



Essex Fire Museum

Annual Report 2018

Overview

The Essex Fire Museum has been situated behind Grays Fire Station, in a former appliance bay, since 2007. It was founded by retired firefighter Roger Pickett, who is the Collections Officer. Roger works part time at the museum, alongside a team of dedicated volunteers. Volunteers attend the museum one day a week, helping with research, accessioning, displays, collection care, enquiries, open days and the general running of the museum.

Museum Collection

In 2018, the museum collection numbered over 4000 items relating to the history of the Essex Fire Service, including four vintage fire engines. Items are donated and loaned to the museum by members of the public, retired firefighters and their families. Objects vary from badges and medals to uniforms, equipment, publications, photographs and records.



Winter shutdown

The museum closes its doors to visitors every year between November and March. Volunteers still work at the museum during this time, conducting research, collections maintenance, event planning and refreshing displays. Volunteers and the Collections Officer also undertake outreach work during this time, attending events such as the Billericay Christmas Market.

Opening Hours/Booking visits

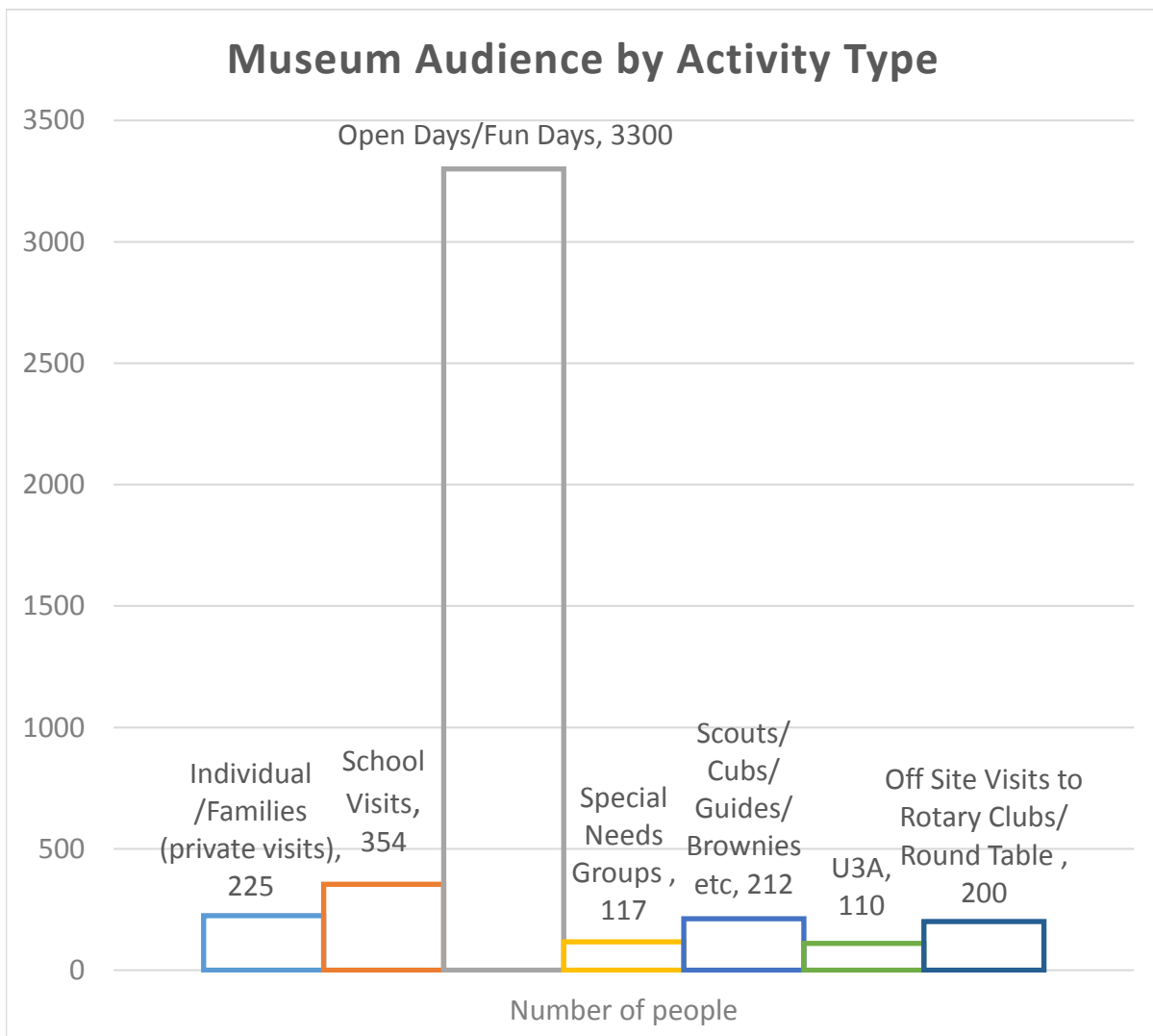
The museum opens for advertised events including open days throughout the warmer months. These are advertised on Facebook and in specialist publications. Private tours for groups can be arranged through the Collections Officer, as well as school visits. Enquiries come in through the Museum Facebook site, by phone, through the Essex Fire and Rescue website and to the museum email address. Talks can also be conducted off site to groups such as Rotary Clubs, schools and specialist interest groups.

