

Diary

January

24 (8 p.m.) Waltham Abbey Historical Society. 'Essex Tokens of 19th and 20th centuries', by Stuart Adams. Victoria Hall, Greenyard, Waltham Abbey.

February

21 (8 p.m.) Waltham Abbey Historical Society. 'Medieval Arms and Armour', by Michael Dewbrey. Victoria Hall, Greenyard, Waltham Abbey.

March

22 (8 p.m.) Waltham Abbey Historical Society. 'Iron Age and Roman occupation of E.F.D.', by Tony O'Connor. Victoria Hall, Greenyard, Waltham Abbey.

Conferences

50 Years of Rescue Archaeology, Council for Kentish Archaeology Conference, 2 p.m. to 5.30 p.m., Saturday 27 April, at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Faversham. Speakers include Brian Philp, Jonathan Horne and Harvey Sheldon. Tickets £3 from C.K.A., 7 Sandy Ridge, Borough Green, TN15 8HP (please enclose s.a.c.).

Exhibitions

This Popular Traitor: the Execution of the Earl of Essex, at the Tower of London until 25 February. Marking the 400th anniversary of the death of Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, the exhibition tells Essex's extraordinary story with unique historical artefacts, paintings and documents on loan from national institutions and private collections.

London's Voices, at the Museum of London until 24 February. Drawing on the Museum of London's extensive oral history collection, this exhibition will reveal the intriguing life stories of a variety of Londoners.

After the Fire: London Furniture 1666-1714, at the Geffrye Museum, Kingsland Road, Shoreditch, until 3 March. Shows the rapid development in the styles and techniques of English furniture generated in London after the Great Fire of 1666, when London, its housing and interior styles all changed dramatically. The exhibition has been guest curated by Adam Bowkett, whose book *English Furniture from Charles II to Queen Anne 1660-1740* will be published at the same time.

Nearest Underground stations are Liverpool Street, then bus 149 or 242 from Bishopsgate, or Old Street, exit 2 then bus 243. Further information from (020) 7739 9893.

Image and Idol: Medieval Sculpture, at Tate Britain until 3 March. A special exhibition of sculpture from the 12th to the 16th century, *Image and Idol* is the result of a unique collaboration between medieval historian Phillip Lindley and artist Richard Deacon.

The works in the exhibition have been mainly borrowed from churches and cathedrals across England and Wales. A centre-piece will be the *Tree of Jesse*, the largest and most impressive example of wooden sculpture surviving from the 15th century. This carved oak figure has been acclaimed as one of the finest medieval sculptures in the world but before now has never been seen outside its home, St Mary's Priory Church, Abergavenny.

An illustrated catalogue will be available with essays by Richard Deacon and Phillip Lindley (64pp, £12.99). Admission free. Website: <http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/default.html>

Agatha Christie and Archaeology, at the British Museum until 24 March. Reveals Agatha Christie the archaeologist and how her discoveries in the Near East influenced her detective writing. Her little known interests and unrecognised talents are shown through archaeological finds from the sites on which she worked with her husband, Max Mallowan, at Ur, Nineveh and elsewhere. The first full-length biography of Sir Max Mallowan, *The Life of Max Mallowan Archaeology and Agatha Christie*, by Henrietta McCall, is published by the British Museum Press in association with the exhibition. The collection of essays on Agatha Christie's travels, *Agatha Christie and Archaeology Mystery in Mesopotamia*, is also published by the British Museum Press. Admission charge.

Unknown Amazon, at the British Museum until 1 April. The first major exhibition to address the great antiquity and complexity of tropical forest civilisation in the Amazon Basin. Organised in association with BrasilConnects, over 200 objects from a wide range of Brazilian and European collections are brought together for the first time to reflect an Amazonian way of knowing the world and to bring to life the long history of human occupation in this vast region. What emerges is a striking picture of densely populated societies thriving long before European contact, with rich artistic traditions executed in pottery, stone, wood and feather work. These new insights have a vital role to play in opening up new perspectives on planning and decision making for the future of the Amazon.

Unknown Amazon is accompanied by a full programme of public and educational events and a beautifully illustrated collection of essays *Unknown Amazon: Culture in nature in ancient Brazil*, edited by Colin McEwan, Cristiana Barreto and Eduardo Neves. Admission £7 (concs.£3.50)

Tours

Desert Discoveries, tours of unexplored areas of the Jordanian Desert in autumn and spring. Cost £4,200 to £7,000 for seven- to ten-day tours. For information contact Ellen Scott or George Grammer, ZZip PR, Bury House, 126-128 Cromwell Road, London SW7 4ET, tel. (020) 7761 1779, email escott@zzip.co.uk.

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