

Committee:	WESTBURY MANOR MUSEUM, FAREHAM JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	20 October 2014
Title of Report:	CURATOR'S REPORT
Author:	Annabel Cook

Purpose:

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

1 Providing a Welcoming and Well Maintained Museum

1.1 Museum Service Delivery

The summer has been a busy period for the museum with the 100 Years Ago event on 4th August, a Vintage Fair, Bygone Fareham and Tea in the Town. Many of the events have been joint-promotions between the museum and Fareham Borough Council and we have found that this approach creates the most successful days in terms of visitor numbers so we are keen to continue this type of event.



Staff and Volunteers have been working hard to improve café income. This work has involved a re-branding to become Westbury Tearoom with new menus, a new display fridge and a blackboard outside to advertise the cakes on offer each day. The coffee machine has also been replaced with a newer model which has saved £400 per year in rental and the cake supplier has also been changed which has reduced ullage and been met with very positive customer feedback.

Discussions have been had with Friends of Westbury Museum, and it has been agreed to create a Friends Corner in the museum to allow customers to see the work of the Friends

and hopefully promote membership to a wider audience. The Friends also ran a stall promoting the museum and their work over the summer and this resulted in a number of new members. Discussions are also beginning around how we celebrate 25 years of the museum in 2015 and initial thoughts are around an Awards for All application to support an exhibition about how the museum came into being and the changes over the years.

Monday opening is still being monitored. Currently, numbers show an increase of 24% when compared to Wednesday visitor figures over the same period in 2013. This increase is more significant if you take into account the three Bank Holiday Mondays which fall into this period.

1.2 Visitor Figures

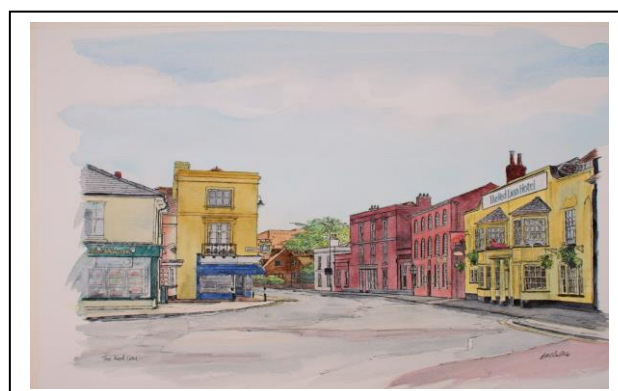
The visitor figures show a decrease over the period April – June compared to 13/14 figures. This is due to the popularity of Lego. However, visitor figures rose for August. We are working to ensure visitor figures for the remainder of the year continue to rise.

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								

2 Hosting Special Temporary Exhibitions and Related Events

2.1 The Villages of Fareham

This exhibition, by local artist Brian Mullins, featured original images of the local area. The exhibition proved popular with both visitors and local collectors generating £1000 of sales of which 25% goes to Westbury Manor Museum.





WW1 Recruitment Office

During August, the temporary gallery played host to a recruitment office which was the centre piece for Westbury Manor Museum's contribution to the WW1 commemorative day on 4th August. The day saw nearly 600 people come into the museum and visitors continued to enjoy the recruitment office for a two week period of August.

Fareham Woodcarvers Exhibition

This exhibition again proved popular with many visitors fascinated with the range and delicacy of the carvings. Having the woodcarvers on site to talk to visitors is an added bonus which helps to bring such an exhibition alive.

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

3.1 Caring for collections

A great number of objects were conserved in the conservation labs at Chilcomb House in preparation for the '1914' Hampshire Big Theme programme exhibition, 'Soldiers' Journey', during this period. The exhibition being prepared for Westbury takes hospitals, medical treatment and knitting as themes so the objects receiving attention included a First World War syringe, stethoscope, bandages, a knitting machine, knitting patterns and woollen garments, as well as 'Princess Mary tins, medals and 'Death Pennies' that will be included in most of the 'Soldiers' Journey' exhibitions being launched simultaneously in the nine other county venues in October.



Syringe after conservation



'Death pennies' undergoing conservation

Further information about 'Death pennies' or First World War bronze memorial plaques has been written by our Keeper of Arts for the 1914 [Big Theme website](#).

