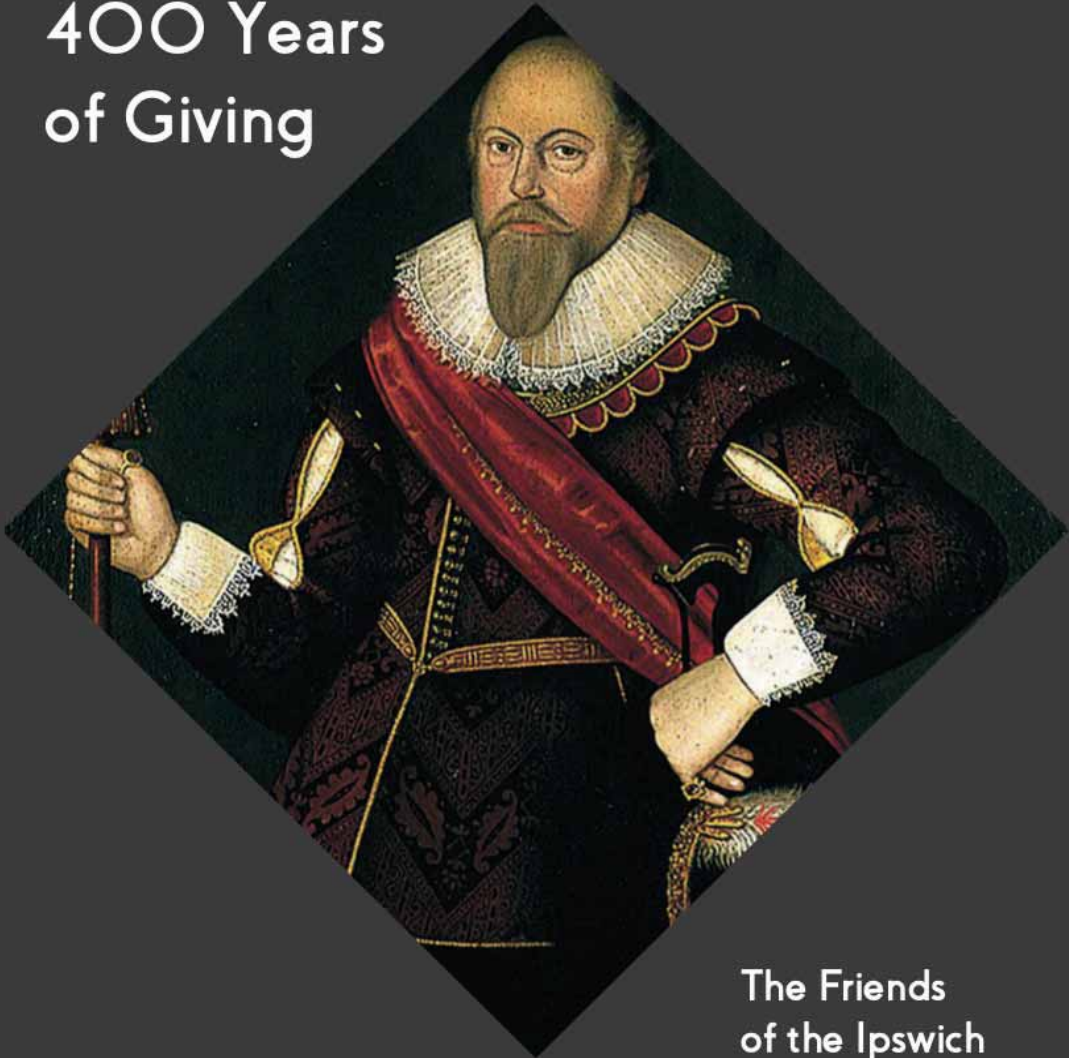




Newsletter
Late Summer
2021

400 Years of Giving



The Friends
of the Ipswich
Museums

We look Forward to
Promote the Past

Chairman's message

Throughout the summer, your committee has been working closely with the CIMS management team on funding proposals for the Museum redevelopment project. As a charity, the Friends are in a position to apply for certain funding when Ipswich Borough Council or the Museums cannot. We had a zoom meeting with a representative from the Garfield Weston foundation in April, and followed this up with a 2-hour site visit last week. So it is with huge pleasure that I can announce a £150,000 pledge subject to National Lottery success. Although we will not be making this news "public" until the result of the NLHF bid is known, it seems only right to share it with you, our members, whose £50,000 pledge has been such an important part of the overall fundraising strategy. You can read more about the Museum redevelopment plans on page 22.

I am also delighted that we are

able to return to in-person events this autumn (see page 18 for more information). The book launch and unveiling of the restored Zinkeisen painting on 6 October, financed by our Angels, is a particularly special event. And here are a couple more dates for your diary: on 29 November we are planning a preview of the landmark *Creating Constable* exhibition; and on 8 December we will be holding our Christmas party again, this year featuring the launch of Emma Roodhouse's major new book on Constable. After so many months of society seeming to tread water, at last (as our motto states) there's much to look forward to.

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Museums + Heritage Awards 2021

Colchester and Ipswich Museums win at these prestigious awards

The 17 winners of this year's prestigious Museums + Heritage Awards have been announced in an online ceremony hosted by journalist and broadcaster Samira Ahmed. Colchester and

very tough times... but we have also seen extraordinary generosity, creativity, resilience and risk-taking," said Maggie Appleton MBE, chief executive of the RAF Museum and chair of the judging panel this year.



Eleanor Root, Collections and Learning Curator, who led this award-winning project

Ipswich Museums picked up the Community Impact Award for their *Museum from Home* activity packs.

"We have experienced some

"These awards celebrate those fabulous traits of our sector, and of the remarkable people that make it one which is such a joy to be part of."

