

The Friends of the Ipswich Museums

Newsletter SPRING 2016



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Cover Picture:

**Port of Ipswich from
the Big Gas Holder**

1938 (pencil and watercolour)

by Leonard Squirrell

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).

Friends continue to provide financial support to the Ipswich Museums as well as acting as volunteers. The Friends run outings, talks and other events for their 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 Summer 2016 Newsletter should be sent to the editor by 1 June 2016.

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

Cover Picture:

Port of Ipswich from the Big Gas Holder

1938 (pencil and watercolour)

by Leonard Squirrell 1893-1979

We look forward



to promote the past

Have you visited our website www.foim.org.uk? We use our website to advertise events notified too late to be included in the Newsletter.



FoIM is a subscribing member of the Ipswich Arts Association, please visit their website www.ipswich-arts.org.uk for further information.

Editor's Notes

I took over the editorship of this newsletter in Dec 2002 as I retired from my career as a scientist. This edition has been put together jointly by me and my successor, Alick, who introduces himself on page 8. I am sure Alick will serve you well as editor; as you will see he has already had experience as a museum volunteer.

I always enjoy learning more about items in the Museum or Mansion. In this issue our President, Lady Deben, tells us about Admiral Edward Vernon (whose portrait hangs in the Library at the Mansion) and Rowell Bell tells us about the collection of spoons in the Upper Tudor Room.

The Art School has a fascinating exhibition based on zoological specimens in Ipswich Museum. In the Mansion, Constable's **Salisbury Cathedral** has been replaced by thirteen works by Leonard Squirrel (1893-1979), who was born in Ipswich and spent most of his life there. The choice of pictures (all from the Ipswich Museum collection) demonstrates what a versatile artist he was.

I apologise for an error in the last edition. I said the East Anglian School of Art was originally in East Bergholt, I should have said Dedham.

Mary Halliwell

TWO VACANCIES ON THE FoIM COMMITTEE

TREASURER AND INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

On the Friends' committee we have vacancies for a treasurer and for an independent examiner that need to be filled by April 2016. The current incumbents (Peter Stockdale, treasurer, and Ken Wilson, independent examiner) are both stepping down after many years of excellent work in these roles.

Whilst not onerous, both roles are key to the operation of the FoIM charity and offer an opportunity to be part of our active - and welcoming - committee.

For further information, please contact either

John Lapsley at
johnlapsley@hotmail.com
☎ 01473 738 008

or Peter Stockdale at
stockdalepeter@gmail.com
☎ 07979 852147

Chairman's Letter

Changes to the Committee

It is with regret that I intend to step down as Chairman at the next AGM due to family commitments. I have enjoyed my 3 years as your Chairman and my focus has always been very much at visitor level. I have been concerned with the impression our Museums make on visitors as well as getting our important collections more widely seen and known about. My aims were to facilitate changes to displays and exhibitions by offering funding and time as well as helping with acquisitions. With the support of a hard-working and dedicated committee, some of these aims have been achieved, but there is still a lot to do. I am therefore delighted that John Lapsley has agreed to take over as Chairman at the next AGM. John will bring a fresh and businesslike approach to the role and has the backing of an excellent team.

I am sorry that Peter Stockdale, our Treasurer, has also decided to step down and I would like to thank him for all the hard work he has done over the last few years. Ken Wilson has been our independent examiner for many years and he, too, is retiring. We are still looking for someone to take over these roles, so please get in touch with us if you feel you could help. I am delighted that three new committee members will be joining us at the next AGM. Alick Barnett will be taking over from Mary Halliwell as newsletter editor. Mary has

done an excellent job producing interesting and informative newsletters for the last 13 years and our thanks go to her for all the hours she spends writing and collating articles and chasing some of us for our reports! Alick has been working closely with Mary on the last two editions. Mary Duffy and Richard Wilson will, I'm sure, also bring fresh ideas and thoughts to our meetings.

Museum News

It's been an exciting year for the town and the Museums with around 30,000 visitors coming to see **Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows**. It has firmly put Ipswich on the map and I hope we can keep this momentum going by showcasing some of our own nationally and internationally important collections.

By the time you read this, an exhibition of works by Leonard Squirrell will be on show in the Wolsey Art Gallery. We have a large body of work by this very popular local artist in the collection and I am particularly pleased to see them being shown. The display will change in June, and FoIM members are invited to a private view with a talk by Emma Roodhouse on 9 June. A new exhibition is also on show at the old Art School Gallery called "*Art/Science/Life*" featuring works by the Artist in Residence, Lucy Lyons, responding to items from the collections.

