

FREE

# 2026 SUMMER OF CULTURE

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES THROUGH CREATIVITY

Artist Walks & Talks  
Essex History & Stories  
Events & Exhibitions



Essex  
County  
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Credit: Epping Forest District Museum



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# Summer of Culture 2026

## Welcome...

To the Summer of Culture magazine. In this edition we bring you a range of arts and cultural activities for all the family.

Partnering with Essex arts and cultural organisations, we showcase activities taking place throughout the county this summer.

Read about all the forthcoming festivals, the latest exhibitions taking place at some of the fantastic arts and cultural venues throughout the county and how we're celebrating the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of English Romantic artist John Constable.

We also bring you all the activities taking place throughout Essex thanks to the Arts and Cultural Fund, the latest exhibitions being held by Essex Museums, as well as lots of great ideas for a family day out in our listings section.

So, read on to find out more about 'Summer of Culture 2026' as we connect communities through creativity.



Credit: Signals Media

**This magazine is available as an accessible PDF.**  
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## New group to advocate for Essex arts and culture sector

A new countywide group has been launched to support the Essex's cultural and creative industries.

**T**he Essex Cultural Steering Group aims to help the county thrive as a nationally recognised hub for creativity, innovation and investment.

As a group, their aim is to support cultural tourism, the creative industries, enhance social health, create vibrant, inclusive communities and celebrate the county's unique stories and voices.

Formed following a report commissioned by Culture Essex,

the group features a countywide alliance of cultural leaders, creative practitioners, place makers and strategic partners from across a range of sectors.

A Culture Essex spokesperson said: "The group exists to ensure that culture remains central to the county's future by connecting people and amplifying the voices of creative professional, communities, organisations and cultural leaders."

Visit [www.essex-culturegroup.co.uk](http://www.essex-culturegroup.co.uk) to find out more.



Credit: Jayne Lloyd

## Arts and cultural events coming to county

A range of arts and cultural events are coming to the county for residents and visitors to enjoy thanks to two new funds.

**T**he successful applicants to Essex County Council's Creative Industries Project Development Fund and Cultural Development Project Fund will soon be launching their projects over the coming months.

The funds were open to creative businesses and cultural organisations from across the county.

The Creative Industries Development Project Fund is backing projects within the creative industries such as music, video games, film and television. Meanwhile cultural businesses and organisations – such as galleries, museums, theatres, performing and visual arts groups – are being supported by the Cultural Development Project Fund.

For more information and to view the full range of forthcoming projects and events visit: [www.culture-essex.co.uk/spotlights](http://www.culture-essex.co.uk/spotlights)



Credit: Freya Photos



# American delegation visits Essex

In 2025 Essex County Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding to recognise the historical and cultural ties that unite Essex and Virginia Beach, USA, and aims to promote business and cultural exchange.

Culture Essex worked with the Essex Growth Agency on the 'Welcome Home to Essex' campaign and co-hosted a reception for a delegation from the City of Virginia Beach and the Hampton Roads Alliance, a business consortium.

Hosted at the historic Layer Marney Tower, the delegation - which included Virginia Beach Mayor, Bobby Dyer - met with local firms such as Tiptree based jam makers, Wilkin and Sons, and Witham based video games developer, Dala Studios, to celebrate the launch of the tourism campaign that captures the historical connection between the two places.

Following the reception, the delegation was treated to a tour of the tower and an exhibition depicting key historic images, including photographs of United States Army Airforce servicemen on top of Colchester Castle during World War Two from the diaries at the Essex Record Office by E.J. Rusdale.

Find out more by visiting:  
[www.welcomehome-essex.com](http://www.welcomehome-essex.com)





# Free Festival of Essex Archaeology and Heritage returns to Cressing



The highly successful Festival of Essex Archaeology and Heritage is returning to Cressing Temple Barns this July.

**O**n Thursday 23 July at the historic site, the free family friendly festival is back having proved to be highly popular last year.

This year's event aims to build on the success of 2025's inaugural festival and will feature even more exhibitors and reenactments to entertain visitors. It's ideal for all ages and anyone with an interest in archaeology, history and the heritage of Essex.

Owners of listed buildings and heritage professionals are also encouraged to attend the talks taking place.

Organised by Place Services at Essex County Council, this year's festival will once again bring the county's past to life through a programme of family activities,

museum exhibitions, archaeological organisations, societies re-enactment groups, falconry displays and much more.

Many of the exhibitors will be undercover in Cressing's historic wheat and barley barns so visitors can enjoy the event whatever the weather.

Tim Murphy, Place Services Historic Environment manager, added: "Last year's festival exceeded our expectations as we saw over 1,000 people of all ages visit, however, we want this year's event to be bigger and better.

"Within the county there are lots of fascinating historical assets which we want to celebrate and promote to the public as widely as possible.

"This festival is ideal for those who want to meet Essex's leading

experts and those involved in discovering, preserving and presenting the best of the county's heritage"

For more information visit: [www.explore-essex.com/whats-on/festival-of-essex-archaeology](http://www.explore-essex.com/whats-on/festival-of-essex-archaeology)







## New heritage trails coming to Cressing

A range of new interactive walking trails are coming to Cressing Temple Barns as part of the Working Farm project.

**F**rom September visitors will be able to enjoy the new trails, which will be full of information at the push of a button or via a QR code.

Thanks to funding from the National Lottery, through Arts Council England, the Friends of Cressing Temple Barns have been busy with a project documenting the 900-year history of Cressing as a working farm.

Having restored some of the antique farm machinery to its former glory, the Friends are now working on eight new walking

trails - each focusing on a different era of Cressing's history.

From the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 to Cressing hosting 'land girls' during World War Two, the story of the site's rich farming history will be brought to life through storytelling and educational materials.

Sue Lowe, Chair of The Friends of Cressing Temple, said: "Many will be familiar with Cressing's majestic timber-framed barns but less well known is its rich and varied 900-year history as a working farm - from the 1100s right through to the 1980s.

"From this September visitors of all ages will be able to enjoy the new walking trails and gleaming machinery. Before then though you might catch a glimpse of us road-testing the trails, sprucing up the machinery or installing new signage and audiovisual equipment."





# Water Stories to tell **Jumbo history**







## A nine-month heritage filmmaking project for young people will focus on the links between Colchester's historic 'Jumbo' tower and global water supply issues.

'Water Stories' under The Jumbo Project programme, will train 12 to 18-year-olds to become heritage researchers, filmmakers and interpreters.

Backed by the Arts and Cultural Fund, Balcerne Water Tower, known as 'Jumbo', is Britain's largest surviving Victorian municipal water tower having been built in the 1800's during the 'Golden Age' of industrial water engineering.

The Grade II listed building – which is visible above the city skyline – was built using locally made bricks and originally supplied water for the city's first fire service. It also played a vital role in transforming public health by providing clean drinking water, this was at a time when cholera was devastating communities across England.

Building preservation trust and charity - North Essex Heritage - is leading The Jumbo Project. This once-in-a-generation scheme, made possible by The National Lottery Heritage Fund and players of the National Lottery, will restore the tower and re-purpose it into a visitor attraction and commercially viable, accessible heritage and events venue for the city.

The 'Water Stories' project will see the young people work with international charity, WaterAid, to make video content about Jumbo's

heritage, while drawing attention to today's global water issues, such as accessing clean water, climate change and environmental sustainability.

The young people will also take part in 16 sessions mixing research, group production, creative experimentation, technical skills and practical workshops in research and interviewing techniques.

They'll also research Jumbo's heritage, along with Colchester's water network through site visits, archive work and guided discussions.

The final film created by the projects participants will premiere at Jumbo's reopening event and will be projected inside the historic water tank.

Joseph Rawlings, Jumbo Project Programme Manager, said: "We are overjoyed to have the support of the Essex County Council Arts and Cultural Fund for the Water Stories project.

"Jumbo has been a key part of Colchester's water story since 1883, and we look forward to working with young people to creatively explore the importance of water on a local, national and international level."

Find out more by visiting: [www.jumbo.org.uk/jumbo-to-recruit-young-creatives](http://www.jumbo.org.uk/jumbo-to-recruit-young-creatives)



Credit: North Essex Heritage



# Connecting communities through cinema



Credit: TazzyBro Photography





## A programme of inclusive film events that aims to bring people together is being launched by the Electric Palace Cinema in Harwich, thanks to the Arts and Cultural Fund.

**T**he programme – Community Screenings for Connection – will see guest speakers, screenings and workshops take place throughout the year.

This summer a special ‘Pride on Screen’ event in partnership with Manningtree Pride featuring guest speakers takes place. The programme also features the nostalgic Memory Matinee Revivals with sing-along workshops on Monday 3 and Wednesday 19 August.

