

Joint Museums Committee

Thursday, 26 June 2014, 10.00 am, The Commandery,
Worcester

Present:

Minutes

Mr A N Blagg (Worcestershire County Council)
Mrs L C Hodgson (Worcestershire County Council)
Mr A C Roberts (Worcester City Council) and
Mr D Wilkinson (Worcester City Council)

Officers

Iain Rutherford, Museums General Manager (Museums
Worcestershire)
Helen Large, Marketing and Events Manager (Museums
Worcestershire)
Wendy Pickering, Principal Finance Officer
(Worcestershire County Council)
Neil Anderson, Head of Cultural and Community Services
(Worcestershire County Council)
Ruth Mullen, Corporate Director – Services Delivery
(Worcester City Council)
Simon Lewis, Committee Officer (Worcestershire County
Council)

Available papers

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated); and
- B. The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2014
(previously circulated).

**176 Named
 Substitutes
 (Agenda item 1)**

None.

**177 Apologies /
 Declarations of
 Interest
 (Agenda item 2)**

Mr A Roberts declared general interests as a previous
member of Worcester Military Museum and a member of
the Battle of Worcester Association and a specific
interest in Agenda item 5 as a Board member of St
Richards Hospice.

**178 Election of
 Chairman
 (Agenda item 3)**

RESOLVED that Mrs L C Hodgson be elected
Chairman for the ensuing year.

179 Appointment of

RESOLVED that Mr D Wilkinson be appointed Vice-

	Vice-Chairman (Agenda item 4)	Chairman for the ensuing year.
180	Confirmation of Minutes (Agenda item 5)	RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
181	Annual Review 2013-14 (Agenda item 6)	<p>The Committee received a presentation on the Museums Worcestershire Annual Review for 2013-14.</p> <p>In the ensuing debate, the following principal points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did visitor numbers compare with other neighbouring museum services? The Marketing and Events Manager commented that visitor numbers had dropped by 3% which reflected the regional picture despite a national increase in visitor numbers • How had the information regarding the economic impact on Museums Worcestershire work been collated? The Marketing and Events Manager stated that the comparator information had been provided by external consultants who looked at the 'additionality' factor which was a measurement that showed the additional income that would be generated for Worcester city • Had there been an impact on the service of the decision to increase the price of tour buses nationally? The Museums General Manager stated that the biggest impact of this change had been a reduction in the number of school visits. Every effort had been made to show that the service provided value for money for schools. It was not clear whether the increased prices had had any impact on any other areas of the service • Had the recent increase in the price of coach parking in Worcester city had any impact on the service? The Marketing and Events Manager explained that the market for attracting coach parties was very competitive and some impact was expected as a result of these changes. However the service was not over-reliant on coach parties as a source of revenue. It was important that the offer provided by the service was clear and attractive to promote its use by coach parties whatever charges were introduced

182 Museum and Art Gallery Feasibility Study (Agenda item 7)

for parking

- There was no mention in the presentation of the use of the Commandery as a venue for open area theatre. Did the service benefit financially from these events? The Marketing and Events Manager advised that the service contributed to the Worcester Festival. The Museums General Manager added that the service benefited financially as a result of these arrangements
- How did the service become aware of artefacts that became available from private lenders? The Marketing and Events Manager stated that the museum curators used their knowledge and expertise to contact the private lenders, most of whom were individual lenders.

RESOLVED that the Museums Worcestershire Annual Review for 2013-14 (attached as an Appendix) be approved.

The Committee considered a report from DCA Consultants on an Options Appraisal and Feasibility Study for the Museum and Art Gallery.

The report indicated that DCA Consultants of Birmingham had been appointed in June 2013 to carry out the study. Following presentation of their initial findings on the options available, the Joint Committee recommended that the consultants draw up a business plan for the use of the lower floor of the Museum and Art Gallery (MAG) based on the concept of a children's museum.

The feasibility study identified the key considerations in the installation of a Children's Museum or Gallery in the space, addressed the size and nature of the market, visitor numbers and pricing, architectural considerations and costs and potential funding.

The report painted a picture of an exciting new attraction for Worcester that would also address the budgetary pressures faced by the museum service over the next three years. There were however a number of other options still under consideration by the City Council. It was therefore recommended that the report be referred to the City Council for further consideration at this stage.

