

## Museum Report 10.2024

### 1. Staff changes

The team wished India Jolly (Curator maternity cover) farewell on her travels around Southeast Asia as Charlotte Dixon, Curator, returned from maternity leave at the end of May.

Lucy Cokes, the Curatorial Assistant maternity cover, returned in a new role as a freelance Museum Assistant (Conservation).

To free up a day a week for Charlotte D to work on the stores project Katie Petley-Jones is now the Curator one day a week. Kate Green, Community Engagement Officer, continues to work 3 days a week which is now paid for by the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the museum store project.

So the current museum team are:

- Charlotte Dixon – Curator
- Katie Petley-Jones – Curator / Curatorial Assistant
- Lucy Cokes – Museum Assistant (Conservation)
- Kate Green – Community Engagement Officer
- Charlotte Edwards – Museum Administrative Assistant

### 2. Visitors

Between 23rd January and 30th September 2024, we welcomed 7561 people to the museum, 1192 people to the Tower, 3663 people to events, group and school visits, Friends talks, researchers and to the summer exhibition and engaged with 463 people through Outreach visits.

The total number of visitors to the museum and that we have engaged with is **12,879** over the last 8 and a half months.

We had a record number of visitors to the museum on 8th August with 172 visitors in the main museum and 98 upstairs in the temporary exhibit!

By comparison, in 2023 from January to September we had 12,908 visitors.

### 3. Financial Donations and shop

April to September donations (since the last report):

Source	Amount
Cash donation box (Museum desk)	<u>£638.63</u>
Automaton	£200
Card donation station	£620
Talks & group visits	£173
Tower	£201.94
Teignbridge Community Lottery	£531.50
<b>Total =</b>	<b>£2,567.01</b>

Museum Shop (April – September)

Cash (museum): £801.08

Cash (tower): £77.00

Card: £733.84

Total taken: £1611.92

Expenditure on shop stock: £622.74

**Profit: £989.18****4. Exhibitions and changing displays***3.1 High Street 100*

Our Summer Exhibition 'High Street 100' took place in August and was a great success.

Inspired by the centenary anniversary of the department store Austins, *High Street 100* celebrated 100



years of local businesses from Pethybridge department store to Eubulus Williams' opticians to Madge Mellor's café, to name but a few.

Thanks to research carried out by one of our volunteers, George Hampshire, we displayed a large map of the businesses in the town in 1924.

The exhibition was well attended with **1,268 visitors**.



### 3.2 Stover Canal Exhibition

We were also delighted to host an exhibition for the Stover Canal Trust celebrating the anniversary of the Trust and the amazing work of the volunteers. As this was downstairs in the museum, we don't have separate visitor figures for this one, but we can be sure that many of the 1,976 main museum visitors this summer will have seen the display.



### 4.3 Object of the month

We continue to change the object of the month case. This is a great way to get different objects from the collection temporarily on display.

## 4. Collections updates

### 4.1 New acquisitions

A recent donation which went on display in the High Street 100 exhibition is a business street map of Newton Abbot in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is surrounded by adverts for the local businesses of the time such as piano dealers, grocers and chemists. It is a great addition to the collection and will go on permanent display in the new year.

### 4.2 Conservation

Museum Assistant and Conservator Lucy has been making progress in conserving two water-damaged leaflets from Pearks, a shop in Newton Abbot in the early 1900s. She is also conserving a unique photograph of the Beating of the Bounds at Decoy Wood in 1935. In the Museum, Lucy has been introducing pest monitoring to work experience students and Young Curators.

## 5. Signal gantry

The British Rail Western Region signal gantry on Torquay Road has been restored with the help of South Devon Railway volunteers.

The work included rubbing down and repainting the 70-year-old steel structure, replacing arms and fitting new glass.

The gantry originally stood in the neighbouring railway station but became redundant when modernisation works were carried out in the 1980s.

Author David St John Thomas, co-founder of the David and Charles publishing business, bought it from British Rail and had it moved into its current position which was then part of his company's headquarters.