As reported in our summer 2020 issue, the *Museum from Home* activity packs were developed during the first lockdown in partnership with other local cultural and community organisations for local families in need, including those unable to access digital resources, children with SEN, under 5s and young adults. 2,500 packs were distributed via local groups including Volunteering Matters, BSC Multicultural Support, 4YP and Suffolk Family Carers. The packs were made using resources contributed by DanceEast, Suffolk Libraries, and various freelance artists.

Fellow winners included The National Portrait Gallery, The Garden Museum and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Anna Preedy, director of the Awards commented: “It is truly inspiring to see how our winners have been at the very heart of their communities, playing a vital role in helping to ensure people stay connected and supported during the most challenging of times.”

IBC Portfolio Holder Carole Jones said: “It’s a wonderful achievement for Ipswich that the quality of these materials has now been recognised nationally. We hope the children and young people who were reached through the project will now visit and enjoy our Museums soon and we look forward to welcoming them. My thanks go to our community partners, to Arts Council England, and to our Museum staff – especially Eleanor Root, whose dedication and energy were so crucial to making it a success.” Yes!



Another batch of activity packs ready for delivery

Court coat conserved

Anna Peck, ACR freelance textile conservator, describes the court coat restoration made possible with your support

Following on from my online talk “A stitch in time” which I gave to the FoIM back in February, I thought you might like to hear a little more detail about the conservation of the beautiful, embroidered 18th-century gentleman’s court coat, now on display in the Main Hall at Christchurch Mansion.

As you might remember, the coat was extremely fragile and in very poor condition. Because of this, it had not been displayed for many years but kept flat in a box in the Museum stores for its own safety. Exposure to ultraviolet light in the past had caused the colour of the cut velvet and the embroidery threads to fade and lose their vibrancy, and had caused the silk fibres to become brittle and break. Unfortunately, the colour loss is



irreversible, but the degraded silk could be saved.

The silk threads were shattered and split, leaving the weft thread hanging loose, tangled, and unsupported. There were numerous old repairs throughout the coat which had been executed in unsuitable

threads (some in bright purple!) and these were causing distortions and tensions in the fabric.