Audience

In 2018, the total audience was 4500, with nearly three quarters of the visitors attending via the open days. These figures include visitors to the museum and off -site talks, but do not include outreach at large events.

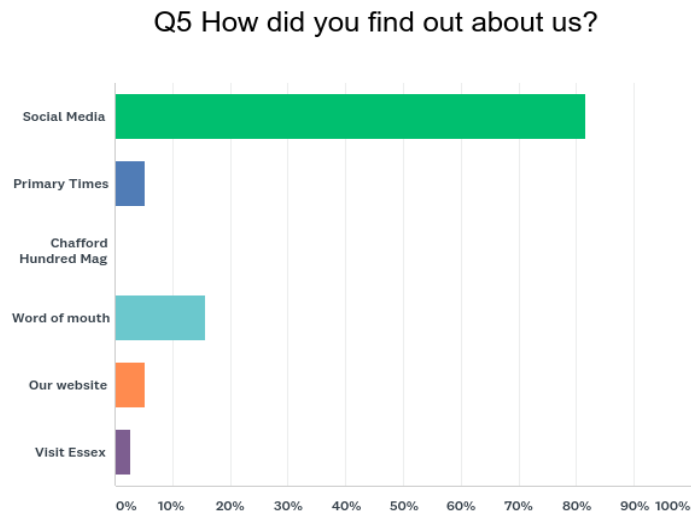
Audience types:

- Individuals/families
- Schools
- Special needs groups
- Scouts/Cubs/Guides/Brownies etc.
- U3A (University of the Third Age – network of groups for retired and semi-retired people)
- Rotary Clubs/Round Table/Special interest groups



