

## **FRIENDS OF COLCHESTER ROMAN WALL - NEWSLETTER - AUGUST 2015**

**[www.romanwall.org](http://www.romanwall.org)**

### **PRIORY STREET INTERPRETATION BOARD TO BE UNVEILED**

The Board in Priory Street will be unveiled on **Friday, 11 September at 10.00am**. This Board has been kindly sponsored by the Colchester Archaeological Group and it will be unveiled jointly by the Mayor of Colchester, Cllr. Theresa Higgins, and the CAG Chair and Friends Trustee, Mark Davies. The Board will stand on the land of Priory Street Car Park, almost opposite the entrance to The Dell Retirement Homes.

The Chairman of the Friends, Henry Spyvee, comments 'If ever there was a Board which perfectly illustrates the need for interpretation of our Wall, this is it.' On the face of it the Wall at this point is made up of brick, some of it obviously very modern. In fact this point was the site of a breach in the Wall at the time of the 1648 Siege. It was knocked down by Parliamentary cannon located on Magdalen Green nearby.

Also visible here are the surviving bastions. Four of the original eight remain above ground. These were erected after the Peasants Revolt of 1381 when the authorities were worried by the possibility of further rebellion. This may look a dull stretch of the Wall but it is anything but dull.

### **NORTH GATE INTERPRETATION BOARD**

The **North Gate** Interpretation Board was unveiled on 21 March, 2015. The then Mayor of Colchester, Cllr. John Elliott, undertook the unveiling. Visible signs of North Gate have long gone but the Board shows what it and that part of North Hill looked like in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

This Board was sponsored by Sir Bob Russell and Lady Russell commemorating five generations of the family in Colchester. Three generations were there to support this happy event.

### **NEWS OF OTHER BOARDS**

The Board at **Scheregate** has been drafted and it is hoped to unveil it before long. This Board is sponsored by the Colchester Town Guides who have explained this and other points on the Wall to countless visitors. The Board tells why it is there and what the name means and features a Colchester character who many of us remember.

The Board at **Head Gate** will feature a digital image, commissioned by us, to show what this area looked like during the Siege of Colchester in 1648. It will recreate the 'Battle of Headgate', one of the bloodiest actions of the Siege. One of the key buildings shown in this exiting image is now Headgate Court, now the offices of Ellisons, Solicitors who have sponsored this Board. The Board will explain all!

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This new image has been created for us by well known historical artist, Roger Massey Ryan. The cost has been met by a grant from the Hervey Benham Charitable Trust. We are grateful to Roger and to the Hervey Benham Trust for bringing us this exciting work which is bound to be a major talking point. We hope that Roger's work will go on display in Colchester Castle Museum where it will help with understanding of the events of this turbulent time.

The Board at the **South West Corner** of the Wall will also focus on the Siege and show that we are fortunate to have as much of the Wall as we have following that cataclysmic event in the history of Colchester. This Board is sponsored by Haines Watts Accountants whose offices are nearby.

Also in course of preparation is the Interpretation Board at the **North East Corner** of the Wall. This stretch has a long history of strengthening and repair, typical of much of the Wall although a lot of the Roman masonry survives. In the 1648 Siege it was the site of a Royalist gun emplacement. This Board is kindly sponsored by the Castle and Roman Road Residents Association. Its members live very much on the spot and indeed the Wall is the end of the garden for many people in Roman Road.

#### **SPONSORSHIP**

What we are doing and will be doing is only possible thanks to the Friends of Colchester Roman Wall who give regularly towards it and to those groups and companies who sponsor individual Interpretation Boards. Those who give £500 or more earn the privilege of having their names on the Board indefinitely. Most Boards are now sponsored but there are still limited vacancies. Get in touch if you are interested. We also need more Friends. Spread the word! To be a Friend, get in touch with our Treasurer, Barry Donovan at [barrydonov@aol.com](mailto:barrydonov@aol.com).

#### **WEBSITE**

Our website is now very much up-to-date as well as being a valuable archive of what has been achieved over the years. It is worth a look on on [www.romanwall.org](http://www.romanwall.org).

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