

1 Museum Management and Staff

1.1 Management

Museum Service

This is the first quarter since April with a full staff team in place, and the planned changes to weekend staffing (as described in last quarter's report) have finally been put into place. Both the Museum and Shirehill store have experienced increasing problems with computer (and phone) connectivity this quarter, due to various and complex issues, mainly relating to broadband and wi-fi connections. Our thanks go to the Council's IT section who have done all they can to improve our situation as a remote site; unfortunately some issues are outside the Council's direct control, and a broadband upgrade by BT in December led to loss of the Museum's computer and phone connections for most of a week. The new broadband is now running well, and we hope that the more reliable and speedy connection will continue.

Forward Plan

Discussions with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) have resumed regarding a bid to the Resilient Heritage grant programme, for funds to investigate audience development and a feasibility study to improve the museum and its income-generation. A bid is now in preparation for the deadline on 18 January, when the Resilient Heritage programme closes. The HLF will be rolling out a new heritage funding framework during 2019, which may provide further funding opportunities.

The Arts Council England (ACE) have finally announced a new timetable for Accreditation reviews according to which the Museum is now in 'batch 8'. We can expect to receive our letter inviting us to re-apply for Accreditation in January 2020 and will have until July 2020 to submit our application. This will involve a review of all Museum policies and plans, which can now be spread over 2019-20.

1.2 Staff, Volunteers and Work Experience

Staff

From the beginning of December, Jill Knight and Jamie Milne, two members of the Museum's casuals team, have stepped into their new permanent weekend and Bank Holiday roles, while remaining members of the casuals team continue to work some shifts and provide additional support where needed.

Volunteers

We extended a warm welcome to our new Front Desk volunteers Jean Peat and Carol Wiseman. As usual, our volunteers contribute considerably to the Museum: 707 hours this quarter

Volunteers	Estimated Hours
Collections volunteers and exhibition work	
Hamish started back inventorying the photograph collection (4hrs p. week)	48
Volunteers including Paula helping with inorganic store items move and ceramics gallery decant (Nov-Dec) – Paula fortnightly 6 hrs per wk, plus additional vols 10 hours total	40
Ian adding accession register entries to Excel spreadsheet (6 hrs per week)	60
Len Pole adding detail to Modes records for World Cultures collection (3 hrs per wk)	36
Jane and David Laing have continued working on the Evelyn Coleman diaries	10

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Natural Sciences volunteers	
Heather Douglas updated location records in Modes Complete. Julia Wentworth assisted with identification of specimens. Verge volunteers Tony Morton, Ken Rivett, Mike Rowley, Margaret Rufus and Heather and Paul Salvidge checked the full with cuts at 44 special roadside verges sites.	25
Cali Holberry assisting with deep clean of Geology Gallery (ca. 2 hrs/wk)	6
Learning & Outreach Volunteers	
Jane Evans continues to provide support to the learning officers, regularly contributing 2.5hrs a week. Support by all learning and outreach volunteers regularly given to help with activities and events.	40
Admin volunteers	
Mary Adams provides invaluable support with the financial administration, working regularly at least 5 hours per week. Ian Sharpe assists with additional admin work	65
Welcome Desk volunteers	
The Welcome Desk volunteers are the 'Face of the Museum' they provide a friendly welcome for visitors; sell tickets and merchandise; provide information about the museum and direct enquiries to members of staff.	377
Total hours contributed by all volunteers for this quarter	707

1.3 Training and Seminars Attended

Date	Course and Staff
2 Oct	MODES Day Banish the Backlog and AGM 2018, John Bunyan Museum, Bedford. Natural Sciences Officer, James Lumbard.
3 Oct	iTrent HR system training Claire Croft, UDC. Natural Sciences Officer, Sarah Kenyon
30 Oct	Basics of Museum Display techniques – Norwich Castle. Learning Officer, Charlotte Pratt
29 Oct	UPerform HR system training Claire Croft, UDC. Natural Sciences Officer, Sarah Kenyon
8 Nov	Autism in Museums – Hitchin Museum. Learning Officer, Charlotte Pratt
12 Nov	Association for Cultural Enterprises AGM (<i>re Museum Shop Sunday</i>) London Transport Museum, Museum Visitor Services and Admin Officer, Wendy-Jo Atter
22 Nov 24 Nov	Casual Museum Assistants & Visitor Service Assistants - refresher training by Jenny Oxley and Stefan Shambrook, and Dementia Friends Training by Mary for Casuals, VSAs and desk volunteers.
28 Nov	Share Natural History Network meeting at University Zoology Museum, Cambridge University. Natural Sciences Officers, Sarah Kenyon and James Lumbard

