts architecture and furniture by the great makers of the period. This house was a hit with our party for its design, contents and marvellous views across the lake.



Brantwood

### Friday 24 April

We drove to **Dumfries House**. Built between 1754-1760 and opened to the public in 2008. Built by the Adam brothers for the 5th Earl of Dumfries and furnished by Thomas Chippendale. There was also

an unrivalled collection of furniture by three great Edinburgh makers: Alexander Peter, William Mathie and Francis Brodie. Very knowledgeable guides took us round and explained how the House and land were saved for the nation in 2007 by a consortium of charities led by Prince Charles. We returned to Carlisle via Auchinleck to see the **Barony A-Frame**, an immense pit-head winding gear which dominates the skyline in East Ayrshire.

### Sat 25 April



Outside Tullie House

Richard Speirs, Chairman of the Friends of **Tullie House**, led a walk to the Museum. It is a Grade I Jacobean building with Victorian and Millennium additions housing

a splendid variety of art and local history. In the afternoon expert guide David Howe joined us for a short drive to look at a section of Hadrian's Wall with a stop at **Birdoswald Fort** where we all got soaked in the wind and rain.

We all enjoyed a farewell dinner together in the hotel.

### Sun 26 April

More was to come in this short history of architecture and furniture as on the way home we stopped at **Hardwick Hall** in Derbyshire, built by Bess of Hardwick, Elizabethan England's second richest woman. The tall well-lit rooms and the lavish stone staircase all created a remarkable impression.

On our return I noticed in the paper that Cumbria had been hit by a magnitude 3.7 earthquake on 28 April. The headline should have read - Seismic event in Cumbria as Friends leave.

**Alan Swerdlow**  
**Jerry Latham**



On Hadrian's Wall

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## Discovery of Letter Written by Charles Darwin

*Jerry Bowdrey and Joan Lyall tell us about the Darwin Letter from 1872 which Joan discovered in the Ipswich Museum just as the Spring Newsletter was going to press.*

Down, Beckenham, Kent  
August 29<sup>th</sup> '72

Dear Sir

I am very sorry that you have become involved in a troublesome controversy on my part. The sentence given by Mr Lyon in inverted commas is an invention, and it is a most unjustifiable proceeding on his part. He might of course have given any interpretation which he pleased of my words, but he had no right to put the words in inverted commas. I may add that I have given in the later and more especially in the 6<sup>th</sup> Ed. of the Origin many cases showing how common generated forms (that is forms partaking of the characters of existing defined groups) are in all the same ancient formations. I have always been curious to hear who wrote Homo Vs. Darwin. Mr Lyon can hardly have the disposition of a gentleman, for in one place he states that I speak the truth solely because I should be found out if I lied. I hope that you will soon be able to bring your controversy to an end and I remain in haste. Dear Sir

Yours faithfully, Ch. Darwin

Harmer, an amateur geologist and palaeontologist of Cringleford near Norwich. A Fellow of the Geological Society (F.G.S.), Harmer authored the classic 'The Pliocene Mollusca of Great Britain' published by the Palaeontographical Society between 1914-1919. Further research yielded that it appears that Harmer had entered into a newspaper controversy with W. P. Lyon, author of the publication 'Homo versus Darwin' published in 1872, in which Lyon (an Independent Minister from Tunbridge Wells) ascribed to Darwin the saying: 'natural selection is a kind of god that never slumbers nor sleeps'. Harmer did not believe that Darwin had made this statement and had written to Darwin to this effect (*Harmer's letter is not yet available on-line*).

In our letter, which we believe to be previously unrecorded, Darwin is particularly annoyed that Lyon had put the invented statement in inverted commas and questions Lyon's standing as a gentleman!

Darwin is interested to learn from Harmer that Lyon is the author of 'Homo versus Darwin', which was subtitled 'A judicial examination of statements recently published by Mr Darwin regarding the Descent of Man'. This was originally published anonymously in the style of a court case transcript but was apparently

### The Context of the Letter

At first we were unsure to whom the letter was written, but we were able, via the Darwin Correspondence Project to ascertain that it had been written to F. W.

based on actual correspondence between Lyon and Harmer.