Essex Fire Museum Facebook Page

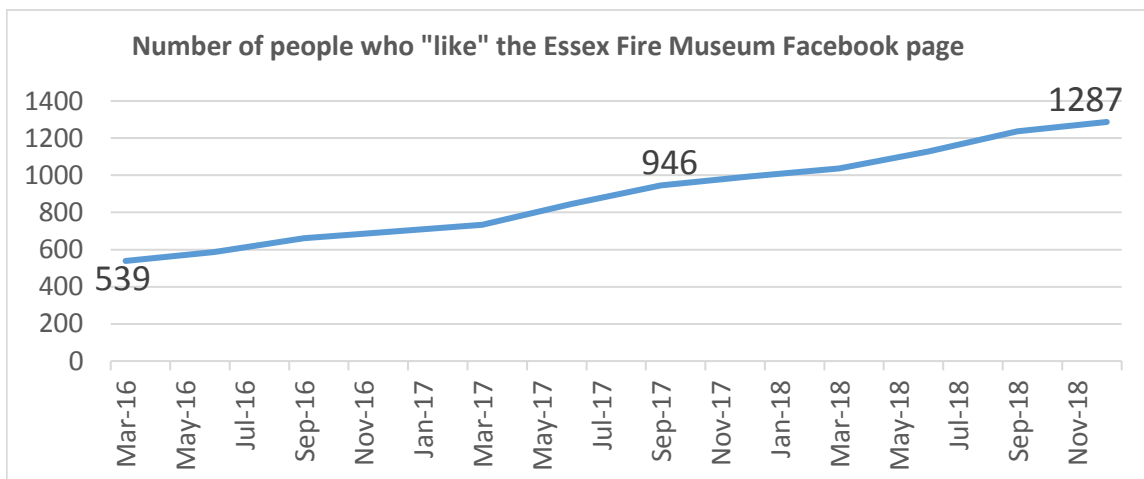
The Essex Fire Museum Facebook site is our best advertising tool. **81%** of respondents to questionnaires at fun days in 2018 said that they had found out about them on social media, which is up from **69%** in 2017.



The events page for the 2018 summer events generated 132 shares and 2,500 people expressed interest in the events.

In 2018, the Essex Fire Museum Facebook page had 47,600 views, 3,600 clicks on its posts and 224 people “checking in” to tell their friends that they were at the museum.

In Dec 2018, 1,287 people “liked” the museum Facebook page, which means they received the museum’s Facebook posts, updates and events in their news feed. There has been a steady rise and the total has more than doubled in two years from 539 in 2016 to 1287 in 2018.



