

Committee:	WESTBURY MANOR MUSEUM, FAREHAM JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	08 October 2013
Title of Report:	CURATOR'S REPORT
Author:	Tom de Wit

Purpose:

Report on activities at or relating to Westbury Manor Museum
Covering period May to September 2013

Recommendation:

It is recommended that this report is noted

1 Providing a welcoming and Well maintained Museum

1.1 Museum Service Delivery

In June 2013, Westbury Manor Museum passed the significant milestone of one year successful service delivery with the new Volunteer team.

As the service enters the second year with this model of delivery, the Volunteer team has developed beyond the initial phase of supporting basic operational service delivery at the site and are now contributing significantly to the capacity of the museum to deliver exciting and well-received programming. Volunteers have made a significant contribution to projects in this report – including the **Then and Now** exhibition– with many of the contemporary photographs produced by the volunteer team, working directly with the Exhibitions team. Some of these photographs are the only modern counterparts the museum has of well known historic local views and have been added to the permanent archive.

Specialist skills brought by the volunteer team were also employed to great effect producing the **SPEED!** Exhibition – producing several short films and configuring digital image projections which form an integral part of this exhibition.

The integration with the Ashcroft Arts Centre has also delivered some fresh interpretation of the space through the summer **Dramatic Discovery** workshops, which engaged local children in week-long workshops held at the museum led by a drama professional in which the children created, produced, directed and acted in a performance inspired by the museum and its collections. At the end of the workshop the piece was performed live in the museum, which gave a

completely new perspective on the museum and its collections, caused the audience to engage closely with the exhibits inspiring the work and provided an opportunity for local children to participate in activity which will build confidence, creativity and organisational skills and may inspire future engagement with the Arts.

Also during this period, the museum has continued to deliver outdoor events which support the work of Fareham's Town Centre and Parks and Open Spaces teams and contribute to vibrant town centre activity.

The museum has worked with the Parks and Open Spaces team to support Fareham in Bloom by promoting access and engagement within Westbury Manor Gardens, and has produced outdoor interpretation to support the work done by this team.

A particular success was the **Festival of Anglo Saxon Life** in June delivered by historical research and re-enactment group "Weorod".



This group base al their interpretation (even down to textiles used in costumes) in historical evidence, including replicas of spear-heads discovered in the Wallington river, now held in the British Museum.

1.2 Friends of the Museum

Several members of the Volunteer team have also joined the Friends of Fareham Museum, one of whom is now a committee member and is building them a new website.

Also new to the Friends and on the Committee is the Chair of Cultural Journeys, a community organisation which has worked with the museum to deliver a successful, Lottery-funded exhibition and book project.

As an independent charitable organisation, the Friends of Fareham Museum are well placed to secure external funds to support the work

of the museum in the community and this new committee member brings considerable skills in this area to the Friends group.

1.3 Visitor Figures

The visitor figures for this year are healthy, and are over 1,000 people higher than by the same time last year, even taking into account the hugely successful Olympic Torch Month during July 2012.

The Success of the Lego Mania programme can clearly be seen during April and May. This also included a significant number of new visitors to the museum brought in by this exhibition.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
January	Closed	2858	2374	2964	1762	1946	1870	1,300
February	1990	2557	3499	3182	2367	2402	1799	2,046
March	1850	2511	1943	3368	3347	2659	1872	1,555
April	2396	2173	3222	3118	3367	2605	1816	4,463
May	2690	2546	2782	2138	2687	1971	449 (Closed except 7days)	3,235
June	2470	2887	2671	2615	2696	1797	1,852	2,281
July	2576	2574	2654	3065	2935	2175	4,992	1,545
August	3632	3171	3437	3781	3333	2266	2,449	1,823
Sept.	3174	2553	2813	2206	2124	1648	1,414	Total for year to August 18,248
October	3219	3019	2921	3514	2471	1950	2,416	
November	2459	2546	2491	2496	2530	1951	1,566	
December	2079	2134	2162	1808	1563	1813	1,070	
Total Year	28,535	29,269	32969	34,255	31,221	25,183	23,565	

