

22 April 2014

Dear Councillor

**MUSEUM MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP**

A meeting of the Museum Management Working Group will be held at the School Room, Saffron Walden Museum on **Wednesday 30 April 2014 at 6.00 pm.**

Yours faithfully

JOHN MITCHELL

Chief Executive

**A G E N D A**

1	Apologies for absence and declarations of interest.	
2	Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2013.	
3	Curator's quarterly report (January - March).	
4	Chairman's Report.	
5	Horse drawn vehicles (update on disposal)	
6	Accreditation.	
7	Store update (verbal report).	
8	House at 40 Castle Street. (verbal update)	
9	Date of next meeting.	
10	Any other items that the Chairman considers to be urgent.	

To: Councillors R Chambers, K Eden, D Morson and H Rolfe (Uttlesford District Council members) and to D Laing, R Priestley, P Salvidge and A Watson (Museum Society Limited members).

Lead Officer: Carolyn Wingfield (01799 510640)  
Democratic Services Officer: Adam Rees (01799 510548)

**MUSEUM MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP held at the  
SCHOOL ROOM, SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM at 6pm on  
26 FEBRUARY 2014**

Present: Councillor K Eden (Chairman)  
D Laing, R Priestley, P Salvidge and A Watson  
(Museum Society Limited)

Officers in attendance: R Auty (Assistant Director Corporate Services), A Rees (Democratic Services Support Officer), A Webb (Director of Corporate Services), N Wittman (ICT and Corporate Support Team Manager) and C Wingfield (Curator).

**MM19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Morson.

**MM20 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 NOVEMBER 2013**

The minutes were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**MM21 MATTERS ARISING**

**(i) Minute MM18 – Date of Next Meeting**

No date had been arranged by members to view the changes on the Museum and Castle Site.

**MM22 CURATOR'S QUARTERLY REPORT**

The Curator presented her report for October to December 2013 and highlighted the points noted below.

Staffing – A new Collections Officer for Human History had been appointed.

Horse-drawn Vehicles – The vehicles were put in temporary storage. Lottery finding may be available for a cart shed. Re-negotiations had taken place with Furlow estate. The Job Masters cart had been rehoused.

Visitor Figures – Figures for the last quarter were good.

Councillor Eden asked what was going to happen to visitor targets.

The Assistant Director Corporate Services said that the target had been reduced. It was unknown what the effects of museum closures on Monday would be.

The Curator said that the year was unusual because the store was moving.

## **MM23 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Mr Watson said that the museum board was to meet the day after this meeting. The Re-Imagining Egypt exhibition had been successful. The Curator and local schools had worked to ensure the success of the exhibition. There would be a support meeting relating to the re-design of the museum's website.

The Curator said that over 3,000 people had visited the exhibition since November 2013.

## **MM24 STORE UPDATE**

The ICT and Corporate Support Team Manager said that construction was currently two days ahead of schedule. Pictures were circulated of the construction site, along with recently obtained artefacts.

Mr Watson asked whether he could have copies of the pictures for the Museum Societies' newsletter.

The ICT and Corporate Support Team Manager said steel construction girders should be erected the day after the meeting. A thank you should be sent to the Head of Street Services. An electronic copy of the pictures would be sent to Mr Watson. Construction should be finished by 28 June.

The Director of Corporate Services said he would invite people to the site once the steel girders were erected. High winds could disrupt the progress of the construction.

## **MM25 MUSEUM AND CASTLE SITE UPDATE**

The Assistant Director Corporate Services said that a full survey of the Curator's House had been carried out by a surveyor. The top floor would probably need works carried out on it. An estate agent had carried out a valuation of the property.

The Director of Corporate Services said that a deal was being negotiating with regards to the lease of the property. The Council would assist the Museum Society with leasing the property. Works on the castle side of the house were progressing. He had met with the Lottery about funding but talks had not been encouraging. The Lottery would match funding, therefore the Council would have to provide 50% of the funding.