As part of the programme the venue also hosted a screening for Autism Acceptance Month – in partnership with Connect Without Limits – during April.

The Community Screenings for Connection programme also builds on the cinema’s wider Electric Palace Archive Project – which is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund – to help preserve over a century of cinema and Harwich’s unique cultural heritage.

The Electric Palace Cinema, a Grade II listed building, opened on Wednesday 29 November in 1911, and the first film shown was ‘The Battle of Trafalgar and The Death of Nelson’.

Unfortunately, the cinema closed in 1956 after it was damaged by the East Coast Floods in 1953. However, it re-opened in 1981 and retained the original screen, projection room and frontage as well as much of the original interior.

In November 2006, British actor Clive Owen became patron of the cinema (at his first official visit he launched an appeal to raise funds to repair this historic building) and in May 2021 the cinema was used as a location for ‘Downton Abbey: A New Era’.

Isobel Keith, Electric Palace Archive Project Manager, said: “We’re delighted to launch Community Screenings for Connection, which is designed to bring people together, celebrate diversity and support wellbeing across the local community.

“The Electric Palace Cinema is a wonderful historic asset for the county, and we’re pleased to create new opportunities for people to engage with Harwich’s unique cultural heritage.”

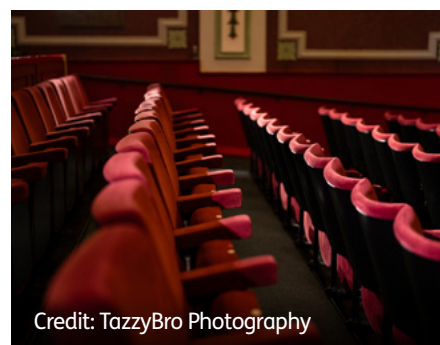
To find out more visit:  
[www.electricpalace.com](http://www.electricpalace.com)



Credit: TazzyBro Photography



Credit: TazzyBro Photography



Credit: TazzyBro Photography





# Enjoy **festivals** in Essex this summer

Discover, browse and explore these festivals celebrating communities in Essex this summer.

## Manningtree Earth Festival

Now until Tuesday 30 June

Manningtree Earth Festival is a series of exciting events coordinated by volunteers from PACE Manningtree and delivered by members of the community.

The events will provide information, knowledge and choices so that we can all become more aware, knowledgeable, better equipped and resilient to the impacts of climate disruption and biodiversity loss.

Enjoy a stimulating programme of over 60 events at The Manningtree Earth Festival 2026 including:

- Films, performances, and live music
- Lectures, talks and debates
- Exhibitions and displays
- Workshops and hands-on activities
- Community happenings and gatherings

Activities will take place at various venues throughout Manningtree and the surrounding area and will bring the community together to discover what we can all do to help climate action and biodiversity.

[www.pacemanningtree.org.uk](http://www.pacemanningtree.org.uk)

## Sustainable Uttlesford Green Festival

Saturday 6 to Sunday 14 June

Explore a week of community events that highlight local sustainable projects benefiting both people and the planet, in collaboration with Sustainable Uttlesford.

- Celebrate community climate action
- Nature recovery and biodiversity
- Sustainable living and circular economy
- And active travel and clean energy





From workshops and talks to green fairs, exhibitions, repair cafés, family activities, nature walks and more - this is a chance to come together and highlight the fantastic work already happening across the district.

[www.uttlesford.gov.uk/green-festival](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/green-festival)

Hopefield's Vegan and Wellness Day  
Hopefield Animal Sanctuary, Brentwood

Saturday 20 June

A large festival celebrating sustainability, plant-powered living and compassion, with all profits supporting rescued animals.

Everyone is welcome, whether you're vegan-curious, wellness-minded, animal-loving or just looking for a brilliant day out with family and friends.

Over 40 amazing stalls showcasing plant-based food, sweet treats, cruelty-free skincare, ethical gifts and more.

- Enjoy live music and performances throughout the day
- Take part in wellness workshops, including yoga, meditation and sound baths
- Listen to inspirational guest speakers
- Join in the family friendly fun with inflatables and a soft play bus for little ones

General admission is included to Hopefield Sanctuary, so you can meet the rescued animals and see how you're helping transform lives.

[www.hopefield.org.uk/vegan-wellness-day-2026](http://www.hopefield.org.uk/vegan-wellness-day-2026)





# The story of the boat that rocked



At 12.00pm on Easter Sunday (March 28) in 1964, a pirate broadcast transmitted over the nation's airwaves which would change the UK radio industry.

**A**s the Rolling Stones hit 'Not Fade Away' played over the airwaves, listeners were introduced for the first time to Radio Caroline.

Founded by Ronan O'Rahilly, the ship 'MV Caroline' (a former passenger ferry) was stationed in international waters off the coast of Suffolk to avoid the British broadcasting regulations at the time. In fact, five different ships were used as a broadcasting base during Radio Caroline's time on the airwaves.

Designed to fill a musical gap left by the BBC's limited pop music programming, Radio Caroline changed not only the face of the UK broadcasting industry, but it also launched the careers of many DJ's who are still on air today.

While Chris Moore is often cited as

the first voice to be broadcasted on Radio Caroline, the pirate station also launched the careers of Tony Blackburn, Johnnie Walker, Dave Lee Travis (DLT), Simon Dee and many more.

Now, a new musical and an illustrated talk celebrating the famous ship and bringing its history to life is to take place at Colchester's Mercury Theatre.

From Wednesday 3 to Saturday 13 June, the East Anglian Touring Consortium present 'Caroline: A New Musical – The Pirate Radio Station That Rocked The Airwaves'.

Set in 1964 in Clacton-on-Sea, the musical sees Caroline and her best friend Mary spend their days stacking shelves only to return home to their mothers listening to Housewives Choice on the BBC. Every night they escape to the pier

to eat chips, laugh and talk about music with Caroline's charismatic boyfriend Robbie.

However, Robbie lands a shock gig with Radio Caroline – the pirate radio station – and overnight, Caroline is hurled into a whirlwind of music, mischief and a cultural rebellion that will rewrite history.

Powered by the sound of the 1960s, the musical is a bold and funny new production about love, ambition and finding the courage to turn up the volume on your own voice.

Also, and taking place on Friday 12 June, is a one hour illustrated talk by Ray Clark - 'Radio Caroline: The True Story of the Boat that Continues to Rock'.

Ray will be delving into the history of Radio Caroline and pirate radio in general and his talk will focus on



## Caroline a New Musical

Wednesday 3 June to  
Saturday 13 June

[www.mercurytheatre.co.uk/whats-on](http://www.mercurytheatre.co.uk/whats-on)

## Radio Caroline: The True Story of the Boat that Continues to Rock

Friday 12 June

## TheatreFest 2026

Tuesday 23 and  
Wednesday 24 June

Bringing together students, teachers and theatre professionals to devise a 10-minute themed theatre piece based on 'Caroline – A New Musical'.

To find out more about the workshops, plays and productions taking place at the Mercury Theatre visit [www.mercurytheatre.co.uk/whats-on](http://www.mercurytheatre.co.uk/whats-on) or see the days out listings on pg. 37.

# CAROLINE

A NEW MUSICAL  
WRITTEN BY VIKKI STONE

## THE PIRATE RADIO STATION THAT ROCKED THE AIRWAVES



Credit: Mercury Theatre

the station's importance in the evolution of radio in the UK.

Its days as an offshore pirate broadcasting station ended on November 5 1990, as the station was facing legal pressures and the last song played on Radio Caroline was Charlie Deore's 'Pilot of the Airwaves'.

In May 2017, OFCOM awarded the station an AM band community licence to broadcast to Suffolk and north Essex. However, it wasn't until December 22 2017 that Radio Caroline began full-time broadcasting by using a redundant BBC World Service frequency and transmitter mast at Orford Ness.

Today, Radio Caroline is still broadcasting, albeit as a legal land-based station and operating as an internet and digital service.

## Calling budding playwrights...

Benfleet based theatre company, Show Up Productions, is inviting theatre makers and theatre lovers to experience the beginning of three new plays where you can provide feedback.

The rehearsed readings by professional actors - followed by a question and answers session with the playwright - are taking place on, Saturday 15 August and Saturday 31 October and coincide with a pop-up theatre at the Hadleigh Old Fire Station.

Alongside the readings, a playwriting workshop held by Richard Kurti to help develop writing skills will also take place, as well as another two workshops which will be led by Anne Odeke and Lisa Marks.

Find out more and sign up by visiting: [www.showupproductions.co.uk](http://www.showupproductions.co.uk)

Supported by the Arts and Cultural Fund.



# Community projects to connect people

Discover Arts and Cultural Fund community projects using sound to connect people this summer.

## Community Music Projects in Clacton, Colchester and Maldon

A series of Community Music projects for youth groups is being launched.