It now sits in the car park of Aldi supermarket.

The project was made possible by donations through our donation box and electronic donation station. A special thanks goes to Denis Lewis for leaving the museum a valuable donation in his will that formed a huge part of getting this project off the ground (quite literally as getting high scaffolding installed was one of the first jobs!)



*Scaffolding going up May 2024*

## 6. St Leonard's Tower

The Tower was open again this year from May to September thanks to our team of volunteers. During this time we welcomed 1,192 visitors into the Tower.

Repair work was undertaken around the window above the door due to cracking and loose stonework / mortar. This work was undertaken by Western Stonemasonry in September to stabilise the stonework.

## 7. Heritage Assets

We had the first HA panel meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> August where all the 21 assets discussed were approved. The team are now contacting owners of the buildings to inform them. Then the next step will be to upload a list of approved heritage assets to the museum and Town Council websites and to also send this list to TDC. The next panel meeting will be in February 2025

## 8. Training

<b>Training</b>	<b>Who attended</b>
Museum Association - Disposal Bootcamp	Charlotte D
Modes Webinar- Validation, or what do the red crosses mean?	Charlotte E
Modes Webinar- Setting up termlists	Charlotte E
Accessioning training (run by the Curator & Curatorial Assistant)	Behind the scenes volunteers
Museum Association - Shout Out: Successful Marketing, PR and Social Media Strategies	Katie, Charlotte E & Charlotte D
J9 Domestic Abuse scheme	Staff & FOH volunteers

We are applying to take part in *Growing Together: Embedding Inclusion and Collaboration in our Museums*, an Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity training programme run by Southwest Museums.

## 9. Volunteers and work experience

The museum currently has 63 active volunteers who assist with a range of activities including front of house, behind the scenes collections work, education and conservation to name a few.

We are still receiving applications for new volunteers.

In July we welcomed two work experience students from Coombeshead Academy and Teign School.

We have also had a work experience placement and their support worker from Dawlish Gardens Trust join the team on a Thursday for 12 weeks.

## 10. Events

### Past events

#### *10.1 Madge Mellor Remembered Day*

On 21<sup>st</sup> August we hosted an afternoon for people to come along and share their memories of Madge Mellor whilst enjoying a hot drink and an éclair. Many memories were noted down and oral history recordings taken to preserve these cherished memories for future generations.



“I worked as a waitress and can remember having to have my lunch at 10 am so that all the staff were back on the floor when the public had their lunch. I also remember all the broken and mis-shaped cakes we used to eat for our tea breaks, it was a great place to work.”

“Big Choux buns, Tiers of cakes, lovely loose tea. Always a treat.”



## 10.2 Heritage Open Days

This year's Heritage Open Days event was on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September with the theme of routes-networks-connections.

To celebrate we had the following activities:

- St Leonard's Tower open, 10am-1pm
- Leather working demonstrations, 10am-1pm
- Lady Katherine (costumed interpreter), 11am-1pm
- Free drop-in Lego workshop with Brickideas, 10am-1pm
- Make and Create – Maps!, 10:30am-12:30pm
- Museum Quest, all week with a chance to earn a themed sticker for Pastports

This was a great success with 113 visitors to the Tower, 86 to the museum and 20 for craft activities totalling **219 visitors** throughout the morning.



## Upcoming events

### 10.3 Halloween

On the evening of the 1<sup>st</sup> November we will be hosting a Halloween event in the museum. This was run last year and due to its success we have decided to run this event again. A storyteller will be telling fictional spooky stories about objects in the museum for a special out of hours visit.

*10.4 Music at the Museum*

*Haldon String Quartet presents: festive classics* – Wednesday 11th December, 7.30-8.30pm.

Haldon String Quartet will be playing a selection of classical and Christmas songs for a special free evening concert in the museum galleries. This will be a drop-in event taking place on the evening of the lantern parade and late-night shopping.