

Newsletter



May 2025

Tower to Tower Sponsored Walk.

We were thrilled to be able to support St. John's Church, Great Clacton, in their fundraising efforts to repair the stonework in the 900 year old building. When St. Osyth Priory was being established in 1118, the Bishop of London gave the Priory the church in Great Clacton and the cannons led the congregation there until the dissolution in 1539. This is a lovely connection between the two communities and the parishioners celebrated that by walking from St. John's Church to the Priory and back. While at the Priory they were treated to a visit to the museum and a guided walk led by one of our wonderful volunteers. They were also able to take some time to pray in the medieval chapel for the future of their church.



Abbots Tower

The tower has been encased in scaffolding for 17 years and we haven't been able to go up it for just over a year due to safety. The Trust are very aware of the impact this has on the landscape and the missed learning opportunities for our visitors.



They are working hard, liaising with Heritage England and fundraising to complete the necessary repairs to the stonework to enable this stunning 16th Century tower to become the inspiring feature it was built to be.

Logs

Tree surgeons have recently been on site to manage the trees and their work resulted in logs being available. We, of course, snapped some up to use in our Forest School area. St. Osyth Primary School also have a Forest School area and we were able to deliver around 20 logs for them to use on their site. One of our regular Home Ed teens came to the session with a mission; his grandad required a log of a certain size to grow mushrooms. He was thrilled to find one just the right size. His grandad has prepared the log and his mum sent me this message. 'Thanks again for helping him find the log. It really made his day - not just that you listened to him, but that you enabled him to feel helpful to someone else! I can't tell you how much I appreciate the time and care you always take. Please don't ever underestimate the difference you make.' One of the larger logs went to St. Mary's Church in Great Bentley and became a target for axe throwing at the May Fayre.

I think it is amazing that a simple maintenance task for the estate has, through our community links, benefitted so many.

All aboard SB May

Tendring Community Writers Group met on board the grain barge moored at St. Osyth Boatyard. Jane Harman introduced to some of the history of the barge, and the Bread and Roses project to rebuild and create a travelling micro-bakery. <https://www.thebreadandrosesbarge.com/heritage>

I was invited to speak in my role of educator at St Osyth Priory Education Centre, local historian and storyteller. I was able to give a rich and detailed account of St Osyth village life during 16th Century, and the series events that ensued to arrest and try Ursula Kemp as a witch, along with many others at the time in this part of Essex. This provided the inspiration for the writing group to create pieces of historical fiction or draw out ideas around the role of women in the community throughout history. It was a fascinating morning and a great opportunity to link with two amazing projects.

Helen Brown
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www.prioryeducationcentre.co.uk