Most of the old repairs were removed – which was like opening a can of worms! This had to be done to allow the

threads were then meticulously realigned and supported with stitching onto silk patches which I had dyed specifically to match the colour of the coat.

The silk was supported with laid couching which is a stitch used a lot in textile



Anna stitches the damaged silk onto a support patch using a curved needle

fabric to relax and lay flat again, but it did make the condition of the coat appear a lot worse before it got better. The loose and broken silk

conservation. It was carried out using an extremely fine, semi-transparent polyester thread so it is as invisible as possible, whilst still giving strength to the



The top of the left sleeve before and after conservation

fabric. The stitching was worked flat on the table with 4mm spacing (I did have to wear my glasses for this!), using a curved needle which can be very fiddly especially with such a fine thread.

The conservation stitching was very time consuming and took up the majority of the hours allowed for the treatment. If you look very closely at the coat now you will see that almost the entire surface is

covered with fine lines of stitching – see if you can spot them! Once all the stitch treatment was complete, a mannequin was customised and padded out to fully support the shape and weight of the coat whilst it is on display.

Thanks to the FoIM funding of this conservation project, the court coat is now safe to be displayed, and its splendour can be enjoyed by all for many years to come.

My Favourite Thing

Rowell Bell, a very special “Friend of The Friends”, selects the portrait of Tobias Bloss painted in 1627/28

There are many fine items I could choose as “My Favourite Thing”: ceramics, glass, silver, furniture and other paintings, even the rather lovely Burrows painting of Bridle Way I donated at the AGM in 2019. “I quite liked that” said my wife JoAnne seated to my left as John Day, seated to my right, handed me the invoice for cleaning it... It had been purchased with Felix Cobbold bequest monies, then sold by the Town many years ago, found by me and now returned.

The Tobias Bloss painting is a two dimensional pictorial statement; however it is not perhaps the portrait which interests me so much as the subject. I was lucky because I knew about the man before meeting him at the Mansion.

There were many philanthropists 400 years ago,

but most of the funds they left were lost or wasted and few left portraits, so Ipswich is very fortunate to own this one. Here we have the man, what he looked like, where he lived, and what he did for himself and for others.

I first read about Tobias Bloss and his charitable legacy in a book I purchased over fifty years ago, which was printed in 1747. Then in 1988 when I took over as Clerk to the Trustees of St. Mary-le-Tower Charities, there was Tobias Bloss in the donors’ accounts.

Tobias, by Will dated 13 July 1630, gave four marks a year to be paid out of his lands, called Apostle Ester in St. Margaret’s parish, for four sermons to be preached in the Parish-church of St. Lawrence, out of which the preacher should have 10s, the sexton



(for ringing the bell and making the seats clean and fit) 1s, and 2s 4d should go in bread for the poor. The sum of £1 13s 4d

a year was paid by Mileson Edgar Esq., the proprietor of the land charged. Some 390 years later income was up by

only £1. Some of Tobias' fellow donors' funds fared better, but their portraits are unknown.

The Blosses were an old Ipswich family of cloth dealers. Tobias, born about 1565, became a Portman and Bailiff of Ipswich, and was Captain of the Ipswich Trained Band between 1620 and 1628. Established in 1573, Trained Bands were voluntary reserve armies based in London and the Provinces.

In around 1615 Tobias and his brother Thomas purchased Belstead Hall and surrounding land as part of a strategy to increase their importance to the level of country gentry, and this portrait shows a proud display of their newly acquired coat of arms. Tobias was buried at Belstead Church.

Tobias Bloss was fortunate enough not to have gone bankrupt in 1622, the fate of many Ipswich merchants when the overseas markets for our cloth died out, as Lillian

Redstone documented in her book Ipswich through the ages: "The Suffolk clothiers gave large credits to the Ipswich merchants, who sold their wares in the Low Countries and elsewhere. When the grasping policy of the clothworkers and the restrictive controls of the Stuart monarchy killed the overseas markets for Suffolk cloths, the Ipswich merchants fell first. Clothiers of a dozen or so Suffolk towns are said to have lost over £30,000 through the bankruptcy of Ipswich merchants in the one year 1622. The era of Ipswich Tudor prosperity thus ended in a period of ruin."