2 Hosting Special Temporary Exhibitions and related events

2.1 Then and Now exhibition

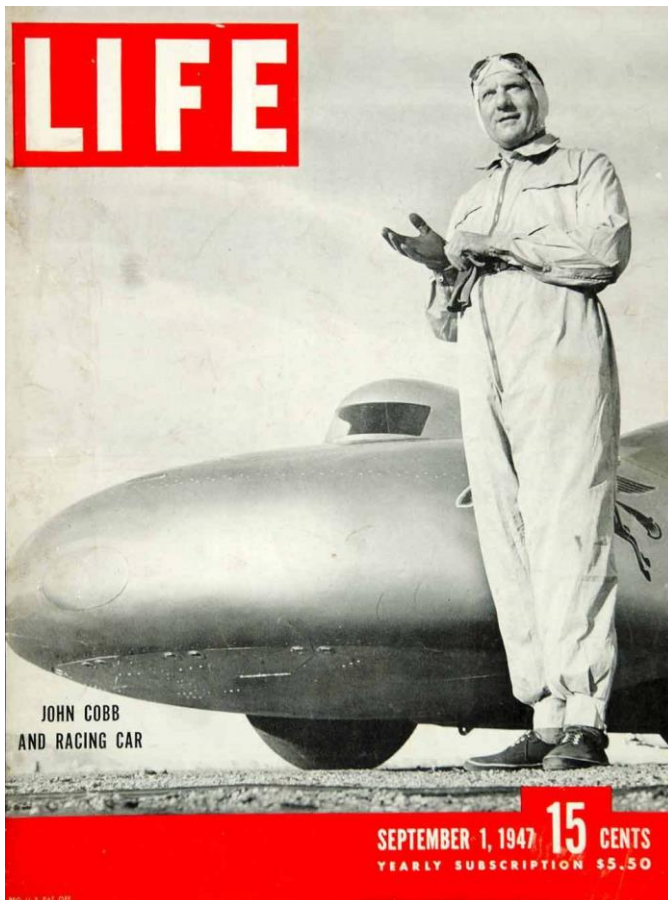
6 April to 29 June

The Exhibition Team has searched our photographic archives to find pictures of Fareham from the Victorian period forwards we then worked with museum volunteers from Westbury Manor Museum to take pictures of the same places today.



This led to a fascinating exhibition of past and present allowing local people to see how their environment has changed, what has remained as well as share memories of the past. This proved a popular exhibition with locals and provoked a lot of discussion and comments. The exhibition proved so popular that it was then displayed at Fareham Library where it was seen by 35,437 people it is now on loan to Wallisdean Junior School until December.

2.2 **SPEED!** Exhibition



This has been a locally-led exhibition with significant volunteer input.

The exhibition is looking at modern history and local high-tech industry through the lives and achievements of some of the world's greatest pioneers of Speed with local Fareham connections.

In keeping with this theme, the gallery is presented in an industrial style and the exhibition relies on significant multimedia content with two digital projections and three films with audio running simultaneously.

Featured local heroes include John Cobb, The Hon Mrs Victor Bruce, Donald & Malcolm Campbell and Peter Twiss.

John Cobb in 1947

3 Caring for collections, promoting access, and providing specialist knowledge and advice

3.1 Caring for collections

The Collections Team has been heavily involved in managing the 2013 Accreditation submission to the Arts Council over the last twelve months, which included the preparation of new collections management policies and plans. Having these collections policies and plans will ensure that Westbury Manor Museum continues to be an 'Accredited Museum' benefiting from membership of the national scheme in many ways, including access to a greater range of funding opportunities.

The Accreditation Assessor for the Arts Council has undertaken a preliminary review of the Westbury Manor Museum return, and is planning to take the museum to the 19 September 2013 panel meeting. Subject to her approval of some additional information we were asked to provide, she would like to recommend that the museum is awarded full Accreditation.

Objects relating to the Borough of Fareham both on display in the museum and in store at Chilcomb House Winchester have been monitored regularly during this period. The environmental conditions at the museum, including temperature and humidity, have been recorded throughout and were checked and found to be satisfactory in July.

