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**MUSEUM OF POWER**  
LANGFORD

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- Children's activities
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- Historic machinery
- Household gadgets
- Free entry to our tearoom and riverside grounds

**Museum and Tearoom opening times:**  
10.00am last entry 3:30pm Nov - March 10.00am last entry 3:00pm. Closed January, Excluding January 1st

Hatfield Road, Langford, Maldon, Essex CM9 6QA  
**T: 01621 843183**

For details of steam days and miniature steam train rides please visit website

In partnership with **ESSEX & SUFFOLK WATER** living water

Charity no. 1087459

[www.museumofpower.org.uk](http://www.museumofpower.org.uk)




**COALHOUSE FORT**

Come and see the aircraft and fort military museums with their new additions and displays. Take a guided tour of the extensive tunnel system and upper defences with a great view over the River Thames.

Coalhouse Fort is one of the largest Victorian Casemate forts in Britain. It was built in 1874 to defend the River Thames and London from a perceived French invasion and was operational through both World Wars.

Open on the last Sunday of each month and Bank Holidays, March - Nov.

Mon 25 May (Bank Holiday)  
Sun 31 May (Open Day)  
Sun 28 June (Open Day)  
Sun 26 July (Classic Cars/Vehicles Day)

For more details call 01375 844203 or visit [coalhousefort.co.uk](http://coalhousefort.co.uk)



**COME AND PLAY AT OUR HOUSE**

Go behind previously closed doors and see how Victorian children played and grew up, in the newly opened nursery.

**Saffron Walden, Essex**

**ENGLISH HERITAGE**  
**AUDLEY END**  
HOUSE & GARDENS

*Step into England's story*




# The Magic of Museums

The days of museums being unwelcoming, quiet, musty old places with objects half hidden in dark cases are long gone. In recent years, museums have been transformed into family friendly venues with all sorts of exciting things going on for kids. Dea Birkett, Director of the charity Kids in Museums tells us how a bad experience in a museum led her to set up the charity.

It's true. Big trees do from small acorns grow. My small son River was thrown out of an exhibition for shouting "Monster!" at a statue of Eagle Man in the Aztec exhibition at the Royal Academy in London. Eagle Man did look rather like - well - a monster. When I wrote about the incident in my Travelling with Kids column, I thought I was just documenting an unfortunate family outing gone wrong. I never imagined the charity Kids in Museums would start and that now, ten years later, it would be a voice for families who want museums to welcome them, just like mine.

But the response to my column was overwhelming. Hundreds of families wrote to me to say that they were fed up with being treated like pariahs in our museums and galleries. Many weeks later, the Royal Academy got in touch, not to say sorry, but to assure me that they "actively encouraged" families to attend. There was clearly a conflict. While the vast majority of museums now have a policy encouraging us to take part, families were reporting that the day-to-day practice was often different. So Kids in Museums was born, its aim to enable all of us, of whatever age, to feel welcome.

There are those who will disagree with the campaign's premise; museums, they said, were descending into interactive kindergartens, and a stand had to be made for grown-up-only space. "Is there no place sacred?" asked one reader. The assumption was that two year olds can't appreciate art. But River was thrown out of the Aztecs precisely because he was appreciating the exhibition. Even if his comment was loud, it was entirely appropriate. He was not shouting "Noddy!" or making Thomas the Tank Engine noises. He was shouting, "Monster!" at a statue that looked like a monster.

If you haven't taken your family to a museum for a while, you ought to plan to go as soon as possible. It's clear that museums are important to children - that's why it's so important to get it right. And children are equally important to museums; a major factor in adults deciding whether to visit a museum is if they think their kids will enjoy it.

Admittedly, once they were unwelcoming musty old buildings with a few crumbling objects sitting in a glass case. The only information would be a small browning label dwarfed by a large sign: "Don't touch." But museums are changing. (Of course, I'm convinced Kids in Museums is behind this change.) They have family events and workshops; art carts; family trails; computer interactives; Saturday clubs; backpacks stuffed with jigsaws and puzzles to help you explore the galleries; cafes with children's menus; websites to help you prepare for your visit and make it live on after you've left. Most museums are no longer boring and irrelevant, but fun.

