

# **Saffron Walden Museum Society**

## **Report to Museum Management Task Group : 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2005**

The Museum Society Management Committee met on Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2005. The Executive Committee met on 7<sup>th</sup> February and 12<sup>th</sup> March.

### **Constitution and Rules**

The Management Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> April considered drafts for the proposed new Constitution and Rules, together with a summary of these intended for members to go with AGM papers. On approval by the Management Committee, the draft documents will be submitted to the Charity Commission for approval prior to going to the Annual General Meeting of the Museum Society on 30<sup>th</sup> June for Members' consideration and approval.

*Note:* To ease the burden on Councillors, having regard to the now established MMTG arrangements between UDC and the Museum Society, the new Constitution proposes the representation on the Management Committee from UDC should be one Councillor. An Alternate arrangement could be put in place if thought necessary.

### **Development of Museum Society**

Considered that some thought should be given to a possible extension to the Museum following initial discussions between David Haylock and Mike Hibbs, who had suggested a competition for the design for young architects locally and in Cambridge. David Laing and David Haylock to discuss with David Morson 'off the record' at this stage.

### **Ceramics Gallery**

Meeting held with the Curator, Maureen Evans and Julia Bazley on 14<sup>th</sup> February. There is no proper costing for the project to date; at least a year would be needed to raise the money so timing to be re-scheduled. Robert Bartlett has done some initial research into trusts etc. David Laing is investigating the VAT position.

### **Membership**

Member get Member campaign has continued but with regrettably limited success. Twelve organisations in the town have had posters and application leaflets, and these have also been displayed in the Council offices. Prizes, to be presented at the AGM, for the largest number of people recruited by both individuals and organisations.

### **MMTG**

Admission policy and charges group yet to be established.

### **Signage**

Members of the Management Committee to give their thoughts on future signage for the Museum both in and around the town.

### **170<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

The Society will be celebrating this with an evening Reception and Preview of 'Fighting Napoleon' at the Museum on **Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> May**. Invitations sent out with the Spring newsletter. Refreshments will be served and there will be a small quiz with prizes. It is hoped that a number of Councillors will join the celebrations.

## SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM

### **CURATOR'S QUARTERLY REPORT January – March 2005**

#### **1 Museum Management and Staff**

##### **1.1 Management**

###### **Resource Centre and Future Development of Museum Service**

The Resource Centre Project Team met on 28<sup>th</sup> January and 24<sup>th</sup> March, with a presentation by Audience Development consultants ABL to councillors and Museum Society Committee members on 28<sup>th</sup> February, accompanied by a small display of items from the Museum collections. The Audience Development project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, has almost been completed and their final report will be circulated to project team members shortly. A professional fundraiser Martin Shaw, had been appointed to work with the Curator and staff to raise awareness of and matching funding for the project.

###### **Budget 2005-06**

A meeting with David Laing, Cllr Morson, Cllr A Dean, Financial Services Manager Phil O'Dell and Executive Manager Environmental & Cultural Services Diane Burridge took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> February to discuss the 'saving' of £11,000 requested of the Museum Service. It was confirmed that this would not be imposed as a cut, but would be sort as far as possible from savings or income generation made during the course of the year. Analysis of the Museum's income from grants, Museum Society, help-in-kind and sponsorship over the past 5 years showed that income from these sources on average slightly exceeded the annual operating budget from Council revenue. Subsequent work by independent financial consultant David Bradley produced a report: there was no significant scope for savings on the Museum budget, most costs being fixed, however various suggestions were made with regard to charges and income generation, which will need to be examined in greater detail by Council, staff and MMTG. Meanwhile £6,500 has been found from another Council source to be spent on marketing. A Marketing Strategy will shortly be prepared with costings and will aim to increase Museum visits and Service users.

###### **Insurance**

As the Council's policy with Zurich Municipal came up for renewal in March 2005, Principal Accountant Nick Harris met with the Curator and an independent insurance adviser to discuss options. From April 2005, the Museum's insurance policy has been removed from Zurich Municipal and placed with Axa who operate a fine arts and museums policy more attuned to the Museum's needs. Axa's representative has made a visit to all three Museum buildings and as verbally confirmed that the policy will cover items to be placed at Prior's Hall Barn.