1.4 Health & Safety

Advice has been sought from Essex Fire & Rescue Service to upgrade the Museum's fire alarm system to 'double-knock' status. This would ensure that in the event of a fire starting out-of-hours, the Fire Service would attend automatically if the signal indicated a strong likelihood of an actual fire rather than a false alarm. Otherwise two Museum keyholders would have to attend a call-out, make an inspection and then call the Fire Service; this would cause a delay with potentially catastrophic consequences if a serious fire got underway. A quote for the necessary work has been obtained from our fire alarm providers, Sunfish, to be discussed with senior Council officers.

2 Buildings and Site

2.1 Museum Building

External works

Repairs and repainting of all external windows, doors and frames commenced in October and continued throughout the quarter. The roof has been inspected and hoppers/gullies cleared of debris by Council operatives in mid-December.

Internal work

New larder fridge installed in kitchen. Computer network upgrade work by IT at the Museum. The Ceramics Gallery has been cleared for redecoration in the New Year.

2.2 Museum Site

Car Park

The white and yellow lines designating parking spaces were repainted in early November. An extra three spaces were added during this operation.

Driveway

Further repairs to the brickwork edges to the Museum drive, were carried out during December.

2.3 Shirehill Store

Fire Assessment by My Fire.

2.4 Grounds and Castle Site

Perimeter wall

The brick and flint perimeter wall was damaged over the Christmas period on the Church Street / Castle Hill corner, presumably by an out of control vehicle.

3 Collections and Research

3.1 Acquisitions and Disposals

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

- Gold Merovingian coin and two pre-Roman Iron Age coins purchased from local metal detectorist.
- Grocer's Shop model.
- Burmese Child's outfit c. 1920s.
- Commemorative tablecloth
- collections of local history photographs, sports programmes and shop receipts.

3.2 Collections Care and Conservation

Cover placed on cracked glacial erratic boulder in Museum grounds to protect it from damage by frost.

Insect Pests

Pest traps in Museum stores and galleries were monitored. As a result of finding insect pests the Workroom was reorganised, decluttered and cleaned. The Inorganics store and North West Essex wildlife diorama case

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were fumigated.

A deep clean of the Geology Gallery underway, including display cases and object on display.

3.3 Documentation

Backlog / updates	New Acquisitions	Backlog (existing collections not previously catalogued on Modes)	Edits and Updates to existing records
Human history collections	50	300 (inorganic store/ceramics gallery/toys & games/photo & doc archives)	885 (ceramics gallery & inorganic store/toys & games cases)
Natural sciences collections	0	31	181
Total	50	331	1066

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

Archive documents and set dressing loaned in for preparing Your Stories (Horticultural Society Bicentenary) display, Jan-Aug 2019 in the Community Case.

3.5 Loans Out

WW1 Schools loan box to Ashdon Parish Council for WW1 Centenary Commemorations.

A loan request from Colchester Museum is anticipated for the Museum Society Board meeting on 29 January; this will be for archaeological treasure finds for a major exhibition.

3.6 Object Identification and Enquiries

Object identifications this quarter: **7** identification enquiries (13 objects and specimens) (4 Human History and 3 Natural Sciences)

Collections Enquiries this quarter: **59** (49 human history, 10 natural sciences)

3.7 Research

10 researchers this quarter, including:

- Glenys Wass, Collections Manager at Vivacity Peterborough, visited Shirehill store and its collections to research options for their new store.
- Researcher from Butterfly Conservation accessed special roadside verges site and species records for a project to improve sites for the Four-spotted moth and Liquorice Piercer moth in Uttlesford. She also viewed Chalkhill blue butterfly specimens.
- Art UK visited in October to photograph a selection of the Museum's sculptures for their national sculpture cataloguing project.
- Maori descendants attending an academic conference at Cambridge University visited the Museum in early December to handle Maori clubs on display in the World Cultures gallery and shared information about their descendants.
- Researcher viewed and photographed coffin lid and associated items in Egyptian Gallery in November.

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- Saffron Walden Town Library Society researchers working on a celebration of the 1910 Pageant researched the Museum's archive of the original event.
- Dr. John Flack, Hon. Sec. PCC at St Mary the Virgin Church in Farnham, Essex brought in a Tithe Commissioners Map of their Village of Farnham, Essex c. 1842 for advice on its conservation and content.