If I had to give one tip to parents going to a museum it would be not to leave the gift shop to last. Go there at the beginning of your visit and let your child pick out their very favourite postcard. It shouldn't cost too much. Then go on a hunt for it in the museum; your child will be spurred on to find it, as they chose it themselves. It's letting them design their own very simple trail. And it will stop them spending the whole visit tugging on your sleeve and asking, "When can I go to the shop?"

For more information about Kids in Museums visit [www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk](http://www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk)

Kids in Museums is an independent charity dedicated to making museums open and welcoming to all families.



## What's Britain's most family friendly museum?

The Telegraph Family Friendly Museum Award gives families the chance to nominate their favourite museum, gallery, heritage site, science centre or historic home in Britain. Royal Gunpowder Mills in Waltham Abbey (pictured below) was shortlisted for the 2014 award. Nominations have just closed for this year's award and the shortlist will soon be announced. Visit [www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk/awards](http://www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk/awards) for more information.



**The Telegraph**





## Royal Gunpowder Mills

Become a super spy at Royal Gunpowder Mills' Secret Island this half term holidays, 23rd - 31st May. Put on your best disguise to break codes, go undercover, foil espionage and reveal double-agents. There'll be secrets to uncover and missions to complete all week. Professor Nitrate's doing some highly hush-hush work, and you can help keep his secrets under

wraps. Special activities include the night vision and bomb disposal challenge, test your speed and agility on the assault course and complete super sleuth training in the Mad Lab and on the test range to determine how good a Spy Kid you really are!

Don't miss the Wild West Weekend 23rd-25th May. Join Laredo's Wild West Living History Troupe for gunfights and pyrotechnic explosions. Interact with the characters and experience life in West. Plus visit the armoury collection see some guns that helped 'Win the West'. Royal Gunpowder Mills, Beaulieu Drive, Waltham Abbey. For more information visit [www.royalgunpowdermills.com](http://www.royalgunpowdermills.com) or call 01992 707370.

## Museum of Power

The Museum of Power is housed in a former water pumping station at Langford near Maldon. It is set in attractive riverside grounds and features a gigantic pumping engine which is in steam at some events. The exhibits and interactive displays illustrating the themes of Power and the Story of Water will fascinate all ages. There is an attractive tearoom offering a range of delicious food. School visits are welcome and parties can be catered for. The museum opens at 10am from Wednesday to Sunday between February and December. Museum admission is £4.50 for adults, £4 for seniors and £2 for children. The miniature steam railway and Model Village operate at most events. Visit [www.museumofpower.org.uk](http://www.museumofpower.org.uk) for further details.



## Coalhouse Fort

The Coalhouse Fort Project is a charity operated solely by volunteers. Its purpose is to preserve and maintain the important Victorian Casemate Fort. Built between 1861 and 1874 to defend London from Napoleon III, it was subsequently occupied by the Army and Navy until vacated in 1962

when it then passed to Thurrock Council. The fort is open to the public every last Sunday of the month and Bank Holidays from March to November with special themed days. There are two museums covering crashed aircraft and fort military history. A number of military vehicles and guns are on display too with a memorial garden to visit. Take a picnic and enjoy the well maintained parkland or a river walk along the Thames. For more details visit [www.coalhousefort.co.uk](http://www.coalhousefort.co.uk)

## Essex Police Museum

Try on the handcuffs, make fingerprints and have fun at the Essex Police Museum. Every Saturday from 10am to 4pm children can take part in police themed craft activities and trails. The museum, situated in police headquarters, Chelmsford, has something for all the family. Sit in a Victorian police cell, dress up in police uniform, or stand in the witness box and plead your innocence! The museum offers a fun and friendly atmosphere to discover more about your local police force. The museum is also open on Wednesdays during the school holidays. Admission is free although there is a charge of £2 for most craft activities. Visit [www.essex.police.uk/museum](http://www.essex.police.uk/museum) for more details.



## Audley End House

Travel back in time this season at Audley End House and Gardens as visitors are transported back to Audley End's Victorian heyday.

