

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6

Committee:	WESTBURY MANOR MUSEUM, FAREHAM JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	6 June 2016
Title of Report:	CURATOR'S REPORT
Author:	CHRISTINE TAYLOR

Purpose:

Report on activities at or relating to Westbury Manor Museum Covering period Feb – May 2016
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1 Providing a Welcoming and Well Maintained Museum

1.1 Museum Service Delivery

The Curator, Erica Munro, left the Hampshire Cultural Trust for a new position at the end of March. The role has been covered in the interim by Christine Taylor, Curator of Natural Sciences for the trust. Following a recruitment process, Cerian Trevan has been appointed and will take over as Curator. Cerian is currently working at Stonehenge and will begin with the trust in mid-June..

Front-of-house quality remains a key focus and staff and volunteers participated in Principals of Customer Service training in May.

The Tearoom continues to bring visitors in to Westbury Manor; many are repeat visitors.

1.2 Visitor Figures

Year	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Totals
2009 – 2010	3118	2138	2615	3065	3781	2206	3514	2496	1808	1762	2367	3347	32,217
2010 – 2011	3367	2687	2696	2935	3333	2124	2471	2530	1563	1870	1799	1872	29,247
2011 – 2012	2605	1971	1797	2175	2266	1648	1950	1951	1813	1870	1799	1872	23,717
2012 – 2013	1816	449	1852	4992	2449	1414	2416	1566	1070	1300	2046	1555	22,925
2013 – 2014	4463	3235	2281	1545	1823	1472	2600	1569	1547	1463	2775	1743	26,516
2014 – 2015	1904	1391	1105	1554	2605	1588	1757	1342	1270	1183	1710	1312	18,721
2015-2016	1161	1157	1254	1784	1708	1076	1398	2265	1152	974	1268	1110	16307
2015-2016	1190												

2 Hosting Special Temporary Exhibitions and Related Events

2.1 Found in the Fields (16 January to 12 March)

This exhibition of lithographs by Carry Akroyd incorporates text from poems by John Clare, bringing the 19th century poet's words into the contemporary landscape. An events programme has been developed for Westbury Manor to complement both the artistic and literacy elements of this exhibition and will be reported in the next period's report.



2.2 Ripping Yarns (19 March – 7 May)

This exhibition about the life and works of Portsmouth author, Percy F. Westerman, was curated by Nigel Gossop. Percy F. Westerman was a prolific writer of children's adventure books.



Some of the book titles by Portsmouth author, Percy F. Westerman.

(14 May – 18 July)

2.3 Big Theme 2016 - Heads and Tails

Part of the Hampshire Cultural Trust's Big Theme 2016 on Royal Blood, 'Heads and Tails' focusses on the past 2000 years of English Royalty through objects, interactives. It features a special Royal Blood horrible history trail for families. Visitors can delve deeper into their local history at this Westbury Manor Museum exhibition, through a special focus on the Tudor period, the English Civil War in the reign of Charles I and the remarkable Wriothesleys. Supporters of Henry VIII, patrons of Shakespeare, at odds with Elizabeth and friends of King Charles I, the Wriothesley family lies at rest in Titchfield Church.



Titchfield Abbey, which features in the Royal Blood exhibition

To mark the opening of the new Heads and Tales exhibition and the Queen's 90th birthday pageant, Right Royal Revels - collections of commemorative artefacts, make-and-take crafts and mug painting took place on 14th May.

A special event by local Anglo-Saxon specialists Weorod will be taking place in the garden behind Westbury Manor on 4th June. Visitors will be able to find out about the history and archaeology of the sixth and seventh centuries, a time when the Kingdoms of Kent, Wessex and Mercia fought for control of Hampshire. There will be timed presentations throughout the day which will include the weaponry of the time - and even how it may have been used!