CLIP Sound and Music will deliver three five-week programmes with organisations supporting communities who may face barriers to creative opportunities. Each programme will use music-making to build confidence, develop skills and create social connections.

In Colchester, CLIP will work with The Outhouse to support LGBTQ+ young people to create podcasts. Participants at African Families in the UK Community Interest Company will explore DJing and music production in Clacton-on-Sea. Finally, in Maldon, students at Mid Essex Co-operative Academy will take part in sound and music workshops.

Across the projects, CLIP will create welcoming spaces for young people to experiment and express themselves through music.

More here: [www.clipsoundandmusic.uk/clip-launches-essex-community-music-projects](http://www.clipsoundandmusic.uk/clip-launches-essex-community-music-projects)



Credit: CLIP

## Essex Voices: Creative community and storytelling project Phoenix FM

'Essex Voices: Stories from Our Communities' is a creative community radio and podcast project led by Phoenix FM giving local people the opportunity to tell their own stories on air.

Backed by the Arts and Cultural Fund, a series of free workshops will be held across Essex where participants and Phoenix FM volunteers will create original programmes to be broadcast on Phoenix FM and released as podcasts.

The project will work with around 60 participants from a range of backgrounds, including young people, older residents and those at risk of social isolation.

The resulting series will explore themes such as local identity, hidden histories and everyday life in Essex. Alongside the broadcasts, community listening events will bring audiences together to hear and discuss the programmes.

Audio recordings will be taking place June to September 2026.

For more information about Phoenix FM and the project visit: [www.phoenixfm.com](http://www.phoenixfm.com)



Credit: Phoenix FM



# Essex music festivals that everyone can enjoy



You might also like to explore events taking place at Saffron Hall. See the days out listings from page 30.

Image: Jess Gillam at Saffron Sounds Live. Credit Sara Platt.

Discover a variety of projects, workshops and festivals taking place in the county. Not only will they delight your sense of sound, but they help to build communities and offer opportunities to young and upcoming musicians.

## Busking for young people

Roman River Festival, Colchester and Tendring, Berryfield Buskers

Berryfield Buskers is set to bring a lively new layer of enjoyment to two local art hubs, the vibrant Firstsite in Colchester and the historic Jaywick Martello Tower. The project will give young people aged eight to 18-years-old the opportunity to 'busk' on a weekend afternoon once a month.

Conceived of and produced by Roman River Music - and supported by the Arts and Cultural Fund - it's inspired by the success of a free Roman River Festival family concert in the Open (Berryfield) Mosaic space at Firstsite last Autumn. It drew a crowd of over 100 people one Sunday afternoon due to the popularity of the young artist spotlight performances.

[www.romanrivermusic.co.uk](http://www.romanrivermusic.co.uk)

## The Maldon Festival

Friday 11 September to Saturday 26 September

The Maldon Festival is returning and promises an unforgettable celebration of music and culture. Supported by the Arts and Cultural Fund, this year's festival will also align with Heritage Open Days and The Maldon Art Trail.

Since its inception in 2008, The Maldon Festival has been a cornerstone of the local arts scene, showcasing an eclectic mix of performances from renowned artists and emerging talents. The 2026 edition features a revitalised programme, classical concerts, contemporary performances and much more.

Discover the programme here: [www.maldonfestival.co.uk](http://www.maldonfestival.co.uk)

## Thaxted Festival: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Friday 19 June to Sunday 12 July

This year Thaxted Festival celebrates a remarkable milestone – its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Having begun in 1986 as a bold revival of a historic musical tradition, it has grown into one of the UK's leading independent music festivals featuring a vibrant celebration of artistry, community and place.

While the modern festival began prior to 1986, Thaxted's musical heritage stretches back much further. The early 20<sup>th</sup>-century composer Gustav Holst (known for 'The Planets'), brought music-making to the town through the Whitsuntide festivals which he developed together with Thaxted's Rector, Fr Conrad Noel.

Discover the events programme here: [www.thaxtedfestival.co.uk/events](http://www.thaxtedfestival.co.uk/events)



# Exhibitions to commemorate 250-years of artist **John Constable**



Colchester and Ipswich Museums are celebrating the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of artist John Constable with three landmark exhibitions.

**B**orn in East Bergholt in 1776, Constable became one of the country's most important painters before his death in 1837 at the age of 60.

He was an English Romantic painter well known for his bucolic landscapes, which are generally considered some of the most popular and valuable in British art. Now, and to commemorate his life and art, the year-long exhibitions will feature a programme of works and activities.

Supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Weston Loan Programme with Art Fund, Arts Council England, and other key partners, the exhibitions will run from Saturday 28 March to Sunday 28 February 2027.

The exhibitions will showcase rare and internationally significant artworks on loan from the Tate, Victoria and Albert Museum, Royal Academy, National Galleries of Scotland and the Government Art Collection.



## Forthcoming exhibitions include:

### **Constable: A Cast of Characters**

Now until Sunday 14 June

Featuring personal letters, period costume and historical artefacts, the exhibition focuses on those who inspired and supported John Constable. Works from Colchester and Ipswich Museums will be on display along with loans from private collectors. A new sculpture by artist and descendant, Sarah Constable, will also be available to view.

### **Constable: Walking the Landscape**

Saturday 11 July to  
Sunday 4 October

This three-month exhibition celebrates Constable's connection to the countryside that inspired him and that he loved. The exhibition will feature rarely seen works on loan and his most personal paintings from his childhood home.

### **Constable to Contemporary**

Saturday 24 October to  
Sunday 28 February 2027

The final exhibition will highlight the relevancy and legacy of Constable's works and will feature new works by local artists and community groups.

For more information about the exhibitions, tickets and booking visit: [www.ipswich.cimuseums.org.uk/constable250](http://www.ipswich.cimuseums.org.uk/constable250)





# New exhibition coming to Firstsite



This summer Firstsite will be transformed by the powerful, immersive work of artist Godfried Donkor.

**F**ree to enter, his exhibition - 'It's a Numbers Game' - offers something for everyone. A powerful and immersive experience, a deeper look at shared histories and a chance to see one of the UK's most distinctive contemporary artists at a major moment in his career.

Godfried presents his first solo exhibition in a UK public art gallery at Firstsite from Saturday 23 May to Sunday 30 August.

From his longtime Brixton studio, Godfried interrogates the layered social and historical relationships connecting Africa, Europe and the Caribbean.

For this exhibition, he's created a series of monumental new works that uncover these intertwined histories through themes of masculinity, military culture, iconic female leaders and resisters and the complexity of their representation.

His layered works explore how history is shaped and seen in different ways over time. Through unexpected contrasts combining images of trade, empire and global finance, Godfried explores how histories between Britain, West Africa and the Caribbean are formed and reformed, including connections between Colchester's past and Ghana.

Boxing is also a recurring theme, representing movement, struggle and exchange across cultures and continents. At Firstsite, this comes to life in a full gallery transformed into a boxing ring.

A specially commissioned hand-painted mural, reflecting on Roman runners and animated across Firstsite's iconic curved wall, completes the exhibition.

Godfried said: "Histories are layered, repeated and reinterpreted over time. Through combining different visual languages, materials and archives, I explore how history and power are not fixed, but entwined and shaped through exchange, memory and perspective.



"At Firstsite, this is grounded in Colchester's own story, connecting Boudicca's resistance to that of Yaa Asantewaa, and to Sarah Bowditch's 19<sup>th</sup> century documentation of the Ashanti. These histories are not separate, but part of the same ongoing conversation, continuing to shift, overlap and reveal new meanings as they are seen again."

Sally Shaw MBE, Director of Firstsite, added: "Godfried's work is extraordinary, it's visually stunning and intellectually powerful.

"It connects our local history - Boudicca's rebellion - to global stories of resistance and resilience. This is art that makes you think differently about history and where we come from. It's why Firstsite exists, to bring art like this to our community."

Find out more by visiting:  
[www.firstsite.uk](http://www.firstsite.uk)

Image credit (top right): Godfried Donkor, St Ike Quartey, 2023. Courtesy of the artist and gallery 1957.  
Firstsite image credit: Jayne Lloyd.





# ‘Phantom Power’ comes to Focal Point Gallery

Multidisciplinary artist and musician Rosie Ridgway is to present ‘Phantom Power’, her first solo exhibition at Focal Point Gallery in Southend-on-Sea.

**T**aking place from Wednesday 24 June to Saturday 12 September, Rosie’s practice spans sound, performance, sculpture and costume.

Rosie’s work reinterprets cultural phenomena to construct alternative realities, often through collaborative and participatory approaches that generate humour and absurdity.

At its core, Rosie’s practice is driven by experimentation, a celebration of difference and a commitment to accessibility.