Visitors throughout the year cannot only see the grand house and estate, complete with the beautifully structured Walled Organic Kitchen Garden with wonderful apple espaliers, but are also welcome to explore the service wing, stables and nursery as costumed characters allow people to experience Life Above and Below Stairs every weekend until October. Mrs Crocombe will be preparing meals in the kitchen and Miss Dormer will be organising the children in the nursery, while new for this year - the groom and stable-hands will be inviting visitors to experience a day in the life of a busy Victorian stable yard complete with horses, crafts, dressing up and games.

Find out more including the full events programme online at [www.english-heritage.org.uk/audleyend](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/audleyend)



## Colchester Museums

History comes alive at Colchester Museums this spring, through a unique mix of the latest technology and hands on activities for your family to discover. Colchester Castle has wowed thousands of happy families with exciting new displays since it reopened its doors following a £4.3m revamp last year. You can explore some amazing archaeological finds, including the 3,000 year old Sheepen Cauldron and the tombstone of Roman centurion Marcus Facilis. These are complemented by a range of hands-on activities like virtual Roman Circus chariot racing and digital app reconstructions of the Castle.

The three museums sites: Colchester Castle Museum, Hollytrees Museum and the Natural History Museum, are also running a series of engaging activities. These include the Twisted History of Colchester in Cartoon, learning about some unusual eating habits of our ancestors in the 'Roman Food' activity, plus the chance to get creative and make your own oyster puppet. To find out more, visit: Twitter: @ColMuseums, Facebook: /ColchesterCastle, or [www.cimuseums.org.uk](http://www.cimuseums.org.uk)



# Chelmsford Museum

Free admission



Oaklands Park, Moulsham Street  
Chelmsford CM2 9AQ  
[www.chelmsford.gov.uk/museums](http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/museums)  
01245 605700

Sandford Mill SCIENCE EDUCATION CENTRE 

## Essex Police Museum's

### Make a Police Car

May 27 10am to 4pm

All ages welcome  
No need to book

£2

175 HQ, Springfield, Chelmsford CM2 6DN  
01245 457150 [essex.police.uk/museum](http://essex.police.uk/museum)



## Chelmsford Museum

Chelmsford Museum offers a warm welcome to families with free admission and parking (up to 3 hours), I-Spy quizzes and loan of explorer kits to make the most of your visit. Set in lovely Oaklands Park, the museum tells the story of Chelmsford and includes the Essex Regiment Museum. All areas are accessible for buggies, there are toilets with baby change facilities, outdoor picnic tables and an indoor refreshment room.

There is a varied family activity programme with monthly pre-school 'Friday Fives' group, to school sessions and family workshops where people can work together on a small project. On Wednesday 27th May the half term workshops have a World War 1 theme - a chance to handle real objects from the Great War plus make a small rag rug. The next open day is the popular Wildlife Fun Day on Sat 30th May (small charge for activities). For more information visit [www.chelmsford.gov.uk/museums](http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/museums)



cimuseums.org.uk

# Fun

this spring

For special  
spring events  
check our  
website!

...at Colchester Castle, Hollytrees  
and Natural History Museum

Join us for one of our fantastic events this Spring.  
Visit our three museums where history comes alive  
through a unique mix of fascinating displays, the latest  
technology and hands on activities for your family to  
explore and discover.

Colchester Museums   ColMuseums  
 colchestercastle 





## Braintree District Museum

From Egyptians to Victorians, Harry Potter to Rivelius, there's a vast array of children's activities on offer at Braintree District Museum, plus each one is Essex Children's University validated. During May all Saturday activities are FREE (KidsClub activities excluded). The museum is celebrating Harry Potter

Day, Victory in Europe (with a brilliant make do and mend activity) and Biodiversity Day! ALL for no charge.

Half Term holidays focus on the elements: earth, fire, air, and water. Volcanoes, walking on water, rockets plus much more. These activities are sure to capture the children's imagination. A KidsClub ticket of just £7 allows access to all five workshops. That's a massive saving of nearly £20!

Remember Fantastic Five? This year it's SUPER SIX for the summer! One ticket price for 30 activities and workshops costs £15! Workshops begin 28th July and continue throughout the summer holidays.

For more information or to book the KidsClub call on 01376 328868 (places are limited).



