

Museums Worcestershire

Annual review 2015–16

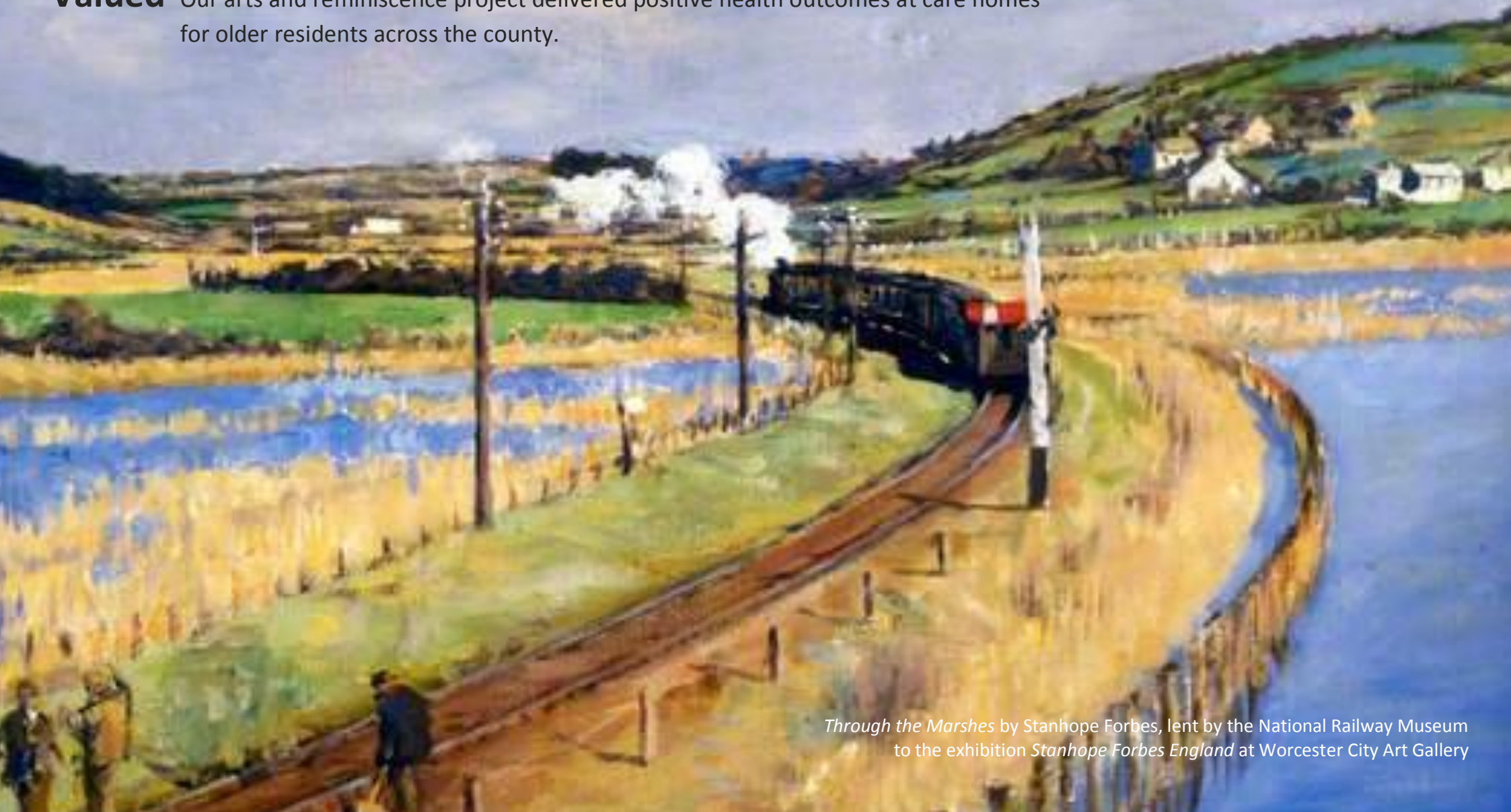


In 2015–16 Museums Worcestershire continued to be

Visible We worked with national partners including Arts Council England, UK Parliament and the Ashmolean Museum.

