

**MUSEUMS COMMITTEE  
12 SEPTEMBER 2011**

Present: Councillors Cartwright, Charlesworth, Forward (as the duly appointed substitute for Councillor Chowney), Hodges (in the Chair), Martin and Webb

Museum Association Representatives: Mr Adams, Mrs Barrett, Mr Peak and Mrs Purdey

Apologies for absence were noted for Ms Cornish, Miss Reed and Councillors Finch and Chowney

**10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following councillors declared their interests in the minutes as follows:

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Minute</u>	<u>Interest</u>
Cllr Hodges and Mrs Barratt and Mr Peak	15 – Transfer of Title	Personal – Trustees of Hastings Fishermen’s Museum

**11. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2011 be approved and signed by the Chair as a true record.

**12. CURATOR’S REPORT**

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to provide an update on issues arising from previous meetings and confirmation of Curator’s actions.

The curator confirmed filming undertaken by the BBC of the Museum’s Baird Gallery which will be included in a Celebrity Antiques Road Trip as part of Children in Need, will be shown in October 2011.

Further to the Museum’s success in becoming part of a Renaissance-funded Sustainable Volunteering Project, discussions continue with the consultants and stakeholders to work on the Museum’s Volunteer Management Policy.

The Museum is to participate in a commemorative plaque registration scheme managed by English Heritage. Information will be held on a national database which will be published on their website late 2011.

East Sussex Records Office has asked Hastings Museum if they are interested in holding an Interreg-funded exhibition in the Autumn of 2013. Interest has been confirmed. The display will be on a seaside-related theme with associated educational and family events.

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**RESOLVED – that the report be noted.**

**13. UPDATE ON COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES**

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to update members on progress of the commemorative plaques programme.

The Curator updated the Committee on the status of the plaque for Alan Turing, she advised that Listed Building permission had been granted for the plaque on Baston Lodge and the owner of the property had confirmed they had taken delivery of the plaque. A small scale or private unveiling ceremony will take place in 2012.

The Committee discussed proposals for a plaque for Sidney Little. Members felt the profile of the plaque should be raised and that it should be nationally publicised; they suggested alternative locations for it to be sited, and the form it should take. The curator advised that she would look at ways forward, taking onboard the suggestions raised by the Committee.

**RESOLVED – that the report be noted.**

**14. UPDATE ON OLD TOWN MUSEUM**

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to update members on the progress of the review of the Old Town Hall Museum. Interested parties attended a meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2011 to review the schedule of works to the physical layout of the Old Town Hall Museum and were informed of the progress made. Members further considered the possibility of extending the museum talks from Carnival Week to Hastings Week; and to pursue press and printing workshops and object handling at Old Town Hall Museum.

Nick Sangster informed the Committee that a counter was being installed to accurately record the number of visitors.

The Committee congratulated the Curator on the improvements made to the progress of the Old Town Hall Museum.

The next meeting will take place on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

**RESOLVED – that the report be noted.**

**15. TRANSFER OF TITLE**

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to inform members of the transfer of a museum specimen. The specimen, a Conger Eel, was removed from display in 1995 and given on loan to the Fishermen's museum in 2002.

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The curator confirmed the ownership of the Conger Eel will transfer from Hastings Museum to the Fishermen's Museum to allow them to carry out essential repair and conservation work to the specimen and its case.

Councillor Hodges, having declared his personal interest, sat down from the Chair during discussion of this item. Mrs Marion Purdey, took the Chair for the duration of this item.

**RESOLVED – that the report be noted and transfer is recommended for approval.**

**16. DISPOSAL OF NATURAL HISTORY SPECIMENS**

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report informing members on the items removed from the natural history collections, as agreed in the Collections Management Programme. The inspection which took place in July 2011, identified nineteen specimens for disposal that were either damaged or had decayed.

Steve Peak asked if the Committee could be notified of items to be removed from the collection before they were disposed of. The curator confirmed this was achievable.

**RESOLVED – that the report be noted.**

(Councillor Webb arrived before the start of consideration of the next application and was present for the remainder of the meeting)

**17. MUSEUM ATTENDANCE FIGURES**

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to inform members of figures for attendances, educational activities and use of the Museum's website for the first quarter of 2011-12.

The Curator confirmed there had been a decrease in visitors to Hastings Museum and Art Gallery following the decision to close on Mondays from 1 April, and an increase in visitors to the Old Town Hall Museum compared to the 2010 figures. The use of museum loan boxes for schools had increased, the loans will be monitored from September 2011 onwards and will be reported to the next meeting. In addition to this information, Councillor Cartwright asked for more detailed information on the loan boxes to be supplied at the next meeting.

