

Press release

Second World War Bombing Map is secured for Ipswich Museum

PRESS CALL: Tuesday 22nd November, 10.30am, at Ipswich Museum in the Ipswich at War Gallery. The press call will be with visiting pupils from Murryfield Primary, Ipswich and Councillor David Ellesmere, Leader of Ipswich Borough Council.

Colchester and Ipswich Museums have recently been successful in securing some important wartime documents relating to Ipswich and the local area.

The large scale Second World War bombing maps show key targets in Ipswich and the local area that were identified as part of Operation Sealion, which was the name of Germany's plan to invade the United Kingdom. The maps are currently on display at Ipswich Museum for visitors to see and will also be used to help children learn about wartime Ipswich in the school workshops.

A spokesperson at Colchester and Ipswich Museums said, "These maps are a very exciting new addition to the collection. They add real value to our Ipswich at War workshops for schools and the maps obviously have a strong connection to the town and surrounding areas. Local people enjoy trying to find their house or favourite place of interest on the maps to see if it was a target for German bombers during the Second World War!"

The story of how they were acquired is very interesting; at the end of World War II a huge library was discovered at St Lambrecht in Austria. The library contained intelligence gathered about the UK and Russia. The amount of British military documents at the library was vast. Memos, also sold at the recent sale, dated October 27th and November 9th 1945 dealt with the logistics required to clear the library. They declared that a 'train of about five ten ton box wagons' would be required. The removal of the library was a clandestine operation, as the memos reveal that 'rapid evacuation seems desirable on the grounds of security...evacuation of the whole of one library is essential and of the second is highly desirable...'

Squadron Leader H C K Henderson RAF was sent to recover the library. This was part of the feverish activity to secure classified German material before it fell into the hands of the Russians and also secure material of

potential use against the Russians at the outbreak of the Cold War. Henderson chose to keep some of the documents that were of not such great interest to the British government, but would have been of great interest to the Russians. This included the Ipswich map, along with a number of other maps of different parts of the country. They came up for auction recently when Henderson's son sold the family archive.

Councillor David Ellesmere, Leader of Ipswich Borough Council, said: "We are pleased that the people of Ipswich now own this important historical document. The map will not only be of interest to the general public; it will also be a useful learning tool for schoolchildren and students. I would like to thank local resident, Peter Marjoram, for bringing this to our attention and urging us to bid for it."

Ipswich Museum

High Street, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 3QH
Open: Tuesday – Saturday, 10am to 5pm
FREE Admission