###### **Other UDC issues**

Meetings were held with UDC officers on implementing the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act; and with Paul Atkins of Saffron Sight to consider needs of visually impaired and deaf/blind visitors. The Education Officer has been undertaking research into the implications of the Children Act 2004 for the Council.

The new on-line ordering system 'Marketplace' is now in full use, though time-consuming.

## **1.2 Staff**

Sally Brookes, one of the casual assistants, has resigned now that she is in full time employment. Additional casual staff are being sought to allow greater flexibility of cover on Sundays and Bank Holidays .

## **1.3 Volunteers and Work Experience**

A new volunteer, Stephanie Thompson, has been welcomed, assisting with children's activities and care of collections projects.

## **1.4 Training and Meetings Attended**

Freedom of Information Act: session for Council staff (Curator and Natural Sciences Officer)

Manual Handling: museum staff training (Conservation Officer)

4-day Health and Safety course (Conservation Officer)

'Great Days Out' forum and training on Excel system in conjunction with new UDC finance procedures (Visitor Services Officer)

Seminar on Children Act 2004 in London (Education Officer)

Forum for Museums in the East of England meeting at Bury-St-Edmunds (Curator and Documentation & Exhibitions Officer, Sarah Wilson)

Meeting of Essex Education Officers

Care of paintings and works on paper – Essex Record Office (Conservation Officer)

East Anglian Conservators Forum members toured recent developments and conservation facilities at the Fitzwilliam Museum and the Hamilton Kerr Institute where paintings conservators are trained (Conservation Officer)

## **1.5 Health & Safety**

An audit of staff needs and workplaces is being carried out by the Conservation Officer, and some more Risk Assessments and a Step Ladder survey are in progress. The H&S Handbook has been updated. The camphor crystals used to insect proof the Chinese costumes were looked at to see if harmful to human health.

## **1.6 Museum Sector**

The DCMS is considering more changes to the regional network of Museum, Archive and Library agencies such as EEMLAC, however the nature and impact of these changes is not yet clear. Meanwhile EEMLAC is producing a number of strategies for the region's museums, and the Curator has been on the working party for the overall Regional Museums Strategy, to be published later this summer. Future funding for Phase 2 Hubs, including the East of England hub, has now been agreed although not as much as originally hoped.

## **2 Buildings and Site**

### **2.1 Museum Building**

The central heating system was finally converted to gas in March once problems with insertion of the new flue liner had been resolved. It was necessary for the Security Officer (part-time post) to put in a lot of extra hours and work very flexibly to meet contractors' requirements. We are now awaiting permanent repairs to the wall of the temporary exhibitions gallery where a small hole had to be made in the chimney-breast, and plans to drain and remove the old oil tank are in hand.

### **2.2 Laboratory/Schoolroom**

New central heating system has worked well throughout the winter.

### **2.3 Newport Store**

The store did not flood this year. The Geology specimens that were moved onto tables as a precaution against flooding over the winter were put back into their storage cabinets during March 2005 (Natural Sciences Officer). A meeting of the Health + Safety Coordination group took place at the store and useful suggestions for improvements were received.

The two large Summerhouse paintings were moved to Bridge End Gardens in collaboration with Mowlem, who will arrange affixing them to the walls. Advice from the Director of the Hamilton Kerr Institute as to their care and long-term prospects resulted in a meeting, attended by Conservation and Planning Dept staff concerned.

### **2.4 40 Castle Street**

New window frame for attic room awaited. Inspection made by Council for asbestos.

### **2.5 Grounds and Castle Site**

Overgrown hazel trees at the Church Street gate have been coppiced. Shrubs under the Museum windows were trimmed to prevent ingress of pests. Four bird boxes were erected on trees in the grounds to provide homes for nesting birds.