2.4 Summer Exhibitions and Events at Westbury Manor

Summer Shorts Exhibition

A season of visual art exhibitions by local artists and artisans at Westbury Manor Museum

SOLENT EMBROIDERS GUILD 22 July – 9 August

Stitching the Solent Shore from Sea to Sky and More

SOLENT ART SOCIETY 13 August – 30 August

Hampshire Open Studios Exhibition”

CATHY LAWRENCE 3 September – 20 September

FAREHAM WOODCARVERS 15 -25 October



Artwork by Solent Art Society



Piece by Fareham Woodcarvers.

National Picnic Week 11 – 19 June

A week of activities to celebrate National Picnic Week. Visitors will be able to enjoy a strawberry tea in the tearoom overlooking the beautiful garden throughout the week. Younger visitors (under 5's with their parents and carers) can take part in a Teddy's Bear's Picnic on 17 June. To keep with the theme the Pride of Place cases will have displays of 'Everything Strawberry' and a 'Teddy Bear's Picnic' in the Pride of Place cases.

Funday Fridays

The ever popular 'Funday Fridays' will be back every Friday in August. Lots of crafty activities to keep families entertained.

All Manor of Arts – 22 July

Family art activities.

Caring for Collections, Promoting Access, and Providing Specialist Knowledge and Advice

3.1 Caring for collections

A security review took place at Westbury Manor Museum in April. Using funding and expertise provided through the South East Museums Development Programme, three staff from the collections team spent a day with Museums Security Consultant, John Minary, to update their knowledge of collections security issues using the Museum as a case study. Recommendations for further improvements to the museum itself are being prepared.

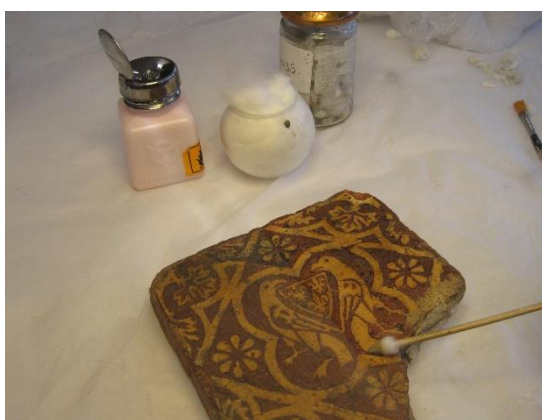
The Collections Manager visited the museum to audit both the collections on display and those held behind-the-scenes. Current policy is for any objects not on display to be stored at Chilcomb House or, if they are on long-term loan, to be returned to their owners. This way we can ensure that the objects are kept in the best condition possible within our resources.

The conservation staff continued to monitor the environment at Westbury Manor to make sure it remained stable enough for the great diversity of objects on display with a visit in March to download the temperature and humidity readings for the last six months. They also made some progress towards solving the problems the museum has been experiencing with the lighting in some of the display cases.

3.2 Promoting access to collections

Preparations for the Royal Blood Big Theme exhibitions have dominated this period. The Wickham Silver, an extremely rare set of Communion silver made during the Commonwealth and that is normally on display at the museum, has been brought back to Chilcomb for cleaning by the conservation team before going on tour to the flagship galleries in the autumn. This will give members of the public who cannot get to Fareham the chance to view some of the finest Cromwellian church silverware in the country.

The exhibition will give us the opportunity to exhibit objects at Westbury Manor that are unsuitable for long term display, including some extremely fine Stuart lace, a fragment of Tudor embroidery recently added to the collection and a 1650 'snaphaunce' pistol, which is an early form of a flintlock pistol. They will all be on display in Fareham for the first time.





A call for objects to enhance the 40th anniversary celebrations at Fareham Shopping Centre in April lead to some wonderful examples of 1970s fashion being brought out on display, not seen since the Museums Service did an exhibition on the Decade that Taste Forgot a few years ago! Over 31,800 people saw the display alongside some classic vehicles that were borrowed for the occasion.



