

The past reinterpreted by contemporary artists

Navigating History: programme of events

Navigating History is a major new project revealing unexpected and peculiar stories hidden within the rich local history and heritage collections of East Sussex Record Office in Lewes, Folkestone Library and Museum and West Sussex Local Studies Collection in Worthing Central Library. Navigating History includes an exciting series of nine specially commissioned projects by practitioners from the fields of art, design, jewellery, film and interactive technology.

Each project has been inspired by items in one of the libraries' archives and between them they weave the past with present, exploring themes of identity, time and place. Accompanying the commissions is a unique series of talks and tours, education and participatory projects, and a publication.

Navigating History Events Programme

Rob Kessler

Botanizing the Library

Botanizing the Library celebrates local flora and the work of Henry Ulyett and Jocelyn Brooke, renowned for their knowledge of local plants. The project unites artefacts and ephemera in the Library together with microscopic images of pollen taken from the Museum's specimens and photographed on a scanning electron microscope. You can collect a monthly series of bookmarks and a limited edition book, see images of pollen in the

Heritage Room and explore a display of the Museum's botanical specimens. Rob Kessler's botanical specimens, photographic images and limited edition book are on view in the Folkestone Library and Museum from 4 October to 27 November. The bookmarks are available from the Library and Ottakar's Bookshop, 16 Sandgate Road.

Bob and Roberta Smith

Grand Day Out

Inspired by outrageous satirical posters and bizarre photographs of seaside entertainers, Bob Smith will launch an absurd political campaign for more art. Before Screaming Lord Sutch there was Lord Charlie Banks. His exploits are revealed by documents in the Folkestone Heritage Room. An employee of the Pleasure Gardens Theatre in the 1900s, Banks and friends paraded the town in fancy dress & animal costumes for the benefit of local charities. In his alter ego as political activist, Banks produced spoof election posters that poked fun at local candidates.

Taking a lead from Lord Banks, Bob Smith will invite the electors of Folkestone to vote for him. Join us for Bob Smith's Grand Day Out where he will perform his songs at the Metropole Galleries (later available on CD). There will also be a poster to celebrate all the lost lateral thinking of the Edwardian era. ▶

In the Library foyer and Heritage Room from 4 October to 27 November; The Grand Day Out with Bob and Roberta Smith is on 30 October (see below).

Stephen Connolly

Folkestone Obscura

Stephen Connolly has made a film surveying 100 years of visual entertainment on Folkestone's seafront. It begins by revealing the hidden story behind one of Folkestone's first seaside attractions—a camera obscura sited on the beach between 1886 and 1900—and follows the century through moving image, capturing the history and quieter moments of leisure by the sea. The film uses material from Folkestone Library & Museum, images from a variety of other collections, new footage and interviews with Folkestonians.

At the Museum, Folkestone Library from 4 October to 27 November. Camera Obscura (see below) is on 30 October.

Talks and Events

Visions through a Lens: from Magic Lanterns to Film

20 October 6.30pm, Sassoon Gallery, Folkestone Library & Museum

A magic lantern and film show looking at how photography and cinema have shaped our views of the past, with Bruce Cook and his Magic Lantern, Frank Gray, Director of the South East Film and Video Archive, and filmmaker Stephen Connolly. Free. Booking advised: 256710.

Navigating the Commissions with Peter Fillingham

30 October, 2pm, Heritage Room, Folkestone Library & Museum

Join us for an enlightening meander

through the Navigating History projects and the materials that inspired them. From Rob Kessler's use of botanical specimens and literature, and Stephen Connolly's research into early film of Folkestone to Bob Smith's satirical rendition of seaside entertainment. Free. Booking advised: 256710.

Camera Obscura

30 October, 12 noon-4-30pm
Meet at the bottom of the Leas Lift (if it rains—Folkestone Library).
Come and view the Folkestone seaside through Stephen Connolly's portable contemporary camera obscura. Free.

Grand Day Out with Bob and Roberta Smith

30 October, 2-6pm (2-5pm on the beach below the Metropole, 5-6pm in the Music Room at the Metropole)
Bring a picnic for Bob and Roberta Smith's Grand Day Out and join in a series of competitions and experiments. Enjoy Bob Smith's ode to Charlie Banks and other songs inspired by the Local Studies Collection of Folkestone Library & Museum. Free.

Botanizing the Library and Pollen: The Hidden Sexuality of Flowers Book Launch

11 November, 5-30-6-30pm, Ottakar's Bookshop, 16 Sandgate Road, Free.

Cross Fertilisation: the pollination of art, science and literature

11 November, 6-30pm, Sassoon Gallery, Folkestone Library & Museum
Join artist Rob Kessler, botanist Madeline Harley (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew), and writer Jonathan Hunt in taking inspiration from our natural history.
Free. Booking essential: 256710.