Councillor Eden asked whether the graffiti on the castle site was significant.

The Assistant Director Corporate Services said that the graffiti was not significant and had been covered over. An e-mail would be sent out relating to this issue.

**MM26**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

A date was to be agreed for the second half of April.

The meeting ended at 6.30pm.

**SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM**  
**CURATOR'S QUARTERLY REPORT**  
**January - March 2014**

## **1 Museum Management and Staff**

### **1.1 Management**

#### **Museum Opening Hours and temporary suspension of human history services**

From 6 January the Museum has been closed on Mondays, and services for human history collections (enquiries, research access, offers for the collection and identifications) have been temporarily suspended due to lack of staff and more urgent priorities. Natural Sciences services continued as normal during this period. Mondays will become the regular day for staff to work off-site at the store.

#### **Forward Plan 2013-2018 and Shirehill Store**

Museum staff and Museum Society directors visited the new store under construction on Shirehill on 20 March and were delighted to see the store so far advanced. Attention is now focusing on racking and capacity issues, to allow specifications on services to progress, and in this respect it has been frustrating that staffing issues and the flood at the Newport store have prevented staff from detailed work on racking and storage for human history collections. However it has been possible to obtain an outline racking layout from one storage company, so that work on installing services can continue.

#### **Accreditation**

There remains a backlog of work in the stores and the documentation of 2013 acquisitions and loans, as a result of the Documentation & Exhibitions post being unfilled since June 2013. This will need to be tackled by the new Collections Officer (Human History) with the Curator in April-May as well as updating policy and procedural documents on collections care and documentation.

### **1.2 Staff**

Conservation Officer Lynn Morrison left due to redundancy on 10 January. The Documentation & Exhibitions Officer post has been re-evaluated and revised as Collections Officer (Human History); interviews were held in January and Leah Mellors, whose specialism is social history, will take up the role from 1 April. The Security & Premises Officer is now working 4 days per week. The Curator took leave during January to move out of the Curator's House at 40 Castle Street, so that the Council and Museum Society can decide how best to use the house to maximise income for the Museum.

Lower than normal staffing levels this quarter has necessitated the regular use of casual contract Museum Assistants to maintain minimal staff levels in the building and to allow full-time staff to have lunch-breaks. The Museum Assistant team were also invaluable in helping with the aftermath of the flood at Newport (see below, 2.3).

### **1.3 Volunteers and Work Experience**

Collections volunteers Roger Barratt, Judy Brook, Hamish McIlwrick, Ian Sharpe and Hilary Walker have been working on collections and administrative tasks. The volunteer team of Verge Surveyors checked special roadside verges sites to ensure that the full-width cut which took place in January was done correctly and that no sites had been missed.

#### **1.4 Training and Seminars Attended**

Some staff have managed to attend some training this quarter, however others have had to miss or postpone essential Council training sessions because of lack of opportunity to leave the site or other urgent priorities, such as dealing with the flooded store.

18 March	SHARE eastern region natural history network meeting, Hunterian Museum – S Kenyon
19 March	E-buy G Tully – Council
26 March	Safeguarding G Tully - Council
March	E-Learning module Information Security - S Kenyon, G Tully – Council

#### **1.5 Health & Safety**

The Roof Safe Access system was checked for its annual statutory certification on 11 March, however we still await a quote for longer lanyards to reach the hoppers and the annual check on the harnesses. (PAT) Portable Appliance Testing of electrical equipment took place in all Museum service buildings.

## **2 Buildings and Site**

### **2.1 Museum Building**

Pest monitoring took place in natural history stores, galleries and museum workrooms in January.

### **2.2 Laboratory/Schoolroom**

Reusable laboratory equipment and supplies has been disposed of to appropriate organisations, mainly to the department of conservation at Lincoln, and the tapestry frame to a textile conservation organisation in Lincoln. The Lab has been used for laying out and drying collections affected by the Newport flood. Basic cleaning tools and conservation and packaging supplies have been retained.