An Iron Age tankard replaced the fossils from Whitby in the Hampshire's Hidden Treasure case in March. This type of display serves to illustrate the diversity of the collections cared for by Hampshire Cultural Trust that are available for exhibition at Westbury Manor Museum.

The prototype 'K3' three-wheeled car that was designed by Jim Keeble (of Gordon Keeble fame) in Titchfield in the 1990s benefitted from some significant conservation work this spring. Our Conservation Engineer worked with volunteers to stabilise the car's suspension so that it can be moved safely without causing it any damage. It was last seen in Fareham in 2009 outside the museum. We hope to take it to Carfest, South at Laverstoke Park this summer to publicise the county's transport collection.

3.3 Providing specialist knowledge and advice

It has been the turn of our specialists in archaeology and history to work on the Big Theme during this period. The Royal Blood exhibition that was installed at Westbury Manor in May

was written by the Curator of Hampshire Archaeology. Our Curator of Natural Sciences started covering the role of South East Area Museums Manager in April. For four days a week she will continue to manage the four sites in the area, including Westbury Manor Museum, until the new area manager starts work.

Our collections staff contributed to the development of outline proposals for the permanent exhibitions at Westbury Manor Museum. Ideas were discussed for ways in which they could be refurbished to tell its story in a modern, accessible, fun, and family-friendly way.

The Hampshire Finds Liaison Officer, funded by the national Portable Antiquities Scheme, recorded three significant finds made by metal detectorists in Fareham Borough during this period - an unusual 15th century coin from Spain that had been pierced and twisted to become a love token, a 17th century farthing trade token from Berkshire and an Iron Age gold quarter-stater of the Atrebates. They were all found in Titchfield. The Finds Liaison Officer will continue to be part of the Collections Team in 2016/17 as the British Museum has agreed to fund the post for another year.

4 Inspiring Learning and Community Engagement

4.1 Formal Education Provision

On 12 February the Community Engagement and Learning Officer (CELO) did an outreach session at Wallisdean Junior, working with Year 3 & 4 on the museum they were setting up for their families as a culmination of their prehistory topic which began with 4 workshops in the museum in January. The learning they undertook at Westbury Manor was clearly reflected in the activities they devised for their own school museum.



Wallisdean Junior
School recording flints

4.2 Community Engagement and Learning

The CELO ran a booked, led family workshop for half term on 19 February. Entitled Fun in the Fields, it was linked to the Found in the Fields exhibition and involved visitors making their own Carry Ackroyd style prints and undertaking natural science activities with real specimens of the animals featured in the exhibition. 34 people attended and feedback received was really good, including the following:
“The printing and laid out games were fantastic”

“It was informative and fun. The children loved the practical hands-on stuff, especially the printing activity.”



Pretending to be.....a bee. A young visitor to Fun in the Fields.

On 10 March the curator gave a presentation at a conference of the Hants and IoW branch of NADFAS (fine arts society), on the new Fareham Workhouse interactive in the museum

Activity/Event	Target Audience	Date	No. of participants
Fun in the Fields	Families	19 Feb	34
Natural Worlds Poetry Workshop	Adults	7 March	11
Easter Egg trail	Families	26 March – 2 April	21
Right Royal Revels	Families	14 May	

The CELO ran two reminiscence workshops for Fareham Day Care Centres in April. On 11 April, a group of 19 people from Lockwood Day Care Centre went to SEARCH Hands-on Centre in Gosport where the CELO worked with them in the 1950s room set. On 13 April, the CELO went to Kershaw Day Care Centre with a collection of artefacts and worked with 14 people on an ‘Old Corner Shop’ reminiscence workshop. Both sessions were funded through Hampshire Futures and both got great feedback from participants including:

“I enjoyed all of the morning. Lots to chat about.”

“Loved looking at the old times items and talking about them.”

“Loved dressing up. Thought the clothes were lovely.”

“Promoted conversation and brought back lots of memories.”

