

Through
the looking
glass

MOTM

Newsletter
Summer 2023



The Friends
of the Ipswich
Museums

We Look Forward to
Promote the Past

Chair's Message

by Richard Wilson

2024 is an exciting year for Ipswich Art Society as it marks 150 years since its foundation. Many of the same characters who were pivotal in founding the Society also played a part in establishing the Mansion as a museum, and so it is with great pleasure that I can announce that next year we will be sharing reciprocal membership with IAS. For the duration of the calendar year, we will be able to enjoy access to their events and any publications at IAS member rates, and we look forward to sharing

with their membership just what we do. You can read more about IAS from their President Stephen Cassidy on page 10 (please be assured that we will not be sharing data electronically).

IAS members will be receiving our newsletter via email, and I would like to take this opportunity to ask if any of you would prefer to read yours this way rather than by receiving a hard copy. Every member who wants a physical copy should have one, and we

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Front Cover: An image from the Friends' recent acquisition - the albums of works by Thomas Churchyard, his daughters, and his friend George Frost

have no plans to stop publishing them, but you will be aware that there is a cost involved and we always strive to maximise the amount of funds that we can pass over to the Museums. If you would rather have newsletters emailed to you, please write to contact@foim.org.uk. In any event, do let us have your email address if you think we don't already as we often have last minute news that we should love to share with you. Just email us or call Jean Attenborrow (see the contact information in the box below).

It is always wonderful when our museums receive the recognition they deserve. This month the Mansion has been celebrated in Tripadvisor's *Travellers' Choice Best of the Best 2023* list, and the recent Arts Council England Designated



status for the Museum's post-Cretaceous geology collection (which includes the remarkable Plio-Pleistocene fossils from Suffolk) are notable feathers in the team's collective caps. The Designation scheme is important as it identifies the pre-eminent collections of national importance held in England's non-national museums, libraries and archives, based on their quality and significance.

Our newsletters always celebrate our museums of course, and this edition is no different as we highlight some important new acquisitions (see pages 18-19 and the back cover). But we are also here to help the museums in other ways financially when we can, and our important new *Re-glazing Angels* fundraising campaign (see pages 8-9) aims to do just that.

We thank you for your continued support and look forward to seeing you in the coming months.

Do we have an up-to-date email address for you?

Are you receiving email notifications from us? If not, please let us know so that we can update our records.

Don't miss out on the latest news and updates!

Email contact@foim.org.uk or call Jean Attenborrow on 01473 213025

Ipswich Museums Report

Alison Hall, Ipswich Museums Manager

As I write, we're enjoying a busy start to the summer holidays. Almost 900 people have passed through Ipswich Museum over the last two weeks to get hands on with *Amazing Animals*, as well as getting a glimpse of what's been happening behind the scenes since the Museum closed. Christchurch Mansion has been busy with our *Family Fun Days*, and there's lots more creative fun still to come over the rest of the month.

Thank you to all of you who took part in the Ipswich Museum consultation event last month. It was good to meet so many of you in person, to share the progress with the Museum decant and to hear your thoughts about the project. We were particularly keen to test some of the stories of Ipswich we'll be telling in the Ipswich Stories gallery, which will tell the story of Ipswich from the Anglo-Saxons through to today, as well as to discover what else you're keen to see in that space.

There was a lot of discussion about the role of the port from the 8th century. As a result, we're ensuring this theme is woven through other stories told in this gallery, and we've allocated further



The canteen of Ransomes and Rapier Limited.

space in the centre of the gallery to provide links to the port and trade through the different periods of history that will, very broadly, follow chronologically around it.

The inclusion of Thomas Wolsey's story was widely supported, and we can tell this story through the Ipswich collections which include a number of Tudor architectural timbers, including the Half Moon corner post, men's working caps, model of Wolsey's gate, his portrait, and ephemera relating to Wolsey's Pageant of June 1930.

Ransomes came up in conversations about industry, philanthropy, economy, and technological advancement (Ipswich as the 'Silicon Valley of its day'), as well as Quakerism

and religion, so there are lots of elements to draw upon to tell the story of Robert Ransome alongside the history of the port.

There was much discussion about archaeology. Exploring Ipswich's roots through the archaeological evidence and individuals such as Basil Brown and Nina Layard, we can reveal Ipswich's deep and historic past and how this helped shaped the town it is today. Here we can include the site of Hadleigh Road (excavated by Nina Layard), explore Basil Brown's discovery of Sutton Hoo, and showcase the finds held in Ipswich Museum's collection from Rendlesham.



