



# CHELMSFORD CIVIC SOCIETY

## September – December Newsletter

### **Our Autumn Programme by Malcolm Noble**

#### Heritage Open Days

We start with what is undoubtedly a highlight of the society's year. This is the Heritage Open Days programme. The city council commissions the society to deliver the programme. Our success in doing so has been recognised by the council, agreeing to increase its financial support this year. Our organisers are Alan Pamphilon and Paul McLean. Their 2019 programme has 32 events, running between 13th and 22nd September. Details, with booking arrangements can be found on our website: [www.chelmsfordcivicsociety.co.uk](http://www.chelmsfordcivicsociety.co.uk). The listings are included on the next page of this newsletter.

We also have a brochure this year you can find it by searching Heritage Open Days Chelmsford on [www.issuu.com](http://www.issuu.com)

**EVENTS ARE BOOKING UP QUICKLY, DO NOT LEAVE IT TOO LATE!**

#### The Ideas Festival

The Ideas Festival will take place in October.

#### My Talk

On 13th November, I will deliver a talk on Chelmsford as the Capital of Essex. Our city is centrally located within the county and adjoined by seven neighbouring local authorities. We are well placed therefore to give a lead to the whole county. We are the capital of Essex. Last year the Sunday Times named Chelmsford as the best place to live in the East of England, saying that 'city has had an extra spring in its step since gaining city status in 2012'. Yet the city's rapid growth, busy centre and the scale of new house building, have all led to new challenges. How then, can we retain a good quality of life for all who live and work here.

#### December Event

Our year ends on 5th December, with what promise to be a fascinating, and doubtless highly entertaining, account of political life in Chelmsford. Stephen Norris, our former Secretary, will tell us all about the politicians who have served on the former borough, the city and county councils and at Westminster over past years.

As always to keep updated follow us on Facebook or visit [www.chelmsfordcivicsociety.co.uk](http://www.chelmsfordcivicsociety.co.uk)



Marconi Ponds

Historical walking tours  
 Saturday 21st September  
 Two tours both starting at 2pm  
 Book via Eventbrite



Sandford Mill

Nature Trail & Industrial Tour  
 Saturday 21st September  
 Site Open 10am-3pm  
 Nature Tours 10am & 11am  
 Industrial tours 10.30am, 11.30am, 1.30pm & 2.30pm  
 Booking via Eventbrite



Staple Grove

A secret 19th Century Mansion, now the Chelmsford Club  
 Thursday 19th September:  
 Guided tours 11am, 12pm, 1pm, 2pm & 3pm  
 Book via Eventbrite



Springfield Lyons

Springfield Lyons Bronze Age Enclosure  
 Saturday 21st & Sunday 22nd September  
 10am-4pm  
 Tours 11am, 1pm and 3pm  
 Tours book via Eventbrite



Woman's Land Army

People Power Lecture "Woman's Land Army"  
 Anglia Ruskin University  
 Thursday 19th September:  
 7.30pm-9pm  
 Booking via Eventbrite



Writtle University

Early 19th century local use of photography - A talk by Heritage Writtle  
 Friday 13th September:  
 19:30  
 Writtle University College  
 Booking via Eventbrite



Greenwoods Hotel

Stock, Buttsbury and People Power - a talk by Peter Brierley  
 Thursday 19th September  
 10.30am-11.30am  
 Booking via Eventbrite



Stock Village Tour

History Tour of Stock Village  
 Thursday 19th September  
 2pm  
 Greenwoods Hotel  
 Booking via Eventbrite



Peasants Revolt

How the Peasants Revolt affected the village and church  
 Sunday 22nd September  
 St. Mary & St. Edward's parish church West Hanningfield  
 Talk at 11.15 am  
 Booking via Eventbrite



Mayoral Parlour

Visit the Mayoral Parlour and meet the Mayor of Chelmsford  
 Monday 16th September  
 10.30am & 1.30pm  
 Civic Centre  
 Booking via Eventbrite



Peculiar People

Chelmsford Evangelical "Peculiar People's" Church and History  
 Sunday 15th & 22nd September 10am-4pm  
 The Peculiar Heritage Walk  
 Tuesday 17th September 10.30



