

**SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM**  
**CURATOR'S QUARTERLY REPORT**  
**April-June 2018**

## **1 Museum Management and Staff**

### **1.1 Management**

#### **Museum Service**

Staff changes (itemised below) have dominated this quarter. Much effort has been invested in the activities programme and marketing, though the long hot spell of weather and number of competing outdoor attraction in early summer have made it hard at times to attract as many visitors as we would have hoped. The Council's Audit team have guided us through preparations for GDPR.

#### **Forward Plan**

After a delay due to their own internal reviews and workload, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) provided some feedback on the project enquiry form for a Resilient Heritage grant, which requires further discussion with their officers. The Curator has been unable to progress this as quickly as hoped, due to staff changes and the need to cover the vacant Collections Officer post and management of the weekend casual staff team. However, it is hoped that a formal grant application can still be submitted in July or early August.

### **1.2 Staff, Volunteers and Work Experience**

#### **Staff**

From 1 April the Natural Sciences Officer post became a jobshare and Sarah Kenyon has worked part-time (18.5 hrs) on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. On 20 April we welcomed James Lumbard as new Natural Sciences Officer jobshare 18.5 hrs, Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays). Leah Mellors, Collections Officer (Human History) left on 10 May to take up the post of Curator of Ripon Museums in North Yorkshire; we wish her well in her new role. Interviews for a new Collections Officer will take place on 2 July and Jennifer (Jenny) Oxley has been appointed. It is expected that she will start on Monday 6 August.

#### **Volunteers**

On 11 June Saffron Walden Museum hosted a Volunteers' Tea Party to mark the end of the UK wide week celebration of volunteering and thank our volunteers for the amazing work they do. The event, which was attended by representatives from the Saffron Walden Museum Society and Uttlesford District Council, also gave our volunteers a chance to meet each other and reflect on their experiences in the different areas of the Museum. (The Museum has over 65 volunteers who fulfil a number of different roles including running the welcome desk; sorting and cataloguing collections; assisting with admin tasks and helping to run the popular learning and activity events during school holidays and half terms.) Attendees also undertook Dementia Friends Training and had the opportunity to follow a Museum Trail designed especially for them.

**Collections volunteers** assisting with social history and world cultures this quarter have included Jill Knight and Paula Evans, while David and Jane Laing have started a new project evaluating and checking local references in a sequence of 1940s-1950s diaries offered to the Museum with a Women's Land Army uniform from Takeley; total approx. 30 hours. Archaeology collections volunteers Peter Morrissey, Peter Stribling, Peter Rooley and Joanne Pegrum have contributed 12 hrs. Since May, the Curator has been covering essential aspects of the Collections Officer post and one consequence has been that volunteer work on the archaeology and social history collections had had to be suspended. **Natural Sciences volunteers** have been updating storage locations on the Modes database, identifying zoology specimens, and conducting ecological surveys of special roadside verges. This totals 32 hours of volunteer time. **Admin volunteers** Mary Adams and Ian Sharpe have continued to put in regular hours (approx. 90 hrs).

**Welcome Desk volunteers** provide a friendly welcome for visitors, sell tickets and merchandise, provide information about the Museum, and direct enquiries to members of staff. For the quarter April-June this totals over 400 hours of volunteer time.

**Learning & Outreach volunteers** have contributed approx 53hours providing help with planning and delivering schools and holiday activities. In addition to the above, directors and members of Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd. have contributed an estimated 25 hours in preparing and running Wallace's Great Big Bake Off event with the Learning & Outreach Officer.