Facebook Review [Essex Fire Museum](#) – 5 star

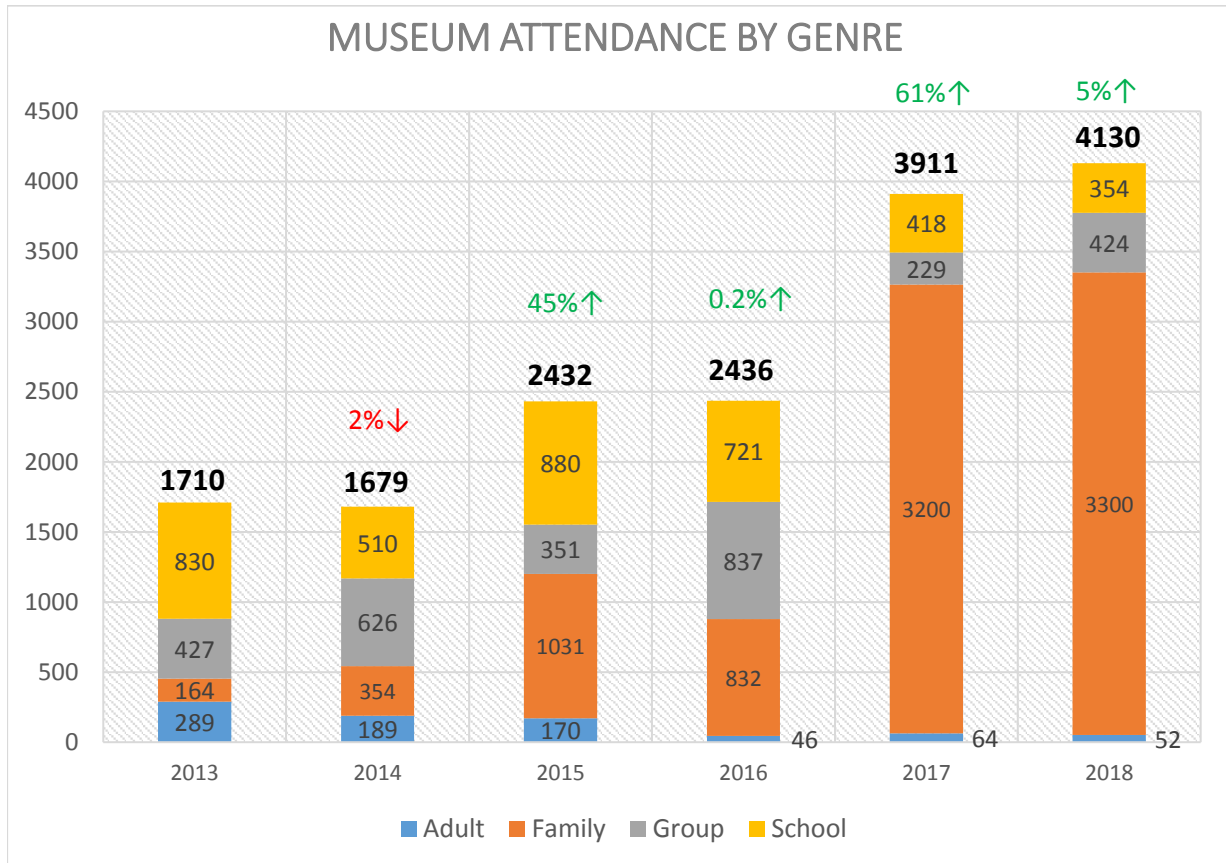
28 August 2018 ·

It was our first time here today (only discovered this event on Facebook a couple of weeks ago despite living 20 minutes away!) and such a lovely morning out well spent! It was a very well organised event and everyone who was part of it was so lovely; from the person welcoming you in the car park, on the stall, the fire cadets and the fireman themselves we had an amazing day there and will be back for sure! Thank you very much.

Family Fun Days

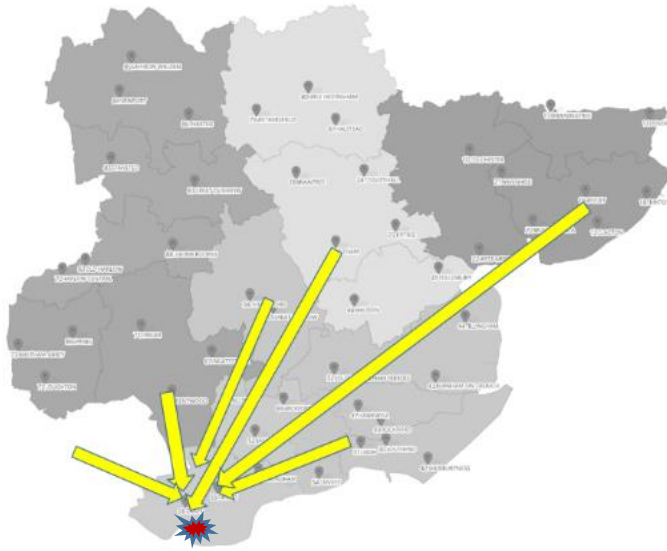
In 2018, family groups continued to be the biggest audience for the Essex Fire Museum, making up 80% of the audience. Between March 2018 and November 2018, the opening months for the museum, there were **eleven** Family Fun Days organised during the school holidays. These events in total attracted an estimated crowd of **3,300** visitors.

Activities at family fun days included fire hose squirting, access to fire engines, dressing up in firefighter uniform, crafts (such as design your own smoke alarm) and trails.



The museum even has its own mannequin for special events. Children enjoy dressing up and getting up close to the engines.

Fun Day Audience Demographics

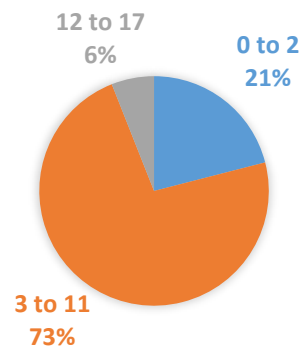


Where do the visitors come from?

