



# Family fun to entertain you!

## At our Ipswich Museums

- 25 May - 2 June Food Glorious Food Trail
- 29 May Teddy Bears Picnic
- 29 May Clay Clams
- 30 May Giant Puffa Fish!
- 31 May Quirky Photo Frames

## At our Colchester Museums

- 28 - 31 May Arty Tea Towels
- 28 and 29 May Everlasting Foam Flowers
- 30 and 31 May Colourful Flower Pots!

## Booking information

Visit [www.cimuseums.org.uk/whats-on](http://www.cimuseums.org.uk/whats-on) for event details, times, prices and booking information. To book by phone: 01206 282940 for events in Colchester 01473 433681 for events in Ipswich.



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



# Family Fun in Essex Museums

Looking for somewhere to spend some really good, engaging, quality time with the family? How about a visit to your local museum? In recent years many museums across Essex and beyond have been working hard to become family friendly venues. Not just when special family activities and events take place, but every time you visit.

The days of museums being dusty, quiet places with objects half hidden in dark cases are long gone. Now you are much more likely to find a warm welcome, practical family facilities, plenty of fascinating objects to see and, most importantly, lots to do in your own time which will make your museum visit a special experience unique to your family.

Recent work with an expert in early years learning has helped museums develop permanent resources particularly appropriate to the younger age group. Gallery trails, colouring sheets and fossil rubbing have been a popular feature at museums such as Harlow and Chelmsford for many years and are still to be found alongside many new activities.

Some museums provide explorer kits. These consist of a

choice of tools including binoculars, magnifying glasses, torches (for those few remaining dark corners!) puzzles and explorer hats so your family can make its own choices about how they would like to explore the museum. Every visit becomes a different experience as new tools are chosen and new objects found. The conversations these tools generate among families, especially when the younger members lead the tour, are fascinating to hear.

Many museums now include interactive features with their special exhibitions. The displays help everyone learn and understand by being hands-on and working with others. The Royal Gunpowder Mills in Waltham Abbey has opportunities for you to launch rockets, fire airsoft guns and get to grips with the Armoury handling collection. The East Anglian Railway Museum

makes the most of its ever popular theme with a miniature railway, a children's pass and activity book.

Saffron Walden and Braintree Museums encourage you to try being an archaeologist, with a sandpit dig. What about stroking unusual stuffed animals in the natural history collection? Essex Police Museum meanwhile has lots of fun police related things to try as well as fascinating displays.

At Epping Forest District Museum, a replica Victorian stove with play food keeps toddlers entertained for hours. Real objects nearby provide a great link for interesting chats as parents and grandparents reminisce about their own childhood.

Lots of museums have replica clothes so you can really feel what it was like to live in the past. Hollytrees in Colchester has a dressing up section, and object handling, with stories about life in the past. The Natural History Museum in Colchester also has plenty of hands on activities, letting you get up close with all sorts of creatures.

Museums can also be great spaces to go with babies. There are so many things to touch and explore, making for a great sensory learning experience. Epping Forest District Museum has a Baby Treasure Basket you can ask to use, full of ordinary everyday things, many of which link to the household objects on display, specially chosen to be suitable for babies to explore.

Some Essex museums such as Chelmsford, Saffron Walden and Epping Forest District Museum offer regular bookable sessions for toddlers. These can be a great way of building up your own and your child's confidence in visiting the museum.

Admission charges, facilities and what's on offer will vary at each museum so it's always



Chelmsford Museum

worth checking in advance if there is anything you really need or want to do. Many museums are free, but those that do charge offer very good value for the range of activities available. Not all have cafes, but most will be understanding about the need for younger children to have snacks and drinks in sensible spaces. Museum staff will do all they can to help you get around and enjoy your visit.

The Roundabout section in Primary Times is a great way of keeping in touch with special

events and activities in school holidays. Think about making museum visits at any time. Let it become a regular way your family can have fun and learn together. There will always be lots of fascinating things to see and fun things to do. As one mum commented: "My only issue is how hard it is to drag a child away from your museum. My daughter will play there until she has to leave!"

Article written by Catherine Hammond, Education and Outreach Officer, Epping Forest District Museum.

## May mayhem at Colchester & Ipswich Museums

During the children's May half-term holiday, why not venture further afield and explore some of the great family sessions being held at the Colchester & Ipswich Museums, Suffolk venues. The Ipswich Museum has everything from mammoths to mummies, plus many other weird and wonderful curiosities. While Christchurch Mansion houses the biggest collection of John Constable paintings outside of London. All six Colchester & Ipswich Museum venues offer fun, hands-on sessions that encourage children to express themselves through a variety of mediums such as art, music and literature. The activities are best suited to children aged two and above and many keep Mum and Dad amused too! For further information and to book an event place at all Colchester and Ipswich Museums venues, visit [www.cimuseums.org/whats-on](http://www.cimuseums.org/whats-on) and check the listings on the Roundabout pages for details of events coming up.

## Visit The View in Epping Forest...



The new Epping Forest Gateway, Rangers Road, Chingford.

Incorporating the new Visitor Centre, The View, Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge and the recently refurbished Victorian tea rooms at Butler's Retreat.