4 Displays and Visitor Services

4.1 Permanent Galleries

Object of the Month featured a bronze Romano-British wine strainer for October, a retired Saffron Walden British Legion standard (to link with Remembrance Sunday and the Centenary of the First World War) for November, and the Piano Coin Hoard acquisition featured as December's Object of the Month.

Curiosity Corner, an initiative by the Learning & Outreach Officer, has featured :

Insects, Spiders and Scorpions - using objects from the collections and new objects from the learning collection kindly donated by Vic Lelliot . This display was used to link with the "spooky" theme for Museums at Night at half-term.

Natural History Christmas: A collections of natural history objects associated with Christmas, including a Christmas tree, Christmas beetles, Christmas cactus and poinsettia.

Approximately 400 items on display in the Museum's Ceramics Gallery have been carefully packed up and moved to temporary storage in the Museum to enable decorating and maintenance work to be undertaken. Approximately 800 collections items stored in the Museum's inorganic store were inventoried, catalogued, packed and moved to Shire Hill to enable the ceramics and glass to be stored. This project was organised by the Collections Officer (Human History) and local removal firm Pretlove's assisted with the removal of heavy social history items to the Shirehill store.

Display improvements have been made to the Toys and Games cases in the Costume and Textiles gallery. The Treasure case in the Archaeology Gallery has been redisplayed. New exhibits include the Iron Age and Merovingian coins described under acquisitions, and a silver Roman ring with an engraved gemstone.

4.2 Temporary Exhibitions

Collections Re-Crafted by the Eastern Region Textile Forum runs in the temporary gallery until Sunday 3rd February, when it will be replaced by an in-house social history and archaeology exhibition entitled *Living with History*.

The Community Case display on the history of the Saffron Walden Football Club came to an end in December and is being changed over to celebrate the Bicentenary of the SW Horticultural Society.

4.3 Visitor Services

	Public		Schools incl. adults		Total	
	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017
October	1026	1406	61	148	1087	1554
November	461	575	111	105	572	680
December	410	541	0	7	410	548
Total	1897	2522	172	260	2069	2782

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Shop

	2018	2017
October	468.94	749.30
November	246.17	296.00
December	253.37	377.47
Total £	968.48	1422.77

Tickets

	2018	2017
October	1164.20	1499.75
November	596.50	718.00
December	496.50	658.50
Total £	2257.20	2876.25

Donations

	2018	2017
October	47.48	98.49
November	28.84	53.81
December	25.40	40
Total £	101.72	192.30

Visitors

Visitor figures have been lower than expected. Informal soundings have been taken with other museum colleagues in the area, and it appears to have been a general trend this summer, lasting into the autumn; during the heatwave and subsequent fine weather, people have been spending more leisure time visiting the coast and outdoor locations, or taking short holiday breaks elsewhere. Lack of space to accommodate large school groups is also deterring some schools and other potential users (e.g. scouts). Increasingly, schools are engaging with the Museum through in-classroom initiatives (new loan boxes and on-site visits).

Shop

For the first time, Saffron Walden Museum took part in Museum Shop Sunday, an International Cultural Shopping Day, where members of the public are encouraged to shop for inspirational gifts offered by cultural organisations. On this day we launched our new product range, inspired by our collections, and created *'The Stories behind the Products'* featuring Wallace the Lion, the Coffin Lid and the Viking Necklace.

The Museum Visitor Services and Admin Officer has developed a retail strategy to reflect topical events showcasing specific Museum Shop Stock, for example, October featured Museum Branded Torches for Museums at Night, Witches Cats and Slime for the Halloween Half Term; November featured war related books and colouring activities for Remembrance, a sale of assorted tumble stones for 'Black Friday' the new product range launch for Museum Shop Sunday and December featured affordable alternative Christmas presents for the Christmas Half Term.

It should be noted that, despite reduced visitor numbers, the average spend per visitor is now 46.8p, compared to 31.9p for the same quarter in 2016 (*2,665 visitors and the shop took £849.75*)

Donations

The downward trend in donations may reflect the charge introduced to cover materials for children's holiday activities where previously a donation was requested.