Postcodes captured on the fun day questionnaires show that although half of the respondents live in similar RM postcodes to the Fire Museum, there were also visitors from quite a spread of locations across Essex, including as far afield as the Tendring district and the E16 area of East London.

Nearly three quarters of the children who attended the family fun day were aged between 3 and 11 years old.

AGES OF CHILDREN ATTENDING FUN DAYS 2018



Feedback from Events

Feedback from events is captured in the visitors' book for visiting groups and through a questionnaire at fun days.

Fantastic day at the museum. Lots to see and do. Volunteers were so helpful, especially Roger. Can't wait to come back again with the family.

Roger is iconic – made history fun, thoroughly enjoyable.

We like the history, arts crafts, fire engines, loved man dressed up too :)

Thank you Roger. I got really good feedback from all the cadets, entertaining, funny, informative, just a few of the remarks.

Outreach Events

Essex Fire Museum was very active with its outreach activities during 2018, attending many large-scale events. Taking a vintage fire engine was a key focal point to attract attention from the large crowds and a stall provided information about the fire museum and fire prevention.

EVENT	EVENT CROWD SIZE (approx)
Southend Airport Avro Vulcan Day	600
Arena Essex Raceway	1000
The Lawns Rochford Classic Vehicle Show	800
Shoeburyness Fire Station Open Day	300
Orsett Show	Between 12,000 & 15,000
Billericay Christmas Market	20,000

Schools

The museum has a good rapport with schools in the local Grays area, which continued in 2018. Talks were tailored according to the age of the children and the topic they were covering, including curriculum topics such as The Great Fire of London for Year 2 primary children. All talks included fire safety and fire prevention advice. Feedback shows that children found the talks entertaining as well as informative. The teachers dressing up in firefighter uniform was a clear favourite.

In total, 354 children attended talks from the Essex Fire Museum, this included groups visiting the museum and offsite visits to schools by the Collections Officer and a Community Safety Officer.

School visits are free of charge and local schools were able to attend with minimal travel costs. Space is limited in the museum, especially if the weather is poor, so group sizes were limited to one class at a time visiting the museum, but visits to the schools involved bigger group sizes.

Loan Boxes

The Museum Loan Box scheme was introduced in April 2016 and funded by a £500 grant issued by Essex County Council.

Original Objectives

- To reach a key audience
- Educational message - key messages around fire safety, importance of prevention, long term impact of reduction of instances of fire in the home
- Promote the Fire Museum

Components of Loan Box Scheme

- 6 Loan boxes stored in The Barn at Kelvedon Park, including items from Fire Museum Collection, stocked up with supply of Home Fire Safety & Museum leaflets for each loan
- Contents:
The boxes all have the same contents, two helmets, two tunics, two hose reels (all from two different periods that aim to give context to how clothing & equipment (PPE- have developed), 14 loose laminated photos

	Total Bookings	Duration in use
2016 /17(April – March)	23	106 weeks
2017/18 (April – March)	9	28 weeks
2018/19 (April – March)	9	24 weeks

Schools surveyed about loan boxes provided the following responses:

	Strongly agree	Agreed	Undecided	Disagreed	Strongly Disagree
Process was easy & straightforward		85%			
Loan box inventory was thorough and easy to understand	72%	28%			
How were items used:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displayed on tables • Children could try on the tunics and helmets • Photos were good for encouraging conversation • Role play, discussing how fire fighting has changed since 1666 (Great Fire of London) to present day • Tactile items are relevant to broad ages • Children interested in why firefighters would need items of protective clothing like gloves • Learning new words. Learning about the emergency services as well as history • Used to write non-fiction report about firefighter • Comparing past & present 				
What did children enjoy most:	Children responded very well to opportunity to try on uniform, role play, hands-on element				
What would you like to see in the loan box:	Picture of actual firefighters, more photos, modern tunic				
Could you use the loan box in conjunction with the curriculum:	100% agreed				
Do you have plans to visit the Essex Fire Museum	42% Agreed				
Would you recommend the loan box scheme to other schools?	100% Agreed				
Would you use the loan box again:	100%				

