

WILTSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY



**ANNUAL REPORT and
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
for the year ended 31 March 2025**

SUMMARY and OBJECTS



Charity Number 1080096 Company Registration Number 3885649
(A company limited by guarantee)

The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society (the Society) was founded in 1853 and the Society's first permanent Museum opened in Long Street, Devizes in 1874.

The Society is a registered charity and governed by Articles of Association.

Objects. To educate the public by promoting, fostering interest in, exploration, research and publication on the archaeology, art, history and natural history of Wiltshire for the public benefit.

Mission Statement. To explore the archaeology, art, history and natural history of Wiltshire.

Aims. The Society runs the Wiltshire Museum, organises a programme including conferences, lecture and events, learning and outreach for children and schools, provides access to our collections for academic and general researchers, reviews planning consents, supports the Wiltshire Archaeology Field Group, promotes Industrial Archaeology and publishes the *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine* (WANHM). Further details are included in this Annual Report.

The Collections. These have been acquired by the Society for over 170 years and their strength lies in the prehistoric material. The Early Bronze Age collection is of exceptional importance because of its size and range, the uniqueness of many of the objects, the fact that it includes many important items, its association with the World Heritage Site of Avebury and Stonehenge, and its relevance to the history of archaeology. 'Gold from the Time of Stonehenge' is on permanent display.

Researchers. Every year academic researchers carry out important research on the collection. There are over 500,000 items in the collections and details can be found in our online searchable database. The collections are '**Designated**' of national importance and '**Accreditation**' status was first awarded in 2005. Overseen by the Arts Council the Accreditation Scheme *sets out nationally-agreed standards, which inspire the confidence of the public and funding and governing bodies. It enables museums to assess their current performance, as well as supporting them to plan and develop their services.*

The **Archive & Library** contains a local studies collection of books, journals, newspapers and other printed items including photographs and maps concerned with Wiltshire, all available to researchers. The archaeology section includes a general collection of archaeology books, the principal archaeology journals, the papers of Wiltshire antiquaries and the written records of more recent excavations in the county. The natural history section similarly includes general natural history books, specialist journals and the papers of early natural historians.

Funding. The Society and Museum are funded by its members, past and present; admission charges, Wiltshire Council, Devizes Town Council, grants from charitable trusts, fundraising activities and income from investments.

The Society holds an Annual General Meeting each year to which all Society members are invited. At this meeting the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March are presented for approval, and Trustees elected.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society is committed to promoting the values of a just, inclusive and cohesive society and we take seriously our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. In all we do, we will seek to remove barriers to participation, create opportunities for engagement and meet the needs of all people.

Equality and diversity is being woven throughout our strategic aims. Our objectives for equality and diversity support our strategic aims and specifically focus on three key areas (governance, workforce and audiences), which will be implemented through our equality and diversity action plan.

A Policy is being developed, working with the Wessex Museums Partnership, to work towards embedding and integrating equality and diversity at every level of the organisation, through specific and regular equality and diversity policy review and strategic planning. We aim to raise awareness and actively promote the values of equality and diversity through the appointment of a board level Diversity Champion and by providing training opportunities for trustees. We are working towards ensuring that all levels of staff and volunteers are included in strategic and action planning and to develop a better and more detailed understanding of our audiences and our local demographics, in order to identify our under-represented audience groups. The Society will also ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of development planning in regards to the relocation of the Museum to the Assize Court.

Decolonising Collections

The Decolonising Collections Framework is supported by an Action Plan individual to each museum in the Wessex Museum partnership.

Decolonising involves creatively reimagining the way museums work, who they work with and what they value. It covers all areas of practice and creates a framework to better support people and institutions. Decolonising is a collective activity, which can be messy, thoughtful, imaginative, and emotional. It is driven by the desire for justice and equity in that it aims to rebalance power and representation away from the coloniser narrative of history and society. This work is intersectional as it challenges structural inequalities across the board to redress forms of historic and ongoing harm. Museums Association.

Decolonising Practice 2022.

The purpose of the Framework is to put the Wessex Museums firmly and consistently on the path to decolonisation, with meaningful, effective and collaborative public engagement. Through this work we want to understand the stories of those who have been oppressed and where there are connections to our collections - whether it is related to the empire or by more recent prejudices conveyed by the bias of curators and historians. We want to tell honest stories about how objects have come to be in museums - who they were given by and how and why the museums decided to accept them.

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Community Engagement

Fabric banners were designed by the Devizes Public Living Room (Camerados) and White Horse Arts and paraded as part of the 2024 Devizes Carnival.

They represent all the things that people love about Devizes, and they play on the Camerados theme - *Life is Pants, Sometimes... But, Devizes Isn't*, see pages 17 and 19 (2024.73 and 2024.7012).

For more community activities, see page 28.



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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st March 2025.

This is my first year writing as Chair of the Society and I am excited to note the progress made on several fronts. Front of mind, for the Board of Trustees and the staff, has been progressing the work for the Assize Court project. Milestones within the year were the achievement of the significant progress with the lottery-funded Development work leading to a plan completed to RIBA Stage 3, much more certainty about costs, a detailed business case and perhaps most encouraging, the enthusiastic participation of over 3,000 members of the community in the outreach and activity programme related to the project. In addition we reached the substantial milestone of over £1m committed in funding to match our Round 2 lottery bid.

Part of the case for the new Museum is a recognition that Long Street, while a wonderful historic home for WANHS, can no longer offer what visitors expect on a trip to a museum. We all know that Long Street is something of a labyrinth and by no means easily accessible for the range of visitors we should like to welcome. This in turn limits our capacity to enlarge our visitor base significantly and in turn to improve the financial basis upon which we operate. Over the last few years this slip in visitor numbers has been further exacerbated by COVID, the cost of living crisis and the external reduction in the county's destination management organisation Visit Wiltshire; unsurprisingly this has resulted in a reduction of visits to the County of some 20% overall. In this context I should like to commend our staff and volunteer team, led so well by David Dawson, for the amazing depth and breadth of activity they manage to achieve within existing limitations both of space and resource. These are detailed in the Director's Highlights of the year on page 10.

Our financial turnover continued to increase,

as last year, due to significant income and expenditure relating to the Assizes for Devizes project. Details are on pages 33 and 34-36. Our overall year end position is however less favourable than last year, largely due to two factors: the planned contribution from WANHS' own resources to the Assize Court Project, and the unplanned, and considerable, hit to our investment returns at the point of year-end due to its falling shortly after US President Trump's disruptive announcement of global tariffs. This only strengthens my view that we collectively have an obligation to maximise the possibilities of what we can control, by making a future museum which is the best, most accessible, most attractive venue possible, and by continuing to attract gifts and legacies which add to our assets and endowment.

Such ambitions are only achieved through extensive partnership. As well as the National Lottery Heritage Fund, we already work closely with other Wessex Museums, supported by Arts Council England; we anticipate positive financial support for our project from Wiltshire and Devizes Town Councils; and we are building the coalition of wider funding partners. But it's not all about money. I'd like to thank my fellow volunteer Trustees, and I am delighted to welcome younger colleagues through the Kids in Museums Young Trustees' programme. Our wider cohort of volunteers, and our membership, make us who we are as an organisation and I should like to thank you all for your contribution in this and future years.

