

# MuseumsMonthly

The latest news and announcements from Southend Museums Service.

## This Issue...

### The Night Sky - The Full Moon in February

As our planetarium is currently closed we will be bringing you fascinating facts and what to look out for in the sky at night, so wrap up warm and get stargazing!

### Beecroft Art Gallery News

Although the Beecroft Art Gallery is currently closed, we've been busy behind the scenes

### Timeless Tales

Get involved in our new storytelling initiative and we could be reading your child's story in the delightful setting of Prittlewell Priory

### Object in Focus...

#### Valentine's Cards!

Romance is in the air for our winter special edition and a cherubic sentiment to warm your cockles

### Southend Museums

Southend Central Museum

The Beecroft Art Gallery

Prittlewell Priory

Southchurch Hall

[www.southendmuseums.co.uk](http://www.southendmuseums.co.uk)



Image of full moon from Southend Planetarium

## The Night Sky The Full Moon in February

Earth has one natural satellite, the Moon, and on February 27th we will see it in its full phase.

The Moon has no light of its own but when the Earth is between the Sun and the Moon we can see its full sunlit side from Earth.

Historically, names were given to each full moon to track the seasons. The names coincide with activities or natural events occurring at that time of the year.

February's full moon was known as the Snow Moon, the month of heaviest snowfall.

## Beecroft Art Gallery News

Although our doors have been closed for a while now, there's still plenty going on behind the scenes as we continue our work with the collections and, as you may have noticed our buildings too! We are currently working on a new entrance space which will greatly improve the visitor experience and until we can welcome you back into the building again, we will be treating you to a 'Curator's Choice' from the collection on a regular basis in the newsletter. Keep an eye on our social media channels too for collections-based posts and we'll be bringing you news of upcoming exhibitions in the next issue.

This evocative winter scene is a favourite from our collection. Purchased by the Friends of the Beecroft Art Gallery in 1958, it was exhibited in the first Southend Open Exhibition in 1957.

Works from the Beecroft collection are available to purchase as prints from ArtUK:

<https://artuk.org/shop/featured-collections/southend-museums-service.html>



Exterior of the Beecroft Art Gallery, Victoria Avenue



'Winter Morning, Leigh' by Valerie Johnson 1950s  
Oil on hardboard

## Once upon a time...

Our first series of Timeless Tales told from the Victorian parlour at Prittlewell Priory proved very popular and we look forward to bringing you more imaginative yarns when the next series returns in the spring. We want children to get creative and start writing their own stories for us to read, so here's how to get involved!

We are happy for you to write about your own personal treasure or perhaps a beloved pet, but we would also love our buildings and collections to be the inspiration behind your stories.

you can find lots of objects on our social media pages, but to kick things off here's one of our lovely 'Robot' radios from the EKCO collection...let the adventures begin!

You can subscribe and watch the first series on our YouTube channel:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwU8n4WBL2zapw3Dknl3vHg>



EKCO AC97 radio 'The Robot' 1936  
©WorthPoint

# 'Timeless Tales' Get involved!



We'd love to receive your children's or community groups' stories so here's how to submit your creations and we'll read a selection as part of our 'Timeless Tales' series



Make your story between 500-1000 words

Use your imagination to create characters and settings using our collections as inspiration or feel free to write about something you treasure



Send your stories to  
[MuseumsEducationTeam@southend.gov.uk](mailto:MuseumsEducationTeam@southend.gov.uk)  
and don't forget to leave your contact details

Tune into our social media platforms or our website for episodes released every Wednesday from 6pm.



# Object in Focus: Valentine's Cards

Did you send or receive a card for Valentine's Day this year? Dating from around the 19th century, these sentimental cards from our collection depict visions of romantic love, but what are the origins of this popular and now very much commercial date in the calendar?

The date of 14th February is possibly linked to the Roman feast of Lupercalia which took place between 13-15th February, but it is not clear who St Valentine was, as two saints share the feast day of 14th February; Valentine of Terni martyred in Rome around AD 197 and Valentine of Rome in around AD 496.

The introduction of the Penny Post in 1840 meant that cards could be mailed anonymously which allowed for more suggestive cards to be sent and in some cases quite cruel sentiments with the so-called 'Vinegar Valentines' where insults replaced amorous declarations.

Valentine's cards started to become popular in America during the 19th century and in 1913 Hallmark Cards produced their first Valentine's card, which became a significant development in the commercialisation of Valentine's Day



## Reopening our venues

Due to government guidance regarding coronavirus safety, all of our venues remain closed. Any updates will be available on our social media channels and our website.

Please be patient with us as we navigate a safe and responsible phased reopening of our venues, and keep an eye on our social media channels for lots of exciting collections content in the meantime!

We hope all our visitors are keeping safe in these weird times and we look forward to welcoming you back later in the year.