In a reply to our Darwin letter on 31<sup>st</sup> August, Harmer explains that he was sucked into the controversy when he wrote a letter to the Daily Press (*a Norwich paper?*) replying to a published letter by a Dr Bateman of Norwich, who claimed to have proved the 'fallacy of Darwinism'.

Bateman called in Lyon to support him and at first Harmer wanted nothing to do with Lyon. Lyon saw this as a collapse of Harmer's case and Harmer could then not help being drawn in to the controversy.

Again in his letter of 31 August, Harmer, himself a religious man, apologises for the attacks Darwin had received and continued to receive in the name of religion by its 'self constituted champions'.

The discovery of the letter in a history file was for us all very exciting and became the subject of much media coverage. During the morning of Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February both Jerry and I were interviewed by two radio stations, Town Radio and BBC Radio Suffolk; Anglia Television and BBC Look East; the newspapers Evening Star and The Times (who did not print the story) and the Culture24 website.

We were delighted to be able to place the letter on display immediately at Ipswich Museum where it will remain for the time being, so there is still the opportunity to view 'our' Darwin letter.

**Jerry Bowdrey**  
**Curator of Natural History**  
**Joan Lyall**  
**Documentation Officer**

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## New Portraits by John Constable

*Emma tells us about two paintings which have recently been confirmed to be by John Constable, possibly of both his parents. Both will be on view in the Wolsey Gallery from September.*

Two portraits in the Colchester collection have now been confirmed as early works by John Constable. The portraits, thought to make a pair, have been in the collection at Colchester since 1926.

Painted around 1805, the recently authenticated portrait of Ann Constable is 36 cm x 28 cm, a format favoured by the artist for portraits early in his career.

This portrait was painted on canvas supplied by T Brown of Holborn, an artist's merchant known to have been used by Constable. The stretcher supporting the

canvas is original and has the same stamp from T Brown.

The sitter in the second portrait has been provisionally re-identified as Golding Constable. The painting, also the same size, was identified as Constable's schoolmaster from Dedham, Dr Thomas Lechmere Grimwood, based on its description in a 1926 Sotheby's sale catalogue as a 'Portrait of the artist's schoolmaster'. But there is now a debate that this could be a portrait of Constable's father, based on another painting the artist

completed of his father that now belongs to the Tate. Certainly the painting of Ann and Dr Grimwood/Golding face complementary directions which could suggest they are intended as a pair. We are grateful to Anne Lyles (a curator at the Tate) and Martin Gayford for the research into the attribution and dating of these paintings.

You can decide for yourself by visiting the excellent exhibition **Constable Portraits: The Painter and His Circle** where the painting of Dr Grimwood/Golding Constable is currently on display

5 March - 14 June 2009, National Portrait Gallery, London

27 June - 6 September 2009, Compton Verney, Warwickshire

Golding Constable's Flower Garden, Ladies of the Mason family and the portrait of Abram Constable are also on display in this exhibition.

### **Constable's Fingerprint**

Recent conservation work on the paintings of Ann and Grimwood/ Golding Constable

helped to confirm that they were painted by Constable at about the same time, 1804-1805.

The conservation work was undertaken by Rosalind Whitehouse, MA ACR FBAPCR. The treatment also revealed other interesting secrets about the paintings.

On the portrait of Constable's mother is a fingerprint in the paint of the dog's face sitting on Ann Constable's lap. It would be nice to think this was John Constable's! There is also a pentimento of a drawn letter 'J' in the top left hand corner.

During the work undertaken on Dr Grimwood/ Golding an inscription was found on the stretcher reading 1804. This helps to support the dating of the portrait.

Once the Constable portrait exhibition is finished there will be a chance to reunite the Constable family by displaying them together in the Wolsey Art Gallery from September 2009.

**Emma Roodhouse**  
**Art Curator**

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## **'Reserving' Judgement**

*Caroline McDonald tells us how her workload is increasing*

The Collections at Ipswich Museum may have been around for over 150 years but they continue to be a dynamic resource that we are continually energising and supporting for the next century and future generations to come. We are often challenged as to why we hold so many objects 'in reserve' that apparently 'sit and do nothing' but I would like to take this

opportunity to shatter that misconception and present our entire collection (no reservations here!) as a living, evolving resource that sits at the heart of everything we do in the service.