### **2.3 Newport Store**

Work at the Depot on electrical services and the car park has impacted on the store a little, requiring staff presence at certain times.

On Friday 7 February exceptional rainfall led to a severe **flood** in the area, the depot was evacuated and Museum staff were unable to check the store until the afternoon of Monday 10 February. Water inside the store rose to between 6” and 8”, deep enough to catch some objects on low shelves which could not be raised any higher. The receding flood water left a dirty brown film over floor, fittings and items affected. This caused a major disruption to staff work schedules, but a cleaning party on Wednesday 12 February removed portable items to the Lab for cleaning and drying and dealt with larger objects in the store. The Council’s stewards Mick Lench and Leo and cleaner Stev assisted with floor cleaning, extra cleaning supplies and two additional dehumidifiers. The prolonged high humidity in the store led to an outbreak of mould and fungus in one area, where there was also a leak trough the eaves from a broken gutter. The Security & Premises Officer has made some repairs to the store door, which has been prone to warping with the floods.

### **2.4 40 Castle Street**

The Curator’s house was vacated on 13 January.

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

As part of the Planning Department’s programme of improvements to the castle site, shrubs along the Tennis Club fence that were shading grass on the tennis courts have been removed. Hazel trees growing along the wall with Church Street were coppiced.

### 3 Collections and Research

#### 3.1 Acquisitions and Disposals

17 acquisitions entered in the register this quarter, of which most were previously unaccessioned coins found in the stores and three were archaeological treasure (see below).

**The Treasure Appeal** and grant-aid from six funding bodies in total enabled the Museum Society to secure all the items of treasure currently available:

- Early Anglo-Saxon gold ring (North-West Essex ring'), 2014.1
- Silver Anglo-Saxon hooked tag, Thaxted, 2014.2
- Tudor-Jacobean gold ring with symbols of Christ's Passion, Canfield, 2014.3
- Silver Anglo-Saxon mount with animal-heads (collected from the British Museum on 3 April, accession number 2014.17)

The gold Iron Age staters (coins) have been set aside because the finder has discovered two more and these now have to clear inquests and valuations before the whole group can be considered.

#### 3.2 Collections Care and Conservation

**Disposal of the Horse-drawn vehicles** has been advertised in the *Museums Journal* and also on the Museums Association website ('Find an Object') and informally, through emails to other appropriate museums in the region. This has resulted in the disposal of the Jobmaster's Wagon of J Carter of Burwell to Burwell Museum (agreed by the Museum Society Board on 27 February, collected by Burwell Museum on 27 March). The wagon will be on display there from Easter 2014.

There have been two other expressions of interest, one of which resulted in a meeting followed by a site visit with a volunteer from Audley End, with a view to acquiring a tip cart for the Audley End Stables draft horse to pull; a response from English Heritage is awaited.

Thankfully, the Society has been able to take out one further 6-month extension to the rent agreement on the barn near Ashdon, so we now have until 30 September to re-house the remaining vehicles. Priorities for retention (apart from the Langley hand-drawn hearse) are the Essex Hay Wagon and one tip cart, preferably the one from Foxton, South Cambs, if there is sufficient space in Shirehill. Provisional plans for disposal at auction are being laid, if no museums or private buyers can be found.

#### 3.3 Documentation

0 new acquisitions catalogued this quarter. Backlog / updates are as follows:

	<b>New Acquisitions</b>	<b>Backlog (existing collections not previously catalogued on Modes)</b>	<b>Edits and Updates to existing records</b>
Human history colln.s	0	0	0
Natural history colln.s	0	0	663
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>663</b>

#### **Effective Collections (World Cultures project)**

#### **HLF All Our Stories project (the Dig ion the Common 2013)**

The Curator has been unable to make any further progress with completing these projects due to staff shortages, time lost dealing with the Newport flood and other pressures this quarter. Also, the final

report on the Dig has only just been completed by Access Cambridge Archaeology in late March and a report and invoice on follow-up work at Newport Free Grammar School is awaited.