In the ensuing debate, the following principal points were raised:

- The consultants had experience of Heritage Lottery bids so it was promising that they considered that this project was suitable for such a bid. It was clear from the consultants' report that 'mothballing' of the ground floor of the building would be too expensive. The question however was where the £2m funding would be sought. The Museums General Manager commented that it was anticipated that there would be a shortfall in funding for the project of £300k. It would therefore be necessary to undertake a fund-raising drive. There were a number of organisations that would be interested in supporting a children's facility such as the one proposed. However the service would need to provide an up-front commitment to the project before any bidding process could be commenced
- The Corporate Director – Worcester City Council advised that the Joint Committee should consider the proposals in respect of the museums service, although they were aware of other issues at the City Council relating to the use of the MAG. It was therefore suggested that the Joint Committee agree the Children's Museum as the preferred approach for future development of the MAG. In addition, the future use of the building had not yet been discussed by the City Council therefore it was proposed to seek agreement from the City Council to develop the site for a Children's Museum
- Part of the attraction of facilities for children was the ability to access outside space. Did the lack of such space at the MAG distract from the attraction to visitors? The Museums General Manager commented that the way the building had been designed enabled ample opportunity for children to 'let off steam' within the fabric of the building
- There was a possibility that the City Council would wish to use the ground floor of the building for other purposes. Did the service have an alternative plan? The Corporate Director – Service Delivery, Worcester City Council stated that work had commenced on this project before the alternative use had been suggested by the City Council. There were other costed proposals set out in the consultants' report and the Joint Committee would need to refer back to these

should circumstances change

- At the moment the plan for a Children's Museum had been recommended to the Joint Committee and a decision should be made on this plan irrespective of what Worcester City Council decided to do
- It was important that should the Children's Museum be agreed as the preferred approach that it delivered the permanent viable solution for the MAG
- It was proposed that the Museums General Manager be requested to report back to the Joint Committee at an appropriate time on the proposals for the use of the ground floor at the MAG following discussions at the City Council.

RESOLVED that

- a) the report from DCA Consultants on an Options Appraisal and Feasibility Study for the Museum and Art Gallery be received;**
- b) the Children's Museum be agreed as the preferred approach for future development of the MAG to deliver the permanent financially viable solution for the MAG;**
- c) the report be referred to Worcester City Council, as owners of the Museum and Art Gallery building, for further consideration; and**
- d) the Museums General Manager be requested to report back to the Joint Committee at an appropriate time on the proposals for the use of the ground floor at the MAG following discussions at the City Council.**

183 Opening Hours Review (Agenda item 8)

The Committee considered the production of a business case for changes to museum opening hours.

The report indicated that Last year's review covered the Art Gallery and Museum and The Commandery. Due to the HLF funded developments at Hartlebury it was felt not appropriate to consider reviewing its opening patterns at this point. However in the intervening period a number of options for the ground floor space within the Art Gallery and Museum had been explored, one of which was the subject of a report to this meeting. As no firm

decisions had been made on this or other options, the opening hours for the Foregate Street building had also been excluded temporarily until there was a clear direction. The report was therefore concerned with the opening hours at the Commandery.

Following a review it was proposed that the opening hours changes least likely to impact on the public were for the Commandery to close on Mondays and throughout the month of January. A longer period of closure during the winter months was considered but this would potentially have an impact on the Christmas season and promotions in December, as well as the Love Worcester campaign developed around February half term. It was proposed that opening on Bank Holiday Mondays be maintained as an exception to Monday closure. This new opening hours pattern would represent common practice at other museums and heritage sites.

These proposals would require changes to staff hours and deployment. Given the range of consultants' reports and in-house now in place identifying improvements to interpretation, visitor experience and marketing of the Commandery, it was also proposed that job roles be reviewed to ensure the best possible service to the public is maintained and enhanced from Tuesday to Sunday when most people want to visit.

Initial estimates of the savings (subject to grading) were £12-14K, assuming all income from the closed periods was lost and not displaced. Extra marketing resources would be required initially to inform visitors of the changes and to encourage visits on other days of the week. It was intended that opening hours would be reviewed again once new interpretation and an improved visitor experience is in place in 2-3 years.