A selection from our Egyptian collection is on loan at Two Temple Place, London,

on the Embankment, very near Temple Underground. It was built by Lord Astor in the 19th century and is now run by the Bulldog Trust. The Trust showcases collections from provincial museums to a wider audience and ours is the centrepiece of the exhibition. The building is only open to the public during exhibitions, so I do urge you to go and see this magnificent building and interesting free exhibition entitled "*Beyond Beauty: Transforming the Body in Ancient Egypt*" which runs until 24 April.

We had an increase in guided tours, too, in 2015 with 46 groups from various parts of the country, and from abroad, being taken around by the Mansion guides. This represents around 900 individuals, which is in addition to a similar number joining the daily "*Peep into the Past*" short tours run by the guides from March – October. I have particularly enjoyed organizing and coordinating the pre-booked tours and I hope to continue to serve on the

committee in the role of Guides Representative.

We were disappointed to learn that the Heritage Lottery Fund bid for the High Street project was unsuccessful. We still have an opportunity to make the most of our splendid Victorian and Art Deco buildings even if the scheme eventually proves to be less ambitious. Our collections deserve to be better known both within the County and further afield. We await more information from Ipswich Borough Council and hope to report further at the AGM on 12 April.

Friends Events

The Christmas party was a great success, and two lunchtime talks by Marcia Whiting of Munnings House and our own Carrie Willis talking about her conservation work were well attended.

For the coming year, the Events sub-committee have lined up two very interesting talks and an unusual quiz.

I hope to see many of you at the AGM on Tuesday, 12 April, presided over by our President, Lady Deben. After the official business, we will enjoy a curator's talk about Nina Layard, whose correspondence and work have recently been re-examined during the ongoing Collections Information Programme.

Thanks to all of you who have encouraged and supported me during my time as Chairman.

Erica Burrows
Chairman

☎ 01473 785152
or eMail ericab@btinternet.com



Bill Seaman's Column

Dear Friends,

I'd like to share with you some of the highlights of the last few months at Ipswich Museums and a few forthcoming events to look out for.

We have had a very successful year in the Wolsey Art Gallery featuring Constable's magnificent **Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows**. Three displays and a year-long programme of events explored the many aspects of this iconic work which have boosted visitor numbers to the gallery by 223% over the year with 33,575 visitors. This represents a 142% increase in visitors to the Mansion that included the gallery in their visit. It has set the standard for other proposed loans from the Tate and we hope to see more significant works from the national collections in Ipswich over the coming years.

The next exhibition now in place in the Wolsey Art Gallery is a celebration of local artist Leonard Squirrell's long career, including four recently acquired pictures of East Anglia.

Over in the Ipswich Art School Gallery "*Art/Science/Life*" has opened celebrating Ipswich Museum's long relationship with both the arts and sciences; Lucy Lyons has been the Artist in Residence in recent months creating some fascinating responses to the museum's intriguing natural history collections. Please do make sure you get to see this exhibition and take part in the range of associated events.

At the end of January, "*Beyond Beauty: Transforming the Body in Ancient Egypt*", opened in the splendid setting of Two Temple Place in London. The exhibition features a number of objects from Ipswich's significant Egyptian collection, most notably the Mask of Titus which is displayed as the star object. The exhibition runs until 24 April and I do recommend a visit.

On 4 February, Ipswich Museum was transformed into "*Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry*" for a spectacular Harry Potter Night. The tickets on Facebook sold out within 2 hours of release – mainly to that elusive group for museums – the early twenties. The audience largely comprised those who were read Rowling's novels and the bedtime readers (like me). A great evening was enjoyed by all with the museum making a perfect setting for this event. This was a marvellous example of the energy and imagination of our new members of staff and trainees. A definite event to run again next year. See: <https://www.facebook.com/events/182865475397456/> for photographs and more details.

At the time of writing we are also enjoying record numbers for the February half term events at Ipswich Museum with over 1,000 visitors a day enjoying a free visit to their local museum.