The Wolsey Gate



The Boss Hall Brooch

Overwhelmingly, we heard from you that through the stories told in this gallery, you want visitors to feel a sense of pride in the town, and to learn about the things that make Ipswich unique.

During the evening, there was also a conversation about the natural history gallery, and what it means to many of you. We're committed to the Victorian aesthetic of this gallery, so your views definitely chime with our approach to restoring and enhancing this space.

The evening was also a great opportunity to meet some of you who have special interests in some of these themes. We're speaking with and meeting those of you who were keen to feed in more, particularly with the specialist knowledge that you have on the different aspects of the history of Ipswich. It's an ongoing process and thanks to your and others' input I think we are really starting to see the gallery take shape.

Speaker's Lunch with Bob Entwistle

Wednesday 4 October

12 noon

Venue - The Garden Room at The Railway Inn, Westerfield

Cost - Friends £25, Guests £30 (includes 2 course lunch)

Booking via contact@foim.org.uk. See page 23 for payment details, and use LUNCH for reference. Please make your menu choice known when booking. You can choose from fish and chips, sausage and mash or vegetarian mozzarella pasta, followed by fruit crumble, brownie or cheesecake. The Garden Room has a bar for you to order your own drinks (not included).

After our lunch Bob Entwistle will talk about his long career in conservation and restoration, called *40 Years of Sticking the Bits Back Together*.



Friends' 2018 visit to Bob's studio that is being upgraded as part of the renovation project.

Christmas Party

Tuesday 5 December

6pm for 6.30pm

Venue - Christchurch Mansion

Cost - Friends £22, Guests £27 (includes refreshments)

We invite you to hold the date for our annual Christmas party. This is always an enjoyable occasion to meet with Friends and celebrate our achievements, and we very much hope that you will be able to join us.

Booking will open following the publication of full details in our next newsletter.

'Behind the Scenes' at the Museum

by Richard Wilson

In May, thanks to the generosity of the CIMS team, we were able to offer two exclusive "behind the scenes tours" of the Museum to enable members to see just what was happening at that stage of the redevelopment project. We enjoyed unencumbered views of the exhibition spaces mostly devoid of displays, and the team spoke at length about the numerous challenges they have faced whilst moving thousands of precious objects into store. Thanks go to all the Museum staff who made these fascinating visits possible.



EVENT
REPORT

Re-glazing Angels - announcing our new fundraising campaign

by Richard Wilson

Over the past few years, Friends and Angels have raised over £26,000 towards conservation, acquisitions and exhibitions for the Ipswich Museums. We are very proud of the outstanding work carried out by sculpture, textile and picture conservationists over that time, including the gentleman's frock coat and the wonderful Jan Porcellis seascape, both seen in recent exhibitions. For 2023 we have a new campaign which we are calling *Re-glazing Angels*.

We hope that you have already enjoyed visiting the *Animals in the Art Gallery* exhibition. You may be aware however that many of the paintings from our permanent collection urgently need reglazing. These are sometimes almost impossible to enjoy as reflections can seriously impair the view. But more importantly, as Corporate Angel John Day (who runs the

East Anglian Traditional Arts Centre) says, "Many artworks were glazed with Perspex which not only bounces our own reflection back to us but does not address the UV protection problem." Our goal is to raise funds to protect and enhance items that have been improperly glazed, starting with those in this exhibition but hopefully later expanding to include other pieces from the collection. MF Gallery and Framing will carry out the work on site.

All donations however large or small are welcome as we can pool gifts to enable as many items as possible to be reglazed. This year we have introduced two top tiers to recognise substantial giving: **Gabriel** - £350 for the largest pieces (with the longest dimension over 1m - ie Munnings *Travellers* or Browning *Lime Tree Shade* (pictured here) and **Raphael** - £250 for medium works

(ie Symonds *Girl and Silver Fish*, see p.16). Our other levels remain: **Archangel** £150 (for smaller individual pieces), **Angel** £50, **Seraphim** £25, and **Cherubim** £15 for gifts made in the name of children.



You can pick your own favourite (a full list of available works will be circulated in September) or make a general donation, and in every case your support will be recognised with an entry into the Borough's register of artworks, so your generosity will be recognised in perpetuity.

Donations are welcome now either via our website under Angels and Giving - use the TOTAL GIVING Button - or see page 23 for other ways to pay.