Viable We secured more than £300,000 additional funding in grants and donations.

Valued Our arts and reminiscence project delivered positive health outcomes at care homes for older residents across the county.



Through the Marshes by Stanhope Forbes, lent by the National Railway Museum to the exhibition *Stanhope Forbes England* at Worcester City Art Gallery



Museum Futures Three Years On

Building a sustainable future for our venues

- Capital programme in place for two out of three museums
- An ongoing relationship with Arts Council England has contributed £260,000 over 3 years to support museum resilience
- In 2015/16 £305,000 additional funding secured in grants and donations. This represents a 25% increase on 2014-15 and a 300% increase since the start of Museum Futures.

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 unrestrictedly whenever they can to support the museums they know and love.

Museums Worcestershire and the Visitor Economy

Love Worcester

Museums Worcestershire supports the Worcester Heritage Partnership and participates each year in the Love Worcester Heritage Festival. 2016 saw all venues record an increase in visitors to their sites and city centre footfall on the first Love Worcester weekend increased by 26%, illustrating the impact that a focus on Worcester's heritage offer can contribute to the city.

The Museum of Royal Worcester

The Museum of Royal Worcester has commissioned Museums Worcestershire to lead their work on 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.

Worcester Uncovered

Museums Worcestershire is a regular contributor to the Berrows Journal Supplement Worcester Uncovered, bringing together the city's historians to celebrate our unique heritage.



**LOVE
WORCESTER**
Heritage Festival 2016

WORCESTER Uncovered Historical and cultural supplement

Upbeat times for orchestra

The county's only professional symphony orchestra has plenty of strings to its bow

Peter Sheeran explains

THE English Symphony Orchestra (ESO), the only professional symphony orchestra based in the Three Counties, is looking to the future as it celebrates its 35th year.

Since its formation by William Boughton in 1980, it has performed around 1,000 concerts, including a recent

series celebrating the work of Elgar in Malvern, Hereford and Birmingham.

The orchestra has played all over the UK, toured the US and recorded over 50 albums for Nimbus. Its list of guest conductors includes such star names as Michael Tippett, Yehudi Menuhin and Vernon Handley.

The ESO believes in bringing the joy of live music to everyone, regardless of circumstance, and has performed everywhere from pre-schools to care homes, and hospices. It runs orchestra

courses from beginner-level upward.

Two such regular members, Noriko Suzuki and Amelia Jones, began their careers as juniors in the side-by-side scheme.

The ESO has very close links with the Elgar School of Music in Worcester and was recently appointed 'orchestra in association' by Worcestershire Youth Music.

The ESO's most popular recording is Vaughan Williams' Lark Ascending featuring Michael Boehmann. This year it has recorded works by



■ The hills are alive with the sound of the ESO

contemporary composers such as Deborah Pritchard, Geoffrey Gordon and Philip Sawyers. It has also just recorded the piano concertos of the American composer Ernst Krenek.

Christmas concerts are coming up in Berkeley Castle and Greinstock. Visit www.eso.co.uk and follow on twitter @EnglishSymphon

Shop at Hive for perfect presents

DON'T miss the Explore the Past shop if you're visiting the library or the cafe at The Hive. It's halfway up the staircase, on Level 2 and there you'll find a distinctive range of jewellery, pottery, and other gifts with a real flavour of Worcester, old and new, made by local craftspeople.



■ Tin mug on sale at The Hive shop.

In addition there are CDs and books, too, including a wide selection of local history. In time for Christmas, a new children's book has been published by Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service.

Stories of Worcester, History through the eyes of children, by Pat Hughes and Deborah Overton, illustrated by Pat Hughes and Aisling Nash, is a delightful collection of stories based on real evidence of the history of the City. The

Fame and fortune for idyllic painter



■ The Smooth Severn Stream by Benjamin Williams Leader 1886. It's a familiar riverside place – can you tell where?

The riverside Diglis Hotel was once home to a Victorian artist. PHILIPPA TINSLEY tells his story.

BENJAMIN Williams Leader is Worcester's most famous artist and the Worcester City Art Gallery, fittingly, has one of the best collections in the world of his work including twelve oil paintings.