Since coming to the High Street Museum last July, I am heartened that news is spreading that an archaeology curator is back in post and this is reflected in the

growing number of enquiries I am receiving from members of the public.

University researchers are an obvious example of how work on the collections and advances in knowledge are being made all the time, often quietly and behind the scenes. Box after box of pottery sherds may not seem interesting to a general visitor but to the researcher recently studying the early Iron Age material from Darmsden it was an invaluable opportunity to advance knowledge in his area of interest. Similarly a large collection of Palaeolithic flint from Bramford Road is receiving the same care and attention and will inform other people's research projects for many years to come.

The collections work on all levels and shortly I will be delighted to welcome the newly formed Levington Local History Society who will be coming to look at a large hoard of Bronze Age metalwork buried near their village about 3000 years ago. None of the group are 'experts' and

many have no prior knowledge of the Bronze Age – but it is from where they live and making a personal connection with that material will be a hugely important part of the day and hopefully will stay with them for a while to come.

Similarly a local family are coming to visit our store to look at Late Anglo-Saxon pottery as they enjoy re-enacting life from this time at events around the country. By making the pots in our collections accessible, they will go on to recreate their own pots as accurately as possible, which they will go on to share with many others, so the impact of what we hold in store will ripple outwards for years to come.

And these ripples could not occur if we did not have a solid core – the collection – to make an impact. Museums are far more than what they display. Our collections not only work for us in research but in outreach, access, marketing, national and international relationship building, partnership working and education – and all without reservation.

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## Sir Richard Wallace and The Ipswich Museum

*Following on from a Friends Lunch-time talk in May about the Wallace collection in London, Ann Ainsworth tells us about Ipswich's "Wallace Collection".*

The mention of the phrase 'Wallace Collection' is quite familiar to many of us interested in art and museums, but I had never before associated the name with Ipswich Museum. Having heard that the Friends group were organising a lecture about Sir Richard Wallace, coupled with reports that there were objects in the

Ipswich Museum collection donated by Wallace, I began to wonder what the connection with him actually was.

Sir Richard Wallace has local connections to Suffolk as his country house was Sudbourne Hall, near Orford. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the Ipswich Museum, becoming Museum President in



1875. This was at the time when Ipswich Town Council agreed to build a new museum on a vacant plot of land in the High Street. Here the new Museum, Library and Schools of Science and Art were built in 1878. Wallace gave a very generous sum of £500 towards the total £2500 that was required in order for the project to be enabled.

Wallace remained Museum President until he died in 1890, when as a memorial to him, Lady Wallace presented to the Museum a statue of a bronze stag and hounds which had stood in front of Sudbourne Hall. This statue was displayed in the garden at the side of the museum until 1961.

Wallace appears to have donated geological material obtained from other collectors including De Blaquiere, E. C.

Moor and the Rev. H Canham. Specimens include fossils from the Red Crag of Pleistocene age, older Silurian and Devonian fossils, starfish, as well as molar teeth from the extinct giant deer *Megaceros* and fossil oxen *Leptobos*.

Wallace is more famously known for his collection of French 18<sup>th</sup> Century paintings which was presented to the nation, and may now be seen as the Wallace collection in Hertford House, London. It is interesting to wonder why this geological material was donated to Ipswich Museum and not retained with the collection. This is an area that requires further research and is a shining example of the many treasures hidden away in the Ipswich Museum collection.

**Ann Ainsworth,  
Assistant Curator of Natural History**

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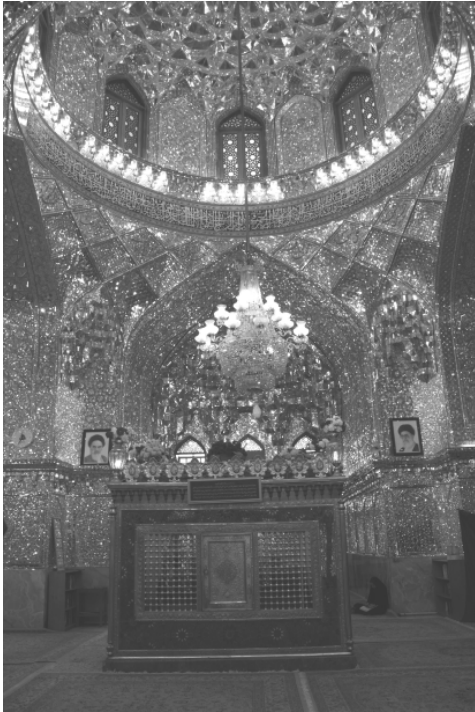
## Persian Splendours

