

The Friends of the Ipswich Museums

# Newsletter AUTUMN 2016



**Acker Bilk at Ipswich Jazz Club**

© Jon Pryke, Ipswich Borough Council Collection

*we look forward*

# FoIM

*to promote the past*

## The Friends of the Ipswich Museums Newsletter

is published three times a year 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, Christchurch Mansion and the Ipswich Art School Gallery. Since April 2007 the Ipswich Museums have been managed as part of the Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service (CIMS).

The Friends continue to provide financial support to the Ipswich Museums as well as acting as volunteers. We run outings and arrange talks and other events for members.

The Friends provide guided tours of the Mansion and Museum, including free *"Peeps into the Past"* at the Mansion throughout most of the year. Tours for groups can be booked by contacting the Mansion

(01473 433554).

FoIM is a member of the British Association of Friends of Museums, the Ipswich Arts Association and the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce.

Contributions to the Spring 2017 Newsletter should be sent to the editor by 1 February 2017.

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Our advertisements are all from corporate members, please support them.

Please visit our Website, [www.foim.org.uk](http://www.foim.org.uk), which we use to advertise events notified too late to be included in the Newsletter.

We are also on Facebook.

*We look forward*



*to promote the past*

## Front Cover

### Acker Bilk at Ipswich Jazz Club

© Jon Pryke, Ipswich Borough Council Collection



FoIM is a subscribing member of the Ipswich Arts Association, please visit their website [www.ipswich-arts.org.uk](http://www.ipswich-arts.org.uk) for further information.

## Editor's Notes

### Enjoyment

I have had a great time putting together this newsletter which is full of articles written by Museum Service staff and Friends volunteers, who clearly enjoy what they are doing on behalf of the visiting public.

The "*Open Call*" exhibition at the Art School Gallery features prominently and we are given a privileged glimpse into the background of how this was organised. You know, the frantic paddling below the water line as a swan glides serenely past as you sit idly on a river bank, watching the world go by.

At the other extreme, the intricacies of re-stringing a model luffing crane (see page 22 for an explanation) and the complications of gaining appropriate qualifications to actually work for the Service are mentioned.

I particularly enjoyed the article "A View from the Secretary's Desk" and also "From Rubbish Bin to the Ipswich Borough Collection", if only for the titles. This latter article, though, gave me the chance to include some evocative pictures dating from my youth.

Alick Barnett

### Make Contact with Us

The Friends of Ipswich Museums Committee would like to hear from **you**.

We spend a lot of time organising events and trips for you as well as raising money for the Museums. Why not let us know of what you think of our efforts?

If you have any suggestions for places to visit, or exhibitions that you would like to see, please let us know.

You can write to us  
c/o Ipswich Museum, High Street,  
Ipswich, IP1 3QH.

or via our Website: [www.foim.org.uk](http://www.foim.org.uk).

Click on the "Contact" button at the top of the screen.

### The Newsletter

If you wish to contact the editor to comment on the content of the newsletter, or even submit an article for publication, this can also be done by post via the Museum, or by using the Internet.

On the FoIM Website, click on the "Activities" button, then select the "Newsletter" option.

## Chairman's Letter

### Interesting Times?

I know that the so-called ancient Chinese curse "may you live in interesting times" is apocryphal and there is no substantiated Chinese source. Nevertheless, it seems that we do indeed live in interesting times, triggered by the uncertainties around funding arrangements for the arts and museums over the next five years.

On top of all this, Ipswich Museums is a complex organisation comprising a traditional museum, outreach services, art galleries and a Tudor manor house. The buildings are spread over two sites which inevitably makes allocation of resources more difficult. Whilst we have a dedicated Museum Services team in Ipswich, some core services are delivered by the Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service from Colchester. The collections housed in Ipswich are of national importance and include fine art, furniture, costumes, ethnographic artefacts, a rhinoceros and of course, the cannibal fork of Reverend Baker fame. All this makes for quite a challenging organisation to manage with shared services and complicated funding arrangements.

Over the last few years, Jayne Austin has successfully managed the complexities and supported all parties to maintain and to develop the services

and facilities that the museums offer to the public. As you may already know, Jayne will be moving from the Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service to take over from Lyn Gash as the Museum Development Manager for Suffolk County Council. Jayne has managed through a time of significant change and I would like to say a special "thank you" to her for her support for the Friends. We wish her every success in her new role with the County Council.

In the last newsletter, the work to maintain Christchurch Mansion and to upgrade the environmental control services in the building was mentioned. I think that this needs to be highlighted once again because it marks a very significant commitment by Ipswich Borough Council to the Mansion and signals its importance to Ipswich from a cultural and a commercial point of view. In parallel, improvements have been made to the Art School Gallery to enable exhibitions in the rotunda.

This year's "*Open Campus*" events in the Ipswich Art School Gallery have been a great success due to collaboration, led by the Museum Service's team, with the University of Suffolk, Ipswich Borough Council, Ipswich Art Society and local artists. Funding was obtained from the Arts Council England.