Articles and Publications

The museum volunteers have a vast knowledge of fire service history between them. From February 2018, the museum volunteers started writing and researching a series of articles about different aspects of the Essex Fire Service history. This collection is entitled, *All Fired Up* and is published on the Fire Museum page of the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service website. These articles include fascinating accounts of events and incidents in the Essex Fire Service history, as well as detailed historical information on fire service equipment and personnel.

All the articles can be found here:

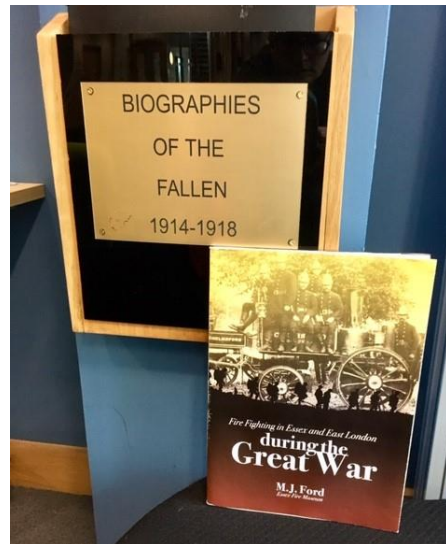
http://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/Fire_Museum/Museum_Articles/

Articles from 2018:

1. [A Bit of Gas](#)
2. [The Pump Escape](#)
3. [HK Hudson Abbreviated](#)
4. [The Fire Brigades Act 1938](#)
5. [All Creatures Great and Small](#)
6. [Hooked!](#)
7. [The Silvertown Explosion](#)
8. [The Fire Brigade is on the Job!](#)

9. Francis Charles Wilson
10. All Fired Up Hydrant Plates

Work by our museum volunteers went up for display in 2018 and is available for all to see at Essex County Rescue and Fire Service Headquarters at Kelvedon Park. A selection of *All Fired Up* articles are on display in the foyer and a book by museum volunteer, Mick Ford, written in collaboration with the Essex Fire Museum, is in the Muster Area - *Fire Fighting in Essex and East London during the Great War*.



Museum volunteer articles and publications on display at Essex Fire HQ.

Museum volunteer David Hughes has researched an extensive piece of work entitled *Essex Firemen Who Served Between 1900 and 1920*. This contains biographies of over 200 firefighters who were involved in the Essex Fire Brigade during World War 1 including their occupation, whether they were exempted from service and if so, the reason for their exemption if known or whether they enlisted in the Armed Service and if so, what happened to them.



This is available to view on our internet page and we are hoping to get it published on the Ancestry site.

Remembrance Day – November 2018

Report on EFM's Remembrance Day commemorations by Mick Ford, Museum Volunteer:

*During research for **Essex Firemen Who Served Between 1900 and 1920**, it was discovered that fifteen brave souls failed to return home to their families. In 2014, the year the nation commemorated the start of that conflict, we felt it would be seemly that the ultimate sacrifice these men gave should be recognised. Museum staff designed the memorial and the Design Technology Department of Chelmer Valley High School, Broomfield, agreed to assist in production. The fifteen names were subsequently laser cut onto a gold metallic plaque, mounted on solid oak. On 11th November 2014, the plaque was unveiled at Essex Fire Headquarters, Kelvedon, by the Chief Fire Officer in the presence of colleagues from HQ and the Essex Fire Museum; a duplicate plaque was also unveiled at the Essex Fire Museum, Grays Fire Station.*

As research progressed, three more names were uncovered, which required commemoration. To commemorate the centenary of the Great War, a new memorial plaque was designed to add the extra three names. Chelmer Valley High School, laser cut eighteen individual plaques to be fixed to a black tinted plate glass backing piece with space left at the bottom, this would allow more names to be added if discovered later.