## East Anglian Railway Museum

The East Anglian Railway Museum is a living heritage site based at Chappel railway station near Colchester. The complex of original Victorian buildings has a unique story to tell of railways and people's lives in East Anglia from the 1840's through to the 21st Century. There are lots of family events throughout the year. On Sunday 24th & Monday 25th May there is the 'Transport Extravaganza' which as well as rail will include vintage cars, vans & lorries. On Sunday 21st June is the 'Driver for a Fiver' day, treat Dad to driving a diesel train. Sunday 5th July is 'Living History': 'Fabulous Fifties' day. This is suitable for all ages, with the chance to see various transport of the time. On these days you get an unlimited number of train rides (excluding mini rail).

For more details call 01206 242524 or visit [www.earm.co.uk](http://www.earm.co.uk)

## Southend's Pier Museum

Founded in 1989, Southend's Pier Museum's displays include the Pier's history, staff, entertainment, the Pier at War WW1 and 2, also visiting Paddle Steamers, disasters and entertainment. Hands-on exhibits include old 1d slot machines and original Pier railway signal box with working levers. There are restored 1949 Pier train carriages and a Victorian Pier Tram with mannequins in period costumes. New volunteers are urgently required to help keep the museum operating. Call 01702 614553 if you would like to help. Open May to October; Sat, Sun, Tues, Weds and Bank Holidays, 11am-5pm. Highly recommended for school visits with special rates available. Pre booking required. Call 01702 614553 / 01702 611214.

## Here comes the Fire Brigade!

Calling all budding firefighters! Take a look round fire engines of yesteryear at the Essex Fire Museum at Grays, see what equipment they used and learn about how the fire service in Essex has changed from small parish brigades to the county-wide service we have today. The museum holds fun days where children (and grown-ups if they behave!) can sit in one of the engines, squirt water, try on real helmets and enjoy a fun arts 'n' crafts session. The museum is located behind Grays Fire Station on Hogg Lane in the former AFS garages. Admission is by appointment only as events fill up fast. Keep an eye on their Facebook page and website [www.essex-fire.gov.uk/Fire\\_Museum](http://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/Fire_Museum) to find out what fabulous events they are running. They look forward to welcoming you.

Protecting our heritage

Welcome to The Essex Fire Museum at Grays

A Most Fascinating Place

MLA Accredited Museum

### Coming up at East Anglian Railway Museum...

**Sun 24th & Mon 25th May**  
Transport Extravaganza  
With vintage cars, vans and lorries.

**Sun 21st June 'Driver for a Fiver'**  
Treat Dad to driving a diesel train.

**Sun 5th July Fabulous Fifties**  
A 'living history' event for all the family.

East Anglian Railway Museum  
Chappel Station, Nr Colchester CO6 2DS  
[www.earm.co.uk](http://www.earm.co.uk) 01206 242524

## Fantastic Family Activities at Braintree Museum

**Half term KidsClub Elements workshops**  
Earth, Fire, Air, Water...  
Volcanoes, walking on water, rockets and much more!

**May Saturday activities Free!**  
During May all Saturday Activities are FREE (KidsClub activities excluded). We will be celebrating Harry Potter Day, Victory in Europe with a brilliant Make Do & Mend activity and we celebrate Biodiversity Day! All for no charge at all!

**SPECIAL OFFER!**  
Attend ALL workshops for just £7! Places are limited and must be booked in advance by calling 01376 328868.

All workshops are Essex Children's University validated - don't forget to bring your passport.



Braintree District Museum, Manor Street, Braintree, CM7 3HW. Tel: 01376 328868.

[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/museumbraintree) Braintree District Museum [@museumbraintree](https://www.instagram.com/museumbraintree) [www.braintreemuseum.co.uk](http://www.braintreemuseum.co.uk)

## Southend's Pier Museum

See the fascinating history of the world's longest pier come to life.

Attractions include: Restored pier signal box, old penny slot machines, souvenir Kiosk & more!



The Museum is located below the pier shore station and access is from the station.

We offer special rates for schools - please ask!

Open May-October. Sat/Sun/Tues/Weds & Bank Holiday Mondays.  
11am-5pm. For more information call 01702 614553.  
Visitors aged 14+ £1.50, 5-13yrs 50p. Under 5's free.

Southend Pier Museum Foundation Trust. Reg Charity No. 802105