He portrayed an idyllic and glorious British landscape celebrating the nature around us.

Leader was born in Worcester in 1831 as Benjamin Leader Williams (he later swapped his names around to avoid confusion with other artists called Williams). His father was a notable civil engineer who designed the Diglis lock; the family lived right next to his work at Diglis

House, now the Diglis Hotel. Educated at the Royal Grammar School in Worcester, Leader first worked at his father's office as a draughtsman while studying art in the evenings at the Worcester School of Design. At the age of 23, he was admitted to the Royal Academy Schools in London and started on a career path to become one of the most celebrated landscape artists of the Victorian age. At the height of his fame he was reputedly the most expensive painter in England and exhibited at the Royal Academy every year from 1857 to 1922, a record-breaking 65 continuous years!

The Civil War City

In 2014 we launched a campaign to promote *Worcester – The Civil War City*. It aims to support tourism and to make the most of our Civil War heritage, part of Worcester City Council's corporate commitment to History and Heritage.

Our contribution at Museums Worcestershire is to establish an upgraded visitor attraction at the Commandery, highlighting Worcester's unique place as the City where the Civil War began and ended.

We have appointed award winning exhibition designers GuM to our Development Team and the first phases will include:

- A new Battle of Worcester exhibition and a tribute to US Presidents John Adams and Thomas Jefferson in a garden wing display overlooking Fort Royal Park.
- Civil War trails of the City and Battlefield to link the Commandery with other heritage attractions

This exciting project is supported by £260K of funding from Worcester City Council, £50K from Worcestershire County Council and £29K from Arts Council England (West Midlands Museum Development).





-  The Commandery
-  Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum
-  County Museum at Hartlebury
-  Museum Collections
-  Learning
-  Support Us

About Museums Worcestershire

Museums Worcestershire comprises three fantastic venues – The County Museum at Hartlebury Castle, Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum and the Commandery.

The collections and exhibitions at our sites are many and varied, covering centuries of the county's history right up to the present day. Thousands of objects, including the historic buildings themselves, are brought to life through innovative exhibitions and events throughout the year.

[Find out more](#) >

Twitter

Tweets by [@worcetermuseum](#)

What's on

Top pick: [Oak Apple Day](#)

On the day that Charles II regained the throne enjoy a 17th century fete with maypole and dancing, Living History and period entertainment.

May Calendar

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
						01
02	03	04	05	06	07	08
09	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

Social media continues to grow with more than 6,500 Twitter followers and a new presence on Instagram.

A partnership with the Worcester News has reached 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.

www.museumsworcestershire.org.uk our new website is responsive for mobile devices and also fully accessible. Events are at the heart of the new website's design, with an events-calendar, news articles and directories in which information can all be added by staff across the venues to keep the site up-to-date and relevant.



The Commandery

"An excellent way to look back in time"

2015-16 highlights:

Worcester Re-enactors Living History at the Commandery event attracted 2,000 visitors in a multi period spectacular.

A fascinating exhibition focused on the divisive and complex Charles I, whose reign heralded the start of the English Civil Wars.

Worcester healthy Walkers group, based at the Commandery, saw increased numbers promoting health and enjoyment of the local area.

The Commandery Garden group have helped the production of our own vegetables, plants and the construction of a bug hotel.

The *Year of Liberty & Democracy* events programme, in partnership with the county's Magna Carta 800th celebrations and the Battle of Worcester Society, attracted more than 19,000 visitors.

We worked with the Worcestershire Youth Cabinet on a LiberTea event; nation-wide celebrations led by Parliament. A review of The Commandery's LiberTea is included in the UK Parliament publication *2015 Anniversaries: Parliament in the Making*.

The local community joined the Battle of Worcester Society in the annual Drumhead ceremony.

City Art Gallery & Museum

2015-16 highlights:

SPRING Stanhope Forbes' England

81% of visitors came specifically for the exhibition

51% of visitors came from outside the WR postcodes

SUMMER Way of the Warrior

55% of visitors enjoyed their very first visit to the Art Gallery & Museum.