Common Walk

Galleywood Common Walk  
 Tuesday 17th September  
 10.30am  
 Galleywood Heritage Centre  
 Booking via Eventbrite



Council Chamber

Essex County Council Tour of the Historical Council Chamber and Foyer.  
 Thursday 19th September & Friday 20th September  
 10am and 2pm  
 Booking via Eventbrite



Secret Waterways

Walks to parts of the Chelmer & Backwater Canal  
 15th, 16th, 19th & 20th September  
 Start city centre  
 Booking via Eventbrite



St Mary / St Leonard

History of St Mary with St Leonard, Broomfield Parish Church  
 19th, 20th, 21st September  
 10am-12pm, 2pm-4pm  
 Sunday 22 September:  
 Morning Service 10.30am



Pleshey Castle

Pleshey Castle is a wonderful surviving example of a Norman motte-and-bailey castle  
 Sunday 22nd September  
 Tours 2pm, 3pm & 4pm  
 To book call 01245 605700



WWII Heroines

The WWII Heroines of the British Waterways talk  
 Tuesday 17th 2pm-3.30pm  
 Galleywood Heritage Centre  
 Book via Eventbrite



Essex Police Museum

Backstage Tour  
 Saturday 14th & 21st September  
 10am-4pm  
 Tours at 11am & 2pm  
 To book email  
 Hannah.wilson@essex.pnn.police.uk



Civic Theatre Tour

Behind the scenes Tours of the Civic Theatres  
 Sunday 15th September  
 Tours 10.30am, 11.30am, 1.30pm, 2.30pm & 3.30pm  
 To book call: 01245 606505



Hylands House

Hylands House and Estate Open Day  
 Sunday 15th September  
 10am to 4pm  
 (last entry at 3pm)  
 Tours at 11am & 2pm



Greenham Common

People Power at Greenham Common" a talk by Elizabeth Woodcraft  
 Friday 20th September:  
 Talk starts at 7pm  
 Cramphorn Theatre  
 To book call 01245 606505



Grave Stories

Looking out for Grave Stories in Danbury  
 Sunday 15th September and Sunday 22nd September  
 3pm  
 Church Green, Danbury



Guy Harlings

Sunday 15th September  
 10am - 3pm  
 New Street, CM1 1AT  
 Guy Harlings, is a landmark listed building dated from c1720



Marconi Tour

Marconi History Walking Tour  
 Friday 13th September 10am  
 Finishing inside the 1912 Factory Building  
 To book email  
 cityhistorywalks@gmail.com



Church of St John

Church of St John the Evangelist, Moulsham Street  
 Saturday 14th September  
 10am - 4pm



Cemetery Tours

Tours of the "Non-Conformist" Cemetery  
 New London Road  
 Sunday 22nd September  
 10am-4pm



Anglia Ruskin

Anglia Ruskin University Special guided tour  
 Wednesday 18th September  
 10.30am-12pm  
 Booking via Eventbrite



Salvation Army

Tour of the Salvation Army Citadel Building  
 Friday 13th September  
 1.30pm



Weeley Festival Talk

A talk on the Great British Woodstock: Wednesday 18th September 7pm  
 Writtle University College  
 Book via Eventbrite



Chelmsford Cathedral

Tours of Chelmsford Cathedral  
 Sunday 15th September  
 1.30pm & 4.30pm

To book visit [www.chelmsfordcivicsociety.co.uk](http://www.chelmsfordcivicsociety.co.uk)

## Chelmsford Rivers and Canal Link (CRACL)



The Society is part of the CRACL group working to join up the City's waterways. Roy Chandler has prepared a feasibility study on behalf of the group and has presented it to the City Council. The report will be launched to the media and the general public first at the Heritage Open Days: during the Chelmer and Blackwater Canal Walks on 15th, 16th, 19th and 20th September. A second launch will take place on 5th October at Sandford Mill.

## UK City of Culture 2025 – Lets go for it!

Any City intending to submit a bid must register with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport by the end of February 2021. An initial bid has to be submitted by the end of April 2021 and if shortlisted, a final version by the end of September 2021.