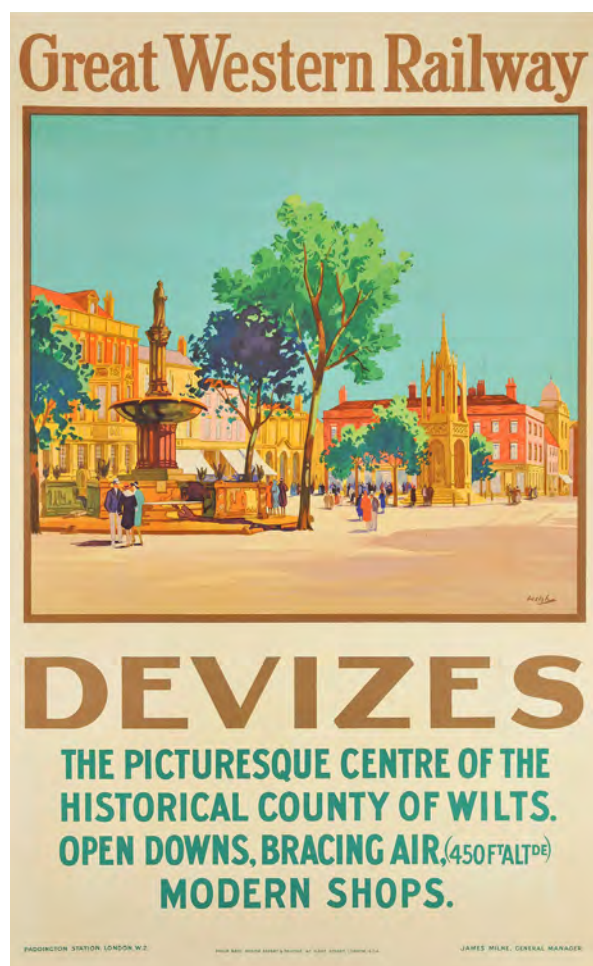
We are moving into a pivotal period of change for the Museum. We look forward to bringing you, our members, forward with us.

Caroline Kay

An eclectic mix of images of Devizes added to the collection in the year.



Clockwise from the top: a late 19th Century aerial view of Devizes, taken from St John's church tower. Included in a photograph album donated to the Museum, see page 20 (2024.7011); Great Western Railway, Devizes - Lithographic poster produced c. 1930 by the Great Western Railway, see page 18 (2024.1001); digital photograph of the former Pizzeria in Northgate Street, Devizes, destroyed by fire in November 2024, see page 20 (2024.7013).



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BOARD OF TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees present their Annual Report, together with the financial statements of the charity, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

This Annual Report includes the reports and financial statements set out on pages 10 to 54. The Report of the Board of Trustees should be deemed to be the directors' report for the purposes of Company Law.

The reports on the following pages show how the Objects of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society ('the Society') - see below - are achieved to further the charity's purposes for the public benefit. The Trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The Director is the senior member of staff responsible for the ongoing operations in consultation with the Chair and his report, and those of the staff, follow, on pages 10 to 33. The Society's committees and working groups provide a number of services to members and the wider public. They cover a wide range of activities from fundraising, industrial archaeology through to expert advice on planning matters. Their work helps promote the Society and its Museum and Archive and Library to a wide audience and reports are included in this report. The Society could not operate without the hundreds of volunteer hours provided and also the invaluable funding and support of our membership. .

The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the Articles of Association and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIETY

The objects for which the Society is registered are *to educate the public by promoting, fostering interest in, exploration, research and publication on the archaeology, art, history and natural history of Wiltshire for the public benefit.* To achieve this the Society:

- Maintains a museum, library and art gallery, open throughout the year, and mounts exhibitions to stimulate and enhance appreciation of the county of Wiltshire.
- Actively collects objects and documents, through the Collections Trust, that tell the story of Wiltshire
- Organises lectures, conferences and visits to disseminate greater knowledge and appreciation of our heritage, to both the Society's members and wider audience.
- Provides activities for young people to enable them to appreciate and develop their understanding of the local environment and its history (including school visits to the Museum and workshops at schools).
- Engages with local community groups to offer arts, culture and heritage activities for all generations.
- Provides opportunities for volunteers, without whom the Society could not offer the scale and variety of activities.
- Promotes, encourages and undertakes research and publishes newsletters, an annual magazine, reports, periodicals, books and other literature which are relevant to its activities.
- Operates an archaeological field group which encourages members to become involved actively in archaeology in the county.
- Committees and working groups are formed to follow up on specific issues.



ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Maintains a museum, library and art gallery, open throughout the year, and mounts exhibitions to stimulate and enhance appreciation of the county of Wiltshire. Loans objects to other organisations.

MISSION STATEMENT

Inspiring people to explore the archaeology, history and environment of Wiltshire

Highlights of the Year

This has been an incredibly busy year as we juggle work on the Assizes for Devizes project alongside the more 'normal' work of the Museum. It has been a privilege to have worked with Martin Nye, who retired as Chair at the end of last year, and to welcome Caroline Kay, our new Chair. I am also very grateful to Alison Hems, our interim Chair, for making sure that the handover worked so smoothly.

The year saw a landmark for the Museum as we marked the 150th Anniversary of its opening in September 1874. The Museum opened with a two-day celebration and a procession led by the Mayor, followed by a dinner in the Town Hall. We marked our 150th birthday with a small exhibition and a Members' tea party.

The major exhibition during the year was the *Wiltshire Thatcher*, highlighting a photograph album created by Ernest Farmer, a leading Victorian photographer, on a visit to Wiltshire. The album includes a photograph of a Wiltshire thatcher, immortalised on the cover of the Led Zeppelin IV LP that features *Stairway to Heaven*. Curated by Lisa Brown and Heather Ault, this included a busy series of talks and events, including Victorian family portrait sessions captured on glass plate negatives. Making exhibitions and events a success relies upon the support of a great team. Karen Jones designed the exhibition panels and organised the events, Emma Sykes developed stock for the shop and coordinated bookings.

In the Autumn we again held our popular Oexmann Art Competition, where the judging panel had the mammoth task of selecting winners from amongst 200 adult and 300 children's entries, all coordinated by Heather Ault. We are grateful to the Oexmann family for their continuing support for the competition, inspired by Theophila Oexmann.

We continue to run a busy learning and engagement programme. Ali Rushent, our Learning Officer, welcomed early years classes, primary schools from across the County, A-level groups and special needs classes. She has also continued our successful home schooling programme, as well as holding children's activities throughout the year.

Amy Hammett, our Community Curator, has continued to develop our work with our wider community, including working with Spurgeons Children's Centres and the Wiltshire Youth Justice Service Team. In 2025 Amy's work has been recognised with her Street Art project being shortlisted for a national award in the Social Justice category by Kids in Museums.