In the ensuing debate, the following principal points were raised:

- In response to a query, the Museums General Manager explained that the basis for the proposed review of museum opening hours was to achieve cost savings
- It was noted that the Foregate Street building had been omitted from the review of opening hours however it would be worth considering opening the building on Sundays. The Museums General Manager commented that the problem with proposals at the Foregate Street building was that

an admission-free policy was in operation there and therefore there would be cost implications of opening on Sundays. It could only be possible to open on a Sunday if the building was closed on another day of the week. In contrast any costs as a result of changes to the opening hours at the Commandery could be recovered through increased admission charges. The Corporate Director – Service Delivery, Worcester City Council added that it was a local policy not to charge admission to the Museum and Art Gallery

RESOLVED that:

- a) the production of a business case for changes to museum opening hours as set out in the report be approved; and**
- b) the presentation of a final report to a future meeting, following consultation with staff, partners and stakeholders be approved.**

**184 Commandery
Redevelopment
- Phase 1
(Agenda item 9)**

The Committee considered the submission of an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for phase 1 of developments at The Commandery.

The report indicated that over 2012/13 Museums Worcestershire commissioned a significant body of research (funded by Arts Council England) into the potential of the English Civil War heritage to provide an overarching theme for the Commandery as a visitor destination. The research looked at the current visitor experience at the historic site from the perspective of existing and future visitors, evaluated pilot interpretation with these audiences, identified potential future markets for a Civil War product and quantified the wider Civil War history that existed in Worcester.

The findings of this research had informed strategic planning for The Commandery and The Commandery's potential needed to be realised by better interpreting and explaining the historic significance of the site and its Civil War story and by strengthening its position as a visitor destination. This work would be carried over four phases. An application to the HLF Our Heritage Fund was required for the first phase of this work which would see the reintroduction of the English Civil War as a theme in a significant section of the building, the rebranding and repositioning of The Commandery and the curation of a high profile events programme throughout 2015 leading up to a product launch in Spring 2016.

		<p>The total value of the first phase of the project was estimated at £126,000, with HLF requested to fund £98,000. The remaining £28,000 would be sourced from existing budgets, sponsorship and in-kind support of volunteers.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the submission of an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for phase 1 of developments at The Commandery be approved.</p>
185	Heritage Marketing Report (Agenda item 10)	<p>The Joint Committee considered the progress made in delivering museums and heritage marketing projects.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the progress made in delivering museums and heritage marketing projects be noted.</p>
186	Finance Report (Agenda item 11)	<p>The Joint Committee considered the financial position of the Joint Museums Service for the 4th quarter 2013-14 and draft budget for 2014-15.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the financial position of the Joint Museums service as detailed on the report be noted</p>
187	Performance Report - 4th Quarter (Agenda item 12)	<p>The Committee considered the performance and service plan information provided for the 4th quarter 2013-14.</p> <p>The report indicated that the key points to note were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) An uplift in admissions at both Hartlebury and the Commandery; b) The popular Songs of the Sea exhibition attracted 17,000 visitors following its opening on 8 February, allowing the Museum and Art Gallery to recover after lower numbers in January. Figures were lower for the 4th quarter overall due to the success of the Laura Knight exhibition in the same quarter in 2013; c) Visits to the museum website showed a drop but significant changes to the museum website were being planned to develop its content and profile; d) The number of visits by children and young people showed a positive increase in the last quarter, a sign that both promotional work linked to Love Worcester and new publicity directed towards schools was paying dividends.

**188 Work
Programme
(Agenda item
13)**

RESOLVED that the performance information provided for the 4th quarter 2013-14 be noted.


The Committee considered its future work programme.

The Committee noted its future work programme.

The meeting ended at 11.30am

Chairman

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A photograph of a statue at night. The statue is a dark, standing figure on a pedestal. In the foreground, two people are wearing large, yellow and green butterfly costumes with red and white eye-like patterns on their wings. They are positioned on either side of the statue's base. In the background, there is a large, dark building with multiple spires, likely a cathedral or church, and some trees. The sky is a mix of purple and pink, suggesting dusk or dawn. A street light is visible on the right side of the image.

Museums Worcestershire 2013-14

In 2013-14 Museums Worcestershire continued to be

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Visible this year we took our museums out on to the streets in MOTHS (Museums on the High Street)

Viable we raised the largest amount of income from grant funding and continued our Museum Futures programme to build a sustainable future for our venues

Valued we presented two blockbuster exhibitions at Worcester Art Gallery & Museum which achieved record audience figures

Income Raised

£234,841 from voluntary income, up from £79,656 in the previous year

includes

- £132,500 grant from Arts Council England to *Strengthen Museums and the Visitor Economy in Worcester*
- Funding from major partner organisations such as the Art Fund and The Tate

And raised in partnership, £450,000 for Hartlebury from Heritage Lottery Fund stage one, which Museums Worcestershire worked with HCPT to achieve

We wish to thank all of our funders including those who have invested large grants to enable us to spread our wings: those who have supported workshops and events for major exhibitions, and those who simply give unrestrictedly whenever they can to support the museums that they know and love.