In the Mansion I finally came face to face with the man whose legacy I kept alive for the past 32 years, instead of terminating as per guidelines. I am glad I kept that legacy alive. The motto under the coat of arms reads DUM SPIRO SPERO, which translates to "While I breathe, I hope"!

In memory of Alick Barnett

We were very sorry to hear that Alick Barnett died in June after a short illness. Alick joined the FoIM committee in 2016 for a short while as our newsletter editor, taking over from Mary Halliwell. His wife, Gillian, is one of our Mansion guides and Alick was a regular visitor to the Mansion.

For most of his working life he was an electrical engineer with Eastern Electricity. On retirement he volunteered and gave talks at the Ipswich Transport Museum before joining FoIM.

Alick's family were Danish, and he and Gillian spent many holidays in Denmark. They were very pleased to celebrate their Golden Wedding together a couple of years ago.

Our sympathies are with Gillian and their sons.



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Having your cake and eating it?

FoIM Vice-Chairman **Denise Fiennes** reports on our next conservation project and how, as Members and Angels, you are making this important work possible

“Coffees for Conservation” was created in lockdown as part of our Choir of Angels campaign to encourage people to donate money to the Museums when they were unable to visit cafés with their friends. Our members and Angels have looked kindly upon the work that the Friends have been doing with acquisitions, conservation and exhibitions, and we are so grateful for each and every contribution.

Since it was formed in 2018, the Choir of Angels has raised over £17,000. Becoming an Angel in memory of a friend or a loved one is only £10 and a Cherub £15 – we have had a number named after grandchildren who have been able to see their names listed on our website alongside all the Angels.

As lockdown eased this summer it seemed time to thank our 65 Angels for all they have

done to make this campaign a success, and very appropriate to organise a Coffee Morning hosted by our Committee and our President, Lady Deben. Over 40 Angels heard speeches in the Mansion’s Great Hall and enjoyed coffee served in the China Room by The Green Room Café, one of our newest Corporate Angels. They provided specialist coffee, local milk and what can only be described as ‘divine’ angel cakes! (If you call in on them on St. Margaret’s Green, do ask for the raspberry cake...) Owner Su Ling Emin said she was delighted to be sponsoring the event and expressed how pleased she was to be working with the Friends’ committee on such a happy occasion. Gifts of coffee beans and Angel Tea were included, and members can see where to source these on the Angels page of our website.

Following on from the restoration of the exquisite 18th-century court coat that people can see on display in the Power of Stories exhibition until 24 October, Emma Roodhouse unveiled our next exciting conservation project, a rare early 17th-century Dutch painting from the CIMS collection that has now been attributed to the important marine artist Jan Porcellis (see the article on page 15).

We received our first Archangel donation for this item immediately afterwards, from Ben and Kathryn Parry in memory of Beate and John Parry who for over 40 years had been the organist at St. Margaret's, the closest church to the Mansion. Another Angel, Rowell Bell, swiftly followed, and so we are already on the way towards raising the £4,000 needed to restore this important painting.

If you would like to become an Archangel, Angel, Seraphim or Cherubim then please visit our

website www.foim.org.uk and click on ANGELS AND GIVING. Your contribution will help us to restore and add this wonderful work to one of the finest collections of art in the country. You can give securely online through Total Giving or fill in a form, and preferably add Gift Aid, which will contribute a further 25% to your donation. If you think about going out for a coffee but would rather donate it to the Museums, please do: Coffees for Conservation is ongoing.

Archangels £150 Angels £50
Seraphim £25 Cherubim £15

Giving is quick, secure and easy. On the form you can leave us a message or a reference i.e. Jan Porcellis, or Coffees for Conservation etc.