It was noted that the continued reduction in the number of Educational visits was due to uncertainties concerning school budgets and the number of language school students had decreased since the closure of Hastings

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Museum and Art Gallery on Mondays. A report will be submitted to the next meeting following discussions with schools in the new term.

The Curator advised the number of weddings taking place at the museum had increased, the figures will be reported to the next meeting.

Members discussed if it was possible and beneficial to look at ways to separate the figures for the number of visitors attending the Tourist Information Centre and the Old Town Hall Museum.

**RESOLVED – that the report be noted.**

**18. MUSEUM EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to inform Members of forthcoming events and activities.

These include, amongst others:

- 'Coastal Landscapes' from the permanent collection. Exhibition ends January 2012;
- 'Len Shelley and Angie Biltcliffe'. Until 23 October;
- 'Room for Ideas: Contemporary Jewellery'. From 12 November to 19 February 2012;
- 'The Seaside World of Punch and Judy; a touring exhibition'. From 1 October to 8 January;
- 'Teilhard de Chardin in Hastings: to commemorate centenary of his ordination'.

Events:

- Life Writing Course with Maureen Connett. 20 & 27 September 2011;
- Hastings Interfaith Forum event. 24 September 2011;
- Teachers' Drop-In. 27 September 2011;
- Punch and Judy Show. 1 October 2011;
- The Sea is Singing to Me. Museum Association concert. 8 October 2011;
- Kids go Nuts in Summerfields Woods. With the Rangers. 9 October 2011;
- The Big Draw – Postcards from the Other Side of the World. 15 October 2011;
- Half-term activities at both Museums. 22 – 30 October 2011;
- Indian Inspirations embroidery techniques with Claire Buckley. 22 & 29 October 2011;
- Afrikaba Workshops. 26 & 27 October 2011;
- Edward Preston Talk. 28 October 2011;
- Edwards Preston Talk. 4 November 2011;
- Edward Preston Talk. 11 November 2011;

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- Private View of Jewellery exhibition. 11 November 2011;
- Edward Preston talk. 18 November 2011;
- Museum Association coach excursion to Museum of Childhood. 20 November 2011;
- Edward Preston Talk. 25 November 2011;
- Artefact Inspired Jewellery Design with Jane Runchman. 26 November 2011;
- Museum Association AGM, with presentation on Stade Education Project. 4 December 2011;
- Jewels Yule Love Workshop with Jo McAllister and Maxine Wareham. 10 December 2011.

Regular Events:

- Local Studies Room open every Wednesday;
- Play and learn sessions every Thursday.

**RESOLVED - that the report be noted.**

**19. MUSEUM ACQUISITIONS**

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented an updated report informing members of items acquired by the Museum since June 2011.

These included:

- "The Robert Tressell Lectures 1981-88", edited by David Alfred. Copy signed by Tony Benn and 1950s plastic seaside bucket;
- Victorian bed-bonnet, used by donor's mother, born 59 Croft Road, Hastings;
- Six copies of the "Hastings and St Leonards Pictorial Advertiser" from 1909-1912;
- Two Edwardian postcards, written from Middle St, Hastings, in 1913;
- Lease for "Whitby House", near the Stonebeach, 1830;
- Collection of holiday leaflets and pamphlets from Hastings, 1960s;
- Fabric samples from Royal Yacht, Queen Victoria's Funeral Pall etc collected by Polly Stone, Court Dressmaker.

**RESOLVED – that the report be noted and the Chairman sign the acknowledgments of thanks to the donors.**

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**20. REQUEST FOR LOAN**

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to consider loans from the Museum collection.

The National Maritime Museum had requested the loan of the JMW Turner watercolour painting 'Hastings: Fishmarket on the Sands', for a major landmark exhibition developed by the National Maritime Museum in association with Tate Britain, entitled "Turner and the Art of the Sea'. The exhibition will incorporate paintings on loan from lenders all over the world. It is hoped the Hastings work would be displayed with water colours that were exhibited at the Royal Academy. The exhibition will be held between November 2013 to March 2014. Museum Association members will arrange a coach trip to the exhibition.

Steve Peak asked if the National Maritime Museum had any Hastings related material which could be exhibited. The curator advised due to space limitations any loan would be limited to a temporary exhibition. Councillor Hodges proposed that any artifacts could be exhibited at the Fishermen's Museum. The curator agreed to look into these matters further.

**RESOLVED - that the loan be recommended for approval.**

**21. MEETING AT EAST SUSSEX RECORD OFFICE**

Cathy Walling, Museum Curator, presented a report to inform members of results of a meeting between the Museum Curator and the County Archivist.

Matters relating to the transfer and accessibility of Hastings records were discussed. The Committee resolved to agree to attend a tour of East Sussex Records Office.

**RESOLVED - that the report be noted.**

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 3.45pm)