Either way please confirm with an email to contact@foim.org.uk. If you have not yet completed a Gift Aid declaration (which boosts your donation by 25%), please ask us to send you one.

We want to do everything we can to conserve these special works of art for future generations. This project will make a huge difference to the Museums' permanent collections.

Thank you for being a Friend of the Ipswich Museums.



For the latest information about all our events,
please visit our website:

www.foim.org.uk

Information on the Ipswich Museum
redevelopment can be found at:

www.ipswichmuseum.co.uk

Welcome from Ipswich Art Society

by Stephen Cassidy (Chair IAS)

Next year sees the 150th Anniversary of Ipswich Art Society, and we are thrilled to be sharing a year's joint membership with The Friends of the Ipswich Museums. The Society and the Friends closely align in the promotion of local culture, building on the past to develop the future.

The Art Society was founded as the "Ipswich Fine Arts Club" back in 1874, in the Victorian zeal for high quality pursuits and public involvement. Its Annual Open Exhibition - which continues to this day - grew out of a collaboration between professional artists, teachers, students and amateurs. The Borough Art Collection includes acquisitions from these

exhibitions over time. We hope to recognise this in some way at the Mansion next year. Further exhibition plans include the Annual Open, Fine Arts students at UoS, and one at The Hold using the Society's and Suffolk's archives to illustrate the 150 years of significant shifts in the industry and appearance of Ipswich. A series of talks will include John Sheeran and Emma Roodhouse as well as members of the Society and UoS. An Art Trail will connect the exhibitions and points of cultural interest in the town. Artist-led workshops will encourage wide public participation. We look forward to sharing the celebrations with as many as possible.



Left: *Portrait of a Bowl of Fruit* by Claire Fried
Above: *At the Field's Edge* by Mark Beesley

BAfM London Visit

by Erica Burrows

Terry and I joined Friends from various museums on another fascinating London tour led by BAfM chairman, Dan Calley. Dan has a loyal following on his trips from the Belfast Linen Library Friends, who are a lively and knowledgeable lot. This time we started in the Apothecaries Hall, which was rebuilt after the Great Fire of London and was one of the few buildings in the area to escape serious damage in the Blitz. The archivist explained the origins of the Apothecaries and their links to the Chelsea Physic garden. Our excellent blue badge guide, Julia, then led us on a tour of Blackfriars and we ended at the College of Arms where Tim Duke, the Clarenceux King of Arms, gave a fascinating talk about heraldry and the role they played in the recent Coronation. For the first time in 70 years, the three Kings of Arms got to wear their crowns, which are only ever worn during the Coronation service. We were shown the court room and libraries where leather-bound volumes of Coats of Arms are kept, many

of which date back to mediaeval times, and even today are all still recorded on vellum.

The next day we began with a visit to Temple Church where the Master of the Temple, The Revd. Robin Griffith-Jones gave us a lively and engaging talk about this 13th-century church built as "Jerusalem in England." He also told us about The Knights Templars and the bane of his life, the Da Vinci Code! The trip finished with a tour of Middle Temple Hall and lunch in the magnificent Great Hall built in 1570. The amazing double hammer beamed roof survived a land mine dropped in 1941, which blew a huge hole in the end wall and destroyed the screen but did not move the awe-inspiring roof beams.

Dan's next trip will be a four day visit to South Yorkshire prior to the annual BAfM conference in Doncaster. It will include private tours of Oakwell Hall, Wentworth Woodhouse, Yorkshire sculpture Park and Temple Newsam.



Middle Temple Hall

Conservation Corner

by Bob Entwistle

We have moved virtually everything out of the Museum. The bits we can't move we are having to protect in situ.

Rosie the Rhino and Woolly the Mammoth are having to stay and we want to ensure they are safe.

Rosie and Woolly have been mummified to protect them. The decant team of Carrie, Peter, Michael, Ashley, Caleb and Tim, have done a marvellous job preparing them for storage.

Woolly had his/her tusks removed to prevent damage. This was a tricky job as the tusks were not meant to be removed. They had been bolted

into position in 1990/91 when the Mammoth was made. We had to find the bolts beneath the layers of fur and very carefully remove them and then gently manoeuvre them free. The tusks were made of solid resin and were very heavy. Woolly was then wrapped in Tyvek, blankets and covered in a tarpaulin. They put some eyes on the tarpaulin, a bit like painting eyes I presume.