Bill Seaman
Museums Manager

Friends' Diary

Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope when booking events

Date	Event	Booking & details
Monday, 14 March	<p>Sarah Medlam, Emeritus Curator V&A, on the new European Galleries at the V&A.</p> <p>£10 members, £12 guests, to include a glass of wine.</p>	<p>6.30 for a 7 pm start, at the Mansion.</p> <p>Booking is required. Please telephone Barbara Cole. ☎ 01473 287716</p>
Tuesday, 12 April	<p>Friends of Ipswich Museums Annual General Meeting.</p>	<p>To be held at the Mansion.</p> <p>7 for 7.30 pm</p>
Friday, 13 May	<p>Giles Waterfield, author of "<i>The People's Galleries</i>", and Ben Gummer in conversation at the Museum.</p> <p>£10 members, £12 guests, to include a glass of wine. Booking is required.</p>	<p>To be held at 6.30 pm at the Museum in the High Street.</p> <p>Booking slip with this newsletter.</p>
Thursday, 9 June	<p>Private viewing of the Squirrell pictures for members of Friends of Ipswich Museums only. Includes a talk by Emma Roodhouse, Collections and Learning Curator, an opportunity to view the latest exhibition of works by this popular local artist, and a glass of wine.</p>	<p>6.30 for 7 pm at Christchurch Mansion.</p> <p>Bookings via Christchurch Mansion. ☎ 01473 433554</p>
Wednesday, 13 July	<p>Quiz Night with Supper at Seckford Golf Club.</p> <p>Teams of 4: £15 each, £60 per table of 4, to include supper.</p>	<p>Booking slip with this newsletter.</p>
September 2016	<p>Walk and talk. Holywells Park with afternoon tea in the Conservatory.</p>	<p>Details to be confirmed.</p>
May 2017	<p>2/3 night break.</p>	<p>Details to be confirmed.</p>

Friends' News

New Members

A warm welcome to our new members:

Mr R Chapman
Mr & Mrs D Dodds
Mr & Mrs J Duffy
Mr & Mrs R Lyon
Mrs M Naylor
Mrs A Thubron
Mr & Mrs K Ward
Mr & Mrs G White
Mrs M Young

Thanks to all of you who have renewed your membership for 2016. If you are reading this, intend to renew, and haven't yet, I shall be pleased to receive your subscription as soon as possible. Otherwise, I shall reluctantly have to remove you from our membership list.

Jean Attenborrow
Membership Secretary

Newsletter Editor



From this issue, the Friends' Newsletter will be edited by me, Alick Barnett. I am an electrical engineer, having spent most of my working life with Eastern Electricity and its successors. I have also worked part time for the Abbeyfield Society and, finally, for four years as a Physics Laboratory Technician at Deben High School in Felixstowe.

For ten years, I volunteered at the Ipswich Transport Museum; mainly updating the Label Boards describing the Museum's exhibits so as to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act, whilst at the same time checking the content for accuracy and introducing an element of uniformity in their appearance. I particularly enjoyed presenting illustrated talks such as "Switched **ON**" and "Wheels of Ipswich" to local groups - the WI, several local Rotary Clubs and U3A, for example.

I look forward to contributing to the work of the Friends of Ipswich Museums and thank Mary, your retiring Editor, for helping me during the change over.

Alick Barnett

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Free Tours of the Mansion

The daily free tours of Christchurch Mansion began on Tuesday, 8 March and will continue until Sunday, 30 October 2016. These last for approximately half an hour, beginning at 11.00 am (Tues. to Sat.) and 2.00 pm on Sundays.

This is an ideal introduction to the history and some of the major attractions of the house or, if you are already familiar with the house, just pop in, talk to the guide and take the opportunity to look at some of the less well known Mansion treasures.

Joan Munns



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CHRISTCHURCH MANSION

Future Events

Monday, 14 March

Talk by Sarah Medlam

Sarah Medlam, Emeritus Curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum will talk about:

New Baroque Galleries for the V&A: European furniture in the national collection.

The event is being held at the Mansion which will be open at 6.30 pm for a 7 pm start. The cost will be £10 for members and £12 for guests, including a glass of wine.

Booking is required for this event: please telephone Barbara Cole
01473 287716

Wednesday, 13 July

Quiz Night

We are holding a Quiz Night at Seckford Golf Club, instead of our usual Summer Party, including a hot supper (choice of dishes on the night but please advise any special requirements).

Prizes for the 1st, 2nd & 3rd teams and last place booby prize.

Teams of 4 are invited to take part, but don't worry if you don't have a team – we will put teams together on the night. There are prizes for the winners, so start doing your quiz homework! Book a table for 4 (£60). If you don't have a full team, we will place people in teams (£15 per person).

Please use the booking slip available at the end of this newsletter.

Friday 13 May

Ipswich Museum, High Street, Ipswich

6.30 pm

“THE PEOPLE’S GALLERIES”

**GILES WATERFIELD TALKS TO BEN GUMMER
ABOUT VICTORIAN MUSEUMS**

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insight into the rise of Museums and
Art Galleries in the 19th Century

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includes a glass of wine

Booking is required - please use the booking slip available in this newsletter.

