Museums Worcestershire

Annual Review 2016-17



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In 2016-17 Museums Worcestershire continued to be

Visible We worked with national partners including British Museum, Arts Council England and Art Fund

Viable We secured more than £180,000 additional funding in grants and donations

Valued Our Suitcase Stories project delivered positive health outcomes at care homes for older residents across the county.

Museums Worcestershire is a partnership between Worcester City and Worcestershire County Councils



31% of our visitors say "visiting museums is an important part of who I am"
57% of our visitors want to learn something when they visit
51% of our visitors choose to visit us to spend time with their family and friends
Audience Finder research, funded by Arts Council England

All three museum sites were again awarded Full Accredited status by Arts Council England in 2017. Accreditation is a national measure of professionalism awarded to museums who meet a certain standard of visitor service and collections management.

Thank you to all our 100,000 visitors for supporting and enjoying our museums

Museum Futures Four Years On Building a sustainable future for our venues

- First three phases of the Commandery development underway, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council England, Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County Council
- Major audience research programme completed through Arts Council funded Audience Finder programme
- Installation of new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to build audience relationships and increase resilience
- New fundraising initiatives secure £160,000 for new developments



Thank you to all of our funders, including those who have invested large grants to enable us to become a more resilient and sustainable organisation; those who have supported our exhibitions and events, and those who give whenever they can to support the museums they know and love.



Commandery Developments

The Commandery – It Happened Here is a programme to transform the Commandery as a visitor attraction. It will deliver the City's wish to see Worcester's role in the English Civil Wars being more widely recognised, with increasing international awareness of the visit of US Presidents Thomas Jefferson and John Adams in 1786.

Award winning exhibition designers GuM developed an exciting new master plan for the Commandery in 2016.

Support and funding for the first 3 phases has been secured, including grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England. An updated income generation plan was approved in March 2017.

The work includes new displays on the Worcester's Civil War Story and improvements to the building fabric, lighting and heating. A new learning programme is also planned, supported by innovative use of near field technology.



Funding raised by The National Lottery and awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund LOTTERY FUNDED





Civil War Battle HQ & Historic Building

Museums Worcestershire and the Visitor Economy

Developments at The Commandery will support tourism by making the most of our unique **Civil War heritage**, and reflect Worcester City Council's corporate commitment to A Heritage City for the 21st Century.

Museums Worcestershire continues to lead work at **The Museum of Royal Worcester** on their exhibition interpretation following their successful stage 2 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund. This extends the existing partnership and support between the two museums and will offer long-term benefit to the heritage of the city.

The popular *Destination Exhibitions* at the Art Gallery & Museum continue to bring visitors into the city to see **World Class Art** from national partners and our collections. Each exhibition generates economic impact in the region of £0.5m.

Through a partnership with Worcestershire County Council Highways, heritage information features on new real-time information hubs, providing instant access to the city's history.

A continuing partnership with the **Worcester News** reaches more than 21,000 readers every week, achieving almost £40,000 in equivalent advertising value over the year and providing access to 52 rarely seen objects from the collections.

£129,000 from **Arts Council England** supports two major advertising campaigns; City Treasures and County Treasures, raising awareness of the museum collections. The grant also funds a large scale audience research project; the purchase of a Customer Relationship Management System and a Fundraising strategy to build resilience.





museumsworcestershire	Edit Profile	0
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99 posts 766 followers 1.155 following

Museums Worcestershire Instagrams from Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum. The Commandery & County Museum at Hartlebury. www.worcestershire.gov.uk/museums



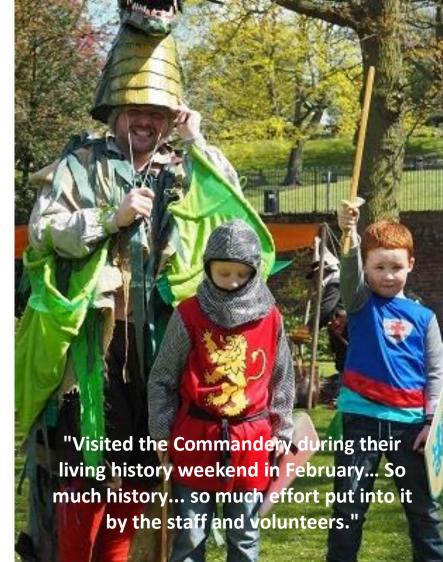
Museums Worcestershire Digital Presence

Museums Worcestershire has been on Instagram for a year, with over 750 followers so far, and high engagement with up to 100 likes per post.

On the website from January-April **page visits have increased by 20%** in 2017 compared to the same period in 2016.

Regular short videos created for social media and the website have resulted in over 10,000 views during the past year.

Museums Worcestershire now has over 7000 Twitter followers.



The Commandery

Admissions were up 10% as we welcomed visitors to our ever popular living history weekend, Oak Apple Day, and Battle of Worcester Weekend, produced in partnership with **Worcester Re-enactors**.