Her installation situates the audience intimately within the dynamics of a band rehearsal

space. Transforming the gallery into a hybrid setting, part studio, part game world, visitors are invited to select and embody their own band characters.

Rooted in the idea of “creative chaos,” the work embraces the unpredictability of bringing together individuals with distinct lives and experiences, all shaped by external forces, and examines how these dynamics influence a group’s ability to function.

Blurring the boundaries between player, performer and audience, the installation encourages active participation, with visitors shaping their experience through movement, interaction and collective presence.

At its heart, the exhibition unfolds as a loose quest, a search for new forms of kinship beyond biology or shared history. It gestures toward a collective belonging built through chance, curiosity and a willingness to step into the unknown.

For more visit: [www.fpg.org.uk/exhibition/phantom-power](http://www.fpg.org.uk/exhibition/phantom-power)

From 3.00pm on Saturday 20 June, Focal Point Gallery is hosting a free daytime gig with live music by Dean Rodney Jr. and The Cowboys (Rosie’s band), Lady Neptune and special guests. Booking is recommended via the gallery website: [www.fpg.org.uk](http://www.fpg.org.uk)



# Step back in time with Essex Museums



Image: Southend Museums Anglo-Saxon weekend

Essex is where rural tradition meets industrial invention and Essex Museums make that bridge visible and tangible through their collections and exhibitions.

**N**early 70 heritage sites in Essex are members of Museums Essex, a charity that supports the county's museums, galleries and heritage organisations.

Essex Museums have been busy preparing exhibitions and events for all to enjoy. Here are just a few highlights with a largely Roman theme.

Find out more about Essex Museums by visiting: [www.museums-essex.org](http://www.museums-essex.org)

## Epping Forest District Museum

### Town and Country: Life in Roman Durolitum

Epping Forest District Museum's new exhibition 'Town and Country: Life in Roman Durolitum', explores what it was like to live at the Roman settlement of Durolitum almost 2,000 years ago.

Join them to explore Roman hygiene, bathing, food, daily life, religion and so much more. View 2,000-year-old sections of mosaic, decorated pots and smaller, personal objects such as jewellery and religious pieces.

The exhibition starts with some Iron Age items found in Waltham Abbey and explores what the area was like before the Romans invaded. Children are also welcome to dress up as Roman gods or goddesses and enjoy extra crafts and activities.

[www.ticketsource.co.uk/efdmuseum](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/efdmuseum)





## Museum of Chelmsford

### Timeless Treasures: The Great Baddow Hoard

From Saturday 18 July

The Museum of Chelmsford is displaying a recent local significant find, The Great Baddow Coin Hoard.

Purchased with a grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, this hoard of gold Iron Age coins, thought to be possibly linked to Julius Caesar, will be displayed for the first time in their exhibition 'Timeless Treasures' and helps shed a light on the activity of Iron Age tribes in the East of England.

Supported by an events programme, from talks to school holiday activities, the exhibition will explore how it came to exist.

[www.chelmsford.gov.uk/museums/collections/the-great-baddow-hoard](http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/museums/collections/the-great-baddow-hoard)



## Southend Museums

### Anglo-Saxon Weekend

Get ready for a very Saxon summer at Southend Museums' 'Anglo-Saxon Weekend'. Travel back in time and wander through Age of Penda's living Anglo Saxon re-enactment camp.

The weekend features combat displays, traditional textiles and blacksmithing, medicine and cooking demonstrations. You can even try your hand with your own sword to see if you have what it takes to be an Anglo Saxon warrior for the Kingdom of Essex.

[www.anglo-saxon-weekend-tickets.eventbrite.com](http://www.anglo-saxon-weekend-tickets.eventbrite.com)

## Saffron Walden Museum

### A wild summer

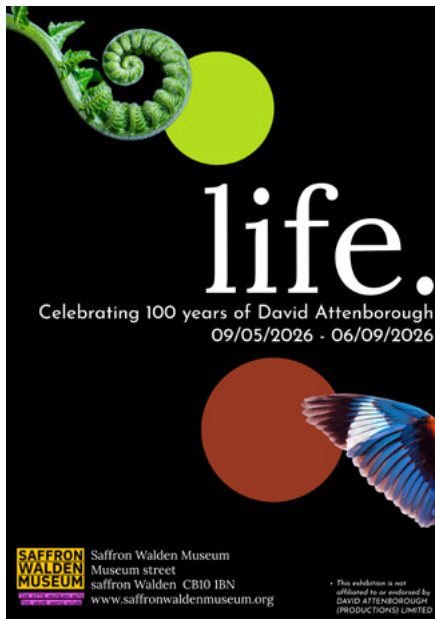
Now until Sunday 6 September

2026 marks the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of much-loved broadcaster and national treasure David Attenborough. To celebrate, Saffron Walden Museum will present a new exhibition, 'Life: Celebrating 100 Years of David Attenborough'.

This special exhibition honours the extraordinary life and work of the nation's favourite naturalist, bringing together objects from across the museum's rich human and natural history collections.

Visitors will be inspired to explore and help protect the natural world - continuing a legacy that has shaped how we see our planet. There are themed family friendly activities throughout the school holidays.

[www.saffronwaldenmuseum.org](http://www.saffronwaldenmuseum.org)



## Rayleigh Town Museum

### Romans!

Now until Wednesday 3 June to Saturday 29 August

This new exhibition at Rayleigh Town Museum will show how the Romans are connected to the local area.

Discover the everyday lives of the Romans in Britain, enjoy children's activities (for a minimal cost) and dressing up. With free entry, this exhibition is a must see for all ages.

[www.rayleightownmuseum.org](http://www.rayleightownmuseum.org)

## Thaxted Windmill

### A wide range of free activities are taking place this summer

Thaxted Windmill, built by local entrepreneur John Webb in 1804, is currently undergoing repair and conservation in a two-year £1.6 million project.

As well as repairing the structure and the millwrighting machinery, this project is about community involvement through education, the sharing of history and the celebration of heritage.

Training in heritage skills will enable volunteers to be researchers, interpreters, guides, producers of learning activities and conservators.

Subjects and themes have been extended to the wider related heritage, such as researching family history, agriculture past and present, photographing historic buildings and landscapes, mills in paintings, folksongs and folklore.

To find out how to take part email: [johnwebbswindmill@gmail.com](mailto:johnwebbswindmill@gmail.com)





# Visit 'Lovejoy' locations with **Essex Film Office**



Image: Finchingfield



Image: Hedingham Castle



## A television programme that boosted local tourism and put the Essex antique industry on the map could be revived for modern audiences.

**T**he highly popular 'Lovejoy' – a comedy-drama series that followed the loveable rogue 'Lovejoy' played by actor Ian McShane – is set to return to screens after 30 years since the programme last aired.

Based on the novels by John Grant, who wrote them using the pen name Jonathan Gash, 'Lovejoy' aired on the BBC from 10 January 1986 until 4 December 1994.

Adapted for television by Ian La Frenais, the programme ran for 71 episodes over six series and focused on the adventures of the rogue antiques dealer in East Anglia and his friends and colleagues 'Tinker', 'Eric' and 'Lady Felsham'.

Throughout the series 'Lovejoy' was portrayed as a 'divvy' (or 'divvie'), a slang term in the antiques industry to describe someone who can identify genuine antiques and instantly recognise fakes.

Filmed in in the picturesque areas of Essex and Suffolk – mainly in the Stour Valley – the programme also shot scenes in the areas surrounding Braintree, Coggeshall, Halstead, Hedingham Castle and Long Melford.

Now, production company See-Saw Films (producers of TV programmes 'Slow Horses' and 'The Kings Speech') have acquired the rights to the novels and are looking to revive the popular programme for modern audiences.

Not only did 'Lovejoy' put the antiques industry on the map, but it also drew visitors to Essex from further afield and proved to be a boon to the local tourism sector.

An Essex Film Office spokesperson said: "The beloved drama really helped to showcase the pretty historic villages and towns in Essex to both a national and international audience.

"The charm of the places that were in the production of 'Lovejoy' has never gone away, and we'd be very keen to welcome film companies to Essex to showcase 'Lovejoy' to a new generation."

Images courtesy of Visit Essex.



Image: Hedingham Castle



Image: Finchingfield



Image: Hedingham Castle

### Looking for a great day out?

Then why not visit all the 'Lovejoy' filming locations using the Essex Film Office movie map?

Featuring all the locations that were filmed for the programme, the movie map also is home to all the areas that have featured in television programmes along with Hollywood blockbusters.