Both the Chief Fire Officer and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner were present at the unveiling of the new plaque at 11.00 hrs on Friday, 9th November 2018, at Kelvedon Park (a similar plaque was produced for the EFM). The memorial can be seen in the Muster Room at Kelvedon Park HQ, accompanied by a book of remembrance, which gives details of those men commemorated on the plaque.

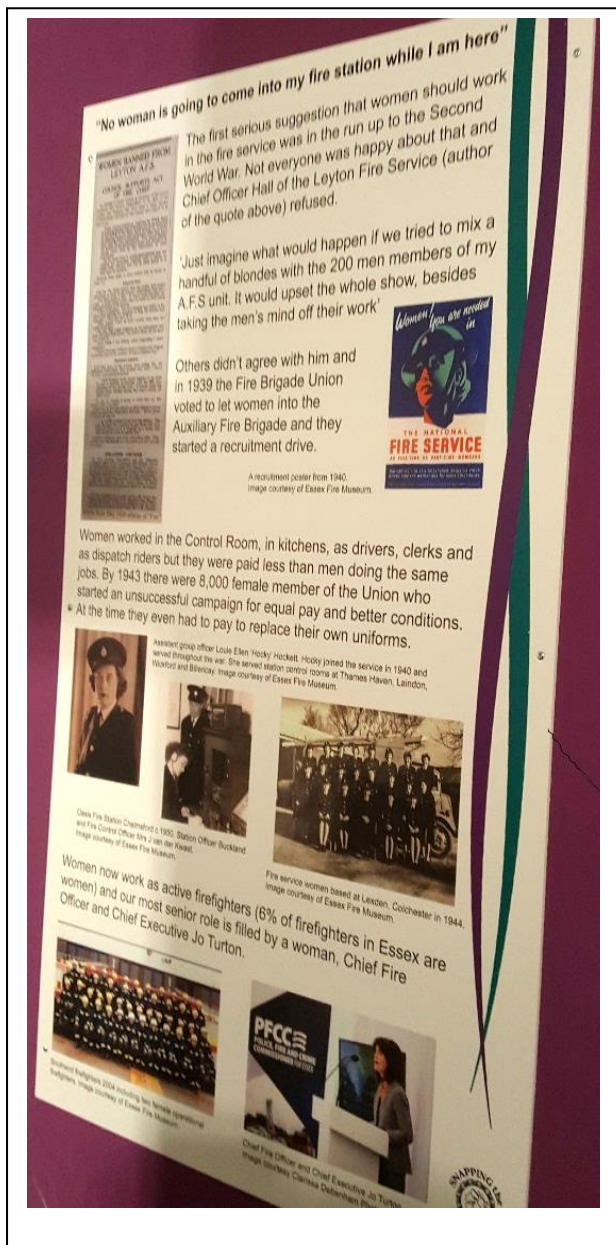
The work undertaken to produce the memorials was an example of the ECFRS working closely with an Essex school and members of the wider community in a worthwhile and unique way.



Snapping the Stiletto – Essex-wide museum project

2018 was the Centenary of the *Representation of the People Act 1918*, which gave the first British women the vote.

The Essex Fire Museum volunteers researched the history of women in the Essex Fire Service, to provide material for a two-year project, led by Essex County Council, to explore how Essex women's lives have changed since 1918. The project received a £95,445 grant from the [Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund](#) to work with 11 local museums and galleries to explore their collections and discover hidden inspirational stories.



Entitled, *Snapping the Stiletto*, the aim of the project is to replace the outdated stereotype of 'Essex Girls' with stories of Strong Essex Women.

These stories will be shared through exhibitions and events around the county as well as online throughout 2019.

More information:

<https://snappingthestiletto.com>