### **3.4 Loans In**

None.

### **3.5 Loans Out**

One request has been received from the Fry Art Gallery for Edward Bawden's framed linocut *Saffron Walden Church / Saffron Walden Festival* which hangs on the turn of the stairs from the Museum foyer. This is for an exhibition Ecclesiastical Delights, with collection planned for 13 September and return to the Museum on 27 October.

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

Object identifications this quarter: **2**

Collection Enquiries this quarter: **30** (and a number of human history enquiries have been logged for completion when 'normal' services are resumed after Easter)

### **3.7 Research**

**3 research visits in person**, in addition to regular collections volunteers, including:

Polly Keeler came for an Education shadowing day (with the Visitor & Learning Services Officer) from Cambridge University. 2 researchers consulted the owl study skins to investigate plumage colour change (Natural Sciences Officer).

## **4 Displays and Visitor Services**

### **4.1 Permanent Galleries**

#### **Treasure**

In the Great Hall (archaeology) gallery, the Roman potter has retired and his former workshop has been re-fitted for a permanent display of treasure and other significant archaeological finds and coins, thanks to a Treasure Plus grant of £5,100 from the Art Fund and the Headley Trust. Preparations have been made for the new display which will open to the public on 5<sup>th</sup> April.

### **4.2 Temporary Exhibitions**

*Re-Imagining Egypt*, an exhibition exploring 300,000 years of Egyptian history, closed on 23 February after a very successful run, attracting over 3,000 visitors.

*Secrets from the Stores* opened on 8 March and presents a selection of specimens and objects which have not been exhibited at all before, or at least not for a very long time. The exhibition also aims to show a little of the work which goes on behind the scenes and touches on some of the many research, educational and other uses to which stored collections are put. It is hoped that some visitors will 'sign up' as potential volunteers for moving the collections into the new store later this summer.

### **4.3 Visitor Services**

	<b>Public</b>		<b>Schools incl. adults</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>2014</b>	2013	<b>2014</b>	2013	<b>2014</b>	2013
<b>January</b>	<b>719</b>	688	<b>23</b>	31	<b>742</b>	719
<b>February</b>	<b>1384</b>	1594	<b>236</b>	324	<b>1620</b>	1918
<b>March</b>	<b>750</b>	954	<b>416</b>	338	<b>1166</b>	1292
<b>Total</b>	<b>2853</b>	3236	<b>675</b>	693	<b>3528</b>	3929

<b>Shop</b>		
	<b>2014</b>	2013
<b>January</b>	<b>161.70</b>	278.68
<b>February</b>	<b>663.28</b>	753.73
<b>March</b>	<b>796.06</b>	430.21
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1621.04</b>	1462.62

<b>Tickets</b>		
	<b>2014</b>	2013
<b>January</b>	<b>551.25</b>	316.00
<b>February</b>	<b>826.75</b>	1013.50
<b>March</b>	<b>652.25</b>	722.50
<b>Totals £</b>	<b>2030.25</b>	2052.00

<b>Donations</b>		
	<b>2014</b>	2013
<b>January</b>	<b>126.47</b>	44.72
<b>February</b>	<b>66.71</b>	53.79
<b>March</b>	<b>48.36</b>	70.18
<b>Total £</b>	<b>241.54</b>	168.69

### **Publicity, Marketing and Website**

The Museum has benefited from the efforts of Jacqui Portway and her fund-raising campaign to commemorate Flossie Gedney, who was Saffron Walden's oldest resident when she died in 2013 aged 109. Jacqui kindly donated the balance of the funds (£1190.57) raised for a memorial bench on the Common and organised the 'Pull Up a Chair for Flossie Gedney' initiative in Waitrose's monthly community fund appeal. Malcolm Domb, Waitrose Branch Manager, presented a 'giant cheque' for £321.00 to the Museum Society with the Mayor and Jacqui in attendance, on 21 March. With the help of Harts, the funds will purchase eight smart and comfortable matching arm chairs for visitors to use in the galleries, with commemorative plaques in memory of Flossie, and a couple of freestanding cycle racks to stand on the forecourt.