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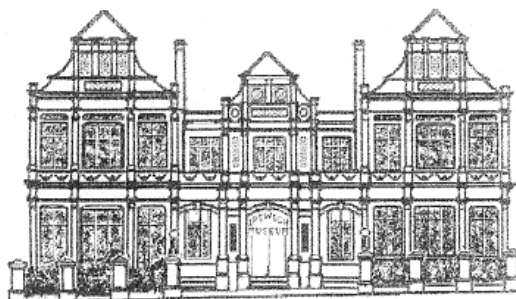
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The Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Ipswich Museums

will be held on

Tuesday 12 April

at

Christchurch Mansion

(7 for 7.30 pm)

To be followed by a **Talk** by curator **Jayne Austin** about **Nina Layard** (1853-1935), a local archaeologist who excavated the Hadleigh Road Cemetery, artefacts from which can be seen in the Anglo-Saxon gallery at the Museum.

The minutes of the Annual General meeting held on 8 April 2015 can be found on the "Friends of Ipswich Museums" website by following the "Our Activities" link or going to www.friendsofipswichmuseums.org.uk/annual-general-meeting/annual-general-meeting-2015/

Rae Wright 1926-2015

Marjorie Carter writes

Rae Wright, who has recently died after a long debilitating illness, was a volunteer Guide at Christchurch Mansion between 2003 and 2008.



Rae Wright and Mary Halliwell hard at work stuffing newsletters into envelopes for posting.

Rae was a native of Ohio, and was evidently born with a thirst for travel and adventure. Her first venture overseas was with the American Red Cross during the Korean War in the early 1950s, where she took the opportunity to explore Japan and Korea before travelling alone through Hong Kong, Thailand, India and the Middle East.

After qualifying as a librarian back in the States, she took up a post in the library of the University College of Ghana, where she met Ray Wright, then Professor of Physics and Acting Vice-Chancellor of the University, who

became her husband. Thereafter they travelled together, encountering riots, revolutions and coups d'état in nearly every country where Professor Wright

had accepted an academic or diplomatic appointment. Their most dangerous assignment was in Tehran, where they arrived in time for the Iranian Revolution in 1978, their situation made riskier because of Rae's American citizenship and because they had recently adopted an Iranian orphan, their daughter Roxane, then 6 years old.

After their escape and further adventures in far-flung places, the Wrights eventually came to

live in Suffolk, Ray Wright's home county, where Rae finally put down her roots. England became her home, and she was very proud when she was granted dual nationality as a British citizen and acquired her British passport. She qualified to teach English as a second language and, as well as becoming a Mansion Guide, she volunteered at Sutton Hoo.

Rae's other great passion, second only to travelling the world, was writing, and in recent years she composed a series of memoirs about her adventurous life. Her book, "*Rambles of a Librarian*", was privately printed by Gipping Press in March 2015.

Squirrell Exhibition

The last display of Leonard Squirrell's artwork in Christchurch Mansion was in "*The Room Upstairs*" in 1993 in order to commemorate the centenary of his birth. A new display of Squirrell's work from the collection has therefore been overdue. As we say farewell to John Constable's ***Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows***, it seems fitting that Leonard Squirrell's smaller scale masterpieces replace it in the Wolsey Art Gallery.

Squirell, like Constable, is rooted in place and his depictions of the locality reveal a deep appreciation of the rural and urban landscape. His highly detailed sketches would be made on the spot and serve as the foundation for prints, pastels and watercolours many

years later. Unlike Constable, he was widely travelled particularly to France in his early career.

Squirrell was born and grew up in Ipswich. At the age of 15 he started at Ipswich School of Art and went on to win a gold medal in the National Competition for Schools of Art with his set of drawings. He attended the Slade School of Art under Philip Wilson Steer and Professor Henry Tonks.

In 1929 he took a job etching at Ipswich Art School and stayed until 1940. Watercolour and etching were his favourite media. He would create sketches outdoors, marking them with copious notes on colour, composition and lighting.



Cornhill, Ipswich. Leonard Squirrell
© CIMS on behalf of Ipswich Borough Council

These sketches then formed the basis to create finished pictures in his studio. He exhibited regularly at the Royal Academy and the Royal Society of Painters in Watercolours and for 67 years with the Ipswich Art Club.

Squirrell was prolific in his output and was commissioned to illustrate books, produce railway carriage images, and calendars for companies. He even produced two books "*Landscape Painting in Pastel*" (1947) and "*Practice in Watercolour*" (1950).

He was an integral part of the artistic life here in Ipswich and the following tribute, written by his lifelong friend Sir William Russell Flint, R.A. (1880-1969) shows his impact on other artists.