Discover more: [www.essexfilloffice.co.uk/essex-movie-map](http://www.essexfilloffice.co.uk/essex-movie-map)



Image: Finchingfield



# **Starring Essex:** Meet the craftspeople working behind the scenes on the world's biggest movies





**Did you know that when you're marvelling at sweeping maritime scenes in blockbuster films, that a boatyard in Maldon is often responsible for helping to create the magic?**

Founded and led by marine engineer Jim Dines, Heritage Marine has evolved from a traditional shipyard into a specialist provider for film and television. Jim's career spans decades from serving as an Engineer Officer in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary to working on the design and build of two 40,000-ton tankers for the Ministry of Defence.

Today, his passion for maritime heritage fuels a unique enterprise that blends engineering precision with creative artistry.

Heritage Marine doesn't just restore historic vessels - it builds entire worlds for film. From authentic World War Two landing craft to fantastic flying ships, Heritage Marine's expertise has supported some of the most ambitious film projects.

In recent years its supported:

- Guillermo del Toro's 'Frankenstein' (2025), produced by Netflix. The team designed and shipped a full-size 120ft rigged vessel to Canada, then flew out to spend five weeks rigging the ship, standing by as specialist advisers on the shoot.
- 'Paddington III: Paddington in Peru' (2024), produced by StudioCanal and Heyday Films. The team rigged and supplied maritime props and set decoration for gimbaled boat sets, built rope bridges and provided marine training for cast and crew.
- Paramount's 'A Quiet Place: Day One' (2024), directed by Michael Sarnoski. The company supplied and operated a 1914 steel coaster as the hero ship for dramatic dockside scenes.



And that's just a glimpse of at the most recent work in a portfolio that spans 'Game of Thrones', 'Wonder Woman', 'Death on the Nile' and many more.

Through the Heritage Marine Foundation, Jim and his team are passing on these rare skills to young people, ensuring the preservation of maritime heritage while creating pathways into the film industry.

#### Essex based 'horror chocolatier'

Guillermo del Toro's production of 'Frankenstein' also selected another Essex based supplier to work with for their adaptation of Mary Shelly's gothic novel. They opted to use authentic, handcrafted props to help realise chilling yet realistic effects on screen.



Image: Netflix

This is where a rather unusual supplier, Sarah Hardy, Essex based 'horror chocolatier' and founder of 'The Edible Museum' in Sible Hedingham, came in. Sarah was commissioned to craft 'jewel like' chocolate beetles in a precise palette, with colours that tied back to the narrative and specific characters (for instance red hues to reflect Frankenstein's mother).

Sarah delivered a stock of anatomically accurate pieces made of milk, dark and white chocolate, combining her sculpting background and mould-making techniques to achieve hyper-realistic results. The crew loved them and ordered more immediately.

Sarah's craft reflects years of experience earning recognition from Guillermo del Toro himself, who chose her authentic craftsmanship over CGI and AI for this project.

Sarah Hardy was also recruited to create giant strawberries for the 2026 'Wuthering Heights' film directed by Emerald Fennell. The artist spent a whole weekend making 20 strawberries designed for Margot Robbie to bite into on screen, they were crafted from sugar paste, modelling chocolate and tiny dyed sesame seeds to appear realistic yet surreal.

[www.ediblemuseum.com](http://www.ediblemuseum.com)

## Starring Essex: Movie map

Find places that have starred big and small screen on the Essex Film Office's movie map and inspire days out in the county with a difference.

[www.essexfilmoffice.co.uk/essex-movie-map](http://www.essexfilmoffice.co.uk/essex-movie-map)



# Explore Essex Book Festival 2026

Essex Book Festival returns this year with an excellent line up of events and activities aimed at connecting people and communities through the theme of 'Common Ground'.

Here are some of this summers highlights.

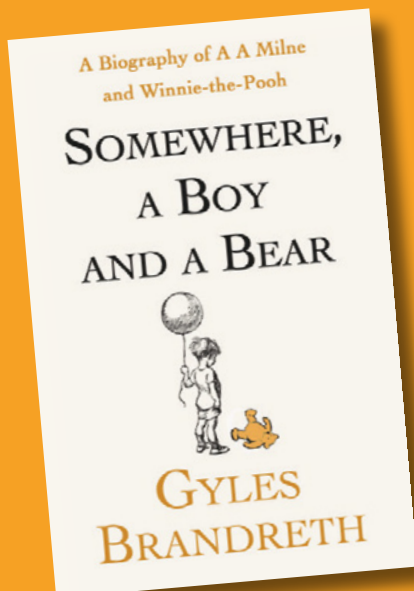
## A Celebration of Winnie the Pooh

**Gyles Brandreth: Somewhere, a Boy and a Bear**

**Chelmsford Cathedral**

Friday 19 June: 2.30pm

BBC presenter, ex-MP and national treasure, Gyles Brandreth will be talking at Chelmsford Cathedral about his latest book 'Somewhere, a Boy and a Bear' his biography of AA Milne and Christopher Robin, which marks the centenary of Winnie the Pooh. Gyles was friends with Christopher Milne for over twenty years.



## A series of Radical Walks

A series of walks, talks and workshops as part of Essex Book Festival celebrating the rich heritage, exquisite nature and wildlife and the communities that make up our county.



## The Essex Ways: Film Screening at Chalkwell Hall

Saturday 20 June: 7.00pm

Feature-length film that follows Essex-born storyteller James Lawrence (Man About Country) on his 2025 epic 400km walking journey, discovering Essex's people, places and stories. Includes a question and answer session with James.

## Walk and Talk around Canvey Wick with Man About Country

Sunday 21 June

Join James for a special guided walk around a fascinating nature reserve and hear stories from over 2,000 years of local history.

## Authors in the Libraries

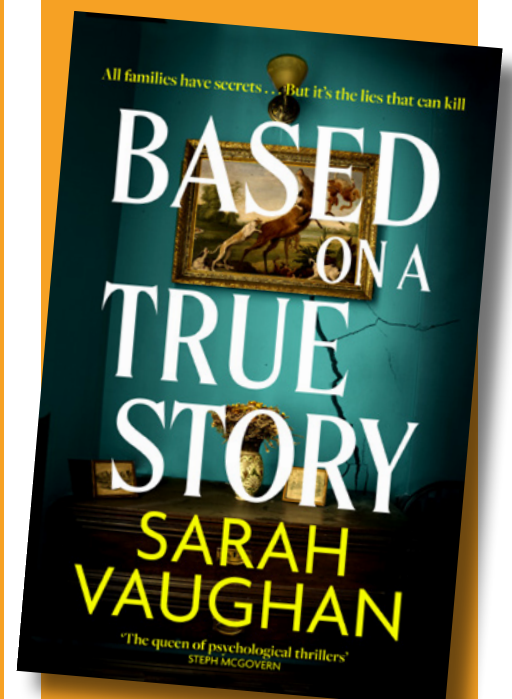
Explore a series of author events running in association with Essex Library Service.

**Sarah Vaughan:  
Based on a True Story**

**Chelmsford Library**

Tuesday 23 June: 7.00pm

Sarah Vaughan, author of 'Anatomy of A Scandal' which was turned into a major Netflix series, will be talking about her latest novel, 'Based on a True Story'. A story of power, money and lies set in a manor house on the cliffs where secrets are threatened to be exposed.





## History at the Tower

### Layer Marney Tower

Sunday 28 June

Make a day of it and attend all three events for a package price.

#### **Tony McMahon: Downfall of the Templars**

12.00pm

The broadcaster and author discusses the links between the Templars and witch hunt mania amongst other questions about their existence and downfall.

#### **Emily Hauser: Mythica**

2.00pm

The award-winning classicist and historian explores the extraordinary stories of the real women behind some of the greatest legends.

#### **Jonathan Freedland: The Traitor's Circle**

4.00pm

The prize-winning journalist and author tells the thrilling true story of one of the most dramatic episodes of the second world war.

Book your Essex Book Festival events: [www.essexbookfestival.org.uk](http://www.essexbookfestival.org.uk)



Image: Layer Marney Tower Credit: Red Carpet Video

## Art in the garden

### The Gibberd Garden, Harlow

Sunday 28 June

Essex Book Festival's first collaboration with the stunning The Gibberd Garden. Enjoy an afternoon of artist talks in this captivating space.

#### **Maggi Hambling in conversation with James Cahill**

2.00pm

One of the most influential artists of her generation, Maggi Hambling talks with author, writer and art critic James Cahill about a new monograph of her trailblazing work.



## Take the Summer Reading Challenge

The 2026 Summer Reading Challenge, themed “Read to the Beat,” is produced by The Reading Agency in partnership with public libraries and Universal Music Group UK, focusing on the connection between books, music and sound. Aimed at children aged four to 11-years-old, it encourages reading six books over the summer to receive rewards.

Look out for this coming soon to Essex Library Service.