**Total hours contributed by all volunteers for this quarter = approx. 644 hrs**

**SHARE Volunteer Awards:** On Wednesday 6 June our Visitor Services and Administrative Officer, Wendy-Jo Atter, escorted two Welcome Desk Volunteers, Angela Jones and Ann Holloway, to the SHARE Museums East Volunteer Awards Celebration, at the Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket, Suffolk. The day out demonstrated our gratitude for their tremendous commitment and contribution. At the event, they were each awarded certificates of their nominations in the following categories:

- Wendy-Jo Atter – Volunteer Leadership Award
- Ann Holloway – Visitor Experience Award
- Angela Jones – ‘We Couldn’t Do Without’ Award

### **1.3 Training and Seminars Attended**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Course and Staff</b>
11 May	SHARE Retail Forum event: ‘Displaying your stock’ - Museum Visitor Services and Admin Officer, Wendy-Jo Atter and Welcome Desk Volunteer, June Baker.
17 May	Museum & Heritage Show, London Olympia attended by the Curator
04 June	Dementia Friends Training (Natural Sciences Officers Sarah Kenyon, James Lumbard)
11 June	Dementia Friends Training (as part of the Volunteer’s Tea Party celebration)

### **1.5 Health & Safety**

#### **Asbestos in Collections**

The survey and work by Kadec had tested numerous objects (social history) and specimens (geology) but thankfully most tests proved negative. Those objects and specimens which do contain asbestos have been isolated and clearly labelled so any risk has been contained, awaiting further work and decisions on disposal or treatment by appropriate means, and submission of a policy document to the Council for approval. This work is on hold until the new Collections Officer (Human History) is in post.

## **2 Buildings and Site**

### **2.1 Museum Building**

#### **Natural History Store**

The air conditioning unit broke down in April 2018 and was repaired by Oakray Ltd on 15 May. An outbreak of moth in Natural History Store at the Museum started on 10 May. This was caused by the air conditioning system breaking down which led to very high temperatures in the store. External advice had to be sought as there is no longer a Pest Control officer employed by the Council. The store was sprayed with commercial moth killer by Natural Sciences Officer Sarah Kenyon on 23 June.

#### **Internal work**

Council cleaner Andy gave the hard floors a special deep clean and buff. The cleaning schedule has been revised to ensure that regular cleaning keeps floors in good condition; this means that 5 hours cleaning time per week rather than the current 4hrs is necessary.

### **2.3 Shirehill Store**

No specific issues to report this quarter.

### **2.4 Grounds and Castle Site**

Museum staff provided access to the Workshop electricity supply on the evening of 17 May for a demonstration of floodlighting on the Castle. The newly-formed Saffron Walden Heritage Development Group, whose meetings are attended by the Museum Society Chairman and Curator, is looking to raise funds for re interpretation boards at the ‘Battle Ditches’ (surviving above-ground sections of the medieval town boundary ditch). If successful, this would offer scope for promotion in partnership with the Castle and Museum site in 2019 subject to the Council’s timetable for completing the castle works, since the Battle Ditches circuit and development of the Castle are all part of the Norman and medieval evolution of Walden as a market town.

## **3 Collections and Research**

### **3.1 Acquisitions and Disposals**

**37 new acquisitions** have been recorded in the accessions register this quarter, including:

- A collection of prehistoric flint tools and cores from parishes in south Uttlesford, transferred from Harlow Museum.
- A selection of items from the Friends’ School and Hospital in Saffron Walden, including two samplers from 1880 by pupils Annie Dawes and Mary Jane Mayllar. The school closed in 2017.
- Six boxes of photographic slides totalling over 400 photographs of Saffron Walden, Thaxted, various villages, portraits and noteworthy buildings & organisations, taken throughout the 1990s.
- Eight hand puppets comprising the common cast of Punch & Judy shows, made and used by a well-known Morris dancer Chris Yeldham from Thaxted. Also a CD-ROM with photos of him.

Some progress has been made with the ‘Piano Hoard’ treasure case. Bishop’s Castle Community College has now accepted the Museum Society’s offer for the piano and the Curator is making arrangements for it to be transported by professional piano movers to Saffron Walden; this will probably take place in late July or early August. The 12 gold sovereigns purchased as a sample of the hoard have been released by the British Museum and are awaiting collection from London.

The Curator and volunteers completed work sorting and re-packing a mixed collection of finds and records from archaeological fieldwork undertaken on the 1970s by the former Passmore Edwards Museum, London Borough of Newham, which was transferred to Saffron Walden Museum last year. Much of this relates to early surveys of the M11 route. A list has been copied to archaeologists in Essex County Council’s Place Services for inclusion on the Essex HER.