"Beside me, as I commence to write a brief tribute, is a reproduction of one of Leonard Squirrell's watercolours

The Market Place, Bungay. It is characteristic of his work and typical of his very special gift of enlivening his scenes with figures, all different and all appropriate...

I was introduced to Leonard Squirrell's work nearly half a century ago. I liked it then: I admire it now. It has the desirable qualities of the best draughtsmanship, technique, clean and harmonious colour, balanced composition and serenity – in short, a reflection of the artist himself, a man steadfast and true. When I see a gathering of a good painter's work one thought comes into mind – all these pictures have been giving pleasure. They will continue to exist and continue to give pleasure..."

Emma Roodhouse
Collections and Learning Curator

An invitation to the Friends of Ipswich Museums

Leonard Squirrell

Come to a talk by Emma Roodhouse
with the opportunity to view the latest exhibition of works by
this popular local artist.

Thursday, 9 June

Join us at 6.30 at Christchurch Mansion
to enjoy a glass of wine before the viewing at 7 pm.

Bookings via Christchurch Mansion ☎ 01473 433554

Museum News

Show and Tell

We will continue to hold “*Show and Tell*” days at the Museum on the following Wednesdays in 2016:-

1 June, 10 August and 26 October, when visitors will be invited to bring in any natural objects they have found whilst walking, working in their gardens or during other outdoor adventures – fossils, rocks, bones, teeth and small bugs (if well contained) – to show others and learn more about them.

“*Show and Tell*” days hope to inspire curiosity and creativity. Specialists will be at the museum between 11 am and 3 pm to help identify natural history, botanical and archaeological objects.

We will also have a specialist from *Icon*, The Institute of Conservation, who can provide advice on how to care for objects.

Joan Lyall

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The Training Museum

Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service (CIMS) received a grant from Arts Council England to deliver

The Training Museum, which is a three year workforce transformation project.

The overall aim is to open up access routes to the museum sector and help diversify the workforce. This is being realised through a number of work strands, one of which relates to traineeships.

We currently have 7 trainees, 4 of whom are based in Ipswich: Anton, Em, Joe and Sammi. They joined us toward the end of 2015 and will work for CIMS for one year. During that time, they are gaining hands-on experience, working alongside our various teams and

receiving vocational training in a range of areas. We are utilising the wealth of knowledge and experience we have at CIMS by delivering much of the training in-house and, where possible, opening

the sessions up to other interested colleagues too.

To date, we have delivered training on documentation, collections database management, packing and storing, marking and labelling, basic object photography, conservation, exhibition design and installation, museum audiences and evaluation.

The trainees are a wonderful group and have already made a really positive impact by getting stuck in to a wide range of projects. It is great to have them on board and be able to support their development during the course of their traineeship and beyond.

Lib Fox
Museums Project Officer, CIMS

☎ 01206 506423

📱 07940 462077



The packing and storing training run by Isobel Keith and Elle Root in January

Conservation Corner

Bob Entwistle writes: Please forgive my absence from the last newsletter. This was due to the China Syndrome.

The China Syndrome.

This is a benign complaint that affects many museums. It manifests itself in Museums in China and the UK.

Symptoms include learning Mandarin/English, trying to eat geese intestines or black pudding, (depending on nationality), smiling and nodding a lot, saying *nihao/hello*, and transferring collections of objects from one continent to another.

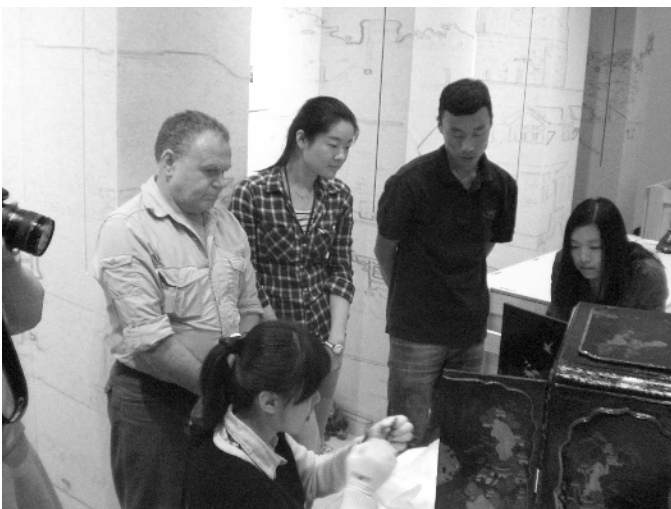
Over most of September and October of 2015 the conservation sections and curators of CIMS condition reported, cleaned and packed 80 objects to go on show at Nanjing Museum.