At the heart of the Society are the collections. We are grateful to the many donors who have added to our collection, highlights including a hoard from near Marlborough. This has been a good example of the importance of detectorists reporting their discoveries to the Portable Antiquities Scheme, as members of our Archaeology Field Group were able to undertake research at the site, uncovering valuable archaeological information. However, a particular favourite of Lisa Brown, our Curator, are children's shoes concealed in a house in Rowde, examples of folk traditions highlighted in the *Un/ Common People* exhibition developed with our Wessex Museums colleagues.

We continue to add to our important Library and Archive, managed by Jane Schön and her team of volunteers. An important donation was the Cunnington family Bible, which contains the names and birthdates of several generations of the family, including the archaeologist William Cunnington I (born 1754).

We continue to welcome researchers to the Museum, working on topics ranging from the creation of a post-Roman pottery type series, to leading-edge AncientDNA to topics such as the botanical drawings of Stella Craig-Ross and Wiltshire brickworks. Our collections database continues to be an important way of helping researchers, and in September we were one of 12 collections that contributed data to the launch of the Museum Data Service, an initiative aiming to include data from all UK museums.

An important role of the Society is the annual publication of *WANHM*, the journal of record for archaeological and historical research in the County. We are grateful to Stuart Brookes, Honorary Editor, and to Peter Saunders and Stuart Raymond for all their work behind the scenes on this well-respected publication.

A special thanks goes to all those who make the work of the Museum possible, including Mandy Dixon, who keeps a close eye on our finances and Carol Johnson, who keeps the building spotless. We are also hugely grateful to our fantastic team of volunteers, whether welcoming visitors, supporting researchers in the library or helping children with their learning. Their help is vital to our work.

In this busy year, much time and energy has also been invested in the Assizes for Devises project. The Project Team achieved a huge amount during the year, engaging 3,000 people in contributing towards design development. The work culminated in submitting a planning application in December 2024 and in preparing for a Mid-Term Review by the National Lottery Heritage Fund in March 2025. The Review included presentations from staff and specialist consultants and the National Lottery Team reviewed some 600 pages of documentation. These reports were prepared by working groups of staff, volunteers, external specialists and Trustees of both WANHS and the Devises Assize Court Trust. It is a huge tribute to all those involved that the Review was successful, with no adverse comments. We can now move forward towards submitting the Heritage Fund application in August. Particular thanks are due to Nicola Trowell (Programme Manager), Claire Slack (Engagement Officer) and Helen Meikle (Support Officer). I am very grateful also for the support and challenge of the members of the Project Board, which includes Trustees from both the Society and the Devises Assize Court Trust as well as their consultant architect, Colin Johns.

We are well placed as we submit our Delivery Stage application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund in August 2025 and keep our fingers crossed for good news in early 2026!

David Dawson

TRAINING

The Collections Officer: Archive and Library (Jane Schön) attended several online lectures by The National Archives and the Society of Genealogists, covering topics ranging from researching family history, how to use Military Records, Rapid Response Collecting and using English Education Records, plus an online international conference about 'Decolonisation' delivered by the International Council of Museums, and an online session about using archival research in the heritage sector, delivered by the Institute of Historical Research and two online Show & Tell sessions on 'Contemporary Collecting' delivered by the Contemporary Collecting Network.

A number of online lectures run by the Research Libraries UK have also been viewed, on the theme of *Inclusive Collections: Inclusive Libraries* and several have been attended. The lectures provide useful background knowledge and will assist with the Decolonisation work being undertaken for the Wessex Museums Partnership NPO.

Portable Antiquities Scheme

Finds Liaison Officers, Finds Liaison Assistants, PAS volunteers and self-recorders recorded 1,725 objects found in Wiltshire in 1,548 records from April 2024 to March 2025. The majority of these finds were made by metal detectorists who reported them to Portable Antiquities Scheme (www.finds.org.uk).

Funding has continued via the British Museum/PAS to finance a part-time (2.5 days per week) Finds Liaison Assistant to support the FLO, and the role continues to be split between Alix Smith and Alyson Tanner, in addition to their volunteering with PAS. We have recently lost one of our regular PAS volunteers who was successful in gaining a full-time post at The Salisbury Museum, but we have a new PAS volunteer starting with us shortly.

The in-situ Bronze age hoard Treasure case reported to PAS in early 2024 and block lifted by Alix and Alyson, together with Neil Adam, Assistant County Archaeologist and Dan Greenaway, the finder, was one of four finds showcased at the British Museum/PAS Annual Treasure report launch in February 2025. The hoard had been micro-excavated by British Museum's Conservation Team and proved to be of great interest as it contained a rare copper alloy anvil, together with a hammer, both of which showed traces of goldworking. Other finds within the hoard included a tanged chisel, palstave and copper alloy vessel fragments - *Record ID: WILT-C97E23 - BRONZE AGE hoard*. Thanks to the finder contacting PAS, rather than digging the hoard up himself, it was possible for Conservation to see in which order the objects had been deposited in the ground and glean other valuable information. Wiltshire Museum hopes to acquire the hoard.

*Sophie Hawke
Finds Liaison Officer for Wiltshire
Portable Antiquities Scheme*



Bronze Age anvil (WILT-C97E23_672e089728396)

Fundraising, Grants, Donations and Legacies

Fundraising is essential to ensure the Society can continue to achieve its aims and ambitions and to work with the local community. The Society's continued success is rooted in the support of members and the local community through subscriptions, donations and being advocates of our work. Corporate Members include Wansbroughs Solicitors, Venture Chartered Accountants and AC Archaeology.

This report highlights some of the work undertaken to fund new interactives, conserve the collection and hold high profile exhibitions. There is more detail elsewhere in the Annual Report.

In addition to annual grants from Devizes Town Council (£4,000) and Wiltshire Council (£12,780) we received funds for specific projects.

Arts Council England/Wessex Museums (NPO)

These funds enable us to employ and support an Exhibitions Officer and Community Curator. The NPO also funded a Street Art project in 2024, to work with a group of young people to work on their confidence and creative skills, aiming to divert them from criminal or anti-social behaviours

Assizes for Devizes Project

£65,000 of grants were received during the year towards the Development Phase of this project (see page 33). This included funds from the Pilgrim Trust, Wiltshire Council, Devizes Town Council and from the Devizes Assize Court Trust. We also received a number of individual donations, all of which are much appreciated.

Cardiff University: FeastNet project.

£3,000 received from this project would be used towards displays in the Assizes for Devizes.

Community Curator activity

£3,000 was received from the Wiltshire Community Foundation to fund the Explore It project during 2024/25, and £3,270 in March 2025 to continue the work into 2025/26. Working with Spurgeon's, and for families struggling with the cost of living and registered with Devizes Sure Start (Spurgeons), a workshop and hot meal are offered once a month.

£4,453 was received in March 2025 from the Wiltshire Police & Crime commissioner fund towards a Street Art (Graffiti) project to run in 2025/26, working with young people at risk of offending.