3.2 Promoting access and providing specialist knowledge and advice

The Collections Team continued to find intriguing objects from the collections stored at Chilcomb House to feature in the Hampshire Hidden Treasure's case. This serves to illustrate the diversity of the collections cared for by Hampshire County Council and that are available for exhibition at Westbury Manor Museum.

The Goblin Teasmade which had been on display from the Social History Collection that became very popular in the 1960s and has come to be regarded as the classic automatic tea maker.

Following this display, the Collections Team have prepared specimens from the Blackmoor hoard for display at Westbury Manor.



The Late Bronze Age hoard, of which this part, was found near Evely Cottage, Hogmoor in 1867. It consisted of over 120 items and some went to the British Museum. The hoard would have been buried around 2,900 years ago and many of the objects appear to have been ritually 'killed' (bent and broken) before being hidden.

Members of the Collections Team also continue to support the exhibitions programme at Westbury Manor Museum. The 'Then and Now' and 'Victorians' exhibitions drew extensively on the expertise and the collections curated by the Photographic Collections Officer, the Keeper of Arts and the Keeper of Social and Industrial History, who all undertook research, selected material and prepared it for display. The collections officers also undertook all the conservation, mounting and packaging of the objects that are to be included in the 'Victorians', which range from Victorian dolls and jigsaw puzzles to pots and pans.

A similar range of specialist work is starting to be carried out in preparation for next year's programme of activities to mark the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War.

4 Inspiring Learning and Community Engagement

4.1 Formal Education Provision:

Over the 4 month period April to July 2013, the Learning and Community Engagement Team worked with **394 pupils** which is **10** school groups in the museum and as outreach. More sessions have been undertaken in September and will be included in the next report. School sessions each have significant work behind

them in terms of admin, liaison, planning and preparation. The Community Engagement and Learning Team are constantly reviewing, evaluating and improving the offer to schools as well as communicating it.

No. of sessions in the museum	No. of children in school groups	No. of outreach sessions/ events	No. of children as outreach
<p>1 Our Town in the Past session for Meon Cross Yr 4</p> <p>(+ 1 teacher training visit for 19 staff from Wicor Primary School)</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>9 5 X special project sessions for Red Barn Primary Yr 5 2 X Minibeast Safari sessions for St Anthony's RC Primary, Yr R 2 X Victorians sessions for Ranvilles Infants, Yr 1</p>	<p>368</p>

Impact evidence and general feedback is collected from all school sessions, to aid evaluation and service planning. All feedback was very positive.

The lead teacher for the **Operation Portchester Project** with **Red Barn Primary School** described the project with the Community Engagement and Learning Team as *“Without a doubt; the most exciting topic I have worked on in my 10 years teaching!”*

This HLF funded local history project was planned and run as a partnership between Westbury Manor Museum and Red Barn Primary School, with most of the school sessions and installation of the final exhibition being carried out in the summer term. An open evening for the school community to mark the exhibition opening, and a family workshop linked to the exhibition at the start of the holiday, added to the more formal education aspects.

The project evaluation included soliciting pupil feedback regarding enjoyment, learning new skills, impact and motivation for further learning. Just a few of the many hugely positive comments were:

“I am going to look more into history & the past...talk to my nan...research at the library...”

“I learnt how to interview someone... how to design a game for an exhibition... how to recognise the Victorian features of houses... how to use a video camera...”

"I enjoyed the trips... the census records...asking questions and learning about others' lives...setting up the museum..."

"We didn't just have to learn, we got to explore too"

The comments by visitors to the children's exhibition were equally heartening and included:

"Speechless! Outstanding! This is the most amazing goal to a topic I have ever seen!"



Red Barn's Year 5 history detectives
with ACELO Emma Hart

The Animation Project with Ranvilles Junior School also culminated in this reporting period, with a celebratory event for the families of the children involved at Ashcroft Arts Centre. The finished animation will feature in the up-coming Meet the Victorians exhibition. The Community Engagement and Learning team are now working with Harrison Primary School on other local elements for this exhibition, to be reported on next time.

