

## Curator's report to Museum Committee, Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020



As part of the Onwards and Upwards expansion project the Museum will be working through a detailed Activity Plan, approved by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). A key aspect of the plan involves our target audiences: people with disabilities, low income families, low income older people, 13-24 year olds and primary schools. Throughout this and subsequent reports points outlined below that are pertinent to these groups or to another key area of the Activity Plan will be highlighted in purple.

Clare Lyall - Curator and Head of Cultural and Neighbourhood Services

Hannah Lyddy - Museum Manager

David Birks - Learning and Outreach Officer

Nikki Ritson - Assistant Learning and Outreach Officer

Hanne Dahl - Collections and Exhibitions Officer

Tessa Kerslake - Marketing and Events Officer

Andrea Bartlett - Retail and Income Generation Officer

Richard Alley - Museum Assistant

### 1. STAFFING/ TRAINING

**1.1 Museum Staff** – Hanne Dahl, our Collections and Exhibitions Officer, left our team on the 15<sup>th</sup> June after deciding to return home to Denmark. We were very sad to see her go and are hugely appreciative for all her amazing work for the Museum. Owing to the Covid-19 Pandemic there is currently a freeze on recruiting new officers. So until at least the start of the new financial year the post will remain vacant.

**1.1.2 New Museum Officers** – Our two new NLHF funded team members both successfully passed their 3 month probationary periods at the beginning of April. We're now full steam ahead with Andrea Bartlett (Retail and Income Generation Officer) and Tessa Kerslake (Marketing and Events Officer).

**1.2 Staff development** – In April NR completed an e-learning Dementia Friends session on leading information sessions online and via social media.

**1.2.2 AB** has carried out free e-learning modules: Visual Merchandising micro course, Hiring diverse teams (prep for interns) and Coaching and mentoring (prep for interns) all with the Cultural Enterprises Academy.

**1.2.3 HD** has used YouTube to watch tutorials on how to edit in the Adobe Premier Pro programme - to be able to edit the film clips and audio for the new screens in our displays.

**1.2.4 TK** has completed the South West Museums, Development Programme e-learning course on Marketing, and taken part in their online webinar on Digital Accessibility.

**1.5 Value Exchange** - This quarter the team have sorely missed working with our volunteers due to the Covid- 19 crisis. We very much hope we can welcome them back soon. In the mean time we have been updating them via emails and phone calls.

### 2. OPERATIONAL

**2.1 Provisional Accreditation** – We are pleased to report that we were once again awarded Provisional Accreditation status by the Arts Council. Initially this would have lasted for 12 months but due to the current crisis ACE have extended all Accreditation periods for a year. This means we will not need to reapply for full Accreditation until early 2022, which gives us some much needed breathing space.

**2.2 Copyright Policy** - HD has been drafting a new copyright policy for the Museum. This covers specific copyright questions relating to the collection and general guidance for visitors. A simplified version will be available via the website, at the front desk and will also form part of induction of new staff and volunteers.

**2.3 Fire Management Plan** – This has now been finalized and shared with the team.

**2.4 Education Strategy** - David has been working on the Learning and Outreach strategy (part of the Activity Plan ref: 3.1). A draft should be ready in the next month.

## 3. COLLECTIONS

**3.1 Library database** - Despite the lockdown it has been possible to work on projects at home including the online database project. With the opening of the library and research facility in the new museum it made sense to make our extensive book database searchable to visitors both online and physically in the library. At the moment the inventory of books can only be accessed by trained staff or volunteers via the collection database 'Modes'. To enable greater access, a user friendly interface was needed which links Modes with a simple search engine on our website. We applied for funding to cover the cost and were successful. We hope to soon appoint a contractor to carry out the work.

**3.2 Film material** - HD has been editing film and audio material from our collection for our new AV screens. The museum has an extensive archive of oral history from Trowbridge mill workers. Most of this material has never been seen or heard by visitors before.

**3.3 Additional display case** - After receiving funding from local parishes and Bob Charmbury, we are now able to have a new case built on the top floor of the museum by Beaufort Bespoke. The case will contain some of the garments made with cloth from the Trowbridge mills which we have acquired over the last couple of years, with the help of the Creative Wiltshire grant. It is great to be able to show the visitors the 'end' products after the cloth had left the mills, like the Mary Quant dress.