Income from Learning & Outreach Services: total £756.50 this quarter

	Schools Sessions	Activities & Events	School Loan & Reminiscence Boxes
Oct	£150	£39	£36
Nov	£489	£30.50	£12
Dec	£0	£0	£0
Total £	£639	£69.50	£48

4.4 Publicity, Marketing, Social Media and New Website

Publicity and Marketing

Publication	Advert	Date
East of England GROUP visitor guide	Museum Advert	2018 issue
East of England Visitor guide	Museum Advert	2018 issue
SW Town Council Official Guide and Map	Museum Advert and full page editorial	2018-19 issue
www.visitsaffronwalden.gov.uk	Museum information and what's on listing	ongoing
Walden Local	Autumn Exhibition and October Half Term activities	17 Oct
UDC website	Museum Shop Sunday 'spinner' advert	Nov
SW Tourist Information Centre	Museum Shop Sunday poster	Nov
Association for Cultural Enterprises	<i>'places to visit on Museum Shop Sunday' ACE website (https://acenterprises.org.uk/museum-shop-sunday-2018)</i>	Nov

Published Articles (in print and on-line)

Publication	Article	Date
Saffron Walden Historical Journal	WW1 Centenary	Oct/Nov
Saffron Walden Flyer	Multiple articles included: Museum News, Object of the Month, Trip Advisor Award, what's on listing	Oct issue
Walden Local	"The Queen of Chardonnay" talk by Jacqui Hutton	03 Oct
Walden Local	New exhibition "Collections Recrafted" by members of Eastern Region Textile Forum (ERTF)	10 Oct
Saffron Walden Flyer	Museum news, object of the month, what's on listing	Nov issue
Walden Local	November's object of the month, the 2nd Saffron Walden Royal British Legion Branch Standard and 'Where is it' photograph competition (ERTF Wallace)	7 Nov
Saffron Walden Reporter	November's object of the month, the 2nd Saffron Walden Royal British Legion Branch Standard	8 Nov
Association for Cultural Enterprises (Weekly e-Bulletin)	Get Prepared for Museum Shop Sunday	16 Nov
Walden Local	Piano Treasure back in town at Museum	28 Nov
Saffron Walden Flyer	Museum news, object of the month, what's on listing	Dec issue
English Heritage	Image of Restormel castle painting - external exhibition display panel at Restormel Castle in Cornwall.	Dec 2018

Exhibition and Events listings

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

- Saffron Walden TIC
- Bishops Stortford TIC
- Saffron Walden Flyer Online
- Net Mums
- Salad Days

Social Media and Email Newsletter

Twitter	Followers: 1944
Facebook	Likes: 999
Instagram	Followers : 346

Saffron Walden Museum Website – Statistics for this quarter

	Visits	Unique Visitors
October	2,753	2,110
November	2,976	2,250
December	1,595	1,170
TOTAL for Q3	7,324	5,530

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.

Trip Advisor

The Museum now ranks number 2 out of 19 things to do in Saffron Walden on this travel and tourism review website. Of the 124 reviews, 70% rate us as 'Excellent' and the most recent one in December stated: *"A Great Discovery - We didn't expect much when we entered this museum, but were greatly surprised! Lots of interesting exhibits, and much larger than expected! Great value - well worth a visit!"*

5 Education, Events and Outreach

5.1 Education

Loan and Reminiscence boxes:

Box	Borrowers	Purpose	Users		
			Children	Adults	Total
Local History	SWCH	Local history project	300	6	306
Toys & Games	Great Chesterford School	To support toys and games topic and as a follow up to museum visit	30	2	32
Vikings	RAB	To support topic deliver and as a follow up to outreach visit	90	3	93
Victorians	Joy from a Local History Group	To support delivery of an education session on the Victorians that she delivered to a local school	30	4	34
Totals			450	15	465

Analysis of use of Learning Services and Pupil Numbers

	Children	Adults
No. of pupils in sessions taught by Learning Officer in Museum	173	31
No. of pupils in independent visits to Museum	5	1
No. of pupils taught in visits out to schools by Learning Officer	90	3
No. of pupils benefiting from loan boxes (details in table above)	450	15
Total users of Museum Learning Services =	718	50

5.2 Events on-site (in Museum and grounds and at Shire Hill Store)

Date	Event	Visitors
5 Oct	Private View of ERTF Collections Re-crafted exhibition	90
24 Oct	Kids activity – Up-cycled badge	42
25 Oct	Kids Activity – Cork Keyring	73
26 Oct	Museums at Night	47
30 Oct	Piano Hoard Launch	63
28 Nov	Vegetarian Taxidermy Session for WI	6
10 Dec	SWMS Christmas party	68
	Total	389