Businesses, sole traders and small companies are all most welcome to join our Choir of Angels. Corporate Angels are £100 for a year, and membership includes three advertisements in our newsletters. If instead of

becoming an Angel you would like to give a Gift Membership to a friend or family, please visit our website and click on JOIN US. It is only £12 per annum (families £15) and you will have access to Friends' events, our Previews and of course the Christmas Party.

With the Museums' Eleanor Root winning a prestigious national award for her innovative work in lockdown with children's programmes (see page 3), and the many exciting family events at the Museums, what better Christmas or birthday gift than to become a Friend of the Ipswich Museums?

Cheques can be sent to Jean Attenborrow, 3 Holly Road, Ipswich, IP1 3QN, or you can send a bank transfer to: The Friends of the Ipswich Museums, Co-op Bank, sort code 08-92-99, account 65886997, adding "membership" as your reference and emailing as above to confirm your details.

Email privacy is fully respected of course, but by having an email address for you we can cut down on costs and contact you so much more easily.

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The Porcellis restoration project

Help alleviate the misery of our Porcellis crew!



Heeled over in the strong winds against stormy skies, the unfortunate sailors caught up in a Porcellis seascape generally have a rough time of it – even his fresh breezes look fairly intimidating. Almost 400 years of dirt and discolouration have made the weather conditions in our Porcellis painting even more foul and forbidding than usual, and this work badly needs restoration (writes **Kevin Young**).

This fascinating painting from the Ipswich Borough Collection was previously attributed to an 18th-century painter “B. de Vlieger”, but

in a recent discussion on ArtUK's *Art Detective* website, Gillis Tak Labrijn (who is currently compiling the catalogue raisonné of Simon de Vlieger) and Pieter van der Merwe of the National Maritime Museum concluded that this painting is in fact by Jan Porcellis, with probable studio assistance from Simon de Vlieger (1601–1653). Labrijn says that *"Original works by Jan Porcellis are rather rare. I could only recommend for the picture to be professionally restored and shown to the public."* Well we agree, which is why we are soliciting donations for the restorative work.

Jan Porcellis (c.1584–1632) was born in Ghent but lived mostly in the Netherlands (apart from a short period in London in 1606). He was recognised as an important figure by his contemporaries; a talented and respected artist who was innovative in focussing on nature, and who emphasised the effects and power of the sea rather than using it merely as a passive background for the ships. This dramatic work is unusual in showing a boat not only battling a rough sea but also under threat of imminent destruction by being dashed against the rocks.

Our painting was purchased from Finborough Hall in Great Finborough. This had previously been the Suffolk estate of William Wollaston, MP for Ipswich, but was sold to Roger Pettiward in 1794 and remained as that family's seat until 1936. We have a portrait of Wollaston by Gainsborough in the collection at the Mansion. The painting was sold again on 21 October 1935 as part of a sale of contents from Finborough Hall, and there is a copy of the sale catalogue in the Suffolk Record Office.

If you are interested in contributing to the restoration, please see Denise Fiennes' article on page 12 of this issue.

We welcome new members: Michael and Caroline Sherrod

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Future Events, Talks & Exhibitions

For the latest information about all our events, please visit our website: www.foim.org.uk

We encourage booking in advance for our events to help facilitate track and trace if required. When booking, please pay by bank transfer to **Friends of the Ipswich Museums, Co-op Bank**, Account Number **65886997**, Sort Code **08-92-99** using your name as the reference and ensuring that you have confirmed your booking by emailing Jean at jattenborrow@hotmail.co.uk. Alternatively, please use the appropriate booking slip (on page 21) and return with your payment (cheques payable to "FoIM") to Jean Attenborrow, 3 Holly Road, Ipswich, IP1 3QN.