[www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/eppingforest](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/eppingforest)



## If you go down to the Forest today...

Epping Forest is a fantastic place for families to have fun for free! It isn't just about trees there are meadows, ponds and historic buildings to enjoy. A great place to start your visit is the new visitor centre, The View, (Rangers Rd, Chingford, E4 7QH) which is open 10am-5pm every day. There you will find helpful staff, interactive forest displays, a shop, and, a fabulous view across Epping Forest. Next door is the atmospheric Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge. Take yourself back in time as you discover how royalty used this incredible Tudor building. Regular family friendly events take place in the two buildings. There are two, free family events about birds of prey, during May half-term: Wednesday 29th May, 1-4pm, find out about the owls that live in the forest. On Friday 31st May from 1-4pm, have fun learning about falcons and falconry. For more details call 020 7332 1911 or visit [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/eppingforest](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/eppingforest)



Image © Malcolm Turner

## History and Science in Harlow

Science Alive is a unique education charity working with schools and families. It runs both a high-tech, new, visitor centre for hands-on Science and Technology as well as a quiet, characterful museum in a beautiful 16th Century setting. The Time Machine is a gallery bursting with exciting interactive exhibits, workshops and shows. Located in a state of the art leisure centre, with swimming, sport and cafeteria all on site, it makes for a fantastic day out. Harlow Museum & Walled Gardens is a tranquil and fascinating venue, visited on three occasions by Queen Elizabeth I. The Museum recounts Living History from Roman times to the present day, through exhibitions, records, visitor trails and interactive exhibits. Science birthday parties are available too. For further details, visit [www.science-alive.co.uk](http://www.science-alive.co.uk)



A HISTORICAL AND BEAUTIFUL PLACE FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY TO ENJOY

Local History collection  
Heritage Study Centre  
Conservation centre  
Souvenir shop • Refreshments  
Disabled access • Free parking

Harlow Museum and Walled Gardens  
Muskham Road (Off First Avenue), Harlow, Essex, CM20 2LF  
Managed by Science Alive • [www.science-alive.co.uk](http://www.science-alive.co.uk) • Tel: 01279 454959

HARLOW MUSEUM & WALLED GARDENS



## A FANTASTIC FAMILY DAY OUT

A gigantic gallery full of HANDS-ON EXHIBITS  
A packed programme of daily shows and workshops  
It's Science, Technology... and just a touch of History.

OPEN MON TO SAT, 10AM TO 4PM  
Family tickets are just £10 for 4 people (Special offers in school holiday periods)

The Time Machine, Leisurezone, Second Avenue, Harlow, CM20 3DT  
[www.science-alive.co.uk](http://www.science-alive.co.uk) • Tel: 01279 413412

**Coming up at East Anglian Railway Museum...**

**Fri 17th & Sat 18th May  
Trolleys & Dollies -  
A Night at the Museum**  
A hands-on event for ages 7+. 12noon-10pm

**Sat 13th & Sun 14th July  
Trades and Transport of the 50s**  
A 'living history' event for all the family.  
10.30am-4.30pm

**East Anglian Railway Museum**  
Chappel Station, Nr Colchester CO6 2DS  
www.earm.co.uk 01206 242524



## A journey through railway history

The East Anglian Railway Museum is a living heritage site based at Chappel railway station near Colchester. The complex of original Victorian buildings has a unique story to tell of railways and people's lives in East Anglia from the 1840's through to the 21st Century. There are lots of family events throughout the year. On Fri 17th and Sat 18th May a 'Trolleys and Dollies' event is planned from noon till 10pm both days. Sat 13th to Sun 14th July is 'Trades and Transport of the 50's', a living history event. This is suitable for all ages, with the chance to see various transport of the time. On these days you get an unlimited number of train rides (excluding the mini rail). For more details call 01206 242524 or visit [www.earm.co.uk](http://www.earm.co.uk)



**A fun and fascinating day out at Epping Forest District Museum**

Bring your family on a journey of discovery with fun activities and resources for all ages. Role Play • Holiday Activities • Special Events

Open: Mon, Tue & Fri, 10am-4pm & Sat 10am-5pm. Admission free.

**Epping Forest District Museum**  
39-41 Sun Street, Waltham Abbey EN9 1EL  
01992 716882 • [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/museum](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/museum)




## Get crafty and explore

Enjoy a fun, fascinating day out at Epping Forest, family friendly, museum. All ages will find something to enjoy from baby treasure baskets for the very young to art activities for the oldest. Create a Victorian feast on the role-play stove, or try washing clothes the old fashioned way with real historical objects. Go on your own journey of exploration around the galleries and discover treasures with the museum explorer kits. During school holidays art and craft activities take place on Tuesday afternoons with special events at weekends throughout the year. Open: Mon, Tues and Fri 10am to 4pm, Sat 10am to 5pm. Admission free. Email [museum@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:museum@eppingforestdc.gov.uk) for regular family updates or visit [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/museum](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/museum). Epping Forest District Museum, 39 - 41 Sun Street, Waltham Abbey, EN9 1EL. Tel: 01992 716882.