[www.libraries.essex.gov.uk](http://www.libraries.essex.gov.uk)



# What's on Summer 2026

Credit: Signals Media

## Adventure Island

### Dinosaur Takeover

Saturday 20 June

Enjoy an unforgettable Jurassic themed event where families can step back in time to meet incredible dinosaurs and take part in the action. Suitable for the whole family. Price: See website. [www.adventureisland.co.uk/event/dinosaur-takeover](http://www.adventureisland.co.uk/event/dinosaur-takeover)

## Audley End House and Gardens

Now until Sunday 13 September

Discover a variety of events and activities for all ages. Enjoy small-scale workshops and classes, including craft, art, yoga and much more. Suitable for all ages. Price: See website. [www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/audley-end-house-and-gardens/events](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/audley-end-house-and-gardens/events)

## Brentwood Art Trail

### Beyond I.D.

Now to Sunday 14 June (closed Mondays): 10.00pm to 4.00pm

Enjoy an exhibition of ceramics, paintings and drawings about cultural and human identity by two artists, Ngondo and Carole Windham, who live in Brentwood.

Suitable for adults (unsuitable for young children). Price: Free.

[www.brentwoodconnected.co.uk/events/brentwood-art-trail](http://www.brentwoodconnected.co.uk/events/brentwood-art-trail)

## Castle Hedingham Wonky Wheel Gallery

Now until September

Discover a packed programme of exhibitions and creative events, including the spring exhibition Awakening the Earth and workshop experiences. Suitable for all ages. Price: See website. [www.wonky-wheel.co.uk](http://www.wonky-wheel.co.uk)

## Castle Park Open-Air Theatre

### Shakespeare in the Park presents: Much Ado About Nothing

Wednesday 10 to Saturday 20 June: Gates 6.30pm, show starts 7.30pm

Shakespeare's original 'rom com' with lashings of laughs and plenty of heart. Suitable for 12-years-old and over. Price: Adults £16.00, £14.00 concessions (under 18-year-old and over 65-years-old). [www.castleparktheatre.co.uk](http://www.castleparktheatre.co.uk)

## Castle Park After Dark Presents: The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes

Tuesday 30 to Saturday 1 August:  
Gates 8.00pm, show starts 9.00pm

Revel in the thrilling tales of Sherlock Holmes after the park has shut to everyone else. Suitable for 12-years-old and over. Price: Adults £16.00, £14.00 concessions (under 18-year-old and over 65-years-old). [www.castleparktheatre.co.uk](http://www.castleparktheatre.co.uk)

## Chelmsford Theatre

### Dementia Accessible Cinema

Tuesday 16 June: 1.00pm

A relaxed and welcoming cinema experience designed with those living with dementia, their families and carers in mind. Suitable for anyone looking for a friendly, understanding space. Price: £3.50. [www.chelmsfordtheatre.co.uk/whats-on/dementia-accessible-cinema](http://www.chelmsfordtheatre.co.uk/whats-on/dementia-accessible-cinema)

## Theatre Workshops

Musical theatre, stage combat, acting, street dance and puppetry workshops available throughout July. Suitable for: See website. Price: See website. [www.chelmsfordtheatre.co.uk/events](http://www.chelmsfordtheatre.co.uk/events)



### The Lion Inside

Monday 31 August to  
Tuesday 1 September

A heart-warming tale about confidence, self-esteem and a shy little mouse who sets out to find his roar. Suitable for three-years-old and over. Price: £18.00.

[www.chelmsfordtheatre.co.uk/event/the-lion-inside](http://www.chelmsfordtheatre.co.uk/event/the-lion-inside)

### Cliffs Pavilion

#### Fanny Galore's Buns and Bubbles

Sunday 14 June: 12.00pm

Enjoy afternoon tea with a difference with Southend's favourite drag queen, Fanny Galore as your host. Suitable for 18-years-old and over only. Price: tickets from £32.50.

[www.trafalgartickets.com/cliffs-pavilion-southend](http://www.trafalgartickets.com/cliffs-pavilion-southend)

### Waitress

Wednesday 17 to Saturday 20  
June: 7.30pm

Meet Jenna, a waitress and expert pie-maker who dreams of some happiness in her life. When a hot new doctor arrives in town, life gets complicated. Suitable for 13-years-old and over. Price: Tickets from £23.50.

[www.trafalgartickets.com/cliffs-pavilion-southend](http://www.trafalgartickets.com/cliffs-pavilion-southend)

### Barnum starring Lee Mead

Tuesday 30 June to Saturday 4  
July: 7.30pm

West End favourite and TV star Lee Mead will take centre stage as the legendary 19<sup>th</sup> century showman P.T. Barnum. Suitable for: See website. Price: Tickets from £22.50.

[www.trafalgartickets.com/cliffs-pavilion-southend](http://www.trafalgartickets.com/cliffs-pavilion-southend)

### Mean Girls

Tuesday 14 to Saturday 18  
July: 7.30pm

Mean Girls is a musical comedy from an award-winning creative team. Suitable for: See website. Price: Tickets from £29.50. [www.trafalgartickets.com/cliffs-pavilion-southend](http://www.trafalgartickets.com/cliffs-pavilion-southend)

### High Society

Tuesday 28 July to Saturday 1  
August: 7.30pm

Helen George ('Call the Midwife', 'The King and I') leads the cast as glamorous socialite Tracy Lord, who plans for the society wedding of the year descend into chaos. Suitable for: See website. Price: Tickets from £35.50. [www.trafalgartickets.com/cliffs-pavilion-southend](http://www.trafalgartickets.com/cliffs-pavilion-southend)

### Crossing Temple Barns

#### World's Edge Fantasy Fayre

Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 June

A midsummer celebration with music, food, role play and artisans. Suitable for the whole family. Prices: see website. [www.worldsedgefayre.co.uk](http://www.worldsedgefayre.co.uk)

### Festival of Essex Archaeology and Heritage

Thursday 23 July:  
10.00am to 5.00pm

A family friendly festival for anyone with an interest in archaeology, history and the heritage of Essex. (Some talks are bookable in advance). Suitable for all ages. Price: Free. [www.explore-essex.com/whats-on/festival-of-essex-archaeology](http://www.explore-essex.com/whats-on/festival-of-essex-archaeology)

### Colchester Fringe Festival

#### Summer Weekender

Thursday 23 to Sunday 26 July

Across four days, local artists and international groups transform theatres, music venues, bars and cultural spaces with an exciting mix of theatre, music and comedy. Suitable for all ages. Price: See website. [www.colchesterfringe.com](http://www.colchesterfringe.com)

### Colchester Zoological Society

#### Carnivores vs Herbivores Weekend

Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 June:  
10:00am to 4:00pm

Discover facts about the zoo's most famous carnivores and herbivores. Suitable for all ages. Price: Event included in standard admission. [www.colchesterzoologicalsociety.com/event/carnivores-vs-herbivores-weekend/](http://www.colchesterzoologicalsociety.com/event/carnivores-vs-herbivores-weekend/)

#### Dino Discovery Day

Saturday 27 June:  
9:30am to 5:30pm

Discover extinct species from millions of years ago, from gigantic carnivores to the graceful herbivores. Suitable for all ages. Price: Event included in standard admission. [www.colchesterzoologicalsociety.com/event/dino-discovery-day](http://www.colchesterzoologicalsociety.com/event/dino-discovery-day)

#### Necks, Horns and Trunks Weekend

Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 July:  
10:00am to 4:00pm

Discover a zoo-per weekend of facts about the zoo's most famous necks, horns and trunks. Suitable for all ages. Price: Event included in standard admission. [www.colchesterzoologicalsociety.com/event/necks-horns-trunks-weekend](http://www.colchesterzoologicalsociety.com/event/necks-horns-trunks-weekend)

#### Summer Holidays

Saturday 18 July to Monday 31  
August: 9:30am to 6:00pm

This summer, enjoy a wild adventure filled with daytime activities for children. Suitable for all ages. Price: Event included in standard admission. [www.colchesterzoologicalsociety.com/event/summer-holiday](http://www.colchesterzoologicalsociety.com/event/summer-holiday)



