

WYMONDHAM

Book fair in aid of museum

A "mammoth" book fair will be held in Wymondham to raise funds for the heritage museum.

Officials from Wymondham Heritage Museum are staging the free fair at Central Hall on

October 26, 10am to 4pm.

The book fair is one of a number of fundraising events to help meet running costs at the museum at the Bridewell, off Norwich Road, which closes for the season on October 31.

READER TRAVEL

AN EVENING OF CLAIRVOYANCE

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STEPHEN HOLBROOK

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CITY TREAT: Norwich author Paul Willetts, who has written a biography about bohemian Soho dandy Julian Maclaren-Ross, inset, suggested a rehearsed reading of one of his works for the Hostry Festival in Norwich.

NORWICH

Writer brings a bit of Soho to the city

From a 1950s radio studio to the stage of a Norwich arts festival – a Norwich based-writer is bringing the work of bohemian Soho dandy Julian Maclaren-Ross to the city this autumn.

The Hostry Festival is taking place at Norwich Cathedral from October 26 to November 4 and among the line-up is a rehearsed reading of Maclaren-Ross' *A Visit to the Villa Edouard VII*, first broadcast by the BBC in 1956.

It was the idea of writer Paul Willetts, who has written a biography of Maclaren-Ross, to include the show in the festival. He describes Maclaren-Ross, who died in 1964, as having lived a "fascinatingly wild" life while also creating an impressive body of writing that was fresh, accessible, eloquent and amusing yet tinged with melancholy.

Among Maclaren-Ross' work was a series of radio dramas – and *A Visit to the Villa Edouard VII* was one.

Mr Willetts said: "He did all sorts of different writing, and had a really

By **EMMA KNIGHTS**

successful sideline in the 1950s and 60s writing radio drama, and he would appear in them too."

He said the *A Visit to the Villa Edouard VII* production coming to Norwich had been performed in London earlier this year to mark the centenary of Maclaren-Ross' birth. It has been directed by actor Callum Coates, who recently appeared at the National Theatre in *The Doctor's Dilemma* and has appeared in *The 39 Steps* in the West End, and who is also playing the role of Maclaren-Ross.

Mr Willetts said the play was based on a memoir about Maclaren-Ross' cosmopolitan upbringing in the south of France, specifically about a trip he made to meet Frank Harris, a friend of Oscar Wilde, and it also includes reminiscences of his father's encounter with Oscar Wilde.

He said: "Set on the French Riviera during the late 1920s, Maclaren-Ross' play focuses on a lunch party hosted

by the elderly but notorious writer, Frank Harris. It's a witty, touching and characteristically stylish coming-of-age memoir that harks back to the raffish world of Harris's great friend, Oscar Wilde."

Mr Willetts' biography of Maclaren-Ross's life is called *Fear and Loathing in Fitzrovia*, and he has also edited collections of Maclaren-Ross' work. One of Mr Willetts' other books, *Members Only*, about the "King of Soho" Paul Raymond, is being made into a film starring Anna Friel and Steve Coogan.

■ **A Visit to the Villa Edouard VII is being performed in a double bill with Voices: Moments from the Lives of Others on Saturday, October 27 from 7pm at Norwich Cathedral's Hostry. Tickets £10. To book call on 01603 218450.**

■ **For more details visit www.hostryfestival.org**

■ **Tickets can be bought at the cathedral shop or on 01603 218450.**

■ **emma.knights@archant.co.uk**



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KENNINGHALL

Call to keep traditional dances alive

A troupe of morris dancers is appealing for new members to help keep this colourful English folk tradition alive.

As the summer dancing season draws to a close, Kenninghall Morris – which celebrates the energetic "Welsh border" tradition with clashing sticks and colourful costumes – is inviting people along to its practice nights to give it a try.

Peter Osborne, squire of the troupe, said: "We have had a great summer

dancing at events across East Anglia, but we are now looking to increase our number over the quieter months. Morris dancing is beginning to shake off some of its old image and is being appreciated more for its lively sense of fun and tradition as well as being a good way to keep fit and meet new people."

Kenninghall Morris was set up in 1999 for fun as an act for the Kenninghall Village Show, but interest was so high that the side

decided to keep going, he explained.

They dance in the style of the Welsh Borders (Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire), now called Border Morris, a tradition that is recorded from the early 17th century and may be even older.

■ **For more information, email Peter Osborne at squire@kenninghallmorris.org.uk or just turn up. Practice nights are every Thursday (except the first Thursday of the month) at Kenninghall Memorial Hall, 7.30pm-9pm.**