Objects relating to the Borough of Fareham that are kept in the Winchester stores, as well as those on display in the museum, have been monitored regularly during this period. Temperature and humidity readings for the previous six months were downloaded and checked in August to confirm that a stable environment had been maintained to ensure the long term preservation of the objects.

3.2 Promoting access to collections

The County Council's First World War Thornycroft lorry built in Basingstoke in 1916, which was returned to full working order by staff and volunteers based at Chilcomb House last winter, was transported to Fareham on 4 August to take part in the commemorations to mark the outbreak of war. The Mayor of Fareham rode from the museum to the memorial service in Trinity Church in the cab of the 'J-Type' lorry before it departed for Winchester to perform a similar function for Hampshire County Council at the Great Hall on this significant date.



The Mayor prepares to board outside museum



The Thornycroft lorry arrives at Trinity Church for the memorial service

3.3 Providing specialist knowledge and advice

Other work undertaken by the Keepers and Collections Officers for Westbury Manor Museum was also largely driven by the '1914' Big Theme project. A great deal of time and expertise has gone in to researching information about the objects and images for the website and for the 'Soldiers' Journey' exhibition.

For example the autograph book that was donated to the museum earlier this year, which belonged to a First World War nurse based at Fareham House Hospital, has been digitised by our Collections Officer who specialises in this type of work. The scans have been used by the Community Engagement Team in their work with local people, as well as the exhibition, making it possible for lots of people to have access to the contents of the diary without causing it any wear and tear. An original First World War nurse's uniform has also

been discovered in the historic costume and textiles collection that will also be included in the exhibition at Westbury Manor.

Amongst a number of interesting objects and specimens brought into the museum by members of the public for identification during this period, our Keeper of Natural Sciences was able to tell one person, what was thought to be a flint tool that they found in their garden was in fact a flattened fossilised sea urchin dating back to a time when southern England was covered in a warm shallow sea between 83 and 74 million years ago.

4 Inspiring Learning and Community Engagement

4.1 Formal Education Provision

The summer term saw no class visits to do the regular workshops (outdoor venues being more popular in summer), but the CEL Team continued to work on the ENTrenchedED project with the Crofton students, and also worked with a project group from Red Barn Primary on a mini exhibition. The total number of pupil visits for academic year September 2013 to July 2014 was 732. In terms of learning hours it would be a much higher figure as much of the work was in-depth project work.

The biggest piece of schools related CEL work has been to revise and rebrand the school workshops at the museum to try to make a relevant offer for the New Primary National Curriculum. Old favourites such as Victorians (which Westbury Manor did well for because of the Workhouse displays) are no longer in the curriculum. Subject matter is now pre-1066. The CEL Team are in the process of promoting the local history offer (as a local study still features in the curriculum) and liaising with schools about using some of the museum's themes for their post-1066 study. There are some Our Town in the Past sessions booked for October and it is hoped that Soldiers' Journey will attract some school visits, although WW1 is not in the primary history curriculum and secondary schools find single-class visits problematic to timetabling.

However, a drop in the number of regular off-the-peg workshops would free up CELOs to use their expertise to work on more bespoke projects with schools which always have more impact and more exciting outcomes.

4.2 Community Engagement and Learning

The last report covered CEL activity up to the end of April. From May to mid September there has been a great deal of activity for a range of audiences. The programme has been enhanced by closer working between the CELO and Fareham's Town Centre Manager to ensure we maximise resources and add value to events already planned. 899 people took part in the activities and events, with many more enjoying the self-led games and trails provided by the CEL Team in school holidays.

Activity/Event	Target Audience	Date	No. of participants
Museum Detectives Workshop	Local home educating families	15 May	13
Games in the Garden (linked to the Games we Played exhibition in the museum)	Families	29 May	71
Owl Lab (CELO provided resources for FBC Rangers event in the museum)	Families	29 May	26
Strawberry Kings talk and tea	Adults	13 June	18
Great Night Out vintage evening	Adults	11 July	39

Handbags and Gladrags vintage handling display to complement vintage fair	Adults	12 July	58
Family Friendly Fridays – 3 X crafty kit activity days linked to museum displays	Families	1, 15 & 29 August	45
Family Friendly Fridays – 2 X led workshops (Pots of Fun and Butterfly Friday)	Families	8 & 22 August	58
5 X No Man’s Land plays about women in WW1	Adults	2, 4 & 5 August	34
100 Years Ago Today – Activities in the museum’s recruitment office	Community	4 August	283
100 Years Ago Today – Poppy Quiz Trail	Community	4 August	165
Bygone Fareham – hands-on activities	Community	13 Sept	89