Wednesday, 6 October – Doris Zinkeisen unveiling and book launch

6.30pm for 7pm at Christchurch Mansion

£6 for members, £8 for guests, to include refreshments (if permitted)

We are very excited to be able (at last!) to unveil the painting *The Misses Janet and Anne Grahame Johnstone and Miss Julia Heseltine* by Doris Zinkeisen that was purchased and restored with the support of our magnificent Angels (see last Winter's newsletter for more details). The portrait shows her daughters Janet and Anne who were to become prolific illustrators, alongside their cousin Julia Heseltine, a recognised portrait artist who still lives and paints in Suffolk.

On hand to tell the story of this special painting and its background will be our very own Emma Roodhouse alongside

Zinkeisen expert Philip Kelleway and conservator Nicola Evans. These three have co-authored a new lavishly-illustrated book *The Art of Doris and Anna Zinkeisen* (published this month), and the evening will see the book's launch together with an opportunity to purchase signed copies at a discounted price. (October is definitely not too early to start some Christmas shopping!)

The book charts the rise of the Zinkeisen sisters from a childhood in Scotland to their emergence as amongst the most eminent artists of their day. Doris and Anna enjoyed huge success and won numerous accolades, and their paintings and design work (including posters, murals for luxury ocean liners, and costume designs for stage and film), are today emblematic of the golden age of British art from the 1920s through to the 1950s.

Philip Kelleway is an art historian who has written books on 18th-century Meissen porcelain, illustration and landscape painting. He is a noted authority on the work of the Zinkeisens and has previously published *Highly Desirable: the Zinkeisen Sisters and their Legacy*. Nicola Evans has worked for Damien Hirst at Hirst Science and for the National Maritime Museum in London. An accomplished artist herself, she now works as conservator of paintings at KSH Conservation Ltd., and we are delighted that she will be talking about her work in restoring this particular painting.

We will be observing any Covid related protocols that might be in place at the Mansion in October, which may include mask wearing and social distancing. Refreshments will be served if permitted.

Friday, 8 October – Hard hat visit to Gainsborough's House redevelopment project

1.45pm at Gainsborough's House, Sudbury

Members only, £15 (to include a £5 donation). Numbers are strictly limited to 15, so book early to avoid disappointment.

We are delighted to have been given this very special opportunity to visit the works currently taking place at our sister museum, Gainsborough's House in Sudbury. Scheduled to open in the spring of next year, *Reviving an Artist's Birthplace – a national centre for Gainsborough* is a £9m Heritage Lottery supported project to develop a world-class centre celebrating the town's most famous son.

A landmark three-storey structure is being built on the site of an empty local authority building adjacent to the existing house. Four new galleries will provide a showcase Gainsborough gallery, a landscape studio with panoramic views over Sudbury, a community gallery and a temporary exhibition gallery/performance space. A new orangery-style café overlooking the beautiful eighteenth-century gardens is set to enhance the visitor experience. You can find out much more information about the museum at www.gainsborough.org.

We will have the chance to see the work in progress and discuss aspects of the development with members of the project team. This visit will not be suitable for those for whom mobility issues might make accessing the site difficult, so please bear this in mind when booking. Please ensure a prompt 1.45pm arrival to collect your hard hat, hi vis jacket and safety boots.

The address is Gainsborough's House, 46 Gainsborough Street, Sudbury, CO10 2EU. At the time of writing, free parking can be found at North Street a short walk away. With access from the A131 one-way system, this has free Pay & Display parking for 3 hours, and has 195 spaces. There are plans, however, for Babergh to introduce charges sometime this year so it would be worth checking in advance on their website or by visiting www.gainsborough.org/your-visit/getting-here.

