



NEWSLETTER AUTUMN / WINTER 2023/24

Another summer season is over – those five months pass so quickly. Visitor numbers were very good with some exceptional Saturday figures. We had a busy time at the museum with school and adult group visits, including a group from the Netherlands who had been trying to arrange a visit since before Covid. They finally managed it in May, on a beautiful sunny day with showed the island at its best. They had a reception at the museum and a trip to the barrow and enjoyed themselves very much, rewarding the helpers with some of their delicious local cake!

We also revived the popular coffee morning for residents of the sheltered courts, an opportunity for them to be served drinks and cakes, meet up with old friends and take a look at the exhibition.

There was an exhibition of art, costumes and folklore by members of the Deepenings Project and another enjoyable session of Do You Speak Mersea? with linguists from the University of Essex.

More recently we had a very successful weekend at the Mersea barrow for Heritage Open Days. The weather was very hot but we had a nice shady gazebo and the owners of the adjoining Barrow Barn supplied the volunteers with jugs of iced water, which was greatly appreciated. We also had many generous donations from visitors. Thanks also to the Lions for helping with parking.

Looking ahead to autumn and winter, we once again have had to shelve plans for an art show due to lack of a sufficient number of artists available to exhibit their work. We cannot put on a good show with just a few exhibitors and perhaps it's time to re-think the whole idea and do something on a smaller scale. Any suggestions welcome.

John Pullen-Appleby is holding more of his local history talks on Mondays from October 9th. In the morning there is a re-run of The History of Mersea- from the Stone Age to the Space Age, for people who prefer a daytime session and in the evening a new series of talks on the History of the Blackwater Estuary.

The museum's own Friday talks start on October 20th with The Archaeology of Brierley Paddocks by Callum Allsop, who was the lead archaeologist excavating the site which is now the Sanderling Reach development. It will be a fascinating talk as evidence was found of many thousands of years of human habitation from the Iron Age through to the Romans and medieval times.

The resource centre will be open fortnightly on Saturday mornings from 10-1, starting on 7th October. Everyone is welcome to pop in for a coffee and biscuits, search photos and documents on the computers or just have a chat with us. It's all very relaxed and informal.

We are now thinking about plans for next year's exhibition, it's never too soon! Thank you to everyone who supported us in the summer and we look forward to seeing you at our autumn and winter events. Further details follow.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT MERSEA MUSEUM 2023/24

MERSEA TENDLES

After a successful event last year, Essex Heritage Workboats have funding to hold further workshops to discuss and make tendles, the traditional Mersea oyster baskets made from elm. These sessions will be held in the museum on the following Wednesday mornings:

October 25th November 8th and 22nd December 6th

Time 11am to 1pm

Refreshments will be available and the workshops are **free** and open to everyone. Anyone interested can just turn up, or for further information please contact the museum.

MUSEUM TALKS

Fridays at 7.30pm, admission £3 members, £5 non members.

October 20th The Archaeology of Brierley Paddocks

Speaker: Callum Allsop

November 17th The Men (and Women) of Nelson's Navy

Speaker: Philip Lyons

January 19th Mersea Island on Film – when the eelgrass left

Speaker: Tim Tokley

February 16th Colchester at War, Life on the Home Front 1939-45

Speaker: Patrick Denney

March 15th The Fishing Industry in Mersea, 1960 to the present

Speaker: Nick French

RESOURCE CENTRE DATES

Saturdays from 10am to 1pm

October 7th & 21st

November 4th & 18th

December 2nd & 16th

January 6th & 20th

February 3rd & 17th

March 2nd, 16th & 30th