*Victoria Adams gives us her impressions of Iran.*

I don't have much to report about my work, as I'm lucky enough to be just back from an extended holiday. I started in Istanbul and travelled 4000 miles eastwards along the Silk Road to Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, but for me the focus was the country in between, the Islamic Republic of Iran. Here are a few brief impressions of this amazing and immensely hospitable country.

Iran has a very dry and rocky landscape (apart from the verdant agricultural land around the Caspian Sea), but is rightly renowned for its walled gardens; our word 'paradise' comes from the Persian for

garden. Persian gardens are highly symbolic, often with four channels of water, usually with fountains, enclosing four square gardens, sometimes with four specific trees. Similarly influenced gardens can be found across the world, from the Taj Mahal to the Alhambra in Spain. Historically, travellers crossing the expanses of Asia along the Silk Road would stay at caravanserais, like English coaching inns. We had a truck instead of a caravan of camels, but it was still very relaxing to sit in peaceful courtyards beside soothing pools and fountains.



Three Mirror Mosaic Shrine

The tiled mosques and palaces were literally breathtaking, with domes, passageways, and courtyards covered inside and out with a vast variety of painted ceramic tiles, mosaics, and mirror mosaics. I can't speak for the men (mosques are strictly divided), but Iranian women seemed to use mosques for somewhere peaceful and shady to hang out, read, send text messages, phone friends, sleep, entertain the kids, and occasionally pray.

Wearing hijab (headscarf and tunic hiding everything but my face and hands) was

somewhat annoying, especially whilst camping and cooking outdoors in high winds. However it was also somewhat freeing, as it took away decisions about what to wear, and hid bad-hair days. I felt a lot safer wandering about the backstreets and bazaars of Tehran than I sometimes do on a Saturday night in Ipswich!

Overall the Iranian people were extremely welcoming and highly articulate with excellent English, not at all as portrayed in the western media, the so called 'axis of evil'. Despite being forced by law to wear religious coverings, most people did not come across as overly religious, many people protested against the regime, and they just want to get on with enjoying their lives like anyone else. Imam Khomeini's anti-America slogans are still painted outside what was the American Embassy (now the US Den of Espionage), but they are not at all representative, and I thoroughly recommend anyone (who can get through the arduous visa application process) to visit this amazing country.

Examples of Iranian tiles, calligraphy, vessels and jewellery can be found in the ethnographic galleries at Ipswich Museum. Christchurch Park is a public garden which would please the most jaded traveller's eye.

**Victoria Adams**  
**Curatorial Assistant**

## Summer at the Mansion

*Emma Roodhouse tells us about a collaboration with the Royal Opera House and a display in association with IpArt 2009.*

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### Royal Opera House at the Mansion, 2 Jun—27 Sept 2009

The Royal Opera House will be installing costume from Verdi's *La Traviata* in the Mansion. The chance to display these costumes came about through a connection with the Royal Opera House scheme of regional engagement programmes called **On the Road**. It endeavours to connect the ROH with new and existing audiences right across the UK encouraging people to engage actively and participate in opera and dance.

This year **On the Road** is working with Colchester & Ipswich Museums Service, Dance East and Ipswich Borough Council to create a programme of activity around *La Traviata*. Activity will link with a live broadcast of the opera from the Royal Opera House as part of the BP Summer Big Screens on 30 June at 7pm.

*La Traviata* is an opera set in Paris during the nineteenth century by Giuseppe Verdi. It is certainly one of Verdi's most popular operas and the story centres on two lovers, Alfredo Germont and a courtesan, the consumptive and beautiful Violetta. Of course in grand opera the life of the lovers is not made easy by the interference of Alfredo's father and ends with tragedy.

