Marvellous Museum of Coastal Curiosities goes on



Marvellous Museum of Coastal Curiosities is on tour in Essex

A travelling flea circus and collection of coastal curiosities are on tour as part of National Lottery funded project.

The Marvellous Museum of Coastal Curiosities will be visiting seaside towns in Essex over the next few weeks full of family entertainment and lots of nostalgia for traditional seaside holidays.

It is part of Essex County Council's Resorting to the Coast project. Supported by £316,400 from the National Lottery, it aims to reconnect people with the history of their towns and how they came to be resorts for holidaymakers.

Seaside stories and coastal curiosities

Here are just some of the stories the travelling museum will tell:

- Clown Bertram (Albert Harvey) entertained audiences on Clacton Pier from 1922 until the war. His ventriloquist dummy Filbert is still a popular attraction at Clacton Museum.
- Before plastic was invented, buckets and spades were made of brightly coloured metal. They disappeared from sale in the 1940s, as metal was needed for use in the Second World War.

- Clacton is home to the second ever Butlins holiday camp, built in 1938, while Dovercourt Bay Holiday Camp found fame as the backdrop to 80s sitcom Hi-de-Hi!
- Screening films under canvas became illegal in 1909, leading Charles Thurston to build Harwich Electric Palace – now one the UK's oldest operational cinemas.
- In the 1930s, 100 Jaywick residents clubbed together to create a 'Circle of Happiness' offering outdoor and beach games and Punch and Judy shows.
- Bathing machines were used by Victorians to protect their modesty when changing for a swim. They were wheeled right into the water and included a 'personal dipper' to push you under. In 1904 men were still required to wear a collar, tie and hat on the beach.
- Entertainment pioneered by some of Britain's best performers on the piers and beaches of the Essex coast, can still be experienced at the West Cliff Theatre's summer Variety Spectacular in Clacton. Established in 1894, it is the longest running show of its kind in the UK.

The Marvellous Museum of Coastal Curiosities will be on tour until mid-September, visit the Resorting to the Coast website for details of dates and locations near you.



Colourful beach huts are staple of seaside towns

Making waves for future of Essex's seaside towns