

Crewkerne Museum and Heritage Centre: Report for 2014

Crewkerne Museum and Heritage Centre (CMHC) has been operating from its current location in the town centre for well over a decade. Its purpose is to preserve artefacts relating to the town and to promote interest in Crewkerne's history and heritage.

2014 has been another successful year, with sustained improvement in overall use of the building and facilities. The financial situation has remained stable and the budget has balanced - even making a small surplus - thanks to diligent housekeeping and valiant fundraising efforts. Once again, the Friends of the Museum have played an important part in the success of the Heritage Centre, contributing both significant financial support and a lively social atmosphere. The support of volunteers has been pronounced as they maintain the building, steward the Museum and Local History resources and generally "keep things going".

Exhibitions

In addition to the permanent displays, 2 special exhibitions were held this year: one telling the story of the town before WW1 and an exhibition relating to the stories of local soldiers who went to the war and the effect it had on the town.

"Art in the Museum" enabled local artists and craftsmen to display and sell their art, whilst increasing visitor footfall and raising funds by way of commissions on art sales.

Maintenance

The windows in the Leslie Andrew Room have been lined with Perspex panels to cut heating costs and noise. The exterior of the building has been painted and looks much refreshed.

A substantial amount of ongoing maintenance has been carried out by volunteers, both in the building and in the museum courtyard.

Schools & Groups

Several visits from local schools have supported their students' learning. CMHC are addressing the new history curriculum by adding fresh subjects.

Local schools have enjoyed being part of the "Hooves, Paws and Claws" project for which CMHC have achieved Heritage Lottery funding. Background information about animals in war has been given and the school-children worked with a local sculptor to produce models of the animals.

As in previous years, free activities for children have been offered during school holidays. Local children took part in Halloween activities at half term as they did during the Easter holidays.

During the summer months CMHC featured an exhibition by GCSE photography students from Wadham School.

A group from Dillington House Photography course visited in the spring and again in the autumn to make use of the exhibitions and the courtyard for their work.

Heritage Week was again marked with 4 Heritage Open Days. An exhibition of some of the stored collection was held. A booklet was published so that visitors could take a tour of the Market Square area with an explanation of the architecture.

Collection

The Museum has acquired a set of WW1 letters which are a significant contribution to the WW1 exhibition.

The old Crewkerne Cinema window has been restored thanks to a generous bequest. The window is now on display in Reception along with the cinema clock and photographs.

Community links

The Management Team has worked with Crewkerne Town Council to help produce a new advertising leaflet. CMHC have also developed a collaborative relationship with Crewkerne Library on talks and projects. Researchers have been looking into the names of all soldiers on all the memorials to give Crewkerne Town Council a complete list. Working in cooperation with the Royal British Legion and others the researchers have helped the Town Council to place a completed memorial in Crewkerne.

Other

Acquisition of a PRS Music Licence has given CMHC the opportunity to hold live events such as the Music Hall evening, and to enhance exhibitions with appropriate music.

The shop has been very successful once again this year, with sales of traditional toys and souvenirs continuing to grow.

Plans to add digital aids to the museum are going ahead. A map display with old photographs of streets in the town is planned. "Discovery pens" will guide the public around the galleries giving additional information and a programme specifically for children. This project will be ready for the 2015 season.

Summary

All in all an extremely successful year in terms of events, support, interest and financial stability. All essentially brought about by the huge voluntary effort and interest of the many people who really "care" for the history and heritage of Crewkerne.

Councillor John Dyke