## 4. EXHIBITIONS

**4.1** We are still hoping to curate the 'Illuminating the overlooked' exhibition in partnership with local artists including Jen Hamblin from Court Street Gallery, but in light of the pandemic we may need to scale down the scope a little.

**4.2 On and Up:** We have finished writing and editing our pieces of text for the new Museum displays. Nikki has produced an 'accident book' as part of the new displays made of a series of unusual deaths and injuries found during researching, she is currently sourcing a publisher to get this made up.

## 6. LEARNING & OUTREACH

The last quarter is, unsurprisingly, marked by lots of cancellations due to the corona virus lockdown. What would have been a very busy quarter with moving back into the museum, lots of schools workshops and two sets of holiday workshops, has been different but productive in a different way.

**6.1 School Workshops:** We only ran one school workshop this quarter – the second of our three woollen industry sessions for a year 2 class at North Bradley. This workshop looked at George Haden and John Dyer and their contribution to the technology. The class examined how steam engines work and how Dyer's fulling machine improved the woollen cloth made in the town. Cancelled workshops included Oasis Longmeadow, Holt, West Ashton and Christian Malford, North Bradley (2 sessions).

**6.2** NR provided online help to parents during lockdown, on a local history project and VE day. Each had pictures of Trowbridge and some questions and discussions (and answers) that could be had with children. Nikki provided local landmarks and fun facts to use for the families daily walks during lockdown.

**6.3 Holiday Workshops:** All our holiday art and craft sessions were cancelled. The Shires had also invited us to run a Mother's Day craft on a Saturday. This was due as lockdown hit. We have also cancelled all our future holiday activities up to early August. At present we cannot say when our next holiday workshops will take place.

**6.4 Monday Crafts:** These were interrupted by our relocation back to the Museum and now have been cancelled for the foreseeable future.

**6.5 Lifelong Learning:** We managed to run one activity this quarter when David gave a talk on the Wiltshire Woollen industry to West Wilts U3A local study group. Our programme of guided walks has been suspended.

**6.6 Reminiscence/History Talks:** Several reminiscence sessions and history talks planned with Shockerwick and Mill Street were cancelled.

**6.7 Not In A Pub Quiz:** The March quiz at Leyker's squeezed in just before lockdown occurred (it wasn't classed as a mass participation event) and after a hard fought contest Septic Tanks won. An alternative on-line version of the quiz took place in May. David devised a shortened and more cryptic quiz for people to try at home. A number of teams took part and really enjoyed it. Ritson's Rejects won again, confirming their status as the team to beat! The quiz will continue online whilst social distancing is still the norm – we'd encourage the committee members to have a go.

**6.8 Handling Collection:** A number of resources have been purchased for our handling collection. These are for our new school loan boxes as specified in the activity plan (Ref: 3.8). These include two local history boxes containing resources reflecting 1000 years of the area's history and two new toys and games loans boxes. David continues the lengthy and detailed job of sorting, boxing and cataloguing the handling collections.

**6.9 Education Store Racking:** We purchased and installed racking for the new education storeroom, which houses our extensive handling collections. David also purchased a mobile cloakroom for when we start to take school bookings in the new museum.

**6.7 Fairy Tale Book:** David and Nikki completed their illustrations for the new fairy tale book that will go in the breakout area. David then worked out layouts for the stories we have illustrated. We have an online competition to illustrate two rhymes, which is still ongoing.

**6.8 Trowbridge history hunters:** Last year the idea of a self-led booklet for children and families was discussed. Nikki has started working on this and plans to have it available for when the museum reopens. It is a booklet made up of quizzes, historic facts and activities based on different areas of Trowbridge.

## **7. MARKETING/PROMOTION AND DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT**

**7.1 Newsletters** - Nikki continues to produce monthly newsletters following the project's development found at [trowbridgemuseum.wordpress.com](http://trowbridgemuseum.wordpress.com). She has also been creating weekly 'stumpy says' facts for Tessa to use online.

**7.2 Monday Makes** - The team has been recording a series of crafts for our socials as part of 'Monday Makes'. These are aimed at different ages and are quick easy crafts to follow along with at home. Since returning on site, we have started recording and producing our weekly 'vlog' style updates again, showing the progress being made at the museum.