Coming back to Interesting Times. It is evident that the successes that we have had to date stem from collaborative working and no longer can our museums operate as stand-alone entities. Looking at the Friends of Ipswich Museums, the same may apply and our success may depend on working with allied organisations across the heritage sector in Ipswich. I see this as a genuinely interesting time and, rather than a curse, a great opportunity to make a constructive contribution to the art, museum and heritage sectors in Suffolk.

## Events

In August, we had a coach trip to the Sainsbury Centre in Norwich to see the Giacometti Exhibition "*A Line Through Time*". August is a difficult month because of holiday and other commitments but we were able to make up numbers from the Grundisburgh Art Group. It proved to be an excellent day out with no traffic hold-ups and a very quiet Sainsbury Centre - almost like a private view. Perhaps the secret for the day was that it was organised by Jean Attenborrow and I kept out of the way!

Coming up, in November, there will be a lunchtime talk by John Field about the paintings by the late Brian Jepson.

The Christmas event will be held on 15 December at the Mansion. The committee was split on whether to hold the event in the High Street Museum or

the Mansion and, in the end, we decided on the Mansion because it was a proven venue. However, the success of the Giles Waterfield talk in May, held in the High Street Museum, means that we hope make more use of the Museum as a venue next year.

The two night break in April 2017 will be to the Bedford area and we plan to include a visit to Bletchley Park. Other sites are being scheduled into the trip and further details are in this newsletter.

## Can you help?

This year, I would like to start to refresh our front-of-house information panels and publicity material in both the High Street Museum and the Mansion to highlight what the Friends have achieved and to showcase the FoIM. Updating the panels and associated material will be difficult without having assistance from people with knowledge/expertise/contacts in the marketing and PR areas. Can you help? if you or someone you know can help out in this area, please get in touch with me.

John Lapsley  
Chairman



01 473 738 008

✉ johnlapsley@hotmail.com

## Bill Seaman's Column

Dear Friends

The third and final phase of the “*Open Season*” was launched in September. The “*Open Call*” exhibition is an extensive display of art works that demonstrate the wealth of local talent within Ipswich and the surrounding area. It was well received with a great turnout on the first day and many people are visiting daily. We are extremely grateful to the Ipswich Art Society and the Friends of Ipswich Museums for all their support and hard work, especially those on the selection panel who had the very difficult task of choosing what to include. We are now looking forward to the “*SPILL Festival of Performance*” and “*Wildlife Photographer of the Year*”, which are coming up next in the Ipswich Art School Gallery.

I hope you are able to catch the exhibition at the Town Hall of the art works produced through the **Creative Heritage in Mind** project. This was a series of courses accessible for people experiencing mental ill health, available at Ipswich Museum and at other museums in the county. The courses enabled people to make connections between objects and translating them into works of art.

The scaffold erected over Christchurch Mansion has been cleverly disguised behind an image of the Mansion façade behind which the capital works, which

include replacing sections of the roof, as well as heating, security and electrical upgrades, are progressing well. This is a major investment by Ipswich Borough Council to sustain the Mansion and its use over the next few decades. It remains open while works are carried out, and it is still free to visit, so we would encourage all our Friends to spread the word. There has been a recent changeover of the Leonard Squirrel exhibition in the Wolsey Art Gallery, so do take the chance to see the two oil works that are usually in store. The re-hang in the gallery reminds us what a prolific artist he was and his enduring appeal for visitors to the Mansion, even during this extended period of works.

Following our success at **Suffolk Adult Learners' Awards** in June, we have now welcomed our new trainees through the **Training Museum** programme. Mark and Michael are based in Ipswich Museums, Tim and Esme in Colchester.

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We will be sad to see our first group of trainees leave at the end of November. Emily, Anton, Sammi and Joe have been a real asset to Ipswich Museums: we wish them well and hope we have given them rewarding experiences equipping them to progress through their chosen careers.

If you would like to know more about what our trainees are up to, you can read their blog at [www.trainingmuseum.wordpress.com](http://www.trainingmuseum.wordpress.com).

Meanwhile, over at the Museum we have been working on a number of projects which are starting to have an impact on the displays and their interpretation. The Anglo-Saxon gallery has undergone a mini-refresh with new flooring being put down for the official launch of the Rendlesham Collection display. We have also started working with our colleagues from GeoSuffolk to improve the interpretation in the Geology Gallery, and with the local Chinese community to refresh the Chinese displays in the World Cultures gallery. With these projects and others, you will start to see some positive changes in the Museum over the next few months.

A key part of this work continues to be the Collections Information Programme which is throwing up surprises with each passing month. Most recently a mail pisane (chain mail collar Ed.) on display in the Ipswich Story has been identified as of European significance due to its

survival in near original condition. Dr Tobias Capwell, Curator of Arms and Armour, The Wallace Collection, London, who carried out the research, describes the piece as "a treasure of Ipswich's medieval collection". The pisane will be on display in the Mansion for six months from the middle of September to allow people a better opportunity to view and appreciate this exceptional artefact.