Economic impact of Museums Worcestershire's work

£943,520 for Worcester City

£1,074,634 for the region as a whole

Museum Futures

Two years ago Museums Worcestershire set out its Museum Futures programme to build a sustainable future for our venues as well as addressing key priorities:

Corporate Context

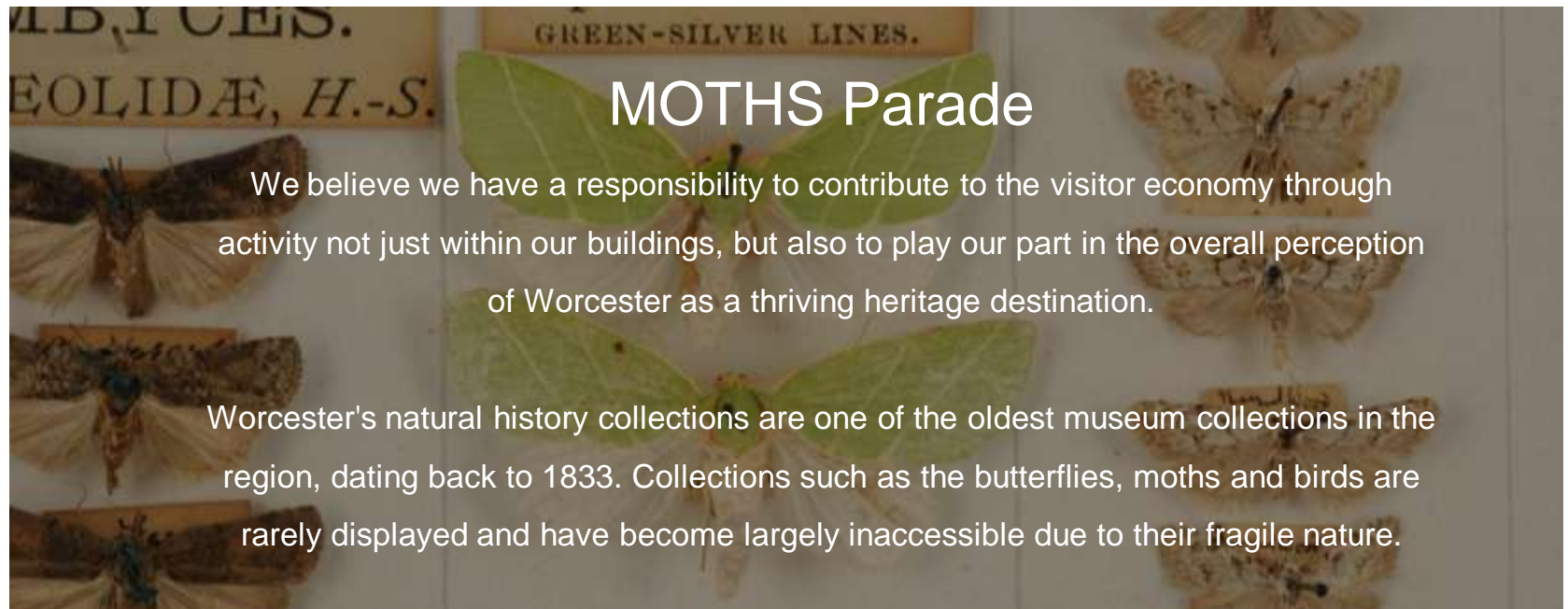
- Supporting *Open for Business* and local economy through increase in visitors and spending
- Making City and County attractive, unique destinations and places to live
- Bringing heritage to life joining up the offer
- Cultural shift towards marketing and tourism
- Developing skills and volunteering
- On-going review of assets
- Deliver reductions in budget

Museum Futures

- Marry together potential audiences and a sustainable product with possibilities for income generation
- Planning to be audience and marketing-focussed
- Priority to contribute to visitor economy
- Look at what gives us competitive advantage
- Use our strengths and work with them

Strengthen Museums and the Visitor Economy in Worcester

- Research to inform development of the Commandery to realise its potential as a visitor destination
- Look at the potential to grow the city's tourism offer
- Fundraising strategy to support capital and revenue streams
- Creation of a major city centre event - the MOTHS parade - to provide a focus for *Love Worcester* and provide innovative access to the city's most fragile collection



We believe we have a responsibility to contribute to the visitor economy through activity not just within our buildings, but also to play our part in the overall perception of Worcester as a thriving heritage destination.