Donations.

Donations were received in memory of Jeremy Cross, who was particularly interested in the environment and the development of the Devizes Assize Court and in memory of Dr Kate Fielden, in addition to a painting (*illustrated rear cover*). A donation was also received from Omnes ad Unum, a local charity, which supports Wiltshire Museum and St John's Church, Devizes.

Exhibition: John Piper in the South Country

Funds were received from the Wessex Museums NPO towards this exhibition which is scheduled to open in March 2026. The Guest Curator is Andrew Lambrith.

John Piper artwork: pen and ink drawing of Devizes Market Place, signed and dated by the artist, 1942 (DZSWS: 2024.1002). This artwork was purchased with funding from ArtFund_/Arts Council (£3,150), the Victoria & Albert Purchase Grant Fund (£3,150) and the Miss J E Smith legacy (*illustrated inside front cover*).

Legacies

In April 2024 a legacy was received from the estate of Miss Jennifer Elizabeth Smith. It was split between the WANHS Endowment Fund and general funds, with a small contribution towards the purchase of the Piper drawing (see above).

Projects: Queer in Wiltshire 2024-2025

This project was funded by a grant of £3,050 from ACE NPO/Wessex Museums and £16,574 from the National Lottery Community Fund. The grants enabled us to employ a Project Officer (Friday Schoemaker), fund artists for LGBTQIA+ workshops and social events, and the development of a booklet exploring the experiences of LGBTQIA+ people in the Wiltshire area. See report on page 29.



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Exhibitions

Our two special exhibition galleries - the Oexmann Gallery and the Piper Gallery - enables us to offer either two small exhibitions or one large exhibition.

The Exhibitions Officer post is funded by the Arts Council and Wessex Museums Project.

The main exhibition for spring/summer 2024 was *A Wiltshire Thatcher – a Photographic Journey through Victorian Wessex* (6 April – 1 September 2024), curated by Lisa Brown and celebrating the work of Ernest Farmer.

The exhibition featured an album of photographs created by Farmer and documented how he captured the spirit of people, villages and landscape of rural Wiltshire and Dorset during the Victorian period.

The exhibition featured the image immortalised on the Led Zeppelin IV album cover, and celebrated the work of Ernest Farmer, who today is little-known but was a leading figure in the development of photography as an art form. The original of the photograph made famous by the band was discovered in a late Victorian photograph album, found by Brian Edwards, WANHS Member and Visiting Research Fellow with the Regional History Centre at the University of the West of England. The album features exceptional photographs from Wiltshire, Dorset and Somerset, and contains over 100 architectural views and street scenes together with several portraits of rural workers. Most of the photographs are titled and beneath the photograph made famous by Led Zeppelin is written 'A Wiltshire Thatcher'. The Victorian photograph album, 'Reminiscences of a Visit to Shaftesbury. Whitsuntide 1892. A present to Auntie from Ernest' is now part of the museum collections.



The acquisition of the photograph album and subsequent exhibition was supported by Brian Edwards, WANHS Member Tim Daw, as well as Frank Menger and Andrew Glester, from the University of the West England Bristol. With permission from English Heritage, Frank Menger, Senior Lecturer in Photography, went to Stonehenge at Sunrise, to recreate the three images taken by Ernest Farmer, which feature in the photo album. Andrew Glester, Lecturer in Science Communication, made a short film documenting the process (*still from film above*).

A number of events took place related to the exhibition, including a camera amnesty and Victorian portrait photography workshops, led by Frank Menger and a lecture 'Exploring photography's history up to 1939', by Dr Michael Pritchard.

See also page 32 and the 2023/24 Annual Report (pages 15 and 20).



Above: Example from the Victorian photography workshop; Led Zeppelin IV Album Cover; Tollard Royal village, by Ernest Farmer (DZSWS:2023.7019).

A *Wiltshire Thatcher* was followed by the *Assize Court Ideas Station* exhibition, developed and curated by Friday Shoemaker, and Bath Spa University students Cynthia Ganabadhi and Anita Sala (September 2024). This interactive exhibition was designed to involve a wide range of people in the crucial planning stage of the Assizes for Devizes project to ensure the new site is developed to be inclusive and accessible to current and new audiences. The Ideas Station travelled to various venues around the county and was finally displayed in the Museum exhibition galleries.

In autumn 2024 we held the *Oexmann Art Award Competition and Exhibition* (19 October – 23 November), with picture collection taking place in late September and judging on 2 October. The judges were Anna Dillon, Mitch Griffiths and Rob Pountney, who had the very difficult job of selecting prize winners and works for exhibition from over 200 adult and 300 children's entries. All children's work was displayed in the exhibition and a purchase prize selected from amongst the artworks for the Museum's collections.

In winter 2024 came *Megalithic Connections – Drawings & Etchings by Dave Gunning* (14 December 2024 – 1 March 2025), an exhibition of artwork inspired by the prehistoric heritage of the UK. Dave has had a long career as an artist capturing prehistoric sites across the UK and the world, with artwork accepted into the Royal collections. He works continuously to



promote and remind people of the wonder of our megalithic heritage and has a long association with Wiltshire Museum having exhibited here a number of times previously.

Exhibition highlights to look forward to in 2025/2026 are *UnCommon People: Folk culture in Wessex*, curated by Simon Costin, Amy de la Haye and Mellany Robinson, *Downland: Art and the Archaeological Imagination*, by Dr Rose Ferraby and also *John Piper in the South Country* curated by Andrew Lambirth, an exhibition which will tour to Museum & Art Swindon.

Heather Ault and Lisa Brown

Above: *Etchilhampton Hill*, collagraph etching by Helen o'Sullivan (DZSWS:2024.1005)

Exhibitions - Library Long Room

A number of small displays have been put on in the Long Room display cases during the last twelve months. The aim is to highlight unknown items within the collections but also to compliment the main temporary exhibition where possible. This year we focused on three key anniversaries, highlighted some LGBTQIA+ discoveries within the museums collections and showcased Wessex Archaeology's community archaeology project Digging for Erlestoke.

- Display highlighting the 80th Anniversary of the evacuation of Imber, Nov/Dec 1943, (13 November 2023 – 13 April 2024)
- Display about the World War Two POW Camp in Devizes and the German POW Diary to coincide with the 'Great Escapes: Remarkable Second World War Captives' exhibition at the National Archives, Kew, (13 April 2024 – 4 July 2024)



From the left: *'West Kennet I'*, donated by Dave Gunning (DZSWS:2025.1002); Gunning exhibition in the Piper gallery; under 18s entries in the Oexmann Exhibition.