Finally, you will know that Jayne Austin, our Ipswich Museums Manager, is leaving at the end of September. We are, of course, recruiting to fill this post. Jayne worked for the Museum Service for nine years, overseeing the purchase of the Ipswich Art School Gallery and refurbishment of the former Science and Art Classrooms, the High Street Exhibition Gallery, Egyptian Gallery and Wolsey Art Gallery.

Jayne's passion for the Ipswich Museum collections started as a child and she has fond memories of having her own discoveries identified by the then Geology Curator – Bob Markham. In her 9 years with the service she has always gone the extra mile to enable increasing numbers of people to enjoy and celebrate the town's fantastic museums and collections.

We wish her well in her new role as Suffolk Museum Development and Partnership Manager.

Bill Seaman

## The Mansion Guides

As the summer season comes to an end, our free daily tours, which we titled "A Peep into the Past", will finish at the end of October. The Mansion guides started the daily short tours in 2013 and have gradually built up a steady stream of visitors. We have probably taken about 3,000 on an introductory tour of the Mansion since then. In addition, 30 groups have booked a full tour of the Mansion this year, which makes a significant contribution to FoIM funds. The figure is much less than 2015, but of course we had Constable's **Salisbury Cathedral** that year and this boosted our tour numbers as well as general visitor numbers. I am sure once the building work is finished, we will see another increase in visitors.

We get bookings from local history groups, the University of the Third Age, the Decorative & Fine Arts Society as well as organizations such as the WI. We had a visit in June from the Friends of Chelmsford Museum, who were very impressed with our collection. Some of you may have been on the trip to Chelmsford a few years ago when the Friends there made FoIM members very welcome, so we were pleased to reciprocate on this occasion with tea and biscuits laid on in the Estate Office.

Also in June, we had a very big group of about 60 ladies from the regional Inner Wheel visit the Mansion. The guides have become very adept at splitting up large groups and starting the tours at different parts of the Mansion. On this occasion, we had four groups going round and managed not to bump into each other, quite a feat.

In August, we had an unusual request for a tour of Ipswich Museum from a group of Syrian Refugees. Only one or two of the them spoke English and there were 12 children in the group.



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They ranged from 2 to 10 years old, so it was a tall order to try and explain the origins of the Museum in the usual way.

However, as usual, Rosie, Wool-i-am and the Giraffe instilled wonderment and needed little explanation so, combined with the dressing up and drawing materials provided in the Museum, they seemed to enjoy their visit.

The four guides were certainly fully occupied rounding up children from all areas of the Museum whilst trying to also sensibly explain Saxons and Romans to the grown-ups via a translator. Luckily, the Egyptian gallery spoke for itself to adults and children alike. We were all

pleased to have played a small part in welcoming these people who have suffered so much.

Although the “Peeps” finish soon, you can still book a tour all year round by eMailing me at [ericab@btinternet.com](mailto:ericab@btinternet.com), via the website, [www.foim.org.uk](http://www.foim.org.uk), or by contacting the Mansion: 01 473 433 554.

Don't let the current building works put you off – the Mansion is still open as usual. We also operate a voucher scheme which you can buy as a gift – Christmas is coming!

Erica Burrows

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Wednesday, 24 August saw a group of Syrian Refugees make a visit to Ipswich Museum. The group of 12 adults and 12 children were led round the museum by Erica Burrows, Marjorie Carter and Joan Munns. As a recent addition to the Mansion Guides I offered to help and found myself entertaining the children whose ages ranged from 2 to 10 years.

Despite language difficulties they were a delight and took great pleasure in dressing up in the various animal outfits.

Helping each other, most of them enjoyed being a monkey, lion or giraffe.

What I took away from the afternoon was the sight of the youngest boy shyly posing for a photo dressed as a monkey and another little boy who, having established one costume was not Spiderman but Batman, was last seen “flying” round the ground floor being a bat.

Gillian Barnett

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## “Open Call”

This year, Ipswich Art School Gallery, together with the Ipswich Art Society, has had three exhibitions opening up the gallery to all artists. “Open Campus” was for young artists starting out, “Open Choice” showed artists looking at collections in new ways. And then the unknown of “Open Call”.



“Open Call” opening with the Mayor Roger Fern

This exhibition made me both nervous and excited. Would anyone actually submit anything? Or would we have too much to handle? How would we dismantle one exhibition, select, place and hang another in four days? The Ipswich Art Society ran the two submission days with military precision, so we managed. Many thanks to those

who cheerfully mirrored work on the submission days.