In the Mansion there will be a trail, developed by ROH Collections in collaboration with Colchester & Ipswich

Museum staff, which will tell the story and history of the opera through costumes and artifacts from the productions. It will contain a costume worn by the famous opera singer Joan Sutherland in 1948 and a gown used by Dame Kiri Te Kanawa as Violetta in the 1967 production. The ROH Collections team will be installing costume during 2 - 5 June if you would like to come and watch. Plus a guided tour will be available on Saturday 27 June during the Ip-Art festival.

More information can be obtained about the ROH 'On the Road' activities at the following web address.

<http://www.roh.org.uk/whatson/ontheroad/ipswich/index.aspx>

### Mansion Minis: a new display during IpArt: 27 Jun -12 Jul

They say good things come in small packages and this year during IpArt there will be a chance to hunt out mini treasures in the Mansion. Artists will be looking at the Mansion collections for inspiration and then recreating their chosen object in miniature. The results will be shown alongside the life-size object. It could be a recreation of an entire room in miniature or scaling down a portrait to postage stamp size.

On show in the Mansion will also be a selection of portrait miniatures from the

Ipswich art collection. Many of these items have not been on show for a long time but include works by the miniature painter to Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette and the eighteenth century painter to the Duchess

of York. There will also be some familiar faces in miniature and a variety of styles.

**Emma Roodhouse**  
**Arts Curator**

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## A Letter from Bristol

*Bob Entwistle, Ipswich's Conservator, is working in Bristol.*

### **The story so far.**

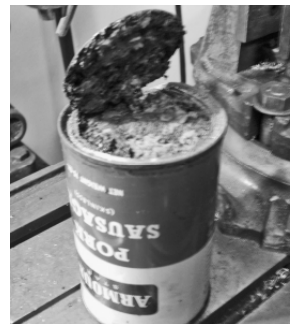
I should have been home by now but I was "extended". I was asked by the deputy director if I would stay for another 3 months. The Work for the new museum was getting heavier, one conservator had gone on maternity leave, another had gone to Egypt, whilst a third had found another job. It seems I was the only objects conservator in Bristol.

I was asked to concentrate on making the assessments for the New Museum of Bristol Slavery, Trade and Creating Galleries. Work stepped up 2 or 3 gears as the design company and various others brought pressure to bear on the museum to move the project along. We now have object selection meetings every month. So far I have amassed over a weeks worth of lieu time since February, and assessed over 550 objects. Since I have no family in Bristol I tend to work late and try to "keep ahead of the game". They even allow me to lock up the museum.

Together with the curators I locate the objects proposed for the museum, photograph them, measure them, assess what they need to make them displayable and how long it will take. I then write up the reports, and submit them to the management team. I make a Power Point presentation of the objects assessed and present it at the object selection meetings.

I have set aside at least one day a week to actually work on and conserve some of these objects, otherwise my work for the new museum would be totally paperwork.

An annoying consequence of being the only objects conservator is that I keep being asked to stop my assessment and conservation work for the new museum and go and do something else.



This week I have been asked to help prepare 60+ ceramic pots for display in a new exhibition that must open on 22 May. Varied and full is my life.

### What's cooking?

Besides assessing and working on pieces of Concord, Bristol Brabazon bits, Great War motorbikes and coins, some of the more quirky things I have had to deal with were a collection of 50 year old tin cans. Two of the cans had blown and were oozing their contents. I had to devise a way of opening two 50 year old cans and disposing of their contents, whilst preserving the cans for display. The cans contained some very "fizzy" pork sausages and some very rank cheese fondue.

To say this was unpleasant is an understatement. I asked the university if they had a laser, thinking I could open them à la James Bond. They laughed and suggested a saw! I managed to take the bottoms off using a lathe, and extract the rotten sausages and the stinking cheese. I was advised to throw the contents in Mr Brunel's nice dock where even the seagulls wouldn't touch it.

A much nicer object was a tin plate map made for the Bristol City Shipping Line. This large map had lots of magnetic boats that could be moved across the Atlantic to show where all its boats were at any one moment. A very simple job that makes a great visual impact.

### Bye Bye Shanghai!

Being the only objects conservator I was asked to organise the taking down, condition reporting and packing of Bristol's

recent Chinese exhibition, which was held in association with the British Museum. It



gave me a chance to get my hands on some very choice objects and to work with a very nice young lady from the BM for 4 days. We reported and packed 150 objects and sent them safely on their way to Coventry for the next leg of their round Britain tour.