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

#### **Insurance Valuations**

The Curator and Museum Collections Valuations Trust (who are providing the grant to fund this work) are bringing pressure to bear on the valuer to finalise the report and complete his suppliers’ form for payment.

#### **Cleaning of Stores and Displays**

Examination of pest traps in the Museum galleries, work areas, stores and Shirehill took place this quarter.

### **3.3 Documentation**

Backlog / updates	New Acquisitions	Backlog (existing collections not previously catalogued on Modes)	Edits and Updates to existing records
Human history collections	-	-	-
Natural sciences collections	0	11	231
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>231</b>

## Effective Collections (World Cultures project)

Still on hold waiting for the Curator to have time to dedicate to moving this project on.

### 3.4 Loans In

None this quarter. A Saffron Walden railway sign, which has long been on loan to the museum and displayed in the Local History gallery, is to be returned to the owner at his request in July. It is planned to replace it with two smaller railway signs (Saffron Walden and Great Chesterford respectively).

### 3.5 Loans Out

None this quarter.

### 3.6 Object Identification and Enquiries

Object identifications this quarter: **8 identification enquiries** (111 objects and specimens)

Collections Enquiries this quarter: **38**

### 3.7 Research

2 researchers this quarter, including (1 human history, 1 natural sciences)

- John Ready examined 6 volumes of George Stacey Gibson's *Flora of Essex* for an exhibition.
- Researcher from New Zealand viewed Maori musical instruments.

## 4 Displays and Visitor Services

### 4.1 Permanent Galleries

*Object of the Month* continues to be a popular and successful initiative to research and display objects that are rarely seen by the public and to share them on our website and social media. They have also been featured in our monthly editorial in the Saffron Walden Flyer, which encourages local readers to visit the Museum to see the object. April featured a selection of Roman roof tiles with animal and human footprints, from the temple near Great Chesterford; in May it was a stag beetle from Great Dunmow and June's object of the month was the early 19<sup>th</sup> century reticule promoting the Abolition of Slavery.

### 4.2 Temporary Exhibitions

*From the Hazely Brick Earth: Agriculture in North-West Essex* continued through this quarter. Work continues on planning forthcoming exhibitions and options for the Museum's 2019 programme. A small reception was held on 3 April for officers of Saffron Walden Football Club and members the family of the late Paul Daw, to mark the Football Club display in the Community Case.

### 4.3 Visitor Services

	Public		Schools incl. adults		Total	
	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017
<b>April</b>	<b>1337</b>	1333	<b>0</b>	31	<b>1337</b>	1364
<b>May</b>	<b>706</b>	790	<b>113</b>	28	<b>819</b>	818
<b>June</b>	<b>596</b>	673	<b>165</b>	48	<b>761</b>	721
<b>Total</b>	<b>2639</b>	2796	<b>278</b>	107	<b>2917</b>	2903
Incl. 300 estimated min. visitors to site for Fete de la Musique					<b>3217</b>	

#### Shop

	2018	2017
<b>April</b>	<b>571.62</b>	634.95
<b>May</b>	<b>575.94</b>	457.60
<b>June</b>	<b>230.77</b>	294.65
<b>Total £</b>	<b>1,378.33</b>	1,387.20

#### Tickets

	2018	2017
<b>April</b>	<b>1,397.50</b>	1,515.25
<b>May</b>	<b>833.75</b>	1,013.75
<b>June</b>	<b>652.75</b>	814.75
<b>Total £</b>	<b>2,884.00</b>	3,343.75

## Donations

	2018	2017
<b>April</b>	<b>64.51</b>	37.11
<b>May</b>	<b>27.00</b>	36.60
<b>June</b>	<b>27.98</b>	*
<b>Total £</b>	<b>119.49</b>	73.71

## Donations

\*The 2017 figures include monies received for the half term activities. Due to unavailability of staff, the donations for June 2017 were reported with July's figures in the following quarterly report.