Over 200 artworks were submitted, with 135 displayed. The panel was Darren Stevens (Senior Exhibitions Officer), Lisa Temple-Cox (Artist Ranger), Valerie Irwin (Ipswich Art Society), Sheila

Brooks (FoIM), who commented, “Wonderful to have the privilege of seeing and having to select art works from such a huge amount of creativity shown from a wide use of many mediums - I very much enjoyed the day”, and me.

Jen Hall (Ipswich Art Society) has to be thanked for all her help on placing day but, how would the image of a mandarin duck on a gold background hang against a watercolour seascape? Themes focused on abstracts, portraits, landscape, collections and Ipswich. Rosie the Rhino cropped up three times - good to emphasise the connection between the Gallery and the

Museum. Darren Stevens and team managed the hanging in just one day.

“Open Call” displays great variety in subjects, colour and the hard work that artists put in to create art. Next year we hope for more of a mixture of ages and will continue to make it open to all.

Emma Roodhouse

## Future Events

### Our Christmas Party: Thursday, 15 December

**Tickets £15, including supper and drinks.**

Join us at 7 pm for a festive evening in Christchurch Mansion. Enjoy the traditional Christmas tree, seasonal music, supper and good company.

Music will be provided by Brantham Community Choir. Founded in 2013,

the 26 strong choir has performed for the National Trust at Flatford Mill and at various local commemorative events. David McLachlan, their musical director, will lead them in a programme of traditional & modern seasonal songs and carols.

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### The Friends' Spring Tour: Sunday, 23rd to Tuesday, 25th April, 2017

**Bletchley Park, Rennie Mackintosh and more.**

Once again we have found some gems in a little visited area of the country. Our 2017 tour provides a variety of interests, while keeping time spent travelling to a minimum. We stay at the Swan Hotel, Bedford, an eighteenth century property full of character and history.

#### **Sunday, 23rd April 2017**

Leaving Suffolk in the morning, we travel to Northampton and visit 78 Derngate, the only Charles Rennie Mackintosh designed house in England.

#### **Monday, 24th April 2017**

Today we visit Bletchley Park, the home of code breaking, which played a major role in World War 2. This is followed by a visit to the nearby National Museum of Computing, which brings to life the history and ongoing development of information technology.

#### **Tuesday, 25th April 2017**

We head towards Kettering and Boughton House, a fine stately home which is renowned for its collection covering most aspects of the decorative arts. Here we will have a tailored, guided tour of the house and estate and a set lunch before returning to Suffolk by early evening.

**Price**, based on a minimum of 30 participants, is **£310** per person. Single room supplement is £66 per person. Included are all entrance fees, all travel, two dinners and breakfasts, one lunch and gratuity to the driver.

For a brochure with full details and a booking form, please complete the slip on page 25. Completed forms and deposit to be returned to Jean Attenborrow by 30 November 2016.

## Friends' Diary

When booking, please use a Booking Slip (page 25) and, where appropriate, enclose a cheque made out to "FoIM". If you wish to have confirmation, please include your eMail address **or** enclose a self addressed, stamped envelope.

| Date   | Event   | Booking & details   |
|--|---|---|
| Thursday,<br>17 November                     | Lunchtime Talk<br><i>"The Architecture of Ipswich"</i> .<br><br>John Field will talk about paintings by Brian Jepson and the architecture of the buildings in Ipswich<br><br>Tickets £16, includes lunch. | 12 noon in the function room at Rushmere Golf Club, Heath Rd, Ipswich.<br><br><b>Fully booked.</b><br><b>Waiting list in operation.</b> |
| Thursday,<br>15 December                     | Christmas Party.  | 7 pm at Christchurch Mansion.<br><br>Booking slip with this newsletter.   |
| February 2017                                | Lunchtime Talk.   | Details to follow on the Friends' Website - <a href="http://www.foim.org.uk">www.foim.org.uk</a> .                                      |
| Wednesday,<br>5 April 2017                   | Annual General Meeting.   | 7 pm for 7.30<br>Christchurch Mansion.  |
| Sunday, 23 April -<br>Tuesday, 25 April 2017 | Spring Tour.<br>Two night, three day, break in Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire.   | Request slip for brochure and booking form with this newsletter.  |

## Friends' Subscription Renewal 2017

Subscriptions are due on 1 January 2017.

**If you pay by standing order, do nothing.**

If you pay annually by cheque, fill in the detachable slip below and send it back to Jean Attenborrow, our Membership Secretary, with your cheque.

**OR** complete a form to set up a standing order. Standing order forms can be downloaded from our Website or requested from Jean.

Standing orders reduce the administrative costs and so make more funds available to support our museums.

Existing corporate members will be contacted. If you wish to become a corporate member, please refer to our Website, [www.foim.org.uk](http://www.foim.org.uk).

### Subscription Renewal 2017

For payment by cheque only

Please do not use this form if you pay by standing order, if you joined after 1 August 2016 or if you are a corporate member.

#### Subscription Rates are:

Individual £12

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## From Rubbish Bin to the Ipswich Borough Collection.