### Visitors

I have had a few visitors from Ipswich over the last few months. Friends and family occasionally come across, and also museum colleagues. Maggi Hayward, the Ipswich Museum designer, came over and I took a few days off to accompany her on a tour of all the Bristol Museums. The Ipswich Museum Egyptian gallery committee also visited Bristol to look at their Egyptian display, and best of all, gave me a lift home!

My contract finishes at the end of June, and Kate Brindley, the Bristol Museums Director, has just resigned. I wish Bristol luck with their new Museum, there is a lot of work to do and two fewer people to do it.

**Bob Entwistle**  
**Senior Conservator**

## Museum Events Highlights in Ipswich

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### Lunchtime Lectures associated with Art in the Round

To be held in Gallery 3 at the Town Hall at 12.15 pm. Lectures are free, booking is recommended (01473 433554)

#### **Thu 11 Jun: Life in Anglo-Saxon England**

Lecture by Dr Tim Pestell, Curator of Archaeology, Norwich Castle Museum

#### **Thu 9 Jul: The Kingdom of the East Saxons: The Poor Relations?**

Lecture by Philip Wise, Heritage Manager, Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service

#### **Thu 27 Aug: Portable Antiquities: The Public Contribution to Anglo-Saxon Archaeology**

Lecture by Laura McLean, Finds Liaison Officer, Essex

The **Art in the Round Exhibition** continues until 5 September 2009.

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### 'Out of the Box' events

'Out of the Box' presents **Corsets**

Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich

Thu 16th Jul—Drop-in 1-3 pm

'Out of the Box' presents **Archaeology**

Ipswich Museum, Ipswich

Thu 23rd Jul Drop-in 1pm – 3pm

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### Fitzgerald Exhibition

I hope to have something from David Jones

## Exhibitions at Colchester

*Ipswich Friends have free entry to Colchester Castle by showing a current Membership Card.*

### **New Gallery at Natural History Museum, Colchester**

A brand new gallery opened in the Natural History Museum, Colchester in April. The gallery which explores climate change and geology, was developed thanks to Colchester Borough Council and a grant from the DCMS/Wolfson Foundation.

The gallery explores past climates, life forms and environments, focusing on the Colchester area and some of the events that have happened here. Climate change is also looked at and the gallery charts how in the past changes to the climate were natural, unlike today where the cause is mankind. Visitors can discover more about the Great Tide of 1953 and the

Great Storm of 1987, hearing real life accounts of those that witnessed them first

### **New Exhibition at Colchester Castle: The Sixties Seen: Music, Art and Fashion**

**13th June – 1 November**

Have a taste of what life was like in the swinging 60's in Britain through music, fashion and art, and how they influenced everyday life. See fabulous clothing with iconic items such as the mini skirt and enjoy discovering more about some of the most prolific designers with pieces from Mary Quant and more. Enjoy art, including pieces by Bridget Riley and take a trip down memory lane with a reminder of the fabulous music.

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## From Other Ipswich Organisations

### **Visual Arts Ipswich**

#### **GALLERY 1, TOWN HALL**

Open: Tue-Sat 10 am- 5 pm

#### **Gallery 1**

##### **Brikin Haward 1912 - 2002**

Unknown Paintings of an Ipswich Architect  
2 May - 13 June

##### **Step by Step**

Lorna Macmillan - Ip-art Award for Visual Art  
Winner 2008  
20 June - 1 August

#### **Gallery 1.1**

##### **PULSE**

Ipswich Fringe Festival

28 May - 20 June

##### **Lost & Found**

27 June - 1 August

#### **Gallery 2 - Suffolk Craft Society**

**Penny Berry:** Relief prints

2 May - 13 June

**James Dodds:** Printmaking

20 June - 1 August

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### **IAA Lecture**

Thurs 11 June 2009, 1.00 –1.50 pm at  
Museum Street Methodist Church:  
Professor Chris Green will talk on music  
by composers linked to Suffolk

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All Council Members can be contacted via our Website: [www.foim.org.uk](http://www.foim.org.uk)

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