**7.3 Social Media Marketing** – The Museum's social media has been working to a structured timetable, with a focus on engaging with the #MuseumFromHome digital event. This has included Making Mondays craft sessions, Project Updates, Stumpy Says facts, and promotion of our digital events such as Not in a Pub Quiz and VE Day celebrations. We have also engaged with content from other organisations and national days, including featuring our staff highlights from the collection for #MuseumFromHome day.

## **8. TOURISM AND EVENTS**

**Engagement figures this quarter (Feb, March, April):** Schools: 178, Other Groups: 447.

**8.1 Trowbridge Heritage Festival 2020** – Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Museum had to make the difficult decision to cancel the festival due to the uncertainty surrounding events. We will take the ideas we had for this festival, and work on/adapt them for the rescheduled Heritage Festival 2021.

**8.2 Museum Re-Launch** – We have decided to hold both a community soft launch and an 'official' more formal event. We hope the former will happen this October and the latter in early 2021.

## **9. PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

**9.1** We are maintaining relationships as best we can at the moment, keeping lines of communication open and hoping that many of our planned collaborations can get going again in the next few months.

## **10. RETAIL AND INCOME GENERATION**

**10.1 Fundraising** - AB has spent a considerable amount of time researching other museums and cultural establishments approach to fundraising, reading case studies and other on line resources from the Institute of Fundraising, to plan and prepare a new strategy for the museum. Once we have a final draft in place we will be pleased to share this with the Committee.

**10.2 Internships** - The University of Exeter asked if we would like to take part in their 'Professional Pathways' student internship programme for a second time (the students are paid by the university and work for the host as a secondment for 35 hours), due to Covid 19 this has to be a remote placement. AB prepared a job specification and project brief for two research roles for our potential 'adopt an object' and a 'major donors / sponsors' scheme. We had nine applicants and interviewed seven students by Skype on 27 May, the two successful candidates started working on the projects from 8th June and will complete their reports by the end of the month.

**10.3 Grant Applications** - During April AB submitted a grant application to South West Museums Development to their small Grant Big Improvement scheme to develop an online index for the museum's Library and Research Hub. I'm pleased to report that on the 15<sup>th</sup> May we were notified that our bid had been successful and were awarded £1000 towards our project.



Trowbridge Museum  
The Shires  
Trowbridge  
BA14 8AT

15 May 2020

Dear Andrea

Thank you for your application to the South West Museum Development Small Grant: Big Improvement scheme funded by the Arts Council England.

Thank you for your application to the South West Museum Development Small Grant: Big Improvement scheme funded by the Arts Council England.

I am pleased to confirm that South West Museum Development will be offering your museum a grant to support the project that you have proposed.

Grant request: £1,000

Grant awarded: £1,000

Project contact: Andrea Bartlett

**10.3.1** AB also applied to the Arts Council Covid- 19 Emergency Fund on behalf of the Museum, endeavouring to recoup some of the extra costs incurred due to the lockdown. Unfortunately, due to the unprecedented level of demand from many different arts and cultural organisations experiencing extreme financial difficulties our bid was not successful.

**10.3.2** We have begun work to prepare applications for submission to the Esme Fairburn Trust in September for funding towards GIS display cabinets. This will enable us to borrow star items from other museums for special and touring exhibitions in the future.

**10.4 Retail** - The reception and shop area in the museum are gradually taking shape, the EPOS till will be delivered at the end of June. Trading accounts have been set up with suppliers, although orders have not been placed yet to the spending freeze. Plans are developing nicely for product development ideas, featuring hand woven greetings cards, bookmarks and other branded souvenirs. The shop storeroom shelving is in place in preparation for future deliveries, and the existing 'Friends 'merchandise has been sorted and carefully stored.



## 11. EVALUATION

Beth Thomas from Culture Force (our evaluation consultants) has completed a programme for the final stages of evaluation needed for the Onwards and Upwards project. This includes focus group sessions with Staff and volunteers as well as other forms of feedback from our users.

## 12. MUSEUM EXPANSION PROJECT (CL)

The building works element have been completed. Practical completion for the works was achieved on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June. Some minor snagging issues were to be resolved by the 25<sup>th</sup> June.

The external emergency staircase has finally been removed exposing more of the original building and the adjoining groundworks have been made good. The development of the Museum's interior displays and interpretation are nearing completion.