Some of these objects were very small, (a nutmeg grater), whilst others were very large, (a chair and a lacquer cabinet). The whole transport needed to be costed. Some objects required

specialist packing, especially the dresses, uniforms and a model guillotine. All needed export licences; all needed professional packing by the shipping agents to comply with new security laws, and objects made of ivory needed CITES licences, (Control in the Trade of Endangered Species), which our Chinese hosts were unaware of.

Both my colleague, Emma Hogarth in Colchester, and I took extensive photographs of all the objects to make detailed condition reports. Ipswich objects included a Mendlesham chair, the lovely lacquer cabinet from the Queen Anne Room at the Mansion, costume, fans, samplers, the painted mirror brought back by Captain Sandy, ceramics, 2 paintings, and glass. Obviously, all these objects needed to be packed carefully and crated to survive customs sheds, being bounced around by airport packers and transported long distances by lorries and plane.

Special cases were made for the cabinet, chair, paintings and mirror, and also the costume, to ensure they arrived safely in a state to be displayed. All the costume was transported padded out to ensure no creases developed and was boxed on a bed of tissue cushions. Also transported was display material, and all



Condition reporting the lacquer cabinet

the mannequins and stands. We did not know if conservation grade display and packaging materials were readily available in China so we brought our own.

After an eventful 6 hour drive from Shanghai airport to Nanjing arriving at 11.30 pm, and after the customs had checked our shipment, we set to filling the cases.

Four people including myself travelled with the objects, and checked their condition with the Chinese conservators as we unpacked. We placed the objects on display, put costume on mannequins, checked light levels, carried out minor repairs, cleaned cases, and labelled the objects on display.

The exhibition entitled "Georgian Life", opened by local officials, was attended by Bill Seaman, British councillors and local TV and press. We all stood at a respectful distance and clapped. Bill had learnt some Chinese especially for the occasion and kept up the British end!

The Lacquer cabinet from the Mansion created a lot of interest, and people clustered round the case to photograph it. The vice director asked me to show her the cabinet and she translated the Chinese characters on the rear of the drawers. I had hoped it was a maker's name or similar information, but unfortunately they just translated as "left" and "right".

We are now making arrangements for the objects to return in May.



The Team

I feel very privileged to have been involved with the three Chinese projects between CIMS Xuzhou and Nanjing Museums over the past 7 years.

I have developed a great interest in Chinese history, seen some amazing sights, bought some marvellous tat in markets, passed an Open University course in Mandarin, and met some very nice people whom I hope I can call friends. I will be very sad to say goodbye as this will probably be the last co-operative visit with our Chinese colleagues and friends for the foreseeable future.

They have opened my eyes to a new culture; made me eat some weird food including frogs, scorpions, sea slug porridge, intestines and jelly fish, and been extremely hospitable.

In return they have learnt about haggis, black pudding, fish and chips, cider, pints of bitter, T K Max, and raspberries and cream teas in my back garden.

Robert Entwistle
Conservator

Polished Spoons

Rowell Bell is a volunteer working with Robert Entwistle in the Conservation Laboratory at Ipswich Museum.

Ever since I reacquainted myself with Christchurch Mansion I have wanted to have a close look at the two dozen or so assorted spoons in the Upper Tudor Room, and this Autumn the opportunity arose.



Some of the polished spoons

The Mansion has 27 very worn spoons, all held by right-handed infants and adults. They are from the early 15th century, or before, to the Commonwealth Period. Nearly all the spoons are brass (latten), and two had been dipped into molten tin to avoid tainting food, especially if prepared with vinegar. One or two spoons could be silver, or gilded silver, but that is not so important.

Disappointingly, there were few maker's marks. The fleur-de-lis incuse, a local mark for the region, appears on a couple of spoons, and could a partial G on another be Gilbert of Ipswich?

Initials are carved on some spoons and they would have been given as Christening presents because they would not be supplied at table and therefore every-one carried their own.

In the Mansion we have a rich variety of shapes at the end of the handle, the

knop, whereas the bowls had been fig shaped since medieval times. As the centuries progressed, acorn knops, diamond points and wrythen knops gave way to an increasing variety of finials – maidenhead, lion sejant (seated), animals, human figures such as Apostles, and seal tops.

They were cast in tiny sand moulds and soldered on to the top of the stem using a "V" joint in the case of London and a lap joint in all other parts of the country. The finials of seal-top spoons, whose period spanned from the late 15th to the late 17th centuries, are thought to be for stirring drinks or crushing or helping to dissolve sugar in tall thin glasses to sweeten their contents. Then there are the slip-top spoons, or were the Apostles forcibly removed?