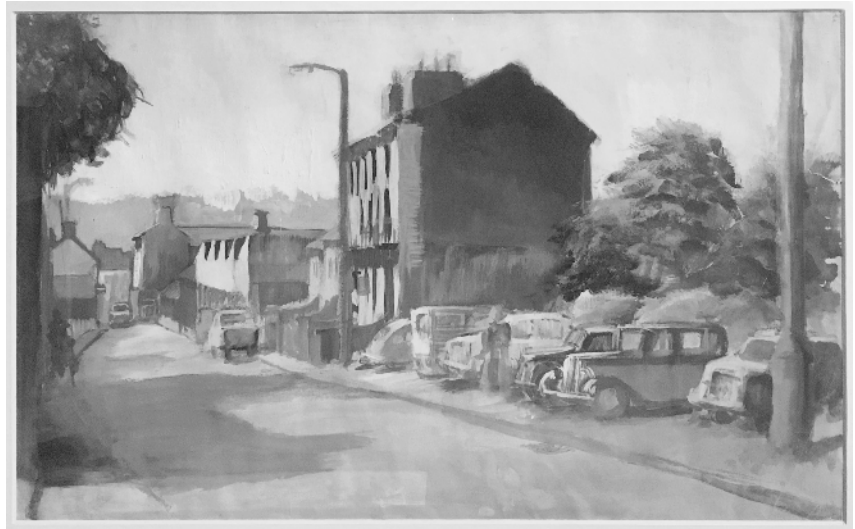
Jon Pryke, Heather Ling and I studied together at the Ipswich School of Art in the early 60s.

Jon and I left to further our careers and Heather stayed on at Ipswich to complete her studies under Colin Moss. On completion of her National Diploma in Design, Heather had a yen to do some teaching and began by taking an evening class in the late 70s through till 1985, a period staggering Colin Moss's retirement. Heather was surprised that when she returned to the Art School during this time, she found a large bin inside which were some rolled up paintings. She recognised them to be gouache paintings by Jon Pryke, of the type we produced for our intermediate certificates. These remained rolled up in Heather's studio for some time, but eventually were returned to Jon.

In 2004 Jon was invited by Arthur Oldham to stage an exhibition in the Artist's Gallery which included two paintings of the Jazz Club and that of George Street. Arthur and I felt that these paintings warranted being in the Borough Collection, not only for their artistic value but as a documentation of local history depicting the Ipswich Jazz Club in the early 60s at St. Matthews

Baths Hall (see the picture of Acker Bilk on front cover and a Jazz Club session on the back cover. Ed.).

At this time I was Chairman of the Friends of Ipswich Museums and, having discussed the matter with the Friends Council, we decided that these should be purchased by the Friends for the Borough's collection.



**George Street, Ipswich 1960**

© Jon Pryke, Ipswich Borough Council Collection

Jon went on to be a member of the Royal Society of British Artists but unfortunately both Jon & Heather have eyesight problems. Jon gave half his proceeds to Heather who made a donation to "Fight for Sight" and Jon donated to the Moorfields Eye Hospital. I feel that this is an amazing story from a rubbish bin to the Borough's Fine Art collection and the proceeds been given to well deserving causes.

Paul Bruce.  
Vice-President, FoIM.

## Thoughts from Carole Jones

*Portfolio-holder for Development [including Museums], Ipswich Borough Council*

### **“Open Call”, “Open Choice”. The Ipswich Art School Gallery.**

There have been two excellent exhibitions at the Art School Gallery recently.

The first, “*Open Choice*”, was one of the best exhibitions I’ve attended at the Art School.

A collaboration between the Borough, Ipswich Art Society and the Friends, it showed a selection of works from the Borough’s collections, with a group of artists from the Art Society responding to them. All the pieces came from the Museum stores and it was great to see them on display.

The exhibition presented the original and the new works alongside one another. The originals were an eclectic mix: from Munnings’ ***King George V on his pony***, a favourite with many Friends, to Elizabeth Frink’s small bronze ***Goggleman***; from a 1930s dinner service to Colin Moss’s ***Man with Drill***. The majority chosen were paintings of local places – an old pub in Salthouse Street, Silent Street, the docks, and the Unitarian Church, Ipswich; three Harry Becker farming scenes; and two paintings of Ipswich Jazz Club (one of Acker Bilk playing!). Dates ranged from the first century AD (a carved Romano-

British handle) to 1987 (Jon Pryke’s ***Brandeston Church***.)

The responses by Arts Society artists were wonderful. For a start, their choices were fascinating – what attracts one artist to Joan Warburton’s ***Burned School***, and another to Forestier’s ***A Scene from Omar Khayyam?*** Roderic Barrett’s spare and striking ***Chair in its Place*** inspired two artists, as did Lucy Harwood’s ***Still Life with Fish***, and an old watercolour of the Custom House by an unknown artist.