100% recommend the exhibition to family and friends

AUTUMN Illustration Beats Explanation

31 artists and schools partnering with Museums Worcestershire including Riversides School, a small school in Worcester, with children aged between 7 and 16 with special educational needs.



"Thank you for bringing this exhibition to Worcester"

Destination exhibitions continued to draw visitors from outside the city and county, contributing to the visitor economy. From experience we now know a destination exhibition has an economic impact in the region of £0.5m.

Overall, a 10% increase in visitors across the year to Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum.



We will remember them

WW1 commemoration activity at Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund

Hartlebury

"An absolute treasure and excellent family value"



2015-16 highlights:

4,000 visitors (so far) to *A Happy Convalescence* exhibition which explores stories of fun, friendship and romance which offered a brief respite from the frontlines for injured soldiers sent to recover at Hartlebury Castle Hospital. The exhibition is part of the Worcestershire World War One Hundred project and runs until the end of 2018. The exhibition has been curated from the Worcester City and Worcestershire County collections along with loans from local people and partner museums.

Heathfield School from Kidderminster worked with Museums Worcestershire to learn 'how to be a curator' and create their own exhibition exploring the battle of Agincourt as part of a national competition run by The Historical Association. The school wrote their own interpretation, sourced objects and planned interactive elements including a trail ... and won the competition!



Collections

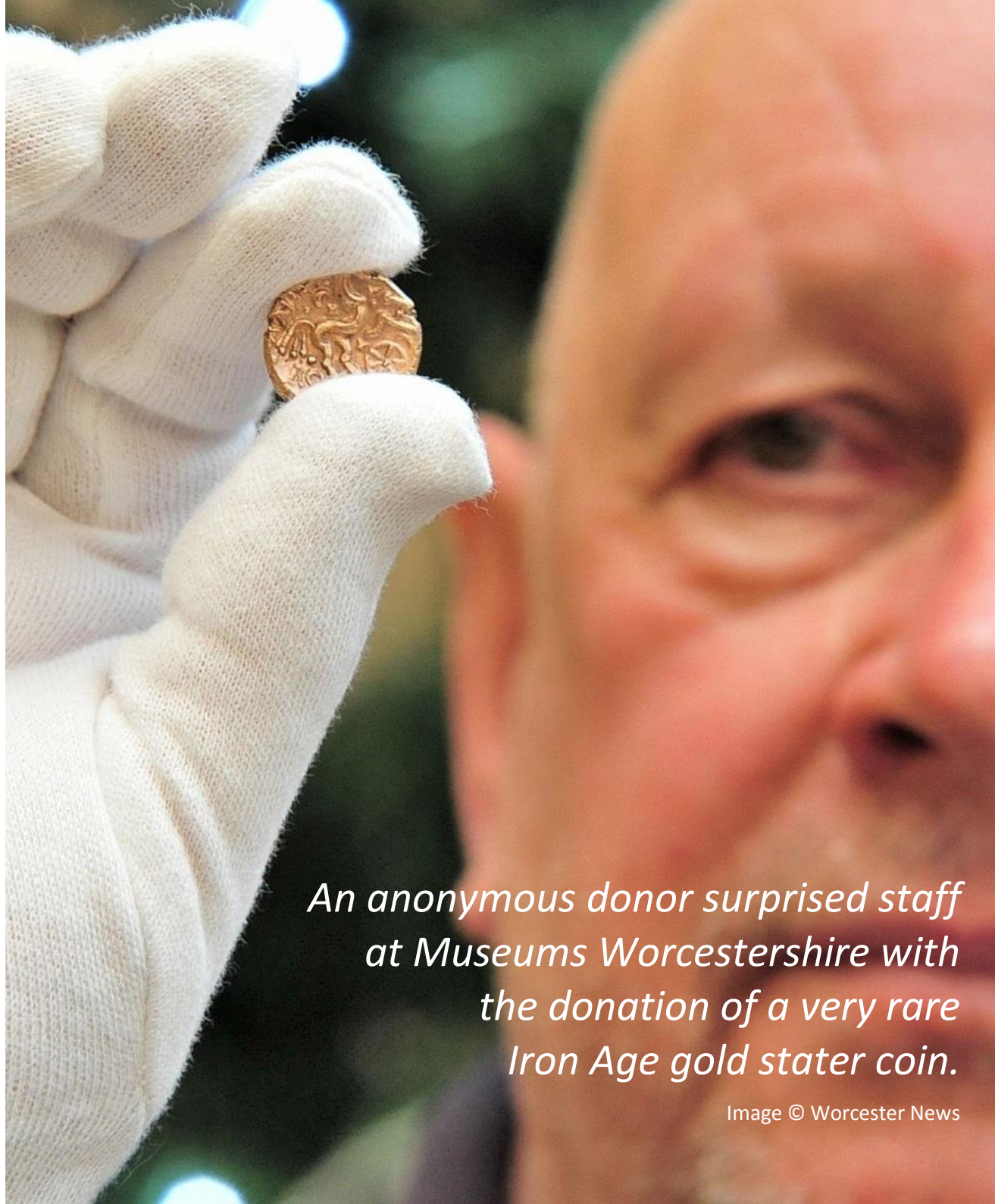
56 items were newly acquired this year for the collections of Worcester City and Worcestershire county museums.