- Display commemorating the 80th anniversary of D-Day, June 1944, (4 June 2024 – 4 July 2024)
- Display highlighting some LGBTQIA+ discoveries from the museum's collections including Siegfried Sassoon, Cecil Beaton, Queen Anne and Thomas Lawrence. Curated by Friday Schoemaker, A4D Projects Assistant., (4 July 2024 – 3 Sept 2024)
- Display commemorating the 150th anniversary of Wiltshire Museum featuring the WANHS Rev. A.C. Smith Presentation Volume and research about four female members included in the volume, (3 Sept 2024 – 1 Oct 2024) and (from 14 Jan 2025)
- Digging for Erlestoke by Wessex Archaeology a community archaeology project by men from HMP Erlestoke, a category C prison in Erlestoke, Wiltshire. The exhibition celebrated the journey, outputs and impact of the project, showcasing the role archaeology can play in improving the wellbeing of people in unconventional settings. The exhibition included documentary evidence of the research process, artefacts uncovered during the recent dig, artistic interpretation of the discoveries and first-hand accounts and interpretations of what it was like to take part in the project, believed to be the first of its kind, (1 Oct 2024 – 14 Jan 2025)

Jane Schön

Loans

Loans to and from the Museum remain important in making the collections accessible to as many people as possible. The Museum lends items from its collections for display and research, subject to the proper security and environmental conditions being met. We are particularly pleased to lend objects for special exhibitions at other museums across Wiltshire.

In September 2024, the Wiltshire Keystone Lodge of Mark Master Masons, Devizes, borrowed an 'Albert Medal' dating to 1881, awarded to William Henry Burt, who managed the hardware shop in the Market Place. William was a former member of the Masons Lodge. The loan was for a special meeting to celebrate its sesquicentennial anniversary (2024.76.1), *see also page 20, image below.*

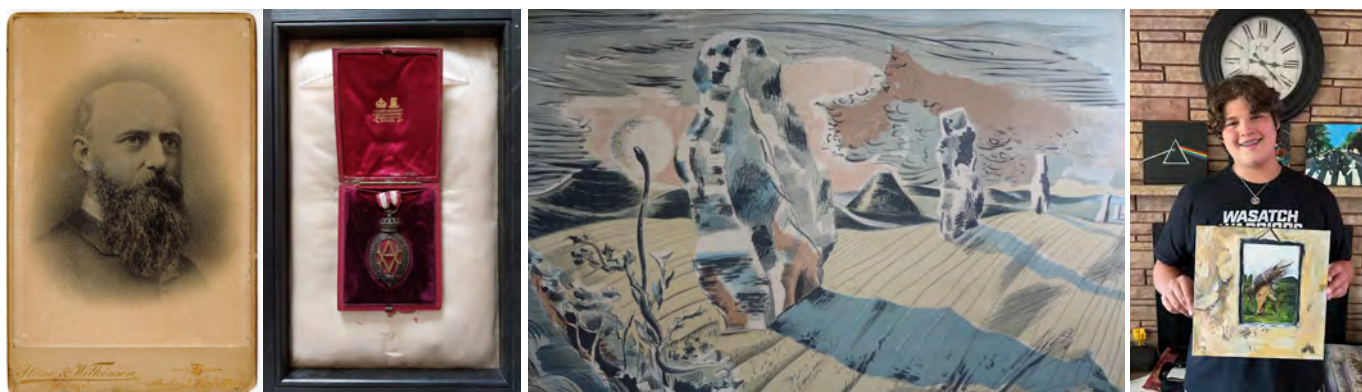
In March 2025, Swindon Museums borrowed a framed colour lithograph by Paul Nash, *Landscape of the Megaliths*, c.1937. The picture featured in the exhibition, *A Very British Art Revolution: Rebellion and Reaction in the Early 20th Century*. The exhibition explored the period between about 1910 and 1945, looking at abstraction, pastoralism, representation of conflict and of ordinary life, and changes in the way art was taught and consumed at that time. *Image below.*

TO THE MUSEUM - None to report this year.

ARCHIVE & LIBRARY

The Avebury Papers Team at Alexander Keiller Museum, Avebury led by Professor Mark Gillings, Principal Investigator and Dr Fran Allfrey, Research Assistant borrowed a further eight WEV Young diaries and six WEV Young journals in March 2025 which cover WEV Young's archaeological work at Avebury during the 1930s. (Eleven diaries were photographed in 2023). The diaries were photographed and included in the AHRC funded project to digitise, explore and share the multimedia archive of Avebury's Neolithic origins and its subsequent life-history. The project results including the digitised diaries will eventually be made available through the *Archaeology Data Service* <https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk> (MSS.4269 and MSS.4270).

Lisa Brown and Jane Schön



From the left: William Henry Burt; William Burt's 'Albert Medal' (DZSWS:2024.76); 'Landscape of the Megaliths', c.1937, by Paul Nash (DZSWS:2017.1006); Cameron Christensen with his acrylic painting of the front cover of the Led Zeppelin IV album, donated to the Museum (DZSWS:2024.1003);

Our collections require constant monitoring to ensure that they are preserved for future generations. Curatorial staff undertake routine preventative conservation to ensure that objects and archives are displayed and stored in the best conditions that we can achieve, and we have been able to improve the storage of several collections over the last few years

All remedial conservation is contracted in from qualified conservators from the ICON Conservation Register.

In preparation for the Wessex Museums touring exhibition, *Un/Common People: Folk Culture in Wessex*, two small children's shoes, found concealed inside the chimney of a late 18th century house in Rowde were conserved for display by the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre conservation team.

When renovating old houses, people often find objects hidden in walls, up chimneys, in roofs and under floors. These range from items of clothing and other personal belongings to bottles, and even small animals, and are often in places they couldn't accidentally have fallen. These objects are known as 'concealed objects' – things which have been deliberately hidden in the belief that they will protect the building and the people inside from evil spirits. People believed that the personal nature of these objects would attract and trap these evil influences. The location of the hiding place was important too. The objects were left on boundaries (under floorboards, in roofs and between walls) as these places were thought to be more vulnerable to supernatural activity. Shoes are one of the most popular concealed objects, with over a thousand concealed shoes discovered throughout Britain alone (2024.42). See also page 17, and for more concealed shoes acquired in the year see page 20.

For the same exhibition, an iron cello, acquired by the museum in 1916, was treated for corrosion, before being put on display. The cello was made in about 1800 by the Milton Lilbourne village blacksmith. The body of the instrument was created using sheet iron and the neck is built from wood. It has been painted black. Beautifully made, this cello was played by the choir-band of St Peter's Church. It has unusual corners and the wooden scroll and pegbox are hand carved. In places like Milton Lilbourne, church singing was led by the people who lived in the village. They picked their own tunes, devised the harmonies, and fitted them to various psalms - a technique known as metrical psalmody. This cello was last played in 1970, to celebrate the 700th anniversary of St Peter's Church. The strings probably date from that performance. The conservation of this piece was undertaken by Pieta Greaves, Drakon Heritage & Conservation.

No items from the Archive & Library collection received conservation work this year.