With the ascendancy of Cromwell and Puritanism, the design of spoons changed to ones with flattened handles, completely unadorned and with a heavy elliptical bowl, both in silver and base metal. A more elaborate example is the silver gilt spoon I cleaned downstairs, made by Thomas Hutchinson of Great Yarmouth circa 1680. But, hopefully, now that the 27 have had a gentle clean and polish visitors will catch sight of them, look at the shapes and texture and ponder on how they were made and whose reflection once looked up from their bowls hundreds of years ago.

Rowell Bell

Thoughts from Carole Jones

Chair, Colchester & Ipswich Joint Museums Committee, Ipswich Borough Council

Recuperating from winter flu recently, I picked a book from my shelves. I hadn't opened it for at least five years and so my reacquaintance with it was something of a revelation. The book is the Suffolk edition of a series produced in 2005 by a charity called "*The Public Catalogue Foundation*", and it lists all the oil paintings in public ownership in Suffolk, giving details of artist and date, and where possible a reproduction of each work. It's clear from the Foreword that Ipswich Museum staff were closely involved in the production of the book, and the section on our collection here in Ipswich is the most substantial.

Gainsborough's wonderful portrait of William Wollaston graces the front cover.

The catalogue for Ipswich is full of gems, often by artists I had never come across before. I was particularly struck by **Lime Tree Shade**, by Amy Katherine Browning, who was born to a farming family in Luton, and who was a suffragette and a graduate of the Royal College of Art. This 1913 piece shows a girl and her dog in dappled sunlight under a tree. A curiosity is a 1965 painting by David Cutler, **Lock and Stagg, Wolsey Street**, which depicts a car showroom of the time. Our Lucy Harwood paintings are a trove. She lived in Suffolk all her life, and worked with Cedric Morris in Benton End – and we have other

Benton End artists in the collection, including Morris himself and Maggi Hambling. And who knew we had a Christopher Wood, a Spencer Gore and a Prunella Clough? Certainly not me.

Possibly the biggest surprise came when I googled Tomás Harris. I'd never heard of him, but his **Landscape, Palm Trees and Cacti** looked interesting. To my astonishment I discovered he was, according to Wikipedia, "an art dealer, artist, Goya specialist and MI5 officer" – possibly a double agent connected with Kim Philby!

The Ipswich collection has up to 100 artworks, in a variety of media, by the much-loved Ipswich artist Leonard Squirrell, and over the next 10 months there will be an exhibition of his works in the Wolsey Gallery, with the first part of the display changed after six months to show a larger number of these pictures. I'm sure visitors will really enjoy viewing them.



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Admiral Edward Vernon

Lady Deben, President of FoIM, has prepared this account of Admiral Vernon's life.

Edward Vernon's connexions with Suffolk derived from his father's family. His father, James, came from Great Thurlow, although he always worked in London and rose to become Secretary of State to William III, as well as being the Member of Parliament for Penryn.

Edward Vernon was born in London in 1684 and went to Westminster School. He joined the navy in 1700, serving first under Sir George Rook and Sir Cloudesley Shovell in the Channel and the Mediterranean. At the age of 24 he was given command of the *Jersey* and sent to the Caribbean, where he remained for four years. He then joined the Baltic fleet until 1721 (with a break from 1717 until 1719).

Having been placed on half-pay in 1721 he stood for Parliament in 1722 and was elected for both Dunwich and Penryn. He chose to sit for Penryn -his father's old seat. In 1726 he was given command of the *Grafton* and took it to the Baltic and then to the Mediterranean, returning to England after peace was made with Spain in 1728.

He resumed his Parliamentary duties and gained a reputation as a forthright speaker, particularly on naval matters. There was no Hansard at that time (indeed, direct reports of the proceedings of Parliament were

forbidden), but one contribution that is recorded is Vernon's strong opposition to the revival of the Salt Tax (1732), which he feared the Scottish would escape while the English paid. This led Cyril Hughes Hartmann, in his biography entitled "The Angry Admiral", to point out that this speech "betrays all the impetuosity and breezy indiscretion which usually characterised his public utterances... As was to happen so often throughout his career, Vernon's facts were absolutely correct; it was in his manner of presenting them that he offended."

One year earlier, in one of the many incidents on the troubled Spanish Main, the ship of Captain Robert Jenkins was boarded and the captain and his lieutenant were tortured. As a coup de grace the Spanish coast guard sliced off the captain's ear and advised him to take it back to King George as a warning. In 1738 Captain Jenkins arrived at the House of Commons to appear before a committee and displayed his pickled ear. Parliamentary and public opinion was aroused and anti-Spanish feeling fomented.