The Museum Society is seeking to re-design its website, with the aid of Tony Morton, and to integrate it with the Museum Service's website to mutual advantage. The Museum Support Committee has set up a website sub-committee to take this further, in collaboration with Council Officers.

There were 2,698 Pageviews this quarter on the Museum's website pages, we now have 217 'Likers' on Facebook and 697 Followers on Twitter.

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

### **5.1 Education**

**No. of sessions taken by Learning Officer: 21 taught paying sessions (large groups have multiple sessions on one day) over 14 days of school visits with 14 different schools**

#### **Analysis of School Visits and Pupil Numbers**

No. of pupils in sessions taught by Learning Officer in Museum *	<b>566</b>
No. of pupils taught in visits out to schools by Learning Officer	<b>0</b>
No. of pupils in independent visits to Museum *	<b>2</b>
No. of pupils benefiting from schools loan boxes in classroom	<b>31</b>
<b>Total no. of pupils benefiting educationally from Museum Service</b>	<b>599</b>

\* These figures plus 107 teachers/adults accompanying paying school groups provide total school visits in Visitor table in 4.3.

## 5.2 Events on-site (in Museum and grounds)

Date	Event and Staff	No. Attending
19-20 Feb	Egyptian half-term events (V&LS Officer and Amy Glover)	240+216 = 456
22 Feb	Egyptian drama workshop (V&LS Officer and Amy Glover)	128
14-23 March	National Science & Engineering Week trails/activities (Natural Sciences Officer and Visitor & Learning Services Officer)	26
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>610</b>

## 5.3 Outreach (Museum activities, talks and lectures at other venues)

Date	Event and Staff	No. Attending
3 March	Talk to SW Initiative (Visitor & Learning Services Officer)	13
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>

### Other Museums and Local Groups supported (Uttlesford) 6 groups, 6 meetings

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

- Essex Field Club (1 meeting, 2013 accounts, Natural Sciences Officer)
- Essex Wildlife Trust Uttlesford Local Group (1 meeting, Natural Sciences Officer)
- Special Roadside Verges project (January cut, 1 enforcement issue, 4 planning applications, Natural Sciences Officer)
- Sustainable Uttlesford (2 meetings, 3 Local Plan site comments, 5 planning applications, Natural Sciences Officer)
- Fry Art Gallery (1 committee meeting, Curator)
- Searchers Metal Detecting Club (1 committee meeting, Curator)

### Attendance of meetings, advice, support or involvement in organisations outside Uttlesford

- Museum Essex (successor to Museums in Essex Committee) 1 meeting (Curator)

### Grants and Support

The Museum received grants and support from the following organisations:

- Museums Essex grant of £400 for storage furniture for natural history collections.
- SHARE paid £46.50 transport cost for Natural Sciences Officer to attend a training event.

### Local Performance Indicators

Definition	This Quarter actual Q4	This Quarter target Q4	Annual Total 2013-14	Annual Target 2013-14
Visitors SI 12c	<b>3,528</b>	4,000	<b>17,552</b>	15,000
Users CI 39	<b>6,303</b>	5,800	<b>28,216</b>	22,000

Targets are based on average of previous three years' figures, including regular activities and events but excluding special and extra events which may be incorporated according to external circumstances.

### Notes on Performance Indicators

**Visitors** are all those visiting the Museum in person, including activities and events in the grounds

**Users** are all those using the Museum Service, including those on-site (visitors, as above); those off-site (attending talk, display or other off-site activity by Museum staff) and those using the Museum 'remotely' (information, research enquiries and services by phone, fax, email, letter and website visits or 'Pageviews').