The Civic Society, Chelmsford Festival, the Ideas Festival and the Ideas Hub have all called for Chelmsford to enter this competition. In 2018 the 'Sunday Times' named Chelmsford as the best place to live in the East of England, saying that 'There's been an extra spring in Chelmsford's step since it was awarded City status in 2012.' Also in 2018, Chelmsford reached the finals of the Academy of Urbanism Great Places competition. The Academy viewed Chelmsford as a City where 'community groups and cultural development projects stand out as particularly strong elements of Chelmsford's achievements' and 'Chelmsford has developed a thriving local economy but is developing a rich local arts scene and has a strong local retail centre. In my opinion we are well placed to reach the short list and then go on to win it. However, even if we choose not to apply in 2021, or go on to win it, there is a lot of useful guidance, assessment tools, and case studies for those thinking of applying. As a result, therefore, we can gain much from using this as a catalyst for local cultural development and setting a simple common aim for the councils and local groups to coalesce around.'

According to the UK Government, the 'overall aim of the UK City of Culture programme is to encourage the use of culture and creativity as a catalyst for regeneration.' The City chosen will:

- 'Deliver a high-quality cultural programme in 2025;
- 'Achieve lasting social regeneration;
- Demonstrate economic impact;
- Demonstrate legacy and evaluation of impact;
- Present credible and realistic plans.'

The 2017 winner was Kingston upon Hull. That City gained a £300 Million boost to the local economy and creating 500 local jobs. Liam Rich, Hull's Programme Manager and former Events Manager for Chelmsford, will tell us about the Hull experience during the Ideas Festival in October. The winner for UK City of Culture in 2021 is Coventry.

## Community Space

'We are meeting shortly, Stephen Robinson and Marie Goldman, new Leader and Deputy Leader of the City Council respectively. We will be discussing Council support for community initiatives.'

## Talk: “The Marconi 2020 Project” By Martin Astell, Manager, Essex Record Office

Martin began by explaining that the Essex Record Office (ERO) provides an important function as the repository for records of historic Essex. It contains some 9 miles of shelving and a specialist archive environment for the preservation of various types of archive material.

In the archive there are records of the Marconi Company from 1898 (Hall Street) and from 1912 (New Street). In these records there is a photographic collection from the Marconi Corporation plc. When New Street closed in 2004 this collection was donated to the ERO along with a rough list of the collection, of uncertain origin. Originally it was thought that the collection included some 80,000 photographs, however it is now realised that it comprises some 130,000 photographs! The photographs comprise glass slides, plastic slides and prints (c. 91 linear metres), originally taken between 1890's and the 1970's. In addition, there is a collection of approx. 30,000 photographs held by Chelmsford Museums, at Sandford Mill.

The entire collection isn't fully indexed, not in the ERO catalogue and is not digitised. In essence, it is not known what is there! A challenge therefore exists, in order to allow accessibility to significant events, people employed, products, etc.

Martin showed a few examples from the collection, which included a circa 1901 vehicle fitted with wireless communication at the Haven Hotel, Bournemouth, a photograph of various eminent characters at Glace Bay, Newfoundland (including famous Marconi people RS Kemp, RM Vivian and JW Taylor, together with Marconi himself) and a couple of photographs taken at the Hall Street Factory in 1903.

Martin explained with the 2020 events nearing (which will include the British Science Festival and the centenary of the Dame Nellie Melba Broadcast), it was an ideal opportunity to address the challenge of the photographic collection. The “Marconi Archive 2020 Project” will therefore review, log and potentially digitise materials and artefacts to create a publicly accessible record relating to the history of the invention of wireless and, in part, telling the story of how it fits into Chelmsford's Cultural Identity. There is also to be a conference at the ERO entitled the “History of Science”, on 7th March 2020.

Unfortunately, the National Lottery Heritage Fund have declined the funding of the Project. It has therefore been decided to break the scope of the Project into more manageable ‘chunks’, have Project phases and to explore a larger number of funding sources, (incl. the Lottery Fund, and Arts Council). In addition, within the British Society for the History of Science a PhD student is to be funded to assist the ERO in its deliberations. Support will also be sought from various local groups, interested parties and volunteers.

The volunteers will initially be required to assist with the cataloguing and information gathering activity. Ways of facilitation, including ‘crowd sourcing’, oral history interviews and story gathering are to be explored. It is recognised however, that the management of expectations will be essential, as ‘we cannot do everything’!