Worcester's natural history collections are one of the oldest museum collections in the region, dating back to 1833. Collections such as the butterflies, moths and birds are rarely displayed and have become largely inaccessible due to their fragile nature.



The timing of the parade just after the devastating floods in Worcester played a big role in getting the city back up and running and the feedback that we obtained from both businesses and the public for the project has been superb

Adrian Field, Worcester BID

Art Gallery & Museum

The background image shows a museum gallery. In the foreground, a large, ornate wooden sarcophagus with a face is displayed behind a glass case. To the left, a large black ceramic jar is also visible. In the background, other museum displays and visitors can be seen.

The most enjoyable visit I have made to an art gallery
Visitor to Song of the Sea 2014

It's great to have something like this on your doorstep
Visitor to Secret Egypt 2013

The **Art Gallery & Museum** continued to embed its focus on destination exhibitions: a focus on big-name artists with themes that link into the historic and contemporary art collections.

- make maximum use of the only venue in the county equipped to accept loans from national museums to give visitors the chance to experience something they would only normally encounter in a major regional or national museum
- bring visitors from a distance into Worcester for special exhibitions and associated events
- highlighting unique Worcestershire connections, giving our local audience insight and pride in their heritage and culture

Over 2013-14

Secret Egypt exhibition, 16,367 visitors enjoyed the chance to see a real mummy in Worcester

Song of the Sea exhibition, 17,000 visitors, many travelling especially to see the exhibition

Vintage Fair space hire, 800 visitors

Fossil Road Show events, 500 visitors supported by Arts Council Funding in partnership with Earth Heritage Trust

Art Gallery & Museum: the Future

We shall continue to develop and deliver destination exhibitions; we are already looking forward to a focus on Stanhope Forbes in 2015 and are in very early discussions with the Art Fund and the Tate to explore the possibility of bringing an exhibition of Pop Artist Andy Warhol's work to Worcester in 2017.

The Commandery

We have thoroughly enjoyed our time; everyone has been very helpful, friendly and chatty.

Always find out something new every time we come. We love The Commandery. This has been the best event so far that we have been to here!

In order to ensure **The Commandery** contributes effectively to the visitor economy a review has been undertaken of its event programme to see which events can provide a tourist focus and attract larger visitor numbers.

Pilot - Living History event, Love Worcester Heritage Festival:

Over a period of 3 days the Commandery became home was home to ancient Greeks, Vikings, Tudors, Stewarts as well as an army of fully equipped soldiers from Napoleonic, Zulu, Boer, First and Second World Wars.

- more than 1,000 visitors
- 22% were visitors from outside Worcester.

Over 2013-14

Visitors increased by 6%

New programme of Civil War talks provided in association with the Battle of Worcester Society

Forging links with local societies and friends groups such as Worcester Re- Enactors

Almost 1,000 children participated in activities throughout the year

2,500 children enjoyed formal learning sessions

The Commandery: the Future

The research carried out this year has provided a pathway for The Commandery and the reintroduction of the Civil War focus will begin during 2015. In the meantime the event programme continues to be enhanced and this August Bank Holiday Monday sees as new event highlighting The Commandery's role in the Battle of Worcester.

Hartlebury

What an absolutely marvellous museum you have hidden away here. We will be telling everyone to take the time and come and spend the day.

Visitor



The County Museum at Hartlebury re-focussed the events programme at our family audience. The programme was packed with fun and informative family days as well as the ever popular craft activities during school holidays. We also worked alongside the Hartlebury Castle Preservation Trust to expand events, including a Burns Night meal with entertainment in the Great Hall, Shakespeare at the Castle in the Carriage Circle, a Big Band Night and two wedding fayres.

Over 2013-14

5% increase in attendance at events and a 13% upturn in income generated on event days

Special events and exhibitions increased to 61 in 2013/14 (previously 58)

Cafe income increased 13.5% on the previous year

Our main exhibition for the year *Hoards, Handbags and Highwaymen* explored the subject of money, allowing us to display for the first time the complete Bredon Hill Coin Hoard

Hartlebury Castle: the Future

2014 sees the submission of the Round 2 application to HLF for the purchase and development of Hartlebury Castle. Museums Worcestershire have been working alongside Hartlebury Castle Preservation Trust on the application and we will find out in September 2014 if Round 2 has been successful.