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

No off-site events or talks this quarter

Other Museums and Local Groups supported (Uttlesford) 5 groups supported, 5 meetings
Museum staff have attended meetings, site visits, undertaken work or given advice to:

- Essex Field Club - 1 meeting (Natural Sciences Officers, J Lumbar)
- Essex Wildlife Trust (Uttlesford) - 1 meeting (Natural Sciences Officers, S Kenyon)
- Special Roadside Verges project – 1 meeting, 2018 reports, distributing Health and Safety equipment, comments on 6 planning applications, broadband cabling work at SRVs, autumn cut and more missing posts (Natural Sciences Officer, S Kenyon)
- Sustainable Uttlesford - 1 meeting, 1 survey (Natural Sciences Officers, S Kenyon)
- Fry Art Gallery – 1 committee meeting (Curator)

Meetings, Support and Involvement in professional and other organisations outside Uttlesford

- SHARE AGM at Colchester 19 Nov – Curator
- Museums Essex meeting, Thurrock 2 Nov - Curator

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Local Performance Indicators

Definition	Q3 Actual	Q3 Target	Cumulative	Annual Target 2018-19
Visitors PI 22 SI 12c	2,069	3,100	8,601	14,000
Users PC 01 CI 39	10,020	9,500	30,226	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: Figures are disappointingly 32% under target. There has been a general downturn in visitors experienced in the museum sector over the summer and into early autumn due to the hot and fine weather changing people's visiting habits. More schools are engaging with the museum, but through off-site usage such as loans boxes. Lack of space is preventing visits by some large school and youth groups.

Users: 5% over target, thanks to continuing good level of engagement with the Museum's website and the new Schools Loans boxes reaching a bigger school audience in the classroom.

Main Museum activities and items to note for Q4 (Jan-March 2018)

1 Museum Management and Staff

HLF Resilient Heritage application to be submitted (result in March or April).
Work to begin on updating policies and procedures for Accreditation Renewal.

2 Buildings and Site

Refurbishment of windows, including two new frames to rear, some glass replacement and final external painting of frames, to continue through January. Scaffolding to be removed by mid February.
Internal repairs and repaint of Museum porch commencing January 21 (two days max.) and work on the Ceramics gallery scheduled to start on January 16.
Work on the Castle site, including a new gate, gravel floor and spotlights will probably start within this next quarter (Council and contractors).
Repairs to the flint and brick perimeter wall damaged over the Christmas period should be in hand within the next quarter (Council and contractors).

3 Collections and Research

Fund-raising and grant applications for treasure acquisition and medieval coin.
Ongoing backlog documentation and collections auditing work on the photograph and document archives stored at Shirehill with help from Human History volunteers. Audit and cataloguing of ceramics store at the Museum, in conjunction with improvements to Ceramics Gallery.
Natural Sciences Volunteers continue to update storage location changes with NSO Sarah Kenyon.
Work with Archaeology Volunteers to resume with sorting out plans and documentary archive from excavations, and preparing for large intake of archives from Stansted Airport later in the spring.

4 Displays and Visitor Services

Much work to be done for next exhibition *Living with History*, due to open with Private View on 16 Feb. Other demands on Curator's time especially HLF application have delayed work.
Your Stories display January -August 2019 to celebrate the Bicentenary of the SW Horticultural Society.
Display improvements to the Local History Gallery and Furniture Gallery.
Ceramics and Glassware to be moved back to Ceramics Gallery once painting and maintenance work completed, will be re-displayed with new additions to the displays.
Repair of Materials interactive in Discovery Centre.
Deep clean of Geology Gallery cases continues with Cali Holberry assisting NSO James Lumbard.

5 Education, Events and Outreach

New learning services leaflet to be posted out (has been emailed out to all schools in Essex already) to schools and care homes within Uttlesford + with a 25mile radius of Saffron Walden
15/01/19 – Outreach visit to Castle Camps Primary School on the topic of the Victorians + 2 loan boxes to be hired to support topic delivery in the school
22/01/19 – Dame Bradbury School to visit the Museum (60 pupils) for a taught session on the rock cycle
24/01/19 – Still in Stitches Textile Group (Harlow) visit
30/01/19 – Saint Mary's primary to visit to Museum (30 pupils) for a taught session "Animals in Space"
19-21 of February, half term activity days + Launch of Museum explorer backpacks
Jan 19 – New display in curiosity corner
1/03/19 Heritage School visit to the Museum (16 pupils) senses and adaptation in animals