A new initiative took place in July – an in-service training visit to the museum by the staff of Wicor Primary School to learn how to use the local history resources. The Head teacher wrote: *"25 teachers and learning support staff had a very informative session at Westbury Manor Museum, led by Emma Hart. In addition to a guided tour of the museum, we were shown the range of historical sources held at the museum and how these might be used to support the school's local studies curriculum. The provision of expert learning staff at the museum makes these excellent collections accessible to schools."*

4.2 Community Engagement and Learning:

In line with the Service Plan aim of widening participation, a programme of activities aimed at different audiences was offered over the last 5 months April-August. 414 people took part in **led activities**. Many more benefitted from the **self-led offer** provided by the Community Engagement and Learning Team which

consisted of the Museum Explorers family games, Lego Mini Figure Hunts for the Easter and Half Term Holidays (1332 participants), and activities in the Operation Portchester exhibition in the summer holiday. The Anglo-Saxon festival added a further 474 participants.

Activity/Event	Target Audience	Date	No. of participants
Self-led Lego Mini Figure Hunt	Children	2-13 April & 25 May – 1 Jun	1332
2 X Lego Animation Workshops	Families	3 & 4 April	33
'Game On' craft workshop linked to permanent displays	Families	10 April	49
Animation Project presentation evening at Ashcroft Arts Centre (Outreach by CE&L Team)	Children & families of Ranvilles Infant School	26 April	34
3 X Lego Masterclass workshops	Families	29 May	63
Anglo Saxon festival	Families & community	8 June	474
Operation Portchester Private View evening	School community of Red Barn Primary	2 July	118
Spy Disguise workshop linked to exhibition	Families	31 Jul	61
3-day Dramatic Discovery drama workshop & performance	Children & families	7-9 Aug	16
3-day Night at the Museum drama workshop & performance	Children & families	12-14 Aug	19
Fly or Flop workshop linked to Speed exhibition	Families	28 Aug	21

The Community Engagement and Learning Team are currently working on the local elements of the Meet the Victorians exhibition with Westbury volunteers and local schools as well as forward planning for the 2014 commemorations of the beginning of the First World War, including planning for 'Entrenched' WW1 project with local secondary schools.

5 Marketing and Management

5.1 Publicity and promotion

In June 2013 a south-east area What's On leaflet, with a print run of 5,000 was produced. This covered the period from July to September 2013 and featured Westbury Manor Museum, Eastleigh Museum, Bursledon Windmill, Gosport Discovery Centre and Gosport Gallery. It was professionally distributed throughout the region. In August a new edition was produced covering the period October 2013 to January 2014. The print run was increased to 10,000 to cover the longer period and distribution has now commenced.

50,000 copies of a special 48 page bumper edition of 'Enjoy Hampshire Museums' were printed in March 2013. It includes museums throughout Hampshire, was designed to appeal to both residents and tourists alike and contains a number of vouchers so its effectiveness can be monitored. It continues to be distributed county-wide to TICs, libraries, museums, accommodation providers, educational establishments, attractions, arts centres, theatres, supermarkets etc.

The service is also preparing for an intensive programme of publicity to promote a forthcoming new Lego Mania display which will be arriving in October. It is hoped that this will build upon the success of the earlier programme.

5.2 Online marketing

Events at Westbury Manor Museum were promoted on a monthly basis via the Hampshire County Council cultural e-newsletter, Showcase. With new people signing up all the time, Showcase is now reaching over 30,000 subscribers. It regularly features both an exhibition and an object of the month as well as signposting recipients to events in their local area. In addition, the monthly e-newsletter Museums Monthly is sent to nearly 12,000 subscribers who have asked to receive museums specific information.

5.3 Research

Postcodes are now routinely collected from visitors at key sites over two 3 monthly periods - January to March and June to August. These are profiled using Mosaic software and provide on-going 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.

5.4 Social Media

The Facebook page and twitter feed set up by the Exhibitions team at Chilcomb House to promote exhibitions and events at Museums Service sites are now well established. Facebook now has almost 950 "likes" and twitter over 1500 followers.