Lisa Brown



Right, from the top: concealed shoes DZSWS:2024.42; Iron Cello, Milton Lilbourne DZSWS:2005.55



Museum Conservator Pieta Greaves

It is with great sadness that we learned that our conservator, Pieta Greaves died, in April. Pieta was a good friend of the museum, and an outstanding conservator. Over the years, Pieta supported the museum with many projects, including preparing objects to go to the British Museum for the Stonehenge exhibition, in 2022 (*pictured left*). Pieta's knowledge and experience were second to none, and she was always happy to help us in any way she could. Her visits to the museum were always fun, with lots of laughs, and we miss her very much.

Lisa Brown

We continue to actively collect objects, through our Collections Trust, that tell the story of Wiltshire, to both enhance our displays and strengthen our research collections.

There were many interesting additions made to the collections during the year. A full list can be found in the *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine* (volume 118, 2025).

All Collections are available to search on our new and improved online collections database, which launched in December 2023 www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk/search-the-collections. One of our principal aims is to make collections data accessible in the widest possible terms. To date there are 130,000 records of catalogued items on the database, across all collections, along with 24,000 digital images. Our collections can also be searched on the Museums Data Service <https://museumdata.uk/>

Acquisition highlights are noted below.

Acquisitions of the Year

Dispersed Iron Age axe hoard consisting of 436 items, including complete axe heads, fragments of axes, and three pieces of casting waste. 402 items were discovered by metal detectorists in July 2019 near Marlborough, and an additional 28 items were later recovered during a magnetometer survey carried out by WANHS, working with the finders. The total weight of the hoard is 10.7kg. PAS Treasure find - the reward was waived by both the finder and landowner. The hoard will go on display at the new Assize Court museum (2024.74), *image below*.

*Three Devizes Carnival fabric banners, two with designs of the town, and the other, a pair of bright yellow underpants, with the Camerados logo. The banners were designed by the Devizes Public Living Room (Camerados) and White Horse Arts. The banners were made and paraded through the town in 2024. They represent all the things that people love about Devizes, and they play on the Camerados theme - *Life is Pants, Sometimes.... But, Devizes Isn't* (2024.73), *image page 6*.

Pen and ink drawing of Devizes Market Place by John Piper, 1942. It is the sketch for the lithograph used in the *Cornhill Magazine*, to accompany an article about Devizes and later reworked for Piper's book, *Buildings and Prospects*, published in 1948. Purchased from the Jenna Burlingham Gallery with grants from Art Fund and Arts Council/V&A Purchase Grant Fund and from the Miss Jennifer Smith legacy (2024.1002), *image inside front cover*.

Two small children's shoes, not a pair and well-worn, found concealed inside the chimney of a late 18th century house in Rowde. Also found close by was a clay pipe fragment and a trade token dating to 1796, issued by 'I. Baster' of the White Hart public house, Devizes. The items were donated by the former owner of the house, Philip Hale, who discovered them during building renovations (2024.42). The shoes would be displayed during the Wessex Museums 'Un/ Common People: Folk Culture in Wessex' exhibition, April 2025, *image page 16*.

Archaeology

Wiltshire Museum closed to the deposition of archaeological archives in January 2013, as the stores were full. In December 2019, a new off-site store at Amesbury was purchased, and in October 2022 it opened to deposition. The museum is continuing to accept the backlog of material being held by various archaeological units who undertake work in our collecting area.

Late Bronze Age copper-alloy socketed and looped axe head, c.1000-800BC. The axe has a dark brown glossy patina, and the cutting edge shows no sign of wear. On the under edge there is a small oval hole close to the casting seam, a fault in manufacture. Found in Milton Lilbourne in the 1990s by John Brown (now deceased). The axe was donated to the museum by the finder's widow, in his memory (2024.72), *image below*.



*From the left: Iron Age axe hoard (2024.74); leather shoes (2024.81) - see page 20;
Late Bronze Age copper-alloy socketed and looped axe head, Milton (2024.72);*

Trowbridge Museum ceased to collect archaeological archives in 2020. Their collecting area was subsequently absorbed by Wiltshire Museum, and their historic archaeological archives were transferred to Wiltshire Museum in 2024. Most notably, this includes the Trowbridge Castle excavation, undertaken by Wessex Archaeology, 1988 (2024.4–35)

Art

Great Western Railway. Devizes. The Picturesque Centre of the Historical County of Wilts. Open Downs, Bracing Air, Modern Shops. Lithographic poster produced c.1930 by the Great Western Railway (GWR). Purchased at auction. Lyon & Turnbull, Edinburgh (2024.1001), *image page 8*.

*Acrylic painting of the front cover of the music album *Led Zeppelin IV*, by Cameron Christensen, aged thirteen, from Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. Student of the Sydney Bowman Art Class of 2024. The painting featured in the exhibition, *A Wiltshire Thatcher - a Photographic Journey Through Victorian Wessex*, April - September 2024. Donated by the artist (2024.1003), *image page 13*.

Stonehenge Landscape – a Favourite Walk of Kate Fielden, oil on canvas by Mark Wickham, 2024. It was painted in Kate's memory and donated by members of the Stonehenge Alliance (2025.1001), *image rear cover*

Pen and ink drawing of the Assize Court by Sidney G. Smith, 1947. The drawing shows the cast iron railings fronting the Assize Court in Northgate Street, erected by William Rendell at their foundry, in 1847. These railings were removed during the Second World War, as part of the nationwide effort to salvage metal for the war effort. Donated by John Girvan (2024.1004), *image page 33*.

Etchilhampton Hill, collagraph etching by Helen O'Sullivan, winner of the Oexmann Art Competition Purchase Prize, 2024. Purchased by the Museum (2024.1005), *image page 14*.

West Kennet Avenue 1, pencil drawing completed in 2024 and donated by the artist, Dave Gunning. Featured in the exhibition, *'Megalithic Connections'*, December 2024 – February 2025 (2025.1002), *image page 14*.

Archive and Library (23/24 figures in brackets)

The Archive and Library collection continues to grow. During the last year nine (12) books were purchased and 64 (101) were donated, of which seven were donated by the authors themselves, contributing to the 78 new acquisitions to the library. Four book acquisitions were volumes published by the Royal Commission of Historical Monuments about historical monuments in Dorset. These will assist future research of the photos in the Ernest Howard Farmer photo album (2023.7018) which was featured in the Wiltshire Thatcher exhibition in April – Oct 2024. Book purchases are still low due to financial constraints imposed by the Coronavirus pandemic.

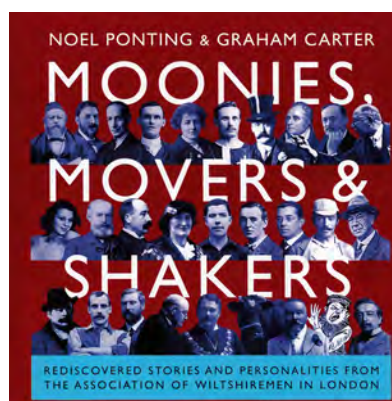
There were 48 (88) new additions to the Archive collection and all but three were donations. They include leaflets and programmes listing events taking place during 2024 and several articles from Devizes Edition of the Wiltshire Gazette and Herald newspaper. There were over 270 new acquisitions to the photographic collection (all were donations), including two photo albums one of which was compiled by Minnie Reed documenting the year she was Mayor of Devizes, 1951-52.