Schools figures increased by 4%. The Commandery Interpretation Team provide their **award winning education programme** for schools, and daily interactive workshops for our visitors.

The Battle of Worcester Society provided us with a successful series of evening lectures based around the English Civil War, which will be continued in 2017. The Drumhead Ceremony on Fort Royal saw record audiences as soldiers and officials processed from the Guildhall to the Commandery and then up onto Fort Royal Hill to commemorate the Battle of Worcester.

Friends of Fort Royal Park and Commandery Gardens gained funding for their *One World in our Park project*. This community driven project will record the rich local history of the park and celebrate it with a community celebration in 2017. All research and social histories gathered from the residents of Fort Royal will be made available at the Commandery in 2017.

Worcester Ambassadors helped fund the Commandery's 17th century garden project, working with local groups including Headway Brain Injury Support. Les Pearson of Worcester City Parks Departments leads a second group of garden volunteers in keeping our grounds beautifully maintained, in aspiration of gaining blue flag status for Fort Royal Park and Commandery Gardens in 2017.

Worcester Art Gallery & Museum

Overall a **3% increase in visitors** across the year to Worcester Art Gallery & Museum. DCMS-sponsored museums and galleries saw a decrease of 4.3%*.

*Source DCMS gov.uk



SUMMER EXHIBITION Pirates, Pants and Wellyphants

Almost **1,000 visitors attended the opening day** with Nick Sharratt 78% of visitors enjoyed visiting the exhibition for over an hour. 6,000 children visited the exhibition

"The staff are always really friendly and welcoming, I appreciated the fact that I could let my little girl run around and enjoy herself without feeling I needed to keep her quiet."

SPRING EXHIBITION This Green Earth

24,000 visitors

54% of visitors came from **outside WR postcodes** (an increase of 3% on the previous years' exhibition)

21% were first-time visitors to the Art Gallery & Museum



"Went along for this rather special Nick Sharratt exhibition. It was brilliant, so interactive and informative. Such a wide variety of ways to deliver the information. Children and adults of all ages could access it."

AUTUMN EXHIBITION Jeremy Deller 'The Battle of Orgreave'

88% of visitors came specifically to see the exhibition For 49% of visitors it was their first visit to Worcester Art Gallery & Museum Average dwell time was 1.5 hours

11% of visitors were 16-24

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Visitors came from:

WALES

Exete

Middlesbrough

Open Gallery: Community Exhibition Space

We have created an exhibition space within the Worcester Art Gallery and Museum for **community groups** to display their arts and crafts. This opportunity has been greatly appreciated and utilised by the local community, with displays from groups such as St. Richards Hospice and Sight Concern.

Hartlebury

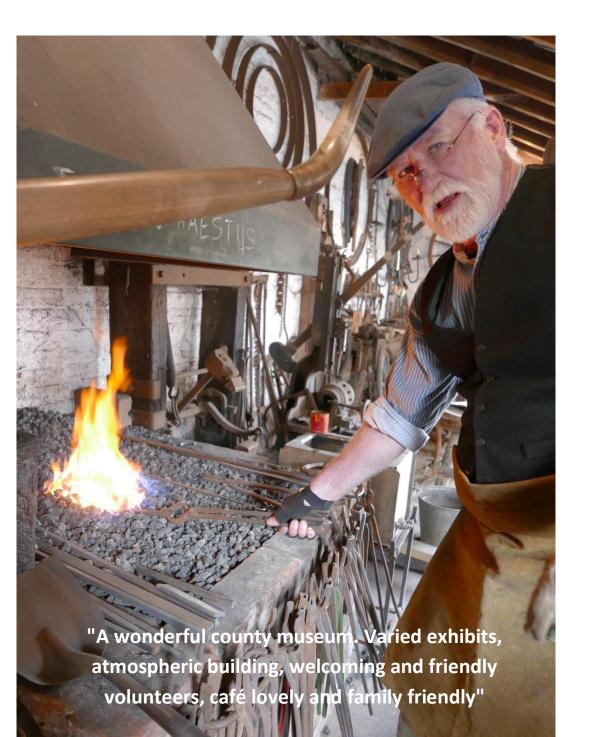
In partnership with Hartlebury Castle Preservation Trust.

The move from the old workshop to the new one is complete, freeing up space to be turned into a new visitor Café. The current project for the workshop volunteer team is the creation of a 2/3 scale model of a Gypsy caravan which will form part of the **new play area for toddlers**.

On May Day Bank Holiday the traditional May Day event attracted the **highest number of visitors** in a single day for the year. The event included maypole dancing, stalls and traditional games.

The appointment a **new Learning Resources Assistant** allows us to explore the options for diversifying the subjects we can offer in order to increase uptake from the education sector. Group visits are up by 13%.

The County Museum increased their **Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme** score this year from 77 to 80%. Full marks (5/5) were achieved in a number of sub categories including customer care, staff efficiency, content of visitor attraction and range/presentation of retail merchandise.