## Income from Learning & Outreach Services : total £1,066.50 this quarter

	Schools Sessions	Activities & Events	School Loan & Reminiscence Boxes
<b>April</b>	£ 0	£ 177.00	£ 54.00
<b>May</b>	£ 222.00	£ 187.50	£0
<b>June</b>	£ 417.00	£ 9.00	£0
<b>Total £</b>	<b>£ 639.00</b>	<b>£ 373.50</b>	<b>£ 54.00</b>

## Income derived directly from Learning & Outreach Services

With the re-establishment of learning & outreach services, following the appointment of the Learning & Outreach Officer in autumn 2017, charges for loan boxes have been revised and for holiday activities there is now a charge of £1.50 per child to cover the cost of materials. The table summarises income from learning activities on and off site. It does not include income which indirectly results from learning and activities, e.g. shop income from souvenir sales, admissions from family visits when children who have been inspired by a school visit return with their families.

## Trip Advisor

Saffron Walden Museum has once again been awarded a TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence for consistently impressing visitors. The Museum was presented with the certificate based on a 4.5 out of 5 star rating on the travel and tourism review website during 2018. It is the fourth time the Museum has received the award. Reviews posted on the website have been very positive, with customers describing it as "excellent" and "a wonderful surprise".

## Museum Shop

The Museum Visitor Services and Admin Officer continues to introduce new lines of stock. Having analysed the results of the Market Research undertaken with visitors at the Welcome Desk, she has launched the first ever 'Saffron Walden Museum Fridge Magnet' which features the ancient Egyptian painted coffin and Saffron Walden Museum text and retails at £3.50. This has already been well received. The shop is kept fully stocked during peak periods such as half term holidays and displays reflect current exhibitions. Investigations are continuing into options for card payment facilities.

## 4.4 Publicity, Marketing, Social Media and New Website

### Publicity and Marketing

Publication	Advert	Date / Notes
SW Town Council Official Guide and Map	Full page Advert & Editorial (Generic Museum)	This will run for 2 years
Select Traveller Magazine	1/4 page advert and editorial (Generic Museum) +	May issue, to cover

	on-line, social media	3 months
www.visitsaffronwalden.gov.uk	ENHANCED advert including hyperlinks (Generic Museum)	Runs for a year
Walden Local	19x4 Advert in The Young Ones issue (Events and Exhibition)	April 5
Walden Local	19x4 Advert in May Hidden Treasures issue (Events and Exhibition)	May 23
Primary Times	1/8 page advert in Primary Times in North & Mid Essex - Issue 109 (Events and Exhibition)	May half term edition
East of England GROUP visitor guide	1/2 page advertisement (Generic Museum)	Runs for a year
East of England Visitor guide	1/2 page advertisement (Generic Museum)	Runs for a year

### Published Articles (in print and on-line)

Publication	Article	Date
Saffron Walden Flyer	Special events at Saffron Walden Museum	April
Walden Local	New Community display – Paul Daw Commemoration	April 5
Walden Local	Launch of new Learning and Outreach Services	April 5
Walden Local	Easter Craft Activities – Book Binding	April 11
Walden Local	Easter Craft Activities- Peg animals	April 18
Walden Local	Chairman’s Charity Event at Museum	April 25
Saffron Walden Flyer	Object of the Month and what’s on listing	May
Saffron Walden Flyer	Front cover feature: Museum Photo	May
Walden Local	May Day celebration	May 10
Walden Local	Out and About Editorial – events and outreach	May 23
Saffron Walden Flyer	Special events at Saffron Walden Museum	June
Walden Local	George Stacey Gibson talk	June 6
Walden Local	Get Busy for Wallace’s Great Big Bake Off	June 6
Walden Local	Tea Party celebration for museum volunteers	June 20
Walden Local	Fete de la Musique – events at museum	June 20
Walden Local	Bake Off Results photo- front page	June 27
Saffron Walden Reporter	Various issues featuring the museum as a venue for the Fete de la Music	April - June

### Exhibition and Events listings

Exhibition and Events are advertised on the following 'What's On' listings (in print and on-line):

- Salad Days
- UDC Newsletter
- Bishops Stortford TIC
- Flyer Online
- Net Mums

### Social Media and Email Newsletter

Twitter	1917 followers
Facebook	78 likes (as recorded on 12 July)
Instagram	189 followers

## Saffron Walden Museum Website – Statistics for this quarter

	Visits	Unique Visitors
<b>April</b>	2,770	2,251
<b>May</b>	1,913	1,437
<b>June</b>	1,738	1,244
<b>TOTAL for Q1</b>	<b>6,421</b>	<b>4,932</b>

**Visits:** the number of visits made by all visitors. (This could be described as the number of "sessions", implying the possibility of multiple pages per visit and multiple visits per unique visitor).