Rosie was treated much the same although her resin horn was left in place. Her horn and ears were protected with Plastazote foam and acid free tissue and then she was mummified in Tyvek, blankets and a tarpaulin. No eyes this time!



Woolly the Mammoth



Rosie the Rhino



Ashley and Peter have been doing more work protecting the Royal George. When we originally moved it to storage from display we placed it on a table and added castors so we could move it about. The model is very dry and fragile. When cleaning the ship the rigging breaks

very easily and small parts of the ship become detached. To minimise the cleaning and the damage. Peter and Ashley devised and built a frame work over the model. To this framework we attached plastic sheeting to keep as much dust from settling on the model as possible.



Royal George



The framework was to support the plastic sheeting. Even the plastic resting on the masts and yards can cause breakages.

Before the model can be re-displayed it will need serious conservation work. Rigging will need to be restrung, and small areas of damage will need to be repaired. A few years ago I repaired all the cannons on the ship and cast replacements for those that are missing. The casts for the cannons are stored with the model so they can be reused in the future.

My Favourite Thing

by new committee member Gaynor Stannard

I'm relatively new to Ipswich and still discovering the treasures of Christchurch Mansion so I was pretty excited to think about what my favourite thing might be and headed straight there. The choice has been tough! But... my favourite thing is the exquisite little painting *Bumble Bee Approaching a Spray of Blossom* by Anna Airy, currently on show in the lovely *Animals in the Art Gallery* exhibition at the Wolsey Art Gallery. I knew nothing about Anna until this beautiful painting caught my eye. I have since fallen totally in love with her work, and with her. She was an extraordinary woman, hugely successful in her lifetime as a painter of wartime, of landscapes (you can almost feel the blustery wind in her paintings of children in the dappled light of the Suffolk countryside), and of portraits (see the magnificent *Mrs Monica Burnand*, also in Christchurch Mansion, with her gorgeous rainbow sash and direct gaze back at us). She also produced extraordinarily detailed nature studies: if I could have two favourite things my other choice would be her wonderfully absorbing *Willow Pattern*, from 1906.



Bumble Bee Approaching a Spray of Blossom Anna Airy (1882-1964)

Anna was a trailblazer - one of the first women to be commissioned as a war artist during the First World War. She also became the first woman to be President of the Ipswich Art Society in 1945, a role that she would continue in

until her death nearly 20 years later. And for over 50 years Anna exhibited at the Royal Academy. During her career she chose some subjects which at the time were unusual for a middle-class woman - the grim, intensely industrial work being done by the mostly female workforce in the munitions factories, and street scenes depicting extreme poverty. And as if that wasn't enough Anna was also a devoted and inspirational teacher of art, and is commemorated each year following her death in 1964 with

an Anna Airy open exhibition for young artists. I've been lucky enough to have the opportunity to learn so much about art and artists in recent years but it is bittersweet when I wonder: why had I never heard of Anna Airy?

But back to that tiny little bee... I love the delicacy and simplicity of the painting, the Japanese influence with the dark background, which draws you in. It captures a fleeting, unremarkable moment with perfect stillness and clarity.

Visit the exhibition in the Wolsey Art Gallery
Animals in the Art Gallery

13 May 23 - 14 April 24

A PEEP INTO THE PAST

The Mansion Guides are available every day until the end of October to take visitors on a free 30-40 minute guided tour. Available Tues-Sat at 11pm and at 2pm on Sundays. **No booking required.**

Please note these free short tours are only suitable for individuals or small parties. Larger groups and coach parties can book their own full tour by arrangement from only £5 per person.

For more information email : contact@foim.org.uk

Poetry Corner

Sue Wallace-Shaddad



Girl with a Silver Fish

After William Robert Symonds

Pensive, she watches each flicker
of movement, flash of silver
as the fish bumps against
the curved sides, trapped
in a translucent globe of glass.

Her fingers clasping the bowl
cast shadows like tree stumps
bordering a pool. She wonders
whether this quivering creature
dreams of fresh water streams

but this is all he has known,
a fairground trophy brought home,
mercurial magic for a young girl
to enjoy before she turns away,
places him on a sideboard, alone.

Sue Wallace-Shaddad

Girl and Silver Fish

by William Robert Symonds (1851-1934)

(Currently on display in the *Animals in the Art Gallery* exhibition)

Welcome to our new Newsletter feature - Poetry Corner - from our resident poet Sue Wallace-Shaddad. Sue's poems are responses to various pieces in our Museums.

