

Press Release

4 October - 27 November 2004

East Sussex Record Office in Lewes, Folkestone Library & Museum, West Sussex
Local Studies Collection in Worthing Central Library

Stephen Connolly, Neville Gabie, Andrew Hunter, Rob Kessler, Simon Pope, Rachel Murphy, Mah Rana, Claudia Schenk, Bob and Roberta Smith

Proboscis and curator Deborah Smith present **Navigating History**, a new project in libraries and an archive that brings to light the richness and diversity of unique local studies materials, through a series of specially commissioned projects by practitioners from the fields of art, design, jewellery, film and interactive technology. By interweaving past and present whilst exploring themes of identity and place the commissions open up unusual and new routes into the collections.

A significant portion of the local studies collections in the libraries and archive are accessible through library/archive catalogues and can be made available to the public on request. **Navigating History's** imaginative and exploratory commissions unearth items relating to more than 500 years of history including 18th Century inventories, early film and local newspapers. A maze of narratives from the unexpected to the peculiar, the tragic to the wondrous are revealed from stories of ordinary people to those documenting momentous events in East Sussex, West Sussex and Folkestone.

The Commissions :

East Sussex Record Office in Lewes

Neville Gabie's *10 September 2001* is an archive within an archive of a portrait of Lewes' community on the day before the tragic event of 11 September 2001. *Mobile Medical Archive Unit* by **Rachel Murphy** uses a repurposed medical trolley as an innovative computer interface to gather and explore attitudes towards health and illness from the 15th Century to the present day. **Claudia Schenk's** *Things Unseen and Forgotten* is inspired by early inventories of the contents of people's homes and explores material wealth and culture today.

Folkestone Library & Museum

Using archival clips, a recreated camera obscura and new film footage with a soundtrack **Stephen Connolly's** film, *Obscura; Seeing By the Sea*, surveys 100 years of visual entertainment on Folkestone's seafront, capturing history and quieter moments of leisure by the sea. **Rob Kessler's** *Botanizing the Library* celebrates the flora of Folkestone through the work of two former residents, Henry Ulyett and Jocelyn Brooke, renowned for their knowledge of local plants. It draws together diverse strands of science, botany and literature using artifacts and ephemera from the library and museum together with microscopic images of pollen. A monthly series of bookmarks and photographs in the Heritage Room will be available in the Library together with a limited edition book. In *Day Out*, **Bob and Roberta Smith** launch an absurd campaign inspired by the satirical political posters and bizarre photographs of seaside entertainers such as Charlie Banks. Banks, who ran a circus in his spare time earning him the nickname Lord Charlie Banks, rallied at local Councillors for their corrupt practices and produced

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Proboscis and Deborah Smith in collaboration with Folkestone Library & Museum, East Sussex Record Office in Lewes and West Sussex Local Studies Collection in Worthing Central Library

spoof election posters. Taking a lead from Lord Banks, Bob Smith will invite the electorate of Folkestone to vote for him in order to build five new museums devoted to Art and declare Folkestone as City of Youth. He will sing songs and create a poster to celebrate 'all the lost lateral thinking of the Victorian era'.

West Sussex Local Studies Collection in Worthing Central Library

Andrew Hunter's *The Lalla Rookh: A Poetic Archive* is a poetic memorial to the "Brave Eleven," a group of fishermen who tragically drowned in the attempt to come to the aid of the ship Lalla Rookh on 25 November 1850. The Lalla Rookh emphasises a dialogue between the local and the global, the immediate and the distant that, while rooted in history, continues to resonate. **Simon Pope's** *A Walk from London to Worthing* centres around 19th century 'route-planners' and guidebooks of the journey from London to Worthing creating a path through the 'information space' of the Library and the local history collection. In *A First Class Ticket For Worthing*, **Mah Rana** inherits a fictional piece of jewellery given to her by her great great aunt Mary Garnett in 1901, who was known to be on holiday in Worthing at an address on Marine Parade.

Accompanying the commissions is a unique series of talks, tours, events and a publication.

Navigating History is a collaboration between Proboscis and Deborah Smith supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council England, Creative Partnerships Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex and Kent County Councils.

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From September 2004 : www.navigating-history.net

Notes to Editors

1. A comprehensive programme of talks, tours and events will be able from September.