During the ensuing debates Edward Vernon claimed that he could take Porto Bello with six ships only; in his view this was no bold claim but a statement of fact based on his knowledge after four

years' service in the Caribbean. The public was delighted at the thought of giving Spain a bloody nose and Vernon was spoken of as another Drake.

Vernon (promoted to Vice-Admiral) was sent to the West Indies with a squadron of nine ships with instructions to harry the Spanish, protect English possessions on land and sea, and gain intelligence. A week after the War of Jenkins' Ear had been finally declared, in November 1740, Vernon attacked and took the fort and town of Porto Bello with six ships and the loss of only seven men.

The extent of the rejoicing in England has only since been exceeded after a naval victory by the celebrations after Trafalgar. Bonfires were lit around the country, both Houses of Parliament sent an Address to the King congratulating him on "the glorious success" and both Houses voted their thanks to Admiral

Vernon; he was presented with the Freedom of the City of London and vast numbers of commemorative medals were struck in his honour (more than for anyone else in the 18th century). Public houses across the country were given Vernon's name and areas of London, Edinburgh and elsewhere were named Porto Bello. "Rule Britannia", written shortly before by Thomas Arne, became a hit as a consequence of the victory and Thomas Topham the Strongman lifted three barrels of water, weighing 1836 lbs, in honour of Admiral Vernon in front of thousands of people in Bath Street, London.

The colonies had contributed a force to support this expedition and a young man on board Vernon's ship was so in admiration of the Admiral (he would write letters home to his younger brother extolling him) that when he returned home to his estate, Little

One of the Medals struck following the Victory at Porto Bello

Obverse: a picture of Admiral Vernon with the words: The British glory reviv.d by Admiral Vernon Reverse: a picture of six ships entering Porto Bello harbour with the words: Who took Porto Bello with six ships only



Hunting Creek Plantation, he renamed it. The young officer's name was Lawrence Washington, his younger brother George, and the new name for the estate was Mount Vernon.

This was the high point of the expedition. Much encouraged, the government sent a land force from England under Lord Cathcart; the omens were excellent as he and Vernon held each other in high esteem and would have worked well together. Sadly, however, Lord Cathcart died shortly before arriving at Port Royal and his place was taken by his second-in-command, General Wentworth. Attacks on Cartagena and then Guantanamo Bay were unsuccessful - in very large part because of Wentworth's inexperience of fighting in the tropics.

By the time Admiral Vernon returned to England he had been elected Member of Parliament for Ipswich (1741) and continued to represent the town until 1757. He had one final naval appointment, as commander of the North Sea Fleet during the '45. He found himself at loggerheads with the Admiralty and wrote two critical pamphlets and was thus dismissed from the Navy in 1746.

Edward Vernon was a blunt sailor with a kind heart and desire for reform. It is no surprise that he never entered the diplomatic corps but he always cared for his men and was loved by them and his fellow-officers in return. In 1729 he was a member of the Fleet Prison Committee - charged by Parliament to look into allegations of abuse in that prison; his

fame rests as much on his instigation of grog (dividing the rum ration into two servings per day, diluted with water and citrus juice) as it does on his victory at Porto Bello; and he was fervently opposed to the press ganging of men to serve in the Royal Navy.

His sailors' affectionate nickname for him - Old Grog - derived from his habit of wearing the same old grogram coat on the bridge of his ship and thus grog is still with us today. His other memorials are his portraits. He sat for the most fashionable portrait painters of the day - Thomas Hudson (in Christchurch Mansion), Charles Phillips (National Maritime Museum) and twice for Gainsborough (one being in the National Portrait Gallery) - and he is in a group of Hogarth of the Fleet Prison Committee (NPG). His memorial in Westminster Abbey is by Rysbrack (if you look above the ticket office when you go in, it will be the first thing that you see) and there is a further bust by Roubiliac in the National Maritime Museum. There are many other likenesses of him, especially in the large number of medals that were struck after Porto Bello.

In a very busy and varied life he made a great contribution to his country and I am delighted to have this opportunity to give him greater prominence in his home county.

He died in Nacton in 1757 and is buried there.

Penny Gummer
March 2016



To learn more go to:
www.bafm.co.uk

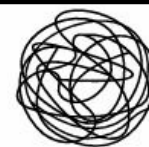
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In this issue:



Costume and furniture from the Ipswich Collection on display in Nanjing (see page 17)



Our President, Chairman and Councillor at Two Temple Place (see page 4)



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Portrait of Admiral Vernon at the Mansion (see page 21)

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Details of membership are given on page 27

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