Sue was born and brought up in Suffolk and now lives here. She has an MA in Writing Poetry and is Secretary of Suffolk Poetry Society.

Friends' Summer Party

by Erica Burrows

Once again we were lucky with the weather for our Summer Party. We were able to enjoy sitting in the Mansion courtyard sipping on Pimms, eating strawberries and cream, while completing a picture quiz set by Erica and a set of Anagrams devised by Sheila.

Thank you to all those Friends and their guests who came along.



**Bloomberg
Connects**

Colchester + Ipswich
Museums has launched
a digital guide about
Christchurch Mansion on

Bloomberg Connects, the free arts and culture app, available from Apple or Google. Use the guide to discover more about Christchurch Mansion's most-loved objects and displays, which you can explore in greater detail. Just download the App and get started!



SCAN ME!

Recent acquisition - Albums of works by Thomas Churchyard and George Frost

by Richard Wilson (with thanks to Emma Roodhouse)

We are excited about our recent purchase of these two albums (with very generous assistance from Art Friends Suffolk). The first, marked Harriet Churchyard (1836-1927), contains over 100 artworks by Thomas Churchyard (1798-1865) and George Frost (1744/45-1821), a prolific artist who documented Ipswich life and who was a collector of Thomas Gainsborough's artwork as well as being a mentor to the young John Constable. The second, inscribed Laura Churchyard (1830-1891), contains artworks by Laura, Harriet and Ellen, all daughters of Thomas Churchyard. There are landscapes (local views of Woodbridge, Melton and the Suffolk coast), and portraits of Thomas and his children alongside those of other local characters.

The Museum holds a significant collection of artwork and literature relating to the 'Woodbridge Wits' who included Thomas Churchyard, a major collector of works by Constable. He was educated at Dedham Grammar and so was perhaps aware that a young Constable had attended the same school. Although his real interest was in landscape art, he trained as a solicitor and in 1822 began

practising as a lawyer, breaking away from a family background in butchery and agriculture. He did not receive formal art training, but it's possible that a friendship with the artist Perry Nursey (1799-1867) introduced him to a classical art collection and encouraged the pursuit of painting outdoors.



By 1829, Churchyard was exhibiting at the Norwich Society of Artists and the following year at the Society of British Artists. In 1831 two drawings from nature were shown in the annual exhibition at the Royal Academy. This spurred him on to pursue a full-time career as an artist and he moved to London, but unfortunately his artistic ambitions in the capital came to nothing so after 1833 he settled back in Suffolk.

In later life, with 10 children to support and facing increasing financial hardship, he was forced to sell parts of his beloved art collection. This caused him to assess the legacy of his own work amassed over years of sketching and painting, so he divided the pictures into 7 batches for each of his 7 daughters. He died



of heart failure at the family home in Woodbridge on 19 August 1865, still surrounded by his art collection – but broke.

After Harriet's death in 1927 there was a large sale of Churchyard's pictures in Woodbridge. This released hundreds of his works, which the unscrupulous passed off as being by Constable. Our albums come directly from that sale and have been with the same Suffolk owners ever since. It is extremely rare to have intact albums compiled by Thomas and his children as many of them have been split up and dispersed.

Although the intrinsic nature of the albums may not make display straightforward, they can be used in future exhibitions and also digitised so that they can be added to the ArtUK website and made available on the Mansion's new Bloomberg Connects app.

300 Years of Cobbold History

by Erica Burrows

A celebration was held at Holywells Park in June to mark the tercentenary of the founding of Cobbold's Brewery in Ipswich. Holywells is, of course, the site of the Cobbold Mansion, which was demolished in the 1960s. The stable block and the conservatory are all that are left of the building that once stood here. Several members of the Cobbold family were present including Anthony Cobbold, son Jeremy, Lord Henry Lytton-Cobbold and his son Edward (pictured below with Rowell Bell and Erica Burrows).

Until recently, Anthony was the Keeper of the Cobbold Family History Trust, which includes the albums of exquisite papercuts made by Elizabeth Cobbold, whose portrait is in the Music Room at the Mansion. Anthony has now handed over the Trust

to his relative, Lord Henry Lytton-Cobbold of Knebworth, where the archive is now kept. Several books have been produced about the Cobbold family, including the latest one, *Cobbold Tales and Ales* written by Mary Attwood. The author's family name is Chevallier, who are related to the Cobbold family through marriage - its that Lord Kitchener connection again! See our previous FoIM newsletter.