"I really like this museum because you can dress up and it has so many interesting things! You can't go away from this museum without learning at least one new thing! The crafts are brilliant and I love it!" Matilda, aged 8



Collections

57 items **newly acquired** this year for the collections of Worcester City and Worcestershire county museums

The majority of these are archaeological site archive deposits, reflecting the increased development work in the county and the associated research being uncovered.

We also welcomed into the collection items relating to the **Forsyth brothers' workshop** in Worcester, including plaster sculptures, drawings and plans. The brothers studied at Worcester School of Art and went on to become pre-eminent sculptors, creating work for Worcester Cathedral and the Perseus Fountain at Witley Court.

Collections Care

Some significant moves of collections were completed in 2016, in preparation for redevelopments at the museum sites.

As a result of these moves, objects can be **better cared for and are more accessible** for public and researchers to access, even when not on public display.

Sharing Curatorial Knowledge

More than 250 visitors attended talks and behindthe-scenes tours, discovering more about the significant museum collections of Worcester City and Worcestershire County councils.

For the first time we offered skills sharing courses, where delegates learned curatorial skills in active hands-on sessions. These were particularly popular with staff from smaller museums and added to Museums Worcestershire's position of sector support and leadership.

Members of the team also shared their expertise with a wider audience appearing as experts on episodes of *Flog It!* and *Bargain Hunt*.



Collection Development Projects

The **Bredon Hill Hoard** has been touring the county to conclude the Art Fund grant-aided project to conserve the Roman coin hoard and to share it directly with the communities that supported its acquisition. The hoard has been displayed at the Hive, the Almonry in Evesham and Broadway Museum and Art Gallery. The project has enabled Museums Worcestershire to share this important discovery across Worcestershire.

In January, we learnt that Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (WAAS), in partnership with Museums Worcestershire, have received £74,900 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to bring the Lost Landscapes of Ice Age Worcestershire back to life. Over the next 18 months staff at WAAS and Museums Worcestershire will be delivering events and exhibitions celebrating over half a million years of the area's prehistory, from the time our ancestors arrived until the end of the last Ice Age 10,000 years ago.

Volunteers

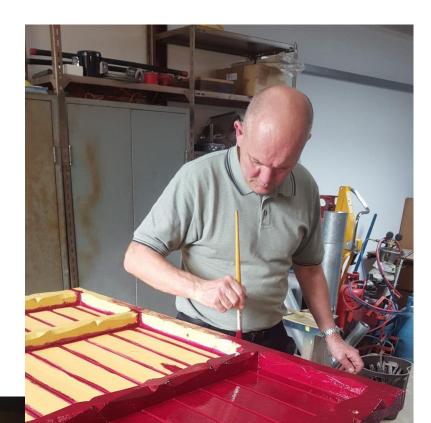
Museums Worcestershire enjoys the **enthusiasm and commitment** of 70 volunteers across its sites.

We have provided a selection of events for our volunteers over the last year from the wealth of knowledge within the Museums Worcestershire team and our partners at Hartlebury Castle. During the last year, we have provided a Vesta Tilley talk, a Collections Store tour and a History of the Bishops at Hartlebury talk to thank our hardworking volunteers for their time, to provide development opportunities and a chance for all of our volunteers to get together.

The **Worcestershire Cultural Volunteering website** has now recruited 80 volunteers from around the county since it started in 2015.







Learning and Community

Suitcase Stories

A reminiscence, storytelling and music project for **people living with dementia** and their carers, Suitcase Stories has enabled adults living with dementia and their carers to relive memories from the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s using the art of storytelling and reminiscence through museum objects.

- 77 individual people living with dementia and their carers participated
- 73% of participants took part in 3 or more sessions
- 294 people attended the performances of the stories

Thanks to the following for funding Suitcase Stories:

Arts Council England, the Elmley Foundation, Worcestershire County Council, Wychavon District Council, Worcester City Council, Wyre Forest District Council, Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils, Malvern Hills District Council.



Our Strengthening Partnership with Sight Concern

Over the past few years we have been working with **Sight Concern**, a growing group of visually impaired adult students. In March, the group explored *David Cox and his Contemporaries*, and followed the visit with a painting workshop held in museum's Activity Space.

"I took up art when I lost my sight at 50. My first painting was after seeing 'Laura Knight' which we saw at Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum. And I am still painting today!"

Working with Home Educator Groups

The number of children who are home educated is on the increase, and recently we have forged a **strong partnership** with this network of families – some local, others county based, and some travelling from Gloucestershire to attend the sessions.

"The children thoroughly enjoyed the content and have been saying how interesting it was, and have enjoyed the activities. The parents were also very appreciative and have asked for more sessions."



Looking Ahead

July 2017 sees the launch of brand new interactive displays on Worcester's Civil War Story at The Commandery

The Art Gallery & Museum stages a significant exhibition of works by Worcester's most famous artist, Benjamin Williams Leader

HLF-funded developments at Hartlebury see Hartlebury Castle Preservation Trust welcoming new visitor services in place including increased car parking and a new Café.

Museums Worcestershire – Visible, viable and valued