

1 Museum Management and Staff

1.1 Management

This quarter, much work has gone into planning the exhibition, activity and events programme for the year ahead, as well as delivering half-term activities and installing a new exhibition *Feeding the Family* at the end of March. There has been good progress with the digital strategy regarding the website.

Museum Development project

Legal advice has finally been obtained on the contract to issue with the surveys we need to commission and the first of these, the metric survey, is expected to go out for quotation in late April. This will be followed for quotation by the combined Historic Impact Assessment / Design & Access Statement which Historic England require for our development project.

Website and Digital Strategy

The Collections Officer (Human History) has participated in a Culture 24 Digital Transformation course run through SHARE Museums East of England and obtained a £1,000 grant towards the costs of redesigning the Museum's website (total cost £5,000 with the Museum Society providing the other £4,000). TELA was commissioned to undertake the work of transferring the website to an updated platform and refreshing its design, to make it easier for staff to manage and edit content and present a more up-to-date, engaging on-line presence for visitors. This work will be completed early in 2023/24.

2 Buildings and Site

Museum Building

Plans are under discussion with the Council's Estates Manager for replacement of the leaking roof to the rear lean-to, which would also facilitate better maintenance of the gutters, downpipes and hoppers on that north-facing aspect of the building.

Castle and Museum Site

We await an on-site meeting in April with a structural engineer from Historic England, to determine when the Castle might be open to the public again. Meanwhile the Estates Manager has secured improvements to the safety fencing and the Museum is planning a number of events and activities this summer on the grass area, which is not affected. These include partnership working with Saffron Walden Town Council for outdoor live screenings over the Coronation weekend 6-7 May.

Shirehill Store

Problems with the dedicated phone line link to the monitoring station has caused much time to be spent by the Security Officer, Curator and IT colleagues debating solutions proposed by the alarm company and providing access for engineers. Meanwhile an electricity meter has been installed to enable independent monitoring of the store's electricity consumption, a necessity now that the neighbouring Council depot building is to be leased to tenants after Easter.

The humidifier in the Natural Sciences store has failed and will need to be replaced as soon as a suitable replacement and funding can be identified.

3 Collections and Research

Work has continued transferring the archaeological metalwork collection to the Shirehill store. Current projects *Greater in Spirit, Larger in Outlook* (world cultures) and *Lost Language of Nature* continue and will be reported more fully in the quarterly report.

4 Displays and Visitor Services

Temporary Exhibitions

Bone Black: A brief history of colours continued its successful run in the Special Exhibitions gallery. The Sensory Table of interactive features (things to touch, smell or listen to) was popular with a wide range of visitors.

At the end of March, a new exhibition was installed in time for the Easter holidays. ***Feeding the Family – a history of dining from Roman times to the present day*** was curated by the Collections Officer (Human History) and the Curator, and opened to the public on Saturday 1 April after a well-attended private view on 31 March, where food prepared by volunteers from historic recipes allowed guests to have a taste of the past, quite literally. The Museum has partnered Uttlesford Food Bank, whose work is featured in the exhibition. The Museum exhibition has also linked with the Gibson Library, which has been showing some of its historic recipe books. *Feeding the Family* runs until 9 July.

It will be followed by the Museum's (and possibly the district's) first ever open-call judged art exhibition ***Uttlesford Open 2023***, for which anybody living or working in Uttlesford or within a 20-mile radius of Saffron Walden, is invited to submit works of art on the theme 'Sense of Place'. Organised by the Learning & Outreach officer, the call for this exhibition has now been publicised, to give potential entrants time to select or prepare a work or two for submission by the closing date in late May. This exhibition will generate some income from entry fees and commission on any works sold. The Museum is working with the Council's principal Urban Designer, to link with public consultation work on planning and sense of place.

Meteorites mini-display

A temporary display of loaned meteorites and information panels was installed in the Great Hall to accompany the Museum's cast of the Ashdon meteorite, to celebrate the centenary of the meteorite fall on 9 March 1923.

Object of the Month has continued online and in the Saffron Walden Flyer:

Jan	Hare and hounds – Romano-British brooch	Curator
Feb	Eider duck	Natural Sciences Officer
Mar	Ashdon Meteorite cast 1923.3 for 100 year anniversary of the fall 9.3.2023	Natural Sciences Officer

Curiosity Corner : (Learning & Outreach Officer)

February	Spring Bulbs
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Your Stories: (Collections Officer, Human History)

Jan - Feb	Black History in Uttlesford (Saffron Walden Library)
Mar	Lost Language of Nature (Natural Sciences Officer)

Visitor Services

Visitor and Shop figures were not available in time for the circulation of this interim report (4 April) but are expected to maintain the performance of previous quarters and enable the Museum to meet its total users target comfortably.

Saffron Walden Museum Website

	Visits	Unique Visitors
Jan	5,482	3,929
Feb	6,097	3,954
March	8,360	6,633
TOTAL for Q4	19,939	14,516

Social Media and Email Newsletter

Twitter	Followers: 2,293
Facebook	Followers: 1,600
Instagram	Followers: 1,181
Email Newsletter	Followers: 1,576

5 Education, Events and Outreach

Learning & Outreach

Income from Learning and Outreach this quarter, including February half-term activities, totals **£1,293.20** with 578 users.

Events highlights

February half-term family craft activities, Rainbow Mobile and Colour Wheel, were enjoyed by 85 children and contributed £204 income. For adults, a specialist life casting workshop, led by the Learning & Outreach Officer, had 4 participants and raised £260 income.

The Museum was delighted to host the Women in Business Uttlesford Reception, *Ambitious Women in Essex* on 1 March, in collaboration with Uttlesford District Council and Essex County Council colleagues.

The Museum has continued a full programme of liaison, partnership working and support with numerous local, county and regional organisations, on current and future projects and activities.