From questions asked the following was noted: -

Digitisation could take up to 3 years and is a full-time studio-based activity

It is believed that there is a collection at the Leonardo Company in Basildon

BAE Systems has its own Heritage Group and may be able to assist

There are Marconi photographs in the Frederick Roberts Collection (Anglia Ruskin University), however it is important to avoid ‘mission creep’, as this collection includes artefacts from RHP

There are some audio recordings at the University of Essex, which may assist in the information gathering activity

The last Sandford Mill Open Days in 2019 are 21st September, and 5th October, 10am – 4pm

The Chairman (Malcolm Noble), thanked Martin for an interesting detailed and thought-provoking talk. Pam Swaby (Membership Secretary) is taking names of those wishing to be kept informed of workshop dates to assist with the Project.

Doug Zeeman, Committee Member, May 2019

## Shire Hall

The building has been empty since the courts were moved out in 2012. It is owned by Essex County Council. In 2017, the Council entered into a leasing agreement with the Aquila company, as preferred bidder. Aquila have until October to obtain necessary planning consent and take over responsibility for Shire Hall.

In 2015, Councillor Dick Madden and Malcolm Noble prepared a business plan for the use of Shire Hall, on behalf of both City and County Councils. This scheme included provision for community space. It also involved consideration of a Tindal Square improvement scheme. This has recently been the subject of public consultation.

Late last year myself and Paul Mclean visited the Shire Hall to take some photos in case it changed from how it used to be.

Here are a few of the photographs in order The Ballroom, the tunnel, The courts and the cells.



## Civic Voice Day Talk

Civic Voice Event 22nd June took place at the Ideas Hub in Chelmsford Library when our committee member Doug Zeeman kindly recounted details of his late father's involvement at Bletchley Park during the Second World War (as one of the PO technicians who built, operated and maintained 'Colossus', the world's first electronic programmable computer), - totally unbeknown to Doug and his mother as a result of the HMS Secrets Act - until some years after his father's death. Civic Voice is the National Society for all civic societies and a number of interested people supported this event. Malcolm Noble our Chairman drew attention to the fact that our membership numbers were abysmal. Statistics and tips were then revealed on recycling in Chelmsford and notification given of the Freighter House Open Day the following weekend - all rounded off with a cup of coffee and cakes.



And from Nick James

"It is almost 50 years since Apollo 11 landed on the Moon and Neil Armstrong's famous "one small step". I started work at the Marconi Research Laboratories in Great Baddow in 1982 and there were still engineers there who remembered the Marconi company's involvement in the landing. This was mainly through the NASA Apollo ground station on Ascension Island. This was designed and manufactured in Chelmsford, tested at Rivenhall and shipped to Ascension and was the first operational station in the Apollo network.

Shortly afterwards, in August 1969, Marconi supplied a large dish to the Post Office ground station at Goonhilly. This was the second dish at the station (GHY-2) and Goonhilly had provided British viewers with coverage of the Moon landings using their original dish, GHY-1 or "Arthur". The Baddow site where I work is now part of BAE Systems Applied Intelligence and we have a contract with Goonhilly as part of a refurbishment of GHY-6 to support deep space communications and possible future missions.

After 50 years Chelmsford is still closely involved in the exploration of space."

## Essex 2020 by Pam Swaby

Chelmsford Civic Society, Chelmsford Science and Engineering Society and Friends of the Museum (Chris Neale, Ros Webb and Pam Swaby- the Hall St campaigners) have reconvened and volunteered to administrate the the Marconi Centenary of the historic broadcast by Dame Nellie Melba from Hall St 15th June 1920. Tim Wander, author and historian, has written a play which will be held at the Civic Theatre from 15th June - 20th June and there will be a one-day exhibition on Marconi at Hylands House on 7th June. In addition, we have organised the lecture programme and science activities during 2020 which will include eminent speakers e.g Prof Danielle George 29th April appearing at ARU and Dr Liz Bruton - date and time to be arranged. In addition, there will be science activities at ARU and in the City Centre as a lead-in to the prestigious British Science Festival 9th-12th.

'The House of Commons Science and Technology Committee makes recommendations to the Government on key areas. We have been looking into using technology to beat climate change, the impact of social media on Mental Health for young people, algorithms In artificial intelligence, the use of genetic testing and quantum technology.' Vicky Ford MP.