It made for a completely enjoyable exhibition. I think my favourite corner was a case containing a small bronze ***model for a screen*** by Henry Moore, placed next to two plaster friezes of children by Ellen Mary Rope, with a response by printer Judith Lockie on the wall behind. Beautiful.

Thanks to everyone involved in this new venture – especially the Ipswich Art Society, Friends, and our Museum staff, who, yet again, did a great job of hanging and displaying. I hope this becomes an annual event.

The current exhibition is also a collaboration with Ipswich Art Society. “*Open Call*” shows pieces chosen after



an open invitation to local artists to submit work for selection. There is a wonderful variety of subjects and styles on show, many are for sale, and it's well worth a visit – on until October 9.

Lastly, can I welcome James Fairclough as the new head of Culture and Environment, and bid adieu to our Ipswich Museums manager Jayne

Austin – Jayne is moving to a post at Suffolk County Council. She has been a wonderful member of staff, so professional, knowledgeable, helpful and committed, we will all miss her. All the very best to them both.

Carole Jones



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## A View from the Secretary's Desk

To be a secretary of an organisation such as FoIM one does not need an in-depth knowledge of our museums and their collections. One does not need knowledge of natural history, fine art, archaeology or any other specialty which covers the vast range of items owned by the Ipswich Museums. One does not need to be an historian or anthropologist. All of which is just as well otherwise I would be totally unsuitable for the job. So what does one need?

One needs to be a good listener. At committee meetings, when several conversations are going on at once, it is sometimes difficult to tell whether anything worth recording is being said. One needs concentration when colleagues are talking of things one knows nothing about. Joking apart, our committee meetings are well mannered, orderly affairs.

One doesn't need qualifications or in-depth knowledge to enjoy visits to the Ipswich Museums. The wonderful atmosphere of the Christchurch Mansion is quite powerful. I think it is one of those buildings which wraps itself around you when you enter. The High Street Museum building doesn't quite do the same for me but it is unique. The variety of items on display there is amazing for a provincial museum. We

are so lucky to be able to pop into our museums for a quick visit whenever we like. I am lucky enough to have been into museums all over the world but I still regard our museums in Ipswich as being special.

Museums cost money in order to survive. It takes people to manage and care for the items in the collections. The buildings have to be maintained (you may have noticed the extensive scaffolding currently surrounding the Mansion). Staff are required to manage the visitors and take care of security. The accurate recording of items as to origin, description and location etc. is needed. Promotion, education and learning are essential elements of museum life. General administration and management is necessary for any operation. These things all cost money. Unfortunately, apart from a few private museums, there are none which are able to pay for themselves. Our museums are supported by Ipswich Borough Council, which like all local authorities, has been put under tremendous financial constraint over the course of several years. The Museum Service has had to bear some of this constraint like all other departments.

I mention all this because the support of museums through "Friends" organisations is perhaps more important

today than it has ever been. We cannot, of course, make up the shortfall in museum funding for core activities, but we can, and do, help by funding or contributing to small items and projects which we consider will enhance the scope and enjoyment of our museums. We make every effort to co-operate with both Ipswich Borough Council and the Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service.

My wife says I have learned nothing in my life but I think one thing I have learned is that nothing stays the same for long. Your committee is currently considering how FoIM operates and whether it could do things better. I'm a bit fed up when companies with which I deal want me to complete a survey on how they performed, as if they don't

know their own business. But we are all amateurs, so if you read this newsletter you have a connection with FoIM, whether or not you are a member. If you have any ideas positive or negative do let us know by eMail at [contact@foim.org.uk](mailto:contact@foim.org.uk) or write to us at FoIM, c/o Ipswich Museum, High Street, Ipswich, IP1 3QH. We are particularly keen to improve the publicity and promotion of FoIM and our museums so, if you have anything you can pass on in those areas, we'd love to hear from you.

I suppose a secretary is an "Honest Scribe" which means I try to record our doings factually and without comment. I hope this item is an example of my work.

Gary Butler



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## Conservation Corner

*In this newsletter Bob Entwistle reveals the depth of knowledge needed to tackle the conservation of such diverse objects as an Evenki suit and a model luffing crane.*

### The Evenki Suit

We have a suit. Where it's from we don't know. It's not, as far as we can tell accessioned, but it has been in the museum for a long time. It might even be one of the first objects here in 1852, before records began. It was given by a Robert Naunton. Mr Naunton was a traveller who gave a few things to the museum and, if what I was told is true, one such object was the suit.



*Naomi Barrel, a volunteer, said she would like to assist with conservation of the Evenki Suit.*

Information received would seem to suggest it is an Evenki suit. The Evenki are a tribe from the Tunguska region of Russia in Siberia. An area nearer to Japan than Russia proper. Friends at the British Museum gave me advice on its conservation and some names of people who may be interested in its history and could tell us more.

