

Crewkerne Musuem Report

(Drawn from Management Team & Collections Reports, 2018-19)

2018 brought lower visitor figures, possibly through a lack of school bookings, and the ongoing challenge of a vacancy for Treasurer. "Art in the Museum" once again, however, produced a reasonable income and boost for visitor numbers. A celebration of the work of volunteers was held with around 35 volunteers enjoying an evening at Oscars, in early December 2018, which gave the chance to get to mix and meet others. Stewards will be treated to an annual afternoon tea in March before the new season.

It is necessary to continue expanding outreach activities, considering new ways to encourage visiting groups and engaging new volunteers. Plans for the 2019 season are underway: the first special exhibition will focus on the Grammar School in coordination with the last Founder's Day to be held by Old Crewkernians, in July 2019. The summer exhibition will look at toys and games through history to attract families.

The Collection team are providing the last exhibition of the A-Z stored collection; children's activities will take place at Easter and Halloween. It is intended to provide town guided walks again in 2019 and the Museum may ask an author of an industrial book to carry out tours of the town's old factory sites. Guided factory walk leaflets went on sale in September 2018 and have attracted interest and sales.

Meetings of four local Museums (Bridport, Beaminster, Dawes Twineworks and Crewkerne) continue and a "Heritage Tent" is planned at the Melplash show, August 2019. Working with other museums with similar backgrounds and collections is proving engaging and productive.

Efforts to appoint a new treasurer have been problematic and discussions continue. Meanwhile, the management group are thankful that two current volunteers have taken on some tasks. It was agreed at a recent management meeting to approach new residents via estate agents with a leaflet about the Heritage Centre and volunteering. A window display is also being used to encourage new volunteers. There is a keen awareness that several of the management group are reaching the age when additional responsibilities are not always welcome and there is a continuing need to secure the future of the Museum and Heritage Centre.

Janet Harris, Chair of the management group wished it specifically to be noted that the Heritage Centre only continues to thrive through the generosity of volunteers who give their time: while some grant funding is received from Crewkerne Town Council, the basic costs of energy, insurance, maintenance and safety checks rise annually. The Museum works hard to recruit and to encourage all ages to become involved, including students during the holidays. The management group are aware of other special grants from time-to-time and actively consider projects that could be linked to these.

Collections (Simon Colledge) noted that during the most recent winter museum closure, volunteers were busy and catalogued several notable artefacts: a collection of family records from the Cartwright family included documents from Mr Cartwright's time as a manager of the Van Heusen factory, making collars and shirts. His son attended Crewkerne Grammar School which leads to an educational theme - a Crewkernian booklet was a timely addition for the forthcoming Crewkerne Grammar School exhibition; another addition is a school note detailing the end of Grammar School status in 1971, and a school scarf. A maroon badge for St Martin's School was sourced in the Crewkerne Antiques Centre and acquired for the museum.

A poster detailing the 2000 Millennium party held on New Year's Eve was received. Other items included family records with details of service 1914-1918 with the R.F.C. A sign for the 1st Crewkerne Scout group is a welcome addition - and a Hoover Dustette.

A framed water colour picture showing the approach to Victoria Square was a kind donation from Philip Harris. Preparation of artefacts for the forthcoming Grammar School exhibition continues and cataloguing and storage of Handling items is making good progress.

Cllr. Marcus Barrett