Highlights include:

BOOKS

As mentioned in previous annual reports, in December 2021 we received a gift of approximately 500 archaeological books, some of which were signed by the author or previous owner. A further two books have been accessioned into the library this year bringing the total accessioned so far to 92 books, with approximately another 20 books to check through. The books that were not accessioned are being sold to raise library funds. Donated by John S.S. Stewart (Book.18874-18875)

Moonies, Movers and Shakers: rediscovered stories and personalities from the Association of Wiltshiremen London by Noel Ponting and Graham Carte (2024). The authors contacted the Archive & Library requesting information about early Freemasonry in Devizes and H.H. Perkins, which has been included in the book. Donated to by the authors (Book.18878), *image below*.



"Moonies, Movers and Shakers: rediscovered stories and personalities from the Association of Wiltshiremen London", by Noel Ponting and Graham Carte (Book.18878); The Cunnington Family Bible (Book.18879); 'Welcome Home' invitation and program (MSS.4796.5). Not to scale.

The Cunnington Family Bible with metal book clasp and storage box with gold lettering 'Blackletter Bible 1588'. The earliest person recorded is Nathaniel Cooper, born 1616, whose great-granddaughter married John Cunnington in 1751. The Bible's faceplates have the names and dates of birth of their children, including William Cunnington I (born 1754), of Colt-Hoare association. Presumably it was owned by him and passed on to his son and then grandson, William (born 1813), of Devizes and the microscope, and then to his son and then to the donors grandfather. Donated by Francina Cunnington & John Cunnington, the 8x great grandchildren of Nathaniel Cooper and 4x great grandchildren of William Cunnington I (Book.18879), *image page 18*.

The Kingtons: A History of the Ancient Parish of Kington St Michael with Kington Langley by Louise Ryland-Epton (2024), who consulted the Archive & Library collection. The book features several key figures who lived in these villages, including John Britton and John Aubrey. It was researched in parallel with the Chippenham volume of the Victoria County History of Wiltshire. Donated by the author (Book.18945), *image page 21*.

JOURNALS

Each year the Archive and Library receives a large number of journals and newsletters via subscriptions, journal exchanges or gifts. These include the *Devon Archaeological Society Journal*, *Antiquities Nationales*, *Hampshire Studies*, *Richard Jefferies Society Journal*, *Goddard Association of Europe* and *Jot & Tittle*, to name a few. The number of journals acquired continues to decrease, this year from 160 to 157, due to societies having caught up with their publications following the Covid-19 Pandemic.

We also downloaded a series of digital newsletters, including *The Jot and Tittle: snippets from Salisbury Cathedral Archives* (158 issues), *The Wiltshire Buildings Record* newsletters (8) and *Victoria County History Wiltshire* newsletters (24). These are excluded from the overall figure.

DOCUMENTS

Two booklets about menstruation given to female pupils at Devizes Grammar School, 1950s. Includes self-addressed envelope by pupil to keep the booklets private. Donated by Sandra Cook, nee Green, a former pupil at the Grammar School (MSS.4775), *image page 21*.

History of Freemasons Keystone Lodge of Mark Master Masons, No.178 Devizes and lecture script delivered by donor at lodge sesquicentennial [150th] anniversary meeting, 13 September 2024. Donated by John Merrett, author of sesquicentennial booklet (MSS.4793)

Invitation and program for Devizes and Roundway "Welcome Home" celebrations held on 1 April 1947 for returning servicemen and women following the end of WW2. Donated by local resident in Avon Road, Devizes (MSS.4796.5), *image page 18*.

Three copies of the Devizes Grammar School Magazines signed by the fellow students of C.S.F. Hooker, 1964 - 1966. Donated by Chris Hooker's family (MSS.4803), *image page 21*.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND POSTCARDS

Three black and white photographs of Stonehenge taken in 2024 recreating the three photographs taken by Ernest Farmer in 1892. Matt Pike, English Heritage Stonehenge Custodian, modelled the modern-day photograph of the man wearing a bowler hat, leaning against the 'Great Trilithon'. Donated by Frank Menger (2024.7008), *image page 32*.

Photograph album belonging to Mrs Minnie Gertrude Reed, recording her year as Mayor of Devizes in 1950s. Also donated was a Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Medal dated 2 June 1953 worn by Minnie during her time in office. Minnie was awarded an MBE in the 1955 New Years Honours list for political and public services in Devizes. Donated by Shirley Heppenstall. Minne Reed was her husband's great aunt (2024.7009), *image below*.

*Collection of 43 colour digital photographs of the Devizes Carnival, held on 31 August 2024. Many of these photographs feature the banners (DZSWS:2024.73). Donated by Helen Meikle, Project Officer (2024.7012), *see pages 6 and 17*.



From the left: Minnie Gertrude Reed (DZSWS:2024.7009); Silver Elizabeth II Coronation Medal, belonging to Minnie Reed (2024.75); Wine glass baluster and penny of Queen Anne (2024.39); Electro-magnetic wooden telephone handset from Southgate House, Devizes (2024.43) and gallery display. Not to scale.

A late 19th century photo album containing black and white photos of Devizes and the surrounding area. The collection of 19 photographs include Drews Pond, St John's Church, the Kennet and Avon Canal, Potterne, Spye Park and an aerial view of Devizes taken from St Johns Church Tower. Donated by Peter Hellier (2024.7011), *image page 8*.

*Eleven digital colour photographs of the Northgate Street fire in the Pizzeria that happened in November 2024. Donated by Jane Schön, Collections Officer (2024.7013), *image page 8*.

Natural History - No acquisitions this year.

Numismatics

Silver Elizabeth II Coronation Medal, with ribbon and presentation box. Once belonging to Minnie Gertrude Reed, first lady Mayor of Devizes, in the 1950s. Donated by Shirley Heppenstall (2024.75), *image page 19*.

'Albert Medal' awarded to William Henry Burt, who ran Burt's Ironmongers, 41 Market Place, Devizes (now Superdrug). William was awarded the medal for bravery in 1881. A nearby premises caught on fire and he rescued the gunpowder stored inside before the building exploded. William was also a former Master of the Devizes Masons, Keystone Lodge, Morris Lane. Donated by family descendant Ken Burt, Nova Scotia, Canada (2024.76.1), *image page 15*.

Recent History

Wine glass baluster and penny of Queen Anne. The baluster is the hollow bulb between broken mereses. The bulb is applied with four raspberry prunts and contains a Queen Anne silver 1d. dated 1706. Raspberry prunts were popular in 17th century Dutch glassmaking and this 18th century glass is likely a throwback to those traditions. Found in Potterne, 2018. PAS Treasure find. Purchased by the Museum (2024.39), *image page 19*.