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

A 1778 hand-coloured print of Worcester by Paul Sandby that had been exhibited at the 1882 Worcestershire Exhibition was kindly donated by Becky and Jenny Johnson to the Worcester City collection with support from the Friends of Museums Worcestershire.

Deborah Fox, Curator of Archaeology & Natural History, was awarded membership of the Chartered Institute for Archaeology and spoke at their conference about archaeological archives.

"It is especially good to see a local authority taking the lead and developing a programme that involves the HER, the field team and the museum in ensuring the enduring significance and security of important archaeological collections." Duncan H. Brown, Head of Archaeological Archives, Historic England



An anonymous donor surprised staff at Museums Worcestershire with the donation of a very rare Iron Age gold stater coin.

Learning and Community

Learning from Objects

150 trainee teachers from Worcester University came to the Art Gallery & Museum to learn about the educational value of museum objects and artefacts. This opportunity offers young teachers an exciting way to approach the more difficult and complex topics.

Arts and Reminiscence Project

Museums Worcestershire has developed expertise in reminiscence and arts projects, working with older people in care homes and other settings to deliver positive health outcomes for older residents in the City and County, using museum objects to stimulate residents' reminiscence.

A pilot programme of 30 arts & reminiscence activity sessions delivered in 6 care homes in the Wychavon District Council area. During the programme:

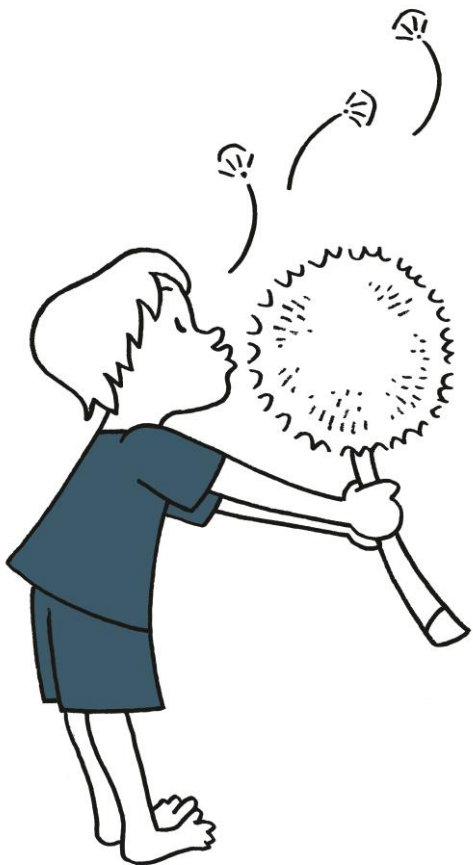
- 102 individual dementia care home residents participated at least once
- 196 hands-on engagements took place
- 29% of participants took part in 3 or more sessions each

"The sessions have been so lively. Combining art and reminiscence activity means that even if the residents don't get hands-on with the painting, they enjoy sitting and watching, or joining in with the chatter and singing" Care Home Manager, Greenhill Park

Young at Art

Themed object, art and poetry sessions for the under 5s (in partnership with The Hive)

"The children have great fun experimenting with different art materials each week (they love the squidgy clay!) and always take home a beautiful creation. More importantly, the sessions have enabled some very shy children (and young parent/ carers) to meet and bond. For some children, Young at Art has provided the necessary confidence for their next step in the world – school reception".