The suit comprises a jacket, trousers, boots and hat. Perhaps there should be more but that's all we have. It is made of skin, possibly reindeer, and decorated with embroidery, and tassels. When it came into the lab the trousers hat and boots had been flattened and the jacket was on an old shop dummy. The jacket has insect damage and many parts of the suit have tears.

The whole suit is very dirty and has been treated with a dressing that has left it sticky and hard. Advice from the British Museum suggested a few ways forward and we carried out a number of tests.

First we cleaned it with water and a detergent. Result – nothing

Second we tried a specialist steam cleaner. Result – little change.

Third we tried white spirit. Result – success.

White spirit, being an aliphatic hydrocarbon, removed the sticky residue, the dirt, and made the suit supple, which allowed it to be reshaped. We used the white spirit on cotton wool swabs which unfortunately left white flecks on the surface.

We then tried melamine sponges, "Magic Sponges" to you, soaked in white spirit which were "magic" and ideal. We cleaned the suit in the fume cupboard in the lab to take away the White Spirit fumes.



*Success!*

Now, it just so happens that I have over 500 melamine sponges in my store because, about 10 years ago, I imported

them from Hong Kong, hoping to sell them to colleagues in other museums. Unfortunately, as soon as they arrived, Lakeland Plastics started selling them cheaper. My one and only foray in to capitalism was a failure and left me with 500 sponges. If anyone wants to buy some sponges, then I'm your man.

After cleaning we treated some areas with microcrystalline wax to keep it supple. Friends at the British Museum later cautioned me against this, saying the wax may darken over time. This was unfortunate as it worked really well. Fortunately, microcrystalline can be removed if required.

The boots, trousers and hat were re-shaped with acid free tissue. We found bits of newspaper in the boot toes dated 1980. Newspaper is bad. Very bad.

Naomi has now started cleaning the jacket. This is by far the most damaged part of the suit. In the recent past, date unknown, hooks and eyes had been fitted to the jacket to aid display. Somebody in the distant past has also carried out some restoration on the jacket and badly stitched modern calico type material into the neck. We will have to see if we are to replace this or leave well alone. This is a work in progress.

After cleaning and conservation we will make a special box for the suit and ensure it is stored safely.

I'll let you know how we got on.

## **Ransomes and Rapier and Cute Dead Animals.**

Apart from Evenki suits we have been busy with taxidermy specimens, cleaning, bagging, and replacing in store. We have finished the shells and eggs and are back to the taxidermy work.

The volunteers have cleaned a peccary, a gibbon skeleton, a baby gazelle and we have taken in a stork, a crested crane and a large gazelle thing with horns, (technical terms). All will be cleaned and bagged to prevent pest infestation, and returned to store.

We are lending engineering models to the Ipswich Transport Museum. They are working models of cranes, a forklift truck, mortar and concrete mixers made by apprentices at Ransomes and Rapier.

(contd. overleaf)

Ever had to restring a model 4½ ton Luffing Crane? I have, and it's very frustrating as I had no clue how luffing cranes worked. However, now I do, but unfortunately I don't suppose I will ever use this knowledge again. (A crane mechanism where the hook remains at the same level whilst *luffing*; moving the jib up and down, so as to move the hook

inwards and outwards relative to the base. Ed.)

I never mentioned the Opium pipes we cleaned and the additions and new work to the Chinese displays. Oh well. If you got this far you deserve a rest.

TTFN

Robert Entwistle  
Conservator

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## Professional Development with Colchester and Ipswich Museums

My interest in Museum Conservation started when I came to Ipswich Museum in 2004 to do a two week work experience placement within the Conservation Department. I thoroughly enjoyed my two weeks working with Robert Entwistle, so much so that I carried on volunteering for some time after.



*Gun cleaning*

I went off to University with an open mind on my future development. However, conservation was never far from my thoughts. I completed a degree in history focusing my studies around material culture and how objects can be a great source of historical interest.

My work with Colchester and Ipswich Museums started in August 2008 as a Casual Museum Assistant. I could never stay far away from the Conservation Lab though. Through the years, with much help and support from my colleagues, I progressed into getting a permanent contract and then progressed to become a Duty Officer.

It was at this point in my career that I wanted to investigate further my enjoyment of Conservation. I could never afford to go back to University so I undertook something far more interesting. I self-funded my own Conservation Technician Qualification through the Institute of Conservation.

Once again my colleagues were very accommodating and I was able to fit my training around my core working hours as a part of my appraisal.

The qualification saw me undertake many modules in areas such as, Museum Ethics, Treatments, Handling and Packing, Inspecting and Monitoring and Providing Demonstration and Explanations.



*Inventorying*

My work included repairing the famous Puzzle Jug, cleaning of paintings, removal of soluble and insoluble salts from a apothecary jar, the cleaning of many Ethnographic objects, just to name a few. I also gave many presentations to the Visitor Services Team, on object handling and cleaning, to further their knowledge in such matters. I completed my Qualification in around 18 months and after a 3 hour assessment I passed with flying colours.