Anthony Cobbold gave a short speech about the family who have been a major influence in Ipswich over the centuries. They were bankers, brewers, and merchants. They produced five Ipswich mayors and of course Mr John and Mr Patrick were chairmen of the Ipswich Town Football Club for many years. We are ever grateful to Felix Cobbold, a great philanthropist, who gave us

Christchurch Mansion and built Fore Street Baths among other acts of generosity.

L to R: Rowell Bell, Anthony Cobbold and son Jeremy, Henry Lytton-Cobbold and son Edward, & Erica



Benton End

by Nicki Porter

We were delighted to offer the opportunity for Friends to visit Benton End, a Grade II listed sixteenth-century house situated on the outskirts of Hadleigh recently. From 1939 - 1982 Benton End was home to the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing and to Cedric Morris, celebrated artist and plantsman and his partner Arthur Lett-Haines.

This bohemian community welcomed students, visitors and friends, creating a lively and fascinating working and social life. Many famous people have visited, stayed and studied there over the years including Francis Bacon, Elizabeth David, Kathleen Hale, Maggi Hambling, Lucien Freud, Vita Sackville-West, Beth Chatto and John Nash, to name but a few.

The day started out wet, and given the 20 minute walk from Hadleigh, there were a few dripping umbrellas stacked outside. The group was split in two, one half had the house tour first, conducted by Matthew Hodges, and the other half had a talk from James Horner, the new head gardener, followed by a tour round the garden by which time the rain had fortunately stopped.

Both tours were very enjoyable and gave a great insight into the life and times of the house and garden, and also their plans for the future.

Matthew is very happy to welcome groups to the house so please contact him at matthew@bentonend.co.uk if you know of a group that might be interested.



Benton End: House, garden and studio room with views over the Brett Valley

New Members & Angels

We warmly welcome our new members

Jane Beauchamp	Sue Raychaudri & Julian Gibbs
Stuart & Patricia Brooks	Guy & Carolyn Renn
Sue Durrell	Kate Reynolds
Stuart & Patricia Grimwade	Peter Smith
Jasmin Hicks	Norman Taylor & Karen Smith
Justine Moss	Anne Tooke
Pat Moss	Keith Wade
Caroline & Robert Poole	Zoe Woods

We are very grateful to all our new Angels

- Rowell Bell
- Angel in memory of Mum's dog and Dad's cat Sam
 - Seraphim in memory of Russell Reeve who died in August 2023
- repeat Seraphim - in memory of loved ones:**
- July 2022 Phyllis L Child (nee Larson) born April 25, 1927
 - April 2023 Ermon Larson (nee Brian)
 - May 2023 George Lavery Sudden Death Syndrome only 22 years
- Erica Burrows
- Angel to welcome Lucie Ava Burrows born on 3 June 2023

Check the Colchester + Ipswich Museums website
for details of events

www.ipswich.cimuseums.org.uk

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- **Bank Transfer** - please use your name and what the payment is for as the reference:
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Contact Jean at jattenborrow@hotmail.co.uk or 01473 213025



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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We are excited to have helped CIMS acquire this coffee tray by local artist Lisa Temple-Cox. Made of reclaimed wood and paper, it uses an engraving from our collections of the Reverend Thomas Birch Freeman (1809-1890) who was an Anglo-African Victorian missionary, botanist, and plant hunter. Born in Hampshire to a freed slave and an English mother, by 1833 he had become head gardener for Lord and Lady Harland at Orwell Park. In 1837 he was ordained, and left Ipswich with his wife to become a Methodist missionary on the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana). Freeman founded nine schools (three for girls), established farms and was active in the anti-slavery cause. During one visit home, Freeman was delighted to find that Harland had built a greenhouse especially for the plants he had collected, and he is credited with introducing the people of Ipswich to the rare and exotic pineapple! When a serious outbreak of leaf rust affected the colonial coffee plantations, the director of the Royal Botanic Gardens asked Freeman for some beans of a resistant variety called Liberica which successfully helped to re-establish the coffee trade.

Like Freeman, Lisa Temple-Cox is mixed race - Anglo-Malay - and was interested to discover that Liberica coffee is still grown commercially in Malaysia. This story inspired her to create the tray that you can find on display in the Mansion's ceramics room.



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