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Essex Book Festival                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Arpita Shah: Nalini                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Great Ruffins                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Various events and locations throughout June.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Saturday 13 June to Monday 5 October                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Wild Arts Presents<br>Mozart: An Evening of Opera                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <a href="http://www.essexbookfestival.org.uk">www.essexbookfestival.org.uk</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | An intimate exploration of family, memory and identity, Nalini is an ongoing series of work by Arpita Shah that focuses on the artist, her mother and grandmother. Suitable for: See website. Price: Free.<br><a href="http://www.firstsite.uk/whats-on">www.firstsite.uk/whats-on</a>              | Sunday 26 July: 3.30pm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Essex Record Office                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Summer Art Fair                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | A summer treat featuring favourite arias and songs from classic musicals by Rogers and Hammerstein, Bernstein and Noel Coward. Suitable for eight-years-old plus. Price: £45.00.<br><a href="http://www.wildarts.org.uk">www.wildarts.org.uk</a>                                                                                      |
| ERO Presents: The SAS in wartime Essex                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Saturday 11 July                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | The Harwich Festival of the Arts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Tuesday 30 June: 10.40am to 12.00pm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Join Firstsite for an unmissable celebration of creativity, bringing together all who are simply curious about art. Suitable for: See website. Price: Free (tickets are required for some activities).<br><a href="http://www.firstsite.uk/whats-on">www.firstsite.uk/whats-on</a>                  | Thursday 18 June to Sunday 28 June                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Join speaker Groden Brown for this talk about the history of the elite British Army regiment during their time based in Essex. Suitable for all ages. Price: £6.75.<br><a href="http://www.essexrecordoffice.co.uk/whats-on/events">www.essexrecordoffice.co.uk/whats-on/events</a>                      | Krafty Kids Workshops                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Annual festival featuring international and local acts from across the world. Suitable for all ages. Price: Free to £15.00. <a href="http://www.harwichfestival.com">www.harwichfestival.com</a>                                                                                                                                      |
| ERO Presents: The life and work of J.A. Baker (1926 to 1987)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Sunday 19 July and Sunday 16 August: 10.00am                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Hylands Estate                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Tuesday 28 July: 10.40am to 12.00pm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Krafty Kids is a monthly creative workshop designed for young people. Suitable for: Nine to 14-years-old. Price: Tickets £11.00, members £8.00.<br><a href="http://www.firstsite.uk/whats-on">www.firstsite.uk/whats-on</a>                                                                         | Sunday 14 June, Sunday 12 July and Sunday 9 August: 10.00am to 3.00pm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Join speaker Dr Sarah Demelo for this talk about the life and work of the author of 'The Peregrine', J. A. Baker. Suitable for all ages. Price: £6.75. <a href="http://www.essexrecordoffice.co.uk/whats-on/events">www.essexrecordoffice.co.uk/whats-on/events</a>                                      | Holiday Fun                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Hylands Estate is fully open to explore, with free family activities to keep everyone entertained. Suitable for all ages. Price: Free. <a href="http://www.hylandsestate.co.uk/explore/openestate">www.hylandsestate.co.uk/explore/openestate</a>                                                                                     |
| Essex Pride                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Saturday 18 July to Saturday 29 August (Tuesdays to Saturdays): 10.00am to 2.30pm                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Outdoor Theatre: Othello                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Saturday 20 June                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Free drop-in creative and outdoor activities for families during the school holidays. <a href="http://www.firstsite.uk/whats-on">www.firstsite.uk/whats-on</a>                                                                                                                                      | Tuesday 16 June: 7.00pm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Essex Pride is an annual celebration of LGBT+ life in Essex and beyond. This is an event for the whole community. Suitable for all ages. Price: See website. <a href="http://www.essexpride.org/tickets">www.essexpride.org/tickets</a>                                                                  | Gateway 978 Radio                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Join The Lord Chamberlain's Men this summer for Othello. See it performed how William Shakespeare first saw it. Suitable for all ages. Price: Adults £20.00, children (under 16-years-old) £12.00. <a href="http://www.hylandsestate.co.uk/events/outdoor-theatre-othello">www.hylandsestate.co.uk/events/outdoor-theatre-othello</a> |
| Firstsite                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Summer School                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | State Fayre                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Godfried Donkor: Its a Numbers Game                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Monday 1 to Saturday 29 August (excluding Sundays): 10.00am to 2.00pm                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Friday 26 to Sunday 28 June                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Now until Sunday 30 August                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Join Gateway 978 for this series of radio broadcasting workshops. Suitable for 11 to 20-years-old. Booking required. Please email <a href="mailto:reception@gateway978.com">reception@gateway978.com</a> to book. Price: See website.<br><a href="http://www.gateway978.com">www.gateway978.com</a> | Introducing State Fayre Festival 2026 – the UK's biggest music and BBQ festival. Suitable for all ages (under 18-years-old must be accompanied by an adult). Price: Day tickets from £105.00 for adults, weekend and camping tickets available.<br><a href="http://www.statefayre.com">www.statefayre.com</a>                         |
| Firstsite is transformed by the work of international artist Godfried Donkor. The exhibition fills the building and invites visitors to think about history in a completely new way. Suitable for: See website. Price: Free.<br><a href="http://www.firstsite.uk/whats-on">www.firstsite.uk/whats-on</a> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |



### Beginners Glass Workshops

Various dates

Spend a fun day learning a new skill and creating your own glass creations with Hylands artist Mona Marnell. Suitable for 18-years-old and over. Price: £115.00 per person. [www.hylandsestate.co.uk/organiser/mona-marnell](http://www.hylandsestate.co.uk/organiser/mona-marnell)

### Ignite Chelmsford

#### Ignite Social

Thursday 11 June, Thursday 9 July and Thursday 13 August: 7.00pm to 10.00pm

A monthly social meet with talks from inspiring local creatives across a range of topics. Suitable for 16-years-old and over. Price: Free. [www.ignitechelmsford.org.uk](http://www.ignitechelmsford.org.uk)

### Kelvedon Hall

#### Wild Arts Summer Opera Festival Mozart: The Marriage of Figaro

Sunday 14 June: 3.00pm

Mozart's comic opera of intrigue, secret lovers and clever disguises is a whirlwind of joyous music and sparkling theatrical mischief. Suitable for 12-years-old plus. Price: From £15.00. [www.wildarts.org.uk](http://www.wildarts.org.uk)

### Langton Hall

#### Artimate: Two-Day Stop Motion Animation Workshop

Tuesday 21 and Wednesday 22 July and Tuesday 18 and Wednesday 19 August: 10.00am to 2.00pm

Children learn on professional equipment the art of stop motion. Booking required. Suitable for seven to 12-years-old. Price: £65.00 early bird and £75.00 general admission. [www.artimate.co.uk](http://www.artimate.co.uk)

### Layer Marney Tower

#### History Day (Essex Book Festival)

Sunday 28 June:  
12.00pm to 5.00pm

This year's lineup includes Tony McMahon, Emily Hauser, Jonathan Freedland and more. Suitable for: See website. Price: See website. [www.layermarneytower.co.uk/events/essex-book-festival-2](http://www.layermarneytower.co.uk/events/essex-book-festival-2)

#### Treasure Island

Tuesday 4 August:  
3.30pm to 5.00pm

This swashbuckling adventure is bursting with swordfights, sea shanties and Long John Silver. Suitable for: See website. Price: Adult £20.00, child £12.00. [www.layermarneytower.co.uk/events/treasure-island-2](http://www.layermarneytower.co.uk/events/treasure-island-2)

### Myddelton House Gardens

#### Wild Arts Presents Mozart: An Evening of Opera

Thursday 18 June: 7.00pm

A sparkling summer treat featuring arias and scenes from operas and songs from the classic musicals by Rogers and Hammerstein, Bernstein and Noel Coward. Suitable for eight-years-old plus. Price: £25.00 and £35.00. [www.wildarts.org.uk](http://www.wildarts.org.uk)

### Museum of Chelmsford

#### Timeless Treasures

Saturday 18 July:  
10.00am to 5.00pm

The Museum of Chelmsford displays a recent local significant find, The Great Baddow Coin Hoard. Suitable for all ages. Price: Free with admission to the museum (£4.00 or free for members). [www.chelmsford.gov.uk/museums](http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/museums)

### Roots Chelmsford Windrush Exhibition

Now until Tuesday 1 September:  
10.00am to 5.00pm

This exhibition will shine a light on the lives of the Caribbean Windrush community and those who left their mark on Chelmsford. Suitable for all ages. Price: Free with admission to the museum (£4.00 or free for members). [www.chelmsford.gov.uk/museums](http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/museums)

#### Memory Café, SEN Friendly Days and Boris Bear Cubs

Various days and times,  
see website.