Volunteers

Worcestershire Cultural Volunteering Website

Museums Worcestershire has recruited passionate volunteers to all venues since its inception in 2014. We also support other museums and heritage sites in the county in volunteer recruitment, encouraging sharing of skills. A great example of Act Local in Worcestershire; volunteers use their time, ideas and skills to make things better for themselves and their local community.

- 12 museums and heritage sites now represented on the website.
- 62 volunteers recruited across the county.

The Worcestershire Cultural Volunteering website is supported by the Worcester Volunteer Centre.

Volunteer Projects

Our collections volunteers, with support from the Art Fund, have been cleaning the Bredon Hill Roman Coin hoard to ensure its preservation. Their generosity in demonstrating conservation techniques at day schools and talks during 2015 has ensured the story of the Bredon Hill Hoard has been shared across the county.

County Museum holiday activity volunteers have successfully worked with the events officer to develop new craft activities together utilising the knowledge and skill base of the volunteers.

Our Learning, Volunteering and Partnerships Manager is on the national Heritage Volunteer Manager Group representing Museums Worcestershire.

*A huge thank you to all our
volunteers who do such
magnificent work.
We appreciate your
knowledge and commitment.*



Hartlebury workshop volunteers relax
on the bench they created



Skills and Training

Skills for the Future

Worcestershire's Treasures is a heritage traineeship scheme funded through Heritage Lottery Fund's Skills for the Future programme, with additional support and funding from Worcestershire County Council and the University of Worcester, and managed by Museums Worcestershire.

- 17 paid traineeships
- across 8 heritage venues in Worcestershire.

Trainees have gained practical work-based skills relevant to the heritage sector as well as a relevant post-graduate qualification.

To-date of the first ten trainees five remain employed in heritage or related sectors, three in Worcestershire, representing a significant boost for the museums and heritage sector in Worcestershire as each paid museum employee is worth £366,170 to the local economy.*

For every two people employed in the heritage and museums sector around three other jobs benefit*.

**Data source: West Midlands Economic Impact Survey 2014; the West Midlands MDO Satisfaction Survey 2013; and the Marches Network, Partners in Museums Development.*

And last but by no means least; let's hear what our visitors have to say:

"A fantastic day for all the family, great interactive activities that the children love."

"Beautifully thought out displays with plenty of things to reminisce about."

"Loved the Gypsy caravans, forge and dolls houses. Also loved the interactive bits as I'm only 54 and a half, and like pressing buttons!"

"A superb museum – kept us interested for hours!"

"Such enthusiastic and interested staff and volunteers and such a surprising amount to see!"

"What a great event day! The kids had so much fun joining in and the people who helped us were so nice!"

"Excellent exhibition. Inspires me to find out more."

"What a brilliant exhibition. So happy to be here, made subjects on show so real. Keep up the good work."

"I think this visit is excellent in every way."

"This place can inspire a new generations as it inspired me 23 years ago"

"Amazing building, fabulous history and stories. "

"Wonderful experience, I wanted to go back through again and again."

"I have had a wonderful day. I have been many times over the last 30 years. Today was really great."

"Every re-enactor was knowledgeable and answered all of our questions. Thanks for a great event".

"Learned a lot in a fun and hands on way"

"Thank you for all of your help and kind support for my parents 50th wedding anniversary party. Noting was too much trouble for any of you. You were all great and lovely"

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



Looking Ahead

2017 will see the Commandery become the centrepiece of the city and county's unique Civil War heritage.

A partnership with Artangel and the Tate will bring a major artwork by a Turner Prize-winning artist to the Art Gallery.

The County Museum celebrates 50 years at Hartlebury Castle.

*Museums Worcestershire –
Visible, viable and valued*