**Unique Visitor:** the number of persons or computers (hosts) that have made at least 1 hit on 1 page of the website during the current period. If a user makes several visits during this period, it is counted only once. Visitors are tracked by IP address, so if multiple users are accessing the website from the same IP (such as a home or office network), they will be counted as a single unique visitor.

## 5 Education, Events and Outreach

### 5.1 Education

#### **Analysis of use of Learning Services and Pupil Numbers**

	Children	Adults
No. of pupils in sessions taught by Learning Officer in Museum*	210	25
No. of pupils in independent visits to Museum *	26	4
No. of pupils taught in visits out to schools by Learning Officer	0	
No. of pupils benefiting from loan boxes (details in table below)	30	1
<b>Total users of Museum Learning Services =</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>34</b>

**Loan and Reminiscence boxes:** 3 boxes used by a total of 94 children and 5 adults

Box	Borrowers	Purpose	Users		
			Children	Adults	Total
Ancient Greece	Great Chesterford School	Class room learning	30	1	31
Rocks	Rickling Primary School	Class Room Learning	32	2	34
Pre History	Rickling Primary School	Class Room Learning	32	2	34
			94	5	99

### 5.2 Events on-sites (in Museum and grounds and at Shire Hill Store

The Museum was delighted to host the Chairman's Charity Event on 17 April, supporting the Chairman's charities of Essex Wildlife Trust and Support4Sight, both of which also have links with the Museum. All curatorial staff were on hand with objects and specimens from the stored collection to show, and objects to handle with a light-hearted activity. The evening promoted the district's heritage, the Museum and Castle site and the work of the two charities.

Wallace's Great Big Bake of was held in the Museum grounds on June the 16<sup>th</sup>. Support was given by local business with the kind donation of prizes from Waitrose, Cook, Tesco's, Harts Books and Steamer Trading. The new Council Chairman, Cllr Lesley Wells and Adrienne Powell from The Wildflower Kitchen kindly judged the cakes and presented the prizes.

The Learning & Outreach Officer worked closely with Council colleagues and Dementia Friends / Uttlesford Dementia Alliance to launch other Museum's first dementia-friendly activities in June, so the lack of uptake was disappointing, although we received excellent feedback from those who attended. The Museum will now concentrate efforts on marketing reminiscence boxes and sessions to care homes.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Visitors</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> April	Easter Crafts – Concertina Book	147
12 <sup>th</sup> April	Easter Crafts – Peg animals	200
21 <sup>st</sup> Feb – 18 <sup>th</sup> April	Chick Hatching project – observed by visitors to the Museum during the Easter holidays	-
17 April	UDC Chairman’s Charity Event	40
5 <sup>th</sup> May	May Day celebration	38
10 May	Leah Mellor’s leaving party	30
15 and 22 May	Dementia-friendly object handling and activity	2
18 May	Museums at Night with moth trail and plants under UV light as insects see them.	18
16 June	Wallace’s Great Big Bake Off – held in the grounds so numbers are approximate	30
24 June	Fete de la Musique with free entry (music in the grounds and in the gallery) Figures in Visitors column are for Museum visits only but it is estimated that at least 300 people enjoyed the music in the ground	300
26 June	U3A self-guided art group visit, sketching in the galleries, estimated	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>811</b>

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

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>No. Attending</b>
19 May	Linton Children’s Book festival, approximate nos.	50
11 June	George Stacey Gibson, The Naturalist. Talk by Natural Sciences Officer, S Kenyon, for Saffron Walden Museum Society at the Parish Rooms, Saffron Walden	63
	<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>