Drop in to explore museum objects in a session suitable for your needs. [www.chelmsford.gov.uk/museums](http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/museums)

### Iron Age Day

Saturday 18 July

Celebrate the opening of Timeless Treasures showcasing the Great Baddow Coin Hoard with a free Iron Age Day, includes living history stalls and more. Suitable for all ages. Price: Free. [www.chelmsford.gov.uk/museums/whats-on](http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/museums/whats-on)

### Naze Tower

#### Summer Exhibition

Saturday 20 June to  
Sunday 6 September

Over 20 artists from the region shown over six floors of Naze Tower. Suitable for all ages. Price: Adult £4.50, senior and students £4.00, four to 15-years-old £3.50, under four-years-old free, family (two adults and up to four children) £14.00. [www.nazetower.co.uk](http://www.nazetower.co.uk)



## Palace Theatre

### I'm Sorry Prime Minister

Tuesday 21 to Saturday 25 July

From the BAFTA Award-winning co-creator of 'Yes, Minister' and 'Yes, Prime Minister', Jonathan Lynn, comes the long-awaited final chapter of British political satire. Suitable for: See website. Price: Tickets from £23.50. [www.trafalgartickets.com/palace-theatre-southend](http://www.trafalgartickets.com/palace-theatre-southend)

## Rayleigh District Council

### Rayleigh Windmill Anniversary

Sunday 26 July 26:  
1.00pm to 4.00pm

An event to celebrate 20 years since the rescue and restoration of the Rayleigh Windmill. Parking is free in all local council car parks on Sundays. Suitable for all ages. Price: Free. [www.explorerochforddistrict.co.uk](http://www.explorerochforddistrict.co.uk)

## Right Hemisphere

### Home Gallery

Friday 12 to Sunday 14 June and  
Saturday 13 to Sunday 21 June

Come and meet local artists and their work in Hadleigh, get involved in a variety of workshops and support the work of local charity PICC Pals. Suitable for all ages (unless workshops state otherwise). Price: Free (some workshops will be paid for events, see website). [www.righthemisphere.co.uk](http://www.righthemisphere.co.uk)

## Beth Chatto's Plants and Gardens

### Roots Shoots Photography 'Natures Eye'

Saturday 13 June:  
10.30am to 3.30pm

Celebrate the height of summer, where nature inspires creativity and intentional seeing. Notice subtle shifts in light and colour and respond thoughtfully through photography. Suitable for: See website. Price: See website. [www.rootsshootsphotography.com](http://www.rootsshootsphotography.com)

## From Snapper to Photographer

Saturday 11 July:  
10.30am to 3.30pm

Step into a vibrant world and begin your journey from casual snapper to confident photographer. Learn to move beyond auto mode and explore manual settings, gaining creative control of your camera. Suitable for: See website. Price: See website. [www.rootsshootsphotography.com](http://www.rootsshootsphotography.com)

## Shadows, Light and Still Life

Saturday 8 August:  
10.30am to 3.30pm

Celebrate the peak of summer at Beth Chatto's Plants and Gardens in an August Photography Workshop, designed for beginners. Suitable for: See website. Price: See website. [www.rootsshootsphotography.com](http://www.rootsshootsphotography.com)

## Saffron Screen

### Wallace and Gromit: The Wrong Trousers - with Live Brass Band

Saturday 4 July:  
2.00pm and 4.30pm

Saffron Screen and Thaxted Festival present Nick Park's Oscar-winning masterpiece, 'The Wrong Trousers'. Suitable for all ages. Price: Adults £15.00, under 16-years-old £10.00. [www.saffronscreen.com/film](http://www.saffronscreen.com/film)

## Signals Media

### World Photo Day Photography

Wednesday 19 August:  
10.00am to 1.00pm

Enjoy a fun outdoor workshop. Explore your surroundings and capture the moment. Bring your own camera or borrow one of Signals. Suitable for ages 11 to 17-years-old. Price: £35.00. [www.signals.org.uk/events](http://www.signals.org.uk/events)

## Summer Workshops

Various animation, digital, drawing, escape room, stop motion and film workshops in Colchester and Clacton available throughout August aimed at young people. For details and price see website. [www.signals.org.uk/events](http://www.signals.org.uk/events)

## Thaxted Festival

Various events: For full listings see website. [www.thaxtedfestival.co.uk/events](http://www.thaxtedfestival.co.uk/events)

## London Mozart Players

Friday 19 June: 7.30pm

An evening of Baroque Music at Thaxted Parish Church with trumpeter Matilda Lloyd. Suitable for all ages. Price: £16.00 to £44.00 with reduced prices for those aged 30-years-old and under. [www.thaxtedfestival.co.uk/events](http://www.thaxtedfestival.co.uk/events)

## The Fibonacci Quartet

Saturday 20 June: 7.00pm

An evening with one of Europe's leading young string quartets featuring work by Beethoven and Schumann in Thaxted Parish Church. Suitable for all ages. Price: £12.00 to £32.00 with reduced prices for those aged 30-years-old and under. [www.thaxtedfestival.co.uk/events](http://www.thaxtedfestival.co.uk/events)

## St Martin's Voices with narrator Zeb Soanes

Friday 27 June: 7.30pm

An evening of words and song taking us on a magical journey round the Isles. Suitable for all ages. Price: £14.00 to £38.00 with reduced prices for those aged 30-years-old and under. [www.thaxtedfestival.co.uk/events](http://www.thaxtedfestival.co.uk/events)



### Opera Beatz!

Saturday 28 June: 2.00pm

A family event on the miniature railway at Audley End, starting with a magical journey to a wooded glade where you can enjoy fun singing and body percussion. Suitable for all ages. Price: £10.00 each for all ages.

[www.thaxtedfestival.co.uk/events](http://www.thaxtedfestival.co.uk/events)

### Wild Arts Opera

Sunday 5 July: 5.00pm

Mozart: The Marriage of Figaro will provide an evening of sparkling tunes, tangled romances and razor-sharp wit. Suitable for all ages. Price: £16.00 to £48.00 with reduced prices for those aged 30-years-old and under.

[www.thaxtedfestival.co.uk/events](http://www.thaxtedfestival.co.uk/events)

### Junyan Chen

Saturday 11 July: 7.30pm

Junyan Chen will perform a mix of classical and contemporary piano works in this varied evening programme at Thaxted Parish Church. Suitable for all ages. Price: £14.00 to £38.00 with reduced prices for those aged 30-years-old and under.

[www.thaxtedfestival.co.uk/events](http://www.thaxtedfestival.co.uk/events)

### Visit Colchester

#### Hollytrees Museum

#### The Siege of Colchester Guided Walking Tour

Saturday 13 June: 2.00pm

Step back to 1648 and learn how the dramatic Siege of Colchester left its mark on Britain's first city. Price: £9.50 per person, under 15-years-old, free (children must be accompanied by a paying adult). Suitable for: See website.

[www.visitcolchester.com/event](http://www.visitcolchester.com/event)

#### Military Colchester Guided Walking Tour

Saturday 27 June: 2.00pm

Join an expert guide to explore Colchester's long military story, from Roman veterans to an 18<sup>th</sup> century garrison. Price: £9.50 per person, under 15-years-old, free (children must be accompanied by a paying adult). Suitable for: See website.

[www.visitcolchester.com/event](http://www.visitcolchester.com/event)

#### Constable's Dedham Guided Walking Tour

Thursday 18 July: 2.00pm

Celebrate Constable's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday with a guided walk through Dedham. Price: £9.50 per person, under 15-years-old, free (children must be accompanied by a paying adult). Suitable for: See website.

[www.visitcolchester.com/event](http://www.visitcolchester.com/event)

#### Roman Colchester Guided Walking Tour

Saturday 1 August: 12.00pm

Follow in the footsteps of the Emperor Claudius and Queen Boudica to uncover Colchester's fascinating Roman history. Price: £9.50 per person, under 15-years-old, free (children must be accompanied by a paying adult). Suitable for: See website.

[www.visitcolchester.com/event](http://www.visitcolchester.com/event)

#### Vulcan Restoration Trust

#### Visit the Vulcan on Father's Day

Sunday 21 June:  
10:00am to 4.00pm

Visit the Vulcan on Father's Day is a great chance to get up close and personal with Vulcan XL426 inside its hangar at London Southend Airport. Suitable for all ages. Price: Adults £10.00, under 16-years-old free, cockpit tours £8.00.

[www.avrovulcan.com](http://www.avrovulcan.com)

### Proms at the Vulcan

Saturday 4 July: 5:30pm to 9:30pm

Proms at the Vulcan returns for another exciting evening with the Essex Concert Orchestra performing a selection of popular and classical music inside Vulcan XL426's hangar at London Southend Airport. Suitable for all ages. Price: Adults £26.00, under 16-years-old £18.00.

[www.avrovulcan.com](http://www.avrovulcan.com)

#### Music and Beer Festival at the Vulcan

Friday 31 July and Saturday 1 August: 2.00pm to 10.30pm

Music and Beer Festival at the Vulcan features the very best in local bands, local breweries and street food, with seven hours of live entertainment each day. Suitable for all ages. Price: Adults £18.00 (Friday), £22.00 (Saturday), accompanied under 18-years-old s free on both days.

[www.avrovulcan.com](http://www.avrovulcan.com)

Listings provided by the Essex Cultural network and Visit Essex members.





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23 JULY

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archaeology  
and family fun  
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Essex County Council

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[explore-essex.com/events](https://explore-essex.com/events)