The knowledge and experience I gained from doing this Qualification has been invaluable. It has opened my eyes to conservation I never dreamed I could do. I now have an unhealthy obsession with

ceramics even if they do taunt and upset me whilst I am working on them.

I am lucky enough to have been given the opportunity to progress further at the Museums with my part time placement with the Collections Information Programme where I get to investigate and get stuck in with documentation and opening up the wonderful stories our objects hold. You may even see us on gallery inventorying so, please come and chat with us.

Carrie Willis  
Duty Officer (Ipswich)  
Collection Information Assistant (Ipswich)  
Conservation Technician

## **The Puzzle Jug**

It is called a Puzzle Jug as there are three spouts so that the user has to guess which one the water will pour from. A small boy visiting the Mansion accidentally knocked the historic jug off a window ledge, smashing it into 65 pieces. It took Carrie 65 hours to repair – one hour for each smashed piece of pottery. For more information go to [www.ipswich.gov.uk/content/puzzle-jug-mishap-update](http://www.ipswich.gov.uk/content/puzzle-jug-mishap-update) Ed.



To learn more go to:  
[www.bafm.co.uk](http://www.bafm.co.uk)

FoIM is affiliated to The British Association of Friends of Museums (BAfM), an independent organisation established in 1973 for Friends, volunteers and supporters in museums, galleries and heritage sites in the UK. It offers a friendly and practical network of support from people with first-hand experience of running Friends organisations, acts as a clearing house for common problems and their solutions. It is a central source of information about Friends for Friends.

Friends groups in Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Suffolk have all generously offered to host a future meeting at their museums.

Plans are now well ahead for one in Hertfordshire at Bushey Museum on 25 October. The information and booking form will be found on the BAfM Website. BAfM members and their guests from every one of our six counties are warmly invited to attend.

The BAfM Website is very informative: members can read the BAfM Journal with many back issues available as "flip books". It will give Friends a broader view of their umbrella association.

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## The FoIM Committee 2016 - 2017

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| <b>Ex-officio Member:</b>              | Bill Seaman, Museum Service Manager |

All members of the Committee can be contacted via  
our Website: [www.foim.org.uk](http://www.foim.org.uk)  
or by post, c/o Ipswich Museum, High Street, Ipswich, IP1 3QH

*We are always pleased to hear from anyone who would like to join our Committee*

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### Membership Details

Membership rates are:

|                    |      |
|--------------------|------|
| Joint/Household    | £15  |
| Single             | £12  |
| Student (under 25) | £3   |
| Corporate          | £100 |

These are the minimum fees. We would not dream of preventing anyone from paying more.

Jean Attenborrow  
Membership Secretary  
☎ 01473 213025  
✉ [jattenborrow@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jattenborrow@hotmail.co.uk)

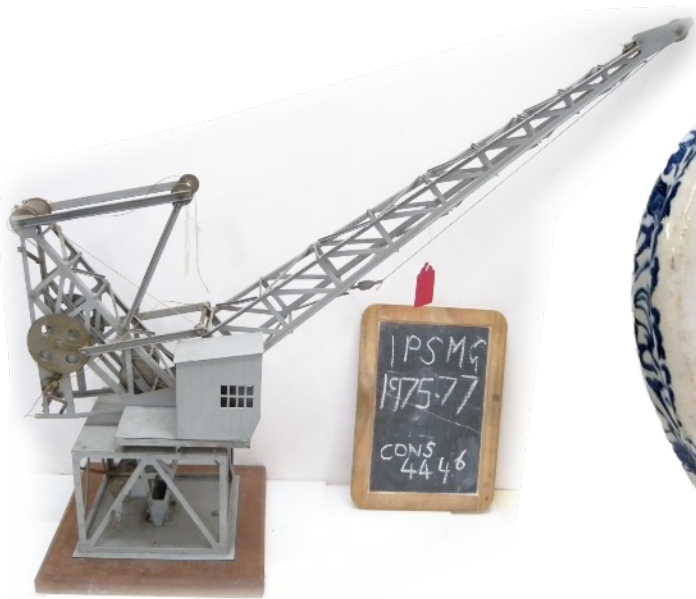
A membership form can be downloaded from our Website or obtained by contacting our Membership Secretary.

#### Membership as a Gift

All you have to do is send the appropriate subscription (payable to FoIM) together with contact details of the recipient to Jean Attenborrow, who will prepare a gift pack for you to send.

If you wish to become a corporate member, please contact us direct via the Website, [www.foim.org.uk](http://www.foim.org.uk).

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Model 4½ ton Luffing Crane

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The Puzzle Jug

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**Ipswich Jazz Club** 1960

© Jon Pryke, Ipswich Borough Council Collection

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

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Registered Charity Number: 275527

We welcome new members to help us support our excellent Ipswich Museums.

Details of membership are given on page 27

We use the Website to advertise events which are notified too late to be printed in the Newsletter.