The afternoon talk on the strawberry heritage was very well received and we plan to offer more ‘tea and talk’ afternoons on week days in term time, especially for older adults. Another new venture was the Great Night Out which linked to the town centre Vintage Fair the following day. With staff in vintage costume, displays of vintage era museum collections, food and wine, it was a booked and ticketed event for adults which proved popular with local ladies. The handling collection of clothing and accessories put together by the CELO also attracted nearly 60 people in from the Vintage Fair on the Saturday.



Great Night Out at Westbury Manor



This year for the summer holiday the museum joined in with the town centre’s Family Friendly Fridays to ensure an activity linked to the museum collections on every Friday in August.

The biggest event at the museum this summer was the 100 Years Ago Today event on 4 August. The CELO provided a wealth of activities in the recreated recruitment office – flag and bunting making, mock-ups of attestation and medical forms, info to read, costumes to try on. She also produced the Fareham Poppy Trail Quiz which started at the museum and took participants up and down West Street to discover what the area was like in 1914 and find fascinating facts about the town’s War Memorial, church and WW1 history. Many of the activities stayed on as self-led activities for families for the rest of the holiday.



100 Years Ago event 4 August





Bygone
Fareham
Event
13 Sept



5 Marketing and Management

5.1 Publicity and Promotion



An exciting season of culture lies in store for Fareham

The town's arts chief Anabel Cook prepares for a busy autumn ahead

Artistic promises to be an exciting time for culture in Fareham. Westbury Manor Museum will be opening *A Soldier's Journey* on October 11.

This is major exhibition which is part of Hampshire's Big Theme.

The exhibition will look at the role of women, and how they supported the war effort. It will feature a number of objects, many of which were used by young people who have been working with us over the last year.

On October 11, there will be the opportunity to have a photo taken which will be added to look as if you lived in 1914.

Around the exhibition, there are also talks, including a book-reading, which allow people to experience what it might have been like during some of the more stressful times of the war.

At the Ashcroft Arts Centre, we have an art installation by comedy names including Katherine Ryan, Steven N. Anne and Bradley Charles, who won the Peter's Edinburgh Comedy award last year - the first



WHAT'S ON

- October 6 and 7 - Stephen K. Ames at Ashcroft Arts Centre
- October 8 - Festival Chris Jay
- October 11 - A Soldier's Journey at Westbury Manor Museum
- November 4 - A November Day at Ashcroft Arts Centre
- November 11 - Battle of Britain at Westbury Manor Museum

All the more details on the autumn season at the Ashcroft Centre and all other events visit ashcroft.org.uk or call the box office on 01329 23100.

Monthly Newspaper column

Marketing Communication:

In May 2014 a south east area What's On leaflet, with a print run of 12,500 was produced. This covered the period from June to September 2014 and featured Eastleigh Museum, Bursledon Windmill Westbury Manor Museum and Gosport Discovery Centre. It was professionally distributed throughout the region to TICs, libraries, museums, accommodation providers, educational establishments, attractions, arts centres, theatres, etc. A new edition covering the period October to January is currently being designed. This will be the branded as Hampshire Cultural Trust.

Soldiers' Journey:

The Soldiers' journey is an exhibition opening at a number of venues, including Westbury Manor Museum, in October 2014 and is part of Hampshire's Big Theme 2014. A digital platform has been created www.bigtheme.org.uk/1914 and marketing plans have been created and executed by RLA marketing agency in Bournemouth. Posters and leaflets are already in circulation in the local area.

The exhibition is also being publicised via social media on the Hampshire1914 Big Theme dedicated Facebook page, Hampshire1914, which now has 2,300 followers and by the associated Facebook app 'Time to Remember' which invites users to write a First World war postcard and share with their friends on Facebook.

5.2 Online Marketing

Events at Westbury Manor Museum were promoted on a monthly basis via the Hampshire County Council cultural e-newsletter, Showcase. Showcase is now reaching over 30,000 subscribers and 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 over 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 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. Postcodes collected from visitors between June and August 2014 will be profiled in September/October.

5.4 Social Media

The face book 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 over 1,300 “likes” and twitter over 2,400 followers.

Annabel Cook, September 2014