Learning and Community

I just don't know what's happening, I'm actually excited about learning!
Primary school visitor

At the Art Gallery & Museum

- new working partnership with SEN students from Tudor Grange School
- programme for primary schools centred on the *Secret Egypt* exhibition, bringing in 11 schools over 3 weeks
- As part of the MOTHS project, the Art Gallery & Commandery worked alongside Imagineer Productions organising workshops providing families with the opportunity to make banners and head-dress for the MOTHS half term parade, including new links with Worcestershire Home Educators Group.

At The Commandery

- repackaged our Tudor programme, with Tudor Music and Dance and Tudor Food for a special Tudor Christmas
- launched *Pepys, Pudding & Pox* as part of our Great Fire of London package
- received the Sandford Award 2013 for its wonderful education programme

At the County Museum, Hartlebury

- WW2 'Classroom at War' is suitable for years 4+ and is always well received.
- In early May, Children's Services at Wildwood brought groups of children to Hartlebury to study the Romany caravans and participate in related practical activities

Museums Learning: the Future

Developing and enhancing our learning programmes in line with developments in the new National Curriculum, launched in 2014. Our aims are to continue to offer a relevant, well resourced quality service for teachers and pupils that supports them in developing a broad and balanced curriculum.

Museum on the Move

Supported by Arts Council England, MOM's vehicles exist to challenge rural isolation and social exclusion, providing access to museums' services. They visit schools, sheltered accommodation, disability groups, hospitals, community groups & events, town centres, festivals and shows.

The exhibition *The Magic of Colour* in 2013 welcomed over 5000 visitors aboard.

Outreach

In partnership with St. Richard's Hospice, we have selected and lent handling material for clients to engage with in the hospice setting. The loans service has also been used by students at the University of Worcester, using them as part of their teaching practise in Worcester and Hereford Schools.

Skills for the Future

Nurturing Worcestershire's Treasures is a work-based training scheme. Five graduate trainees are based with a variety of independent, local government and university based heritage institutions in and around Worcester, and gain work-based skills relevant to the heritage sector as well as Post Graduate Certificate.

Outreach and Community Projects: the Future

Following successful applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund:

- Skills for the Future will facilitate seven more trainees, starting summer of 2014.
- a programme of WW1 events and projects in schools and community settings.

Volunteering

61 volunteers across Museums Worcestershire



Art Gallery & Museum

This year the city collections volunteers have cleaned, measured, weighed and catalogued medieval roof tiles from The Commandery, they have cleaned, marked and repackaged the human remains collection.

Most recently they have been working on gathering stories from the archives of the Museums Worcestershire, Worcestershire Record Office, the Worcestershire Regiment and Worcestershire Yeomanry collections for the museum's WWI exhibition in the autumn.

The Commandery

When I come to The Commandery, I help out with the craft and activities that are going on that day. I also help when there are large groups visiting The Commandery - this can get a bit chaotic from what I've seen! But it was great chance to develop my personal skills. I really like to help out because I get to interact with people that I wouldn't normally, plus the staff are all incredible friendly and make anyone feel at home!

*Kristina Lockyer, aged 16,
holiday activities volunteer*

Hartlebury

Worcestershire County Museum has a dedicated team of seven workshop volunteers, who between them have expertise in various practical skills including woodworking, wheelwrighting, engineering and blacksmithing.

This year the workshop team have produced a new circular bench to replace the one which used to exist around the large lime tree near the museum entrance. Leading the project was blacksmith and former Museum Technician, Eric Jones, but in the end it was teamwork that finally got the bench set up, painted and into position around the tree.

Thank you to all our volunteers who do such magnificent work for the service. We appreciate their commitment, energy and enthusiasm.

Burton wagon and its contents



250-million year old plant fossil



Collections

56 items acquired for
Worcester City collection

32 items acquired for
Worcestershire County collection

Silver brush and mirror set owned by Vesta Tilley





Museums Worcestershire Year in Numbers

103,072 visitors to our museums

Grants and donations £234,841

Total shop income £65,262

MOTHS reached 72,000 people via Twitter

91 significant objects and artworks borrowed from British Museum, Tate, Ashmolean and Birmingham Museum collections and 46 from private lenders

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