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News Release

Supreme Saturday to begin Guildhall's centenary celebrations

The Supreme Court is opening its doors on Saturday 25 May, kicking off celebrations for the building's centenary while giving those unable to visit the building on weekdays an opportunity to see inside the UK's highest court.

The Court will open between 10am and 4.30pm on the Saturday, becoming only the second time the Court has opened fully to the public on a weekend since it was established in 2009. As usual, admission will be entirely free.

The Guildhall building was officially opened in December 1913, originally housing both the Middlesex County Council and the Middlesex Justices' Quarter Sessions. Later changes to both local government and the courts system led to the building undergoing a number of changes of use before being chosen as the future home of the UK Supreme Court in 2006.

While there will be no appeal hearings taking place on the Saturday, there will be plenty for visitors of all ages to see. In addition to the courtrooms, library, exhibition and café area, a wide range of portraits from the Middlesex Guildhall Art Collection will be on show. The open day will also see the launch of two new services for those interested in the history of the Middlesex Guildhall:

- A free audio tour 'app', available on both Apple and Android platforms, which guides visitors around the outside of the building. The tour will highlight points of architectural interest, telling the story of the rich allegorical design of the exterior decoration of the Guildhall. From the intricate keystones above the ground floor windows to a gate recovered from the old Bridewell Prison and built into the rear of the building, the audio tour leads visitors back in time to discover more about the architects' aims for the Guildhall and how the site has been linked to public administration and justice for centuries. A simple version (in mp3 format) will be available for download from the Supreme Court website for those without access to a smartphone.
- A full colour booklet detailing the background to each of the heraldic shields depicted in stained glass found throughout the Supreme Court building. These windows commemorate

notable figures from the county's history, concentrating particularly on prominent individuals holding public office around the time of the Guildhall's construction, including a number of Lord-Lieutenants, Dukes and Sheriffs. The guide, written in conjunction with local historian Rupert Barnes, will be freely downloadable from the Supreme Court website or available on loan from the Court's Reception desk.

This Thursday (16 May) is marked as Middlesex Day, when the county flag flies from the Supreme Court tower to commemorate the anniversary of the battle of Albuhera in 1811, when the Middlesex Regiment engaged in one of the bloodiest battles of the Peninsula War.

The Supreme Court also today confirms it will take part in the Open House London weekend this autumn (www.londonopenhouse.org, 21 and 22 September 2013), after a positive response from visitors in 2012 which saw more than 2,600 people look around the building over the two days. A temporary exhibition relating the history of the Middlesex Guildhall will be in place during the Court's summer recess, including the Open House weekend.

Ends

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