Zinkeisen event on Wednesday, 6 October

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Telephone No _____

Email _____

Any special dietary access/mobility needs _____

Tickets: Friends £6 each: _____ Guests £8: _____

Cheque enclosed for: _____

Return this form to: Jean Attenborrow, 3 Holly Road, Ipswich, IP1 3QN

Hard hat visit to Gainsborough's House on Friday, 8 October

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Telephone No _____

Email _____

Any special access/mobility needs * _____

Tickets: Friends £15 each: _____ Cheque enclosed for: _____

Return this form to: Jean Attenborrow, 3 Holly Road, Ipswich, IP1 3QN

***Please note that because there are no disabled access facilities yet installed at Gainsborough's House, this visit may not be suitable for anyone with mobility issues.**

Ipswich Museum redevelopment

An update from **James Steward**

After two and half years in development we finally submitted the Round 2 £4.3m grant application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund on 25 August. Planning permission has now been granted, and with the support of the Friends (see page 2) we are making positive progress with fundraising applications to Trusts and Foundations, some of whom have already indicated strong support and commitment to the project vision.

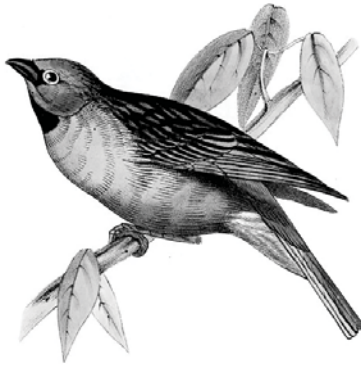
Our lead designer PRS, working alongside our gallery designer Mather & Co., have re-configured every gallery using refreshed, object rich displays and interactive media to bring our collections to life. The new Museum design will:

- improve the presentation of Ipswich's heritage, collections and stories
- create new spaces, alive with activity, opening up new ways to engage visitors with their heritage and the stories we tell. This will include a new coffee shop and flexible spaces for learning, events, programming, hire, and an enlarged retail space
- reveal, restore and reinstate features of the original Victorian building, making physical repairs to ensure the long-term access and safety of the collections
- improve access throughout the Museum, including installing a new lift, taking into account the access needs of all visitors
- through our decolonisation plan, incorporate community participation to better understand the history and acquisition of the collections based around colonial legacies, whilst valuing different perspectives and forms of knowledge
- collaborate with community partners to create possibilities for volunteering and training, as well as developing academic

opportunities.

We anticipate a decision from the NLHF before Christmas. Subject to a positive outcome, work will commence in April 2022 with a two-year capital works programme followed by a gallery fit out from April 2024 and a grand re-opening at Easter 2025.

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Please contact John Day for complimentary advice.

An Angel's view



Sadly, we can't offer wings when you become an Angel, but if we could these might be your privileged Mansion views (above, and back cover). The photos were taken by Rob Bridgeman whilst undertaking high level surveys of the building, and the scaffolding erected over the summer on the southeastern corner was put up to support a dangerously wonky chimney. But which iconic building has the roof shown left? (Answer on the back cover.)

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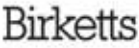
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The School of Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Suffolk are actively engaged in celebrating the rich cultural opportunities in our region. We are delighted to be supporting The Friends of the Ipswich Museums. Our academic staff and students are committed to building our vision of a Creative Suffolk. This extends to finding new and important ways of creatively connecting students and academics with our regional museums and the wider community. New connections offer platforms for new ideas, for advancing research and for worthwhile knowledge exchange which can benefit us all in diverse, innovative and surprising ways. We look forward to future collaborations!

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This fabulous image of the Mansion was taken by Rob Bridgeman whilst undertaking a high level survey of the building (see page 23, where the answer is the Ancient House). Precariously perched in the basket of an enormous crane, he says that he much preferred being in charge of coning off the area back on terra firma! Nonetheless we are grateful to him for these bird's-eye views.

Do visit the *Power of Stories* exhibition before it closes at the Mansion on 24 October. Although mask wearing is recommended, booking is no longer required so do just drop by – the entrance is via the Wolsey Art Gallery. And don't forget that the wondrous *Moon* exhibition closes at the Art Gallery on 10 October.



The Friends of the Ipswich Museums

We look Forward to
Promote the Past

We welcome new members to help
us support our excellent museums.

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Twitter: [@FolpsMuseums](https://twitter.com/FolpsMuseums)