**MUSEUM OF POWER**  
LANGFORD

- Giant steam engine
- Children's activities
- Interactive displays
- Historic machinery
- Household gadgets
- Free entry to our tearoom and riverside grounds

**Museum and Tearoom opening times:**  
Nov and March Sat - Sun 10am last entry 3pm  
April - Oct. Wed - Sun 10am last entry 4pm

Hatfield Road, Langford, Maldon, Essex CM9 6QA  
**T: 01621 843183**

For details of steam days and miniature steam train rides please visit website

In partnership with ESSEX COUNCIL

Charity no. 1087459

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



## Full steam ahead

The Museum of Power is housed in a former water pumping station at Langford near Maldon. Set in attractive wooded grounds, the museum features a gigantic pumping engine which can be seen in steam at special events. The museum exhibits and interactive displays will fascinate all ages and a new 'Steam Pump' tearoom has just opened. The museum opens between Wednesday and Sunday 10am-5pm throughout the summer and children under 16 are admitted free. A miniature steam railway operates on the first Sunday of each month. For details of special events and steam days, or for more information call 01621 843183 or visit [www.museumofpower.org.uk](http://www.museumofpower.org.uk)



**COALHOUSE FORT**

**A Fine Example of Mid-Victorian Military Architecture**

East Tilbury Village, Essex  
Tel. 01375 844203 | [www.coalhousefort.co.uk](http://www.coalhousefort.co.uk)



## Visit a Victorian fort

The Coalhouse Fort Project is a charity operated solely by volunteers. Its purpose is to preserve and maintain the important Victorian Casemate Fort. Built between 1861 and 1874 to defend London from Napoleon III, it was subsequently occupied by the Army and Navy until vacated in 1962 when it then passed to Thurrock Council. The fort is open to the public every last Sunday and Bank Holidays from March to November with a number of special, themed, days. There are two museums covering crashed aircraft and fort military history. A number of military vehicles and guns are on display too, with a memorial garden to visit. Take a picnic and enjoy the well maintained parkland or a river walk along the Thames. For more details visit [www.coalhousefort.co.uk](http://www.coalhousefort.co.uk)



## Southend Musums: Bursting with history

Bursting with history and inspiring collections, Southend museums give everyone a chance to explore. From bug hunts to historic festivals, film nights to holiday activities, there's always something going on at Southend museums. The six branches offer great value days out. You can choose from local history, art, historic houses, even outer space. In addition to the wonderful historic houses of Southchurch Hall and Prittlewell Priory which have their own dedicated activity booklets, this half term at Central Museum you can make a Saxon helmet and shield. Why not view stunning Saxon treasures in the latest exhibition too? For the over 7's there is always a chance to catch a show in the Planetarium. For full listings and details visit: [www.southendmuseums.co.uk](http://www.southendmuseums.co.uk) or keep up to date by following them on facebook, Southend Museums or Tel: 01702 434449.



## Fun at firstsite

Come to firstsite with your whole family, there's something for everyone! Alongside regularly changing contemporary art exhibitions, there are one off events and ongoing activities for all ages. From free family drop in sessions on a Saturday, to ten-week courses

to develop new artistic techniques. The associate artists offer a fun, friendly atmosphere to get creative. Take inspiration from the art on display. firstsite also offers a fantastic film programme including Daydream Cinema for parents with babies under one year old and a family film club, showing children's classics and recent releases. Get active with firstsite's ever-popular Dinky Disco and Club Dinky; a cool sensory dance and art session with proper DJ Stereofreakz, including great tunes and a chill out zone.

For more details visit the website: [www.firstsite.uk.net](http://www.firstsite.uk.net)



## Fun & creative activities for the whole family

Lewis Gardens,  
High Street,  
Colchester, CO1 1JH  
01206 577 067

[www.firstsite.uk.net](http://www.firstsite.uk.net)  
Open 7 days a week  
Entry is free.

**firstsite**

## Behind the scenes at Essex Police Museum

Try on the handcuffs, make fingerprints and have fun at the Essex Police Museum. Every Saturday from 10am to 4pm children can take part in police themed craft activities and trails. The museum, situated in police headquarters, Chelmsford, has something for all the family. Sit in a Victorian police cell, dress up in police uniform, or stand in the witness box and plead your innocence! The museum offers a fun and friendly atmosphere to discover more about your local police force. The museum is also open on Wednesdays during the school holidays. Admission is free although there is a charge of £1 for most craft activities. Visit [www.essex.police.uk/museum](http://www.essex.police.uk/museum) for more details.



Craft events & activities at

**Essex Police Museum**  
Chelmsford



Open Wednesdays in the school holidays & every Saturday 10am - 4pm

Arts & crafts  
Dressing up, Fingerprinting  
Puzzles & Trails  
& much, much more!

[www.essex.police.uk/museum](http://www.essex.police.uk/museum)  
01245 457150

Essex Police HQ,  
CM2 6DN



# Great FREE days out!



**Southend**  
MUSEUMS

Tel: 01702 434449  
[www.southendmuseums.co.uk](http://www.southendmuseums.co.uk)