### **Comment on this quarter's results**

**Visitor figures** are about 12% below target and are also below figures for the same quarter last year. This reflects the effects of Monday closure, together with temporary suspension of human history services due to shortage of curatorial staff. The number of visits by school pupils has been maintained despite the absence of the Visitor & Learning Services Officer in January, due to strong performance by school visits in February and especially March.

**User figures** are nearly 9% above target, largely due to relatively high level of remote users via website (pageviews), although the number of pageviews is not as high as Q4 last year.

### **Comment on annual 2013-14 results**

**Visitor figures** are 17% above target due to strong performance Q1-3. Activity and outreach events Q1-3 were largely responsible for this, and some of these were supported by 'one-off' grants or partnership opportunities, such the HLF *All Our Stories* project and Maze Festival. *Re-Imagining Egypt* and a consistently strong performance on school visits (restricted by the 2 days per week available for the Visitor & Learning Services Officer to teach) have also made significant contributions.

**User figures** are about 28% above target, mainly due Pageview figures for the website.

# **Future Programme, April – June 2014**

## **1 Museum Management and Staff**

Leah Mellors, Collections Officer (Human History), starts work at Saffron Walden Museum.

Staff time will be directed mainly to work for Accreditation and for planning the racking and move to the Shirehill store this quarter.

## **2 Buildings and Site**

Construction of the new store continues. Work continues on the racking specifications.

## **3 Collections and Research**

Work continues on a project to document the presence of protected species of animals and plants in the Natural History collections (Support Worker Madeleine Fanthorpe and Natural Sciences Officer Sarah Kenyon).

Work continues to re-house the horse-drawn vehicles and to assess, cost and apply for grants towards racking for the new Shire Hill store.

## **4 Displays and Visitor Services**

*Secrets from the Stores* continues until 20 July.

Time to research and prepare the next special exhibition (on local civilian life in both World Wars) will need to be fitted in around the new store project.

Visitors are being informed of new opening hours from January via notices, website, Twitter, Facebook and the local media.

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

16 & 17 April *Back to the Stone Age* activities

16 May Museums at Night

28 & 29 May Cracking Codes activities

31 May Tudor Charters activities

**Museum Management Working Group**  
**Meeting 30<sup>th</sup> April 2014**  
**Museum Society Chairman's Report**

As I reported in February the Appeal for the Treasure items has been very successful and we have been able to raise sufficient funds to add to the grants obtained by the Curator to secure all the items we wanted. The total expenditure for five items of treasure was in excess of £61,000.00., the largest part of this came from donations from the V & A Purchase Grant Fund, The Headley Trust, The Art Fund, The Beecroft Bequest and the Essex Heritage Trust, with the balance coming from local donations and from the Societies Acquisition Fund. The Society hosted an evening to thank both "Finders and Funders" on the 4th April. There was an attendance of 66 Guests supported by the Society Directors, UDC officers and Councillor Jim Ketteridge. The Museum has received plenty of coverage in the local press.

Earlier on the 21<sup>st</sup> March Keith Eden, as Mayor, and the Society Chairman were able to accept the gift of upwards of £500.00., for the "Chair for Flossie Gedney" appeal. As a result the Museum will soon benefit from the delivery of eight new chairs for the Galleries.

The Support Committee have discussed improvements to the Societies Web site with the new web master. The Support Committee hope to discuss linking this to the Council's web site in due course.

The Board agreed to donate the Jobmaster's wagon to the Burwell Museum. We have also extended the tenancy of the Barn until September. The future of the remaining vehicles must now be considered.

As a result of the survey for the condition of 40 Castle Street, following discussion with Council officers, the Board agreed to bring forward the proposed sale of the property. It is uneconomic to repair and let. The Council have been asked to surrender the lease of 40 Castle Street and the small garage area off Castle Street to enable the Society to proceed with the sale. Messrs Cheffins have been instructed to offer the property for sale at a guide price of £500,000.00. The Chairman has agreed the area required for access to the garage area with the adjoining owner of 50 Castle Street. The property is now being marketed.

Tony Watson  
23<sup>rd</sup> April 2014.