Lockwood have another session booked for May, for a different group.

5. Marketing and Management

Marketing Communication



Marketing Communication:

A new edition of What's On covering the period May to August and featuring Westbury Manor Museum was delivered at the beginning of April. 12,500 copies were printed and it is now in circulation via our distributors, Brochure Connect, to TICs, libraries, museums, accommodation providers, educational establishments, attractions, arts centres, theatres etc.

Online marketing:

The e-newsletter Museums Monthly, featuring exhibitions and events from Westbury Manor, is sent to sign ups on a new database. Subscribers now number over 2,500.

Research:

Postcodes are now routinely collected from visitors at on an ongoing basis. These are profiled annually using Mosaic software and provide ongoing information on which groups of people are using and not using our services and how individual visitor profiles compare to the local area. This feeds into the service and marketing planning processes.

Social Media:

HCT Facebook now has over 2,600 "likes" and twitter over 3,800 followers. Events at Westbury Manor Museum are promoted on both social media sites on an ongoing basis. The events promoted recently include the following:

07-Mar	Natural Words Poetry Workshop	Westbury Manor
26-Mar	Easter Adventure (26 Mar - 2 Apr)	Westbury Manor
08-Apr	Gadget Kids	Westbury Manor
14-May	Right Royal Revels - Family activities	Westbury Manor
14 May - 16 July	Heads and Tales Exhibition	Westbury Manor
28 May - 4 June	Museum May-kers - Family activities	Westbury Manor

This is not an exhaustive list and doesn't include generic HCT or over-arching theme supported posts, posts added which weren't on the plan, re-Tweets or Tags and Shares. We have Tweeted and created at least one Facebook post for every event listed above.

The heads and Tales exhibition, and any other Royal Blood themed events, have also been shared on our Royal Blood Facebook and Twitter, both averaging an audience of around 100 each.

Visitors to the museums webpages are now being collected each month and interpreted using Google Analytics. An example of how these are presented can be seen here.



Big Theme: Royal Blood 2016

The Royal Blood website including sign up area and What's Ons for all upcoming events is now live. The Westbury Manor Heads and Tales exhibition has now opened is featured on the homepage <http://www.royalbloodhants.co.uk/node/2558>

Royal Blood Facebook and Twitter accounts are posting and tweeting interesting facts in addition to promoting each individual event at each venue.

75,000 DL RB leaflets have been produced promoting all key exhibitions. 48,000 of these are being professionally distributed by Brochure Connect across Hampshire and the bordering counties (Berkshire, West Sussex, East Dorset, Wiltshire and Surrey) including date specific "blitzing" in key areas prior to regional events (including in Fareham for Heads and Tales at Westbury Manor.) Westbury Manor received its pack last week ready for launch, including leaflets and posters.

A PR campaign has been embarked upon with our agency Carswell Gould. This includes Releases at the launch of major exhibitions (Heads and Tales for Westbury Manor) and also a co-ordinated Press event at the Stephen & Matilda re-enactment on 9 July alongside our partners Winchester Cathedral and The Great Hall.

We have taken out Press adverts in the Basingstoke Gazette, including a feature wrap and strip, (we should also receive some editorial support alongside this paid advertising space) in Schools Out (May half term), Primary Times (back page summer half term), Defence of the Realm magazine and The View.

For the first time this year our big theme has a media partnership with Wave FM. This includes On Air mentions of our events during round ups of what's on locally (at least 3 mentions per week for each of our 4 featured events), 2 features in e-shots to their customer database, a webpage on wave105.com (over 330,000 visitors per week), and specific targeted messaging via their Social Media channels throughout the partnership. We will ensure that Westbury Manor gets a mention on air in one of the earlier slots as Head and Tales has now opened.

Finally, Royal Blood signs have been created for use around several key sites as well as pull ups for permanent use in some sites and some for loans/to be moved around to different locations necessary.

Christine Taylor, May 2016