### 12.1 Project History

Our successful round one pass with the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) secured £100,000 towards the development stage, which allowed us to complete the work required to complete our successful round two application to the NLHF for £1,172,500 million, which was submitted in May 2017. The Museum sought funding from others of around £200,000 and the town council will be making a contribution of around £1 million, funded by reserves and borrowing (costing just under £50,000 per annum) over the 25 years of a new lease for two floors of Home Mill.

Improvements to signage outlined in the *Town Centre* section will include the museum and other historic locations, cross-referenced in the new museum displays and visible from the new top floor windows. In addition, we will improve the signs on the approaches to the town. The new museum is due to open in late Summer 2020.

Trowbridge Museum must undergo Accreditation every four years. This is an external independent assessment and covers every aspect of the Museum operation, from being appropriately resourced to employing suitably qualified staff. Without Accreditation, the Museum would not be able to obtain major funding from external bodies including the NLHF. Trowbridge Museum underwent a semi-assessment during 2017/18 and therefore much of the focus of work prior to commencing the Development Phase of the project was on Accreditation.

During the closure period (from June 2019) the Museum implemented the project **Activity Plan**, which was developed during the Development Phase, and enabled our Learning and Outreach service to continue to offer a series of workshops in other locations and outreach services. The Museum also continues to work with our partners to enhance Trowbridge as a tourism destination, supported by the Information Services department.

**12.2 Design & Interpretation** - The staff are in the process of completing the interpretation panels for the displays. Work on this will reach its final phase when all the collections have been returned to the Museum site.

**12.3.1 Roof** – This has now been completed. As of the 23<sup>rd</sup> June there were still signs of two small leaks which was causing a small amount of water ingress. The roofing contractor is to return to site to assess the cause and develop a solution on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June. CL to give verbal update.

**12.3.2 Second and Thirds Floor** – The plywood wood screen within the Learning and Outreach facilities has now been painted the same colour as the other internal walls.

**12.3.3 Ground floor-Lift works** – Completed.

**12.3.4 Shires** – Works completed.

**12.4 National Lottery Funding monitoring** – As a result of the Covid 19 Pandemic we held out meeting remotely on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April. Those participating were Ellen Dempster and Tom Brewer from the NLHF, LA, CL, HL and Councillor Cavill. The NLHF were please that things have been progressing with the Project despite the Pandemic.

They were also extremely supportive in terms of their flexibility in relation to payments. They have formally



approved the contingency allocations amounting to £39,754. The next remote meeting has been arranged for the 15<sup>th</sup> July at 11.00 am.

**12.5 Borrowing for the Project** – The second tranche of borrowing was taken out on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020. This was £450,000 at an interest rate of 2.74% which gives an annual repayment of £24,981.74 for this half of the loan and £24,675.28 for the first half of the loan giving a total of £49,657.02 per annum and £1,241,425.50 including interest over the whole life (25 years) of the loan.

**12.6 Collections** – The first delivery of the Museum’s collections to site was made by Jamie Briggs on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June.

**12.7 Appointment of consultants & contractors** – As a result of the Covid 19 Pandemic, all of the main Contractor Beard’s work had to cease on site on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April. Work recommenced on site on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June and was completed on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> June.

### 13. MUSEUM - FINANCE SUMMARY (AGENDA ITEM 7)

13.1 Q4 accounts detail is attached, summary figures are below.

#### Museum 101 (year end actuals 19/20)

Museum Q3 (April '19 - December '19)	Actual	Budget	Variance
Gross Expenditure	£139,135	£136,062	£3,073
Income	£4,848	£6,200	£1,352
Net	£134,287	£129,862	£4,425

#### Museum 102 (year end actuals 19/20)

Museum Project Q3 (April '19 - December '19)	Actual	Budget	Variance
Gross Expenditure	£1,625,875	£1,785,597	£159,722
Income	£1,625,718	£1,785,597	£159,879
Net	£157	£0	£157

#### Grants Cultural 104 (year end actuals 19/20)

Grants Cultural Q3 (April '19 - December '19)	Actual	Budget	Variance
Gross Expenditure	£22,761	£23,000	£239
Income	£20,000	£0	£20,000
Net	£2,761	£23,000	£20,239

<b>Total</b>	<b>£137,205</b>	<b>£152,862</b>	<b>£15,657</b>
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**11.2 Funding** – The total amount donated by parishes is as follows:

Hilperton £2500

North Bradley £100

Keevil £75

Bratton £600

Great Hinton Ladies Club £260