A trail has been provisionally laid in the 'wild' area on the left-hand side of the drive and the area landscaped with woodland planting. Investigations will continue over the summer to find a path material that suitable for access by people with disabilities. The path will then be re-laid in the autumn, once Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent has been obtained.

## **3 Collections and Research**

### **3.1 Acquisitions**

**49 acquisitions** this quarter, including:

- Clock given to the Mrs Lang upon her retirement as Matron from Saffron Walden Workhouse
- Fragments of old wallpaper found in the documentation room, which was once the curator's quarters

### **3.2 Collections Care and Conservation**

**Care of collections has included:**

- Pest trapping in natural history areas in January 2005 (Natural Sciences Officer)
- Natural History store floor was cleared of objects and vacuumed by Support Worker, ready for spraying to prevent pests in April 2005 (Natural Sciences Officer)
- Work continued on airing the Chinese costumes being donated and catalogued by Europa Chang. Packing is nearing completion. This will lead to a large photographic archive
- The Robert Ship clock has had its bevel lock altered to assist in opening the face
- Local History Recorders are being provided with archival boxes and packing materials

**Remedial conservation work has included:**

- Cllr Vanessa Pedder completed surface cleaning of the whale bone from the Museum grounds and it was transported to Newport store by the Conservation Officer and Council depot staff, where it was fitted snugly under storage racking
- Natural history specimens that were on display in the *All Creatures Small* exhibition were frozen to kill any pests and put away in their locations in the natural history store

- A reorganisation of shelves in the Inorganics Store has resulted in better accommodation for the Military collection (including the Samurai armour) as well as materials used in teaching (Documentation & Exhibitions Officer, Sarah Wilson and Conservation Officer)
- Treatment and mounting of a print of Saffron Walden dated 1811, by a paper conservator

### **3.3 Documentation**

**No of new accessions catalogued: 34**

**Backlog documentation:** 24 new Modes records, and a total of 514 records updated for Natural Sciences.

### **3.4 Loans In**

**Loans In:** Three Battle of Trafalgar commemorative glasses, two mugs and a box loaned by two members of the public for the forthcoming *Fighting the French* exhibition.

### **3.5 Loans Out**

**Loans Out:** Reminiscence boxes to local care homes.

### **3.6 Object Identification and Enquiries**

**Object identifications this quarter: 22**

**Collection Enquiries this quarter: 50** by phone, fax, email, letter or casual enquiries in person (without an appointment). This is likely to be lower than the actual no. as staff leave March/April and pressure of other work have inhibited recording of statistics. A new form has been introduced from April to encourage this. Enquiries received included information about Radwinter during the War, an enquiry regarding the Ethnographic collection by Liverpool Museums and a researcher writing a report on eighteenth century bodices.

### **3.7 Researchers**

**11 research visits in person**, including Cambridgeshire birds specimens, butterfly and moth collections, the medieval pewter collection.

### **Other collections research**

- Natural Sciences Officer contacted 160 people who had taken part in previous surveys of birds in Uttlesford to ask them to support the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch January 2005. Derwent May, a journalist for the Times, interviewed the Natural Sciences Officer about the Special Roadside Verges Scheme in Uttlesford for an article in the *Times* newspaper. UDC is now able to access biological records held by RSPB in order to find out how populations of song thrushes, sparrows and other birds are faring in the Uttlesford district.
- Archaeology enquiries were received from Cornell University and *National Geographic* magazine.
- Edward Bawden linocut of the parish church was professionally photographed for publication in a definitive work on Bawden prints
- Officers of the Wedgwood Society, prior to bringing a group of members in May

## 4 Displays and Visitor Services

### 4.1 Permanent Galleries

#### **Ceramics Gallery**

A company that specialises in museum display casing quoted for this project. Preliminary discussions have been held in fund raising and appeal literature.