*Fabric Rainbow cape made by the Young People at Devizes Youth Centre, to spread awareness of the LGBTQIA+ community as part of an anti-homophobia project, led by Nicola Sage, Wiltshire Council. Worn at the Devizes Carnival in 2011 (2024.79.1)

Three well-worn adult sized leather shoes, two women's (not a pair) and one man. Found built into the stonework of a chimney, inside a cottage dating to the early 17th century. The cottage is in Bray Street, Avebury, and the shoes were discovered during renovation work. The women's heeled shoes have been dated to c.1650 by Northampton Museum and added to the Concealed Shoe Index. Donated by Mrs Diane Gater (2024.81), *image page 17*.

Electro-magnetic wooden telephone handset from Southgate House, Devizes. Southgate House was the home of Alfred Cunnington, who assembled the first commercial telephone in the UK, in 1877, based on the Alexander Bell invention. It was used at Cunnington's wine business in St John's Street, with an over the roof top wire to his home at Southgate House. This wooden unit is thought to be the receiving end of the telephone connection from the wine business. The headset etc in the background of the photograph were already part of the museum's collections. Donated by John Girvan (2024.43), *image page 8*.

Archaeology Archives and Off-site store

For projects notified after 1 April 2025, a flat fee of £125 (+ VAT) per standard size box is now charged.

This aligns Wiltshire Museum with the rate now charged by Swindon Museum. It is an increase of £15 per box. Archaeological contractors were notified about the proposed increase at the end of 2024, so they can build the additional cost into future client projects.

Accreditation

The Curator submitted the museums Accreditation Return to Arts Council England in January 2025. In August 2025 we received confirmation from Arts Council England that we had been awarded Full Accreditation status. The Accreditation panel agreed two areas for development, which we have to progress before the next Return in approximately five years.

Lisa Brown, Jane Schön and David Dawson

Items marked with an * were collected as part of the Wessex Museums Contemporary Collecting Strategy and Action Plan, 2025-29.

Contemporary Collecting is the collecting of objects and stories that reflect the recent past and what is happening today. Usually covering the past 50 years from the date collecting is being undertaken, there are two main ways that contemporary material can be acquired.

Passive collecting through offers of donations is one way, but to get a more comprehensive understanding of modern-day life, active and collaborative types of collecting in the form of coordinated projects are usually more effective.

Contemporary collecting means acquiring new material, to fill the gaps identified in existing collections. It also helps to future-proof collections for as-yet-unknown exhibitions and research projects, therefore ensuring that museums remain relevant to and representative of their audiences. A great benefit of contemporary collecting is that the histories fall within living memory, so can be documented with insights from those who experienced them first-hand. This provides museums with the opportunity to work in partnership with other people and communities, to be creative, dynamic, and inclusive.

Promotes, encourages and undertakes research and publishes newsletters, an annual magazine, reports, periodicals, books and other literature which are relevant to its activities.

We communicate the outputs of research through our online collections database, a programme of conferences and lectures, through publications such as our annual 'Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine', and by updating gallery displays.

Museum Data Service and Wessex Museums Virtual Collections

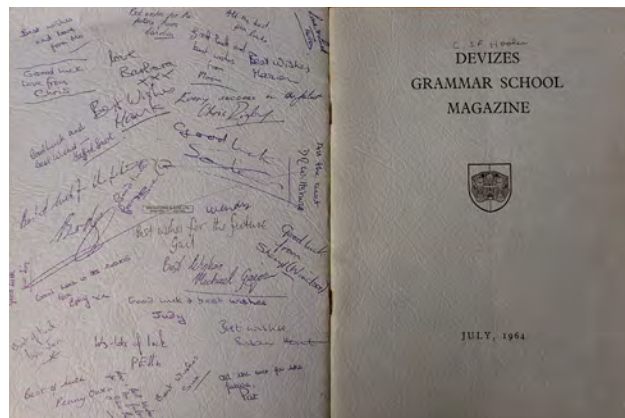
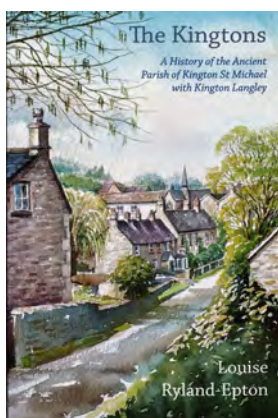
The Director attended the launch of the Museum Data Service in September 2024. Wiltshire Museum is one of 12 'Early Adopter' museums, alongside museums as diverse as the National Gallery, National Museums of Northern Ireland and Tenby Museum. The Museum was specifically mentioned at the launch event and the Jadeite axe was featured in the press release and launch presentation. The platform brings together over 100 million object records from 1,750 museums and collections across the UK, unlocking an invaluable resource for researchers, educators, curators, and content developers. It launched with initial collection of 3,129,798 records from 21 museums. Wiltshire Museum was involved in helping look at the organisational issues in the project to ensure that other museums would find it easy to contribute their data. Our Wessex Museums partners are currently loading their data and in due course the platform will host the data from the Wessex Virtual Museum. The MDS is a collaboration between Art UK, Collections Trust, and the University of Leicester, funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

Wessex Museums Decolonising Collections Framework

The Decolonising Collections Framework (approved September 2023), is supported by an Action Plan individual to each museum in the Wessex Museum partnership.

Decolonising involves creatively reimagining the way museums work, who they work with and what they value. It covers all areas of practice and creates a framework to better support people and institutions. Decolonising is a collective activity, which can be messy, thoughtful, imaginative, and emotional. It is driven by the desire for justice and equity in that it aims to rebalance power and representation away from the coloniser narrative of history and society. This work is intersectional as it challenges structural inequalities across the board to redress forms of historic and ongoing harm. *Museums Association. Decolonising Practice 2022.*

The purpose of the Framework is to put the Wessex Museums firmly and consistently on the path to decolonisation, with meaningful, effective and collaborative public engagement. Through this work we want to understand the stories of those who have been oppressed and where there are connections to our collections - whether it is related to the empire or by more recent prejudices conveyed by the bias of curators and historians. We want to tell honest stories about how objects have come to be in museums - who they were given by and how and why the museums decided to accept them.



'The Kingtons: A History of the Ancient Parish of Kington St Michael with Kington Langley', by Louise Ryland-Epton (Book.18945); Devizes Grammar School Magazine signed by the fellow students of C.S.F. Hooker (MSS.4803); Booklets about menstruation, Devizes Grammar School (MSS.4775).

Researchers

Project to construct a post-Roman pottery type series for Wiltshire, funded by Historic England and managed by Cotswold Archaeology. This is one of several similar type series projects across England funded by HE. The project supports practitioners in post-Roman pottery studies, increases accessibility to archive collections, and provides decision-makers with valuable tools to promote and protect the historic environment.

This pottery series includes all types found within the county and is in both physical and digital form, via a dataset submitted to the Archaeology Data Service. The physical type series will eventually be held by Wiltshire Museum.

Dr Thomas Booth (the Francis Crick Institute) analysed prehistoric human bones and teeth from the museum collections for DNA analysis, as part of the Wellcome Trust-funded *aGB:1000 ancient genomes from Great Britain*. