



Media Release

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Roman Week returns to celebrate Chichester's vibrant Roman History

The award winning Chichester Roman Week is back this May half term for its fourth year and is set to be bigger and better than ever.

Last year's event was an amazing success, welcoming thousands of visitors and winning coveted awards. Most recently, the event was Highly Commended in the category of Limited Budget Project of the Year at the prestigious Museums & Heritage Awards held in London on the 15 May 2019.

Fresh off the back of this award success, Roman Week returns this **Saturday 25 May** and runs until **Friday 31 May 2019**, and is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

Roman Week 2019 is packed with lots of events across the city and surrounding areas. This exciting programme offers something for everyone to enjoy, including a spectacular Roman re-enactment in Priory Park, Chichester, on **Tuesday 28 May** between **11am** and **4pm**. This showstopper event, which includes military and gladiator shows, will bring the Roman period to life, giving visitors the chance

to find out how Roman soldiers and civilians fought and lived during this fascinating period of British history.

Another key highlight of the week is that Chichester District Council's own archaeologist, James Kenny, with volunteers from the Chichester and District Archaeology Society, will be returning to Priory Park looking to uncover more of the park's Roman secrets. Already uncovered are the well preserved remains of a Roman bath-house, which was probably occupied by one of the city's wealthiest citizens, and the team are now looking to make connections between this bath suite and the house that it served. Residents and visitors will be able to watch the dig in action during the week, and on **Saturday 1 June**, the team will hold a special day for the public. This will include a series of talks, at 10am, 12 midday, 2pm and 4pm, to put the work into context and explain what has been found.

James Kenny says: "We're really excited to be returning to Priory Park this year to unearth more of its Roman secrets. We have already found some remarkable and truly unique remains buried beneath the ground, all of which indicate that the person or people who lived there were affluent and of high status. This time around, we hope for more exciting finds."

Other events on offer during this year's Roman Week include talks, walks, guided tours, family activities and workshops. Visitors can also immerse themselves in their Roman heritage through the eye of a lens at The Novium Museum's blockbuster exhibition, Hollywood Rome: Reel Life in the Ancient World. This visually stunning exhibition will run until 8 September, featuring costumes, props and posters from big name modern Roman epics, such as Gladiator, Centurion, and Ben Hur.

Stephanie Thorndyke, Manager of the Novium Museum and Tourist Information Centre, says: "We are over the moon that Roman Week has just been honoured

with such a highly regarded commendation in the Museum and Heritage Awards 2019. It is already a firm favourite in the district's events calendar, and we are delighted to say that this year's event is set to be bigger and better than ever. It's so important for people to have the opportunity to be involved in the history of their city, and we hope that this year's programme of exciting and educational events will bring visitors of all ages into the district to learn more about our unique and fascinating past."

Bignor Roman Villa, Chichester Library, Fishbourne Roman Palace, Pallant House Gallery, Chichester Festival Theatre, Chichester Harbour Conservancy and Butser Ancient Farm will also be running events throughout the week.

For a full programme of events, visit The Novium Museum's website

www.thenovium.org/romanweek.

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**For further information, please contact Terri Foster, PR Officer at
Chichester District Council on 01243 521059**

Notes to editors

Success for Roman Week 2018 at the National Museum & Heritage Awards

The National Museum & Heritage Awards celebrate the innovative and ground-breaking initiatives from museums, galleries and heritage visitor attractions across the UK and overseas.

The awards shine a spotlight on the diversity of this sector, of museums large and small – from the nationals to one-room volunteer-run museums, from iconic buildings and monuments to the great outdoors, all of whom have an equal opportunity to win.

The Novium Museum was shortlisted in the Limited Budget Project of the Year category for Roman Week 2018. Taking place during May half term every year, the event brings Roman history to life with a variety of events taking place in the City Centre and around the District. Grant funding from the Roman Research Trust and the Roman Society funded the headline event during the week this year — a Roman Re-Enactment in Priory Park, which attracted more than 2000 visitors during the day.

Stephanie Thorndyke, Manager of The Novium Museum and Tourist Information Centre, says: “It is an absolute honour for the museum to receive such a highly regarded commendation within the industry for what we believe is a fantastically engaging and interactive annual event celebrating the Roman heritage of our district. We would like to extend our congratulations to the Wonder Women of Space Exhibition at Herschel Museum of Astronomy, Bath who won the category.”

Anna Preedy, Director of the annual Museums & Heritage Awards commented: “These awards recognise the amazing achievements, creativity, innovation, hard work and utter commitment evident throughout the museums and heritage sector. The awards have become the benchmark for excellence and the shortlistees and winners represent the very best of the best.”

At the awards, a Special Recognition Award was presented to Sir David Attenborough, who said: “I’m truly delighted by this award. Museums are among my favourite places. I don’t need to say to you how important they are to our own civilisation and culture and the trouble is that they are always under attack. I have been involved with them for most of my life, one way or another, and I have never known them actually not being under attack and under-funded. So, if I have contributed to one museum or any other museum in preserving those ideals

that are so important to all of us, I'm very grateful indeed that you should think so, if this award is a sign of that thought. Thank you very much."