### 4.2 Temporary Exhibitions

The popular *All Creatures Small* Exhibition finished on 28 February 2005 and the artwork on loan was returned to the Off-Centre Gallery, Bristol. *Small Things Considered – Recent Archaeological Finds from Essex* runs from 19<sup>th</sup> March to 2<sup>nd</sup> May with panels and computer programme prepared by the Essex Finds Liaison Officer, Caroline Macdonald, to promote the Portable Antiquity Scheme of recording finds. Most of the supporting finds are on loan from members of the Saffron Searchers metal detectorist club. A ‘thank you’ evening for them will be held in April, with interested public invited to find out more about their activities. Panels and supporting material from *Archaeology in the Pipeline* have been loaned to 8 parishes.

### 4.3 Visitor Services

Visitors have included senior curators from Austria and Japan.

Consultants from ABL, (funded by HLF grant), conducted audience research including focus groups with ‘target’ groups of visitors: young people, families and rural communities.

#### **Visitors**

	<b>Public</b>		<b>Schools</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>2005</b>	2004	<b>2005</b>	2004	<b>2005</b>	2004
January	<b>1169</b>	1074	<b>457</b>	301	<b>1626</b>	1375
February	<b>1384</b>	1406	<b>654</b>	375	<b>2038</b>	1781
March	<b>1225</b>	1136	<b>*807</b>	946	<b>2032</b>	2082
<b>Total</b>	<b>3778</b>	3616	<b>1918</b>	1622	<b>5696</b>	5238

- includes a day visit to Henham & Ugley School for their History Week (150 children)
- and the Great Chesterford After School Club

#### **Shop**

	<b>2005</b>	2004
January	<b>758.40</b>	491.17
February	<b>838.72</b>	793.49
March	<b>1167.86</b>	1207.17
<b>Total £</b>	<b>2764.98</b>	2491.83

#### **Tickets**

	<b>2005</b>	2004
January	<b>548.00</b>	441.50
February	<b>598.00</b>	592.00
March	<b>609.50</b>	556.50
<b>Total £</b>	<b>1755.50</b>	1590.00

## Donations

	2005	2004
January	53.77	66.19
February	80.77	42.62
March	52.65	38.70
<b>Total £</b>	<b>187.19</b>	<b>147.51</b>

## Publicity and Marketing

Two VI form students from SWCHS conducted visitor research for their Tourism studies. Local archaeology finds have featured in publications, programmes and journals including *Fortean Times*. A calendar of the Museums exhibitions and events for 2005 has been printed and distributed to season ticket holders, local attractions and accommodation providers.

## 5 Education, Events and Outreach

### 5.1 Education

No. of booked school sessions taken by Education Officer: 43

No school loans this quarter.

### 5.2 Events at Museum

Date	Event and Staff	No. attending
13 Jan	<i>Creepy Crawly day</i> for pre-schoolers	28
15 Jan	<i>Spider and Snake day</i> (Natural Sciences Officer, Rosina & Michael Down)	477
10 Feb	Reminiscence Therapy Training Day for carers	24
8 March	Methodist Wives Club evening visit	9
16 & 23 Feb	Two half-term drop-in days <i>Insect Prints</i>	170 + 125
12 March	<i>Life Before the Dinosaurs</i> Science Week event (Education Officer, Natural Sciences Officer)	253
14 March	Great Chesterford After-School Club	34
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,120</b>

### 5.3 Outreach

Museum activities, talks and lectures at other venues:

Date	Event and Staff	No. attending
17 Feb	Education Officer all-day visit to Henham & Ugley school for their History Week	150
28 Feb	ABL HLF presentation at Council Offices	17
	Bishop's Stortford Rotary Club - History of Saffron Walden Museum (Education Officer)	21
	<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>



### **Other Museums and Local Groups supported**

Museum staff have attended meetings, undertaken work or given advice to:

- Fry Art Gallery Society (2 committee meetings, Curator and advice on lighting, Conservation Officer)
- Saffron Walden Searchers Metal Detecting Club (2 meetings, Curator)
- Biological Records Initiative Essex (BRIE) (Natural Sciences Officer)
- Essex Biodiversity Project (Natural Sciences Officer)
- Essex Wildlife Trust (Uttlesford) Committee (Natural Sciences Officer)
- Local Agenda 21 Farming, Wildlife & Countryside Group (Natural Sciences Officer)
- Special Roadside Verges Committee (Natural Sciences Officer)
- Uttlesford Nature Conservation Working (Natural Sciences Officer)
- St. Marys School Staff Training Session (Education Officer)
- Uttlesford Cultural Diversity Festival working party (Education Officer)
- Bridge End Gardens team (advice on monitoring condition of paintings in Summerhouse)
- Colchester Museum Education Service (advice on delivery of education sessions for new service in Ipswich museum. Education Officer)
- Clavering Castle Project (Curator and Education Officer )
- Essex Heritage Education Group meeting (Education Officer)

### **Advice, support and involvement in organisations outside Uttlesford**

- Museums in Essex Committee (Curator)
  - Regional Museums Group, EEMLAC and Regional Museums Strategy Steering Group (Curator)
- Fitzwilliam Museum – Ancient Egyptian Outreach Project (Education Officer)

## **Future Programme and Projects**

April – June 2005

### **1 Museum Management and Staff**

Resource Centre fund-raising and publicity will take priority

### **2 Buildings and Site**

Upgrading of the CCTV system and panic button for desk volunteers are in hand with electricians and Saffron Security. The Museum Society has kindly agreed to fund this work as it exceeds the Museum's revenue budget for equipment upgrades. Plans to refurbish the toilets in line with the latest standards in accessibility is also progressing.

### **3 Collections and Research**

Efforts will be directed at preparation of *Fighting the French*.  
Maynard papers at Ipswich Museum being followed up  
Ethnography projects with UEA and Cuming Museum ongoing

### **4 Displays and Visitor Services**

*Fighting the French* opens 21 May

Hayrick Base and Horse-drawn vehicles to be displayed at Prior's Hall Barn.

### **5 Events, Education and Outreach**

April 12 & 13<sup>th</sup> Holiday Activities: Cabinet of Curiosities

May 12<sup>th</sup> 'Thank You' to volunteers to mark Museum's 170<sup>th</sup> birthday

May 21 – Oct 30 Fighting Napoleon – Walden at War 1789 – 1815

May 28<sup>th</sup> Behind the Scenes – lab, schoolroom and organic store open day

June 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> Encampment in grounds by re-enactors group the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 44<sup>th</sup> (East Essex) Regiment of Foot

Summer holiday and half term activities for families

October 15<sup>th</sup> The Big Draw Sleepover

November 12<sup>th</sup> – April 2006: Fur, Silk & Cotton; Chinese Costume 1870 –1970

## SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM / UTTLESFORD MUSEUM SERVICE

### DRAFT FORWARD PLAN 2005 –

Format according to Accreditation Standard must include:

- a) Statement of Purpose
- b) Key Aims
- c) Specific Objectives (current planning cycle)
- d) Spending Plan (current year and following year)

#### **Statement of Purpose**

Our aim as Uttlesford Museum Service is to give people a sense of place in the present and inspiration for the future through collections and the histories they represent

#### **Key Aims**

To realise our purpose, we aim to

1. Preserve and develop collections, information and the stories they tell to reflect the human history, culture and natural environment of Uttlesford and the wider world
2. Provide physical and intellectual access to collections [and displays]
3. Create opportunities for formal and informal learning and enjoyment
4. Contribute to the protection and appreciation of the local environment
5. Maintain and develop a quality museum service, in accordance with national standards
6. Help to promote Uttlesford's heritage to a wider audience
7. To support the development of the Service, seek appropriate opportunities to generate income in keeping with the Accreditation scheme for museums, the Museums Association's *Code of Ethics* and the aims and target audiences of the Museum Service
8. Cater for a variety of users, but in particular target
  - Family learners – adults with children
  - Young adults – 16 to 29 age range
  - Rural Communities in Uttlesford - especially new communities
  - Special Interest Groups – relevant to collections
  - Tourists and Visitors – especially within 1 hour's drive of Saffron Walden

#### **Specific Objectives**

To be worked on at a later date

#### **Spending Plan**

To be worked on at a later date

Last revised 16/05/2005