**Other Museums and Local Groups supported (Uttlesford) 9** groups supported, **11** meetings  
Museum staff have attended meetings, site visits, undertaken work or given advice to:

- Essex Field Club – assisting third new Treasurer (Natural Sciences Officer, S Kenyon)
- Special Roadside Verges project – 2 meetings, ecological survey programme for 2018, printing survey forms for surveyors, order of Health and Safety equipment, planning condition compliance at Stebbing (Natural Sciences Officer, S Kenyon)
- Sustainable Uttlesford - 1 meeting and report for another meeting (Natural Sciences Officers, S Kenyon, J Lombard)
- Searchers metal-detecting club – 1 meeting (Curator)
- Saffron Walden Heritage Development Forum – 1 meeting (Curator)
- Fry Art Gallery – 2 committee meetings, 1 meeting with Museum Society on Schedule 3 transfer of picture, advice on planning moving collections (Curator)
- Fete de la Musique – 2 site meetings and liaison with Saffron Walden Arts Trust organisers for use of Museum and grounds as a venue; emergency call-out early on Sunday morning re. electricity supply (Curator and Security Officer)
- Chesterfords Local History & Archaeology Society – reference for grant application for archaeological ‘Big Dig’ project
- Meeting with Cannon Chris Bishop from the Church, re borrowing items for Heritage day,

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

- Museums Essex trustees meeting (Curator)

### Local Performance Indicators

Definition	Q1 Actual	Q1 Target	Annual Target 2018-19
Visitors PI 22 SI 12c	3,217	3,400	14,000
Users PC 01 CI 39	9,890	10,500	40,000

### Notes on Performance Indicators

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

**Users** are all those engaging with the Museum Service in person or through other media, and include:

- those visiting the site (visitors, as above)
- those attending off-site events (e.g. talk or other off-site activity by Museum staff)
- those using the Museum ‘remotely’ (enquiries, research and services by phone, email, fax and letter and website visits using ‘Visits’)

### Comments on this quarter’s figures:

**Visitors:** 5% below target. Long spell of hot weather and competing outdoor events have made it harder to attract large numbers for weekend events and activities.

**Users:** 6% below target, mainly due to fall-off in website visits. No clear reason but probable factors include:

people spending less time indoors on internet in long spell of hot weather

post of Collections Officer vacant May-June has stretched staff and despite best efforts it has been difficult to maintain level of social media and blog activity which drives people to the website

# **Main Museum activities and items to note for the next quarter (April-June 2018)**

## **1 Museum Management and Staff**

Support Worker entitlement for Natural Sciences Officer (jobshare) S Kenyon to be resolved; support is currently being provided by casual staff.

New Collections Officer (Human History) to start.

## **2 Buildings and Site**

No major planned works anticipated this quarter.

## **3 Collections and Research**

Natural sciences volunteers are assisting S. Kenyon with documentation of the natural sciences collections. Planning next major intake of archaeological archives from Stansted Airport (Framework Archaeology).

## **4 Displays and Visitor Services**

- Installing *Worlds Under Glass* exhibition 31<sup>st</sup> July- 10<sup>th</sup> of August with private view on Friday 10 August 6 – 7.30pm
- ‘Piano Hoard’ exhibit to be installed (date tbc)
- Work with Eastern Region Textile Forum on next exhibition *Collections Recrafted*

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

- School Visit 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of July – All Saints School from Maldon – Taxidermy
- School Visit 10<sup>th</sup> of July, Weatherfield Primary – Egypt
- Visiting Derek Frampton- taxidermist, to film resources for *Worlds Under glass* exhibition and for possible use in the gallery interpretation in the future.
- School Visit 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of July, Soaring High School, Egypt
- Summer holiday activities 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of August
- Talk for Museum Society 10<sup>th</sup> of September (Learning & Outreach Officer)
- Roald Dahl Day and Open Heritage weekend – 15<sup>th</sup> of September
- Outreach Visit to RA Butler school 17<sup>th</sup> of September
- Visits by Takeley Local History Society to Shirehill store and by Cambridgeshire Association for Local History to Museum in September