

For immediate release Wednesday 4th August 2021

William Friese-Greene and the Birth of Cinema

Exhibition and events programme in Harwich, 1st – 22nd September 2021



Silver gelatin photograph by and showing William Friese-Greene taken about 1886.
Image copyright © The Board of Trustees of the Science Museum, London.

- A free exhibition and events programme this September in Harwich, Essex.
- An exhibition of photographs, patents and other printed materials that together will explore William Friese-Greene's life and work, with reference to present and future motion picture technology.
- A free talk by Peter Domankiewicz, researcher of William Friese-Greene's life and work.
- A guided tour of 'Victorian Dovercourt' created and led by local historian David Whittle.
- A drop-in day of free activities for young people (with parents or guardians) making and learning about Victorian optical toys.
- Introduction to the history and plans of the Grade II* listed Electric Palace cinema, built 1911, one of the oldest surviving purpose-built cinemas in the UK today.
- Presented through a unique partnership between Electric Palace Cinema (Harwich), Harwich Festival and the National Science and Media Museum (Bradford).
- Supported by the Harwich Society.
- Funded as a legacy project of the Essex 2020 'A Year of Science and Creativity' celebration.

Victorian inventor William Friese-Greene was a talented photographer and inventor. Born in 1855, he is principally known as a pioneer in the field of motion pictures, having devised a series of cameras from 1888 to 1891, with which he shot moving pictures. He went on to patent an early two-colour filming process in 1905. While he was in Dovercourt he registered over 20 patents. He died in London 100 years ago, broke and virtually unknown.

This year a group of Harwich-based heritage organisations have joined together to make sure that his legacy lives on in Dovercourt, which was his home between 1897 – 1904.

From 1st – 22nd September 2021 the Harwich Arts and Heritage Centre is hosting an exhibition of photographs, patents and other printed materials that examines the life and work of William Friese-Greene, with reference to past and present film technologies.

The exhibition is on display at the Harwich Arts and Heritage Centre, Main Rd, Harwich CO12 4AJ and is open daily from 10:00 to 16:00. Suitable for all ages.

Project partners:

The Harwich Festival is an arts organisation which entertains and supports the people of Harwich in the fields of creative and performing arts. It runs a Combined Arts Festival, Beach Festivals, events throughout the year at the Harwich Arts and Heritage Centre (HAHC), public art projects and large-scale community art projects.
www.harwichfestival.com

The Electric Palace is one of the oldest purpose-built cinemas in the UK, it opened in 1911 and it belonged to Charles Thurston, a traveling showman who was famous in the East of England for his Bioscope shows in the very early 1900s. The cinema was saved from demolition in 1972 and is now a Grade II* listed building, hosting a variety of film and music events. www.electricpalace.com

The National Science and Media Museum is part of the national Science Museum Group and is based in Bradford, West Yorkshire. Its collection is devoted to the science and culture of image and sound.
www.scienceandmediamuseum.org.uk

The Harwich Society was founded in 1969 to help preserve the ancient seaport of Harwich. The society is run by volunteers, who repair and look after several local historical buildings within the Harwich area.
www.harwich-society.co.uk

Essex 2020 is an Essex Partners' initiative. Leaders from the public, private and voluntary sectors, working together to create a better future for the people of Essex. www.essex2020.com



For further press information and images please contact Laura Ager, Education Officer at the Electric Palace on 07999 204378 or email educationofficer@electricpalace.com

All events can be found on the Heritage Open Days website www.heritageopendays.org.uk and via links on the Electric Palace website www.electricpalace.com

Curator Toni Booth from the National Science and Media Museum is available for interview. Please contact Laura via phone or email as above to arrange this.

Programme of events

Exhibition

From 1st – 22nd September 2021 the Harwich Arts and Heritage Centre is hosting a free exhibition of photographs, patents and other printed materials that examines the life and work of William Friese-Greene, with reference to past and present film technologies.

The exhibition is on display at the Harwich Arts and Heritage Centre, Main Rd, Harwich CO12 4AJ and is open daily from 10:00 to 16:00 from 1st to 22nd September. Suitable for all ages.

Accessibility info

The gallery space is on the first floor. Access is up a flight of stairs and there is no lift available. We regret that the exhibition is not accessible to wheelchairs, pushchairs or prams.

The exhibition will be moved downstairs to an accessible space on the ground floor on Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th September, when it will be open from 10am to 4pm. Access to wheelchairs on these two days is via the front door with a platform lift to take wheelchairs up a short flight of steps. Assistance with using the lift will be provided if required on these two days.

Victorian Dovercourt: guided tour

Spend the afternoon walking through Dovercourt, reimagined as it was in Victorian times. The tour is led by David Whittle, one of Harwich's most knowledgeable and experienced tour guides. Approximate length of tour is 90 minutes. Suitable for all ages.

Friday 10th September - start at 3.15pm, end time 5pm (approx)

Saturday 11th September - start at 3.15pm, end time 5pm (approx)

Talk: Who was William Friese-Greene?

A talk by Peter Domankiewicz, expert on the life and work of English inventor William Friese-Greene. The talk will be approximately 45 minutes long and will be followed by questions and discussion. Suitable for ages 14+.

Saturday 11th September - start at 2pm, end time 3.15pm (approx)

Accessibility info

The talk takes place on the ground floor on Saturday 11th September and is accessible via the front door with a platform lift to take wheelchairs, prams or pushchairs up a short flight of steps. Assistance with using the lift will be provided if required on this day.

Family friendly drop in activity day

Visitors between 11am and 3pm on this day will have the opportunity to try out a variety of simple techniques to create the effect of a moving image and make their own flip book to take away with them. Suitable for all ages.

Saturday 18th September – gallery open from 10am, activities 11am - 3pm.

Accessibility info

The drop in activity takes place on the ground floor on Saturday 18th September and is accessible via the front door with a platform lift to take wheelchairs, prams or pushchairs up a short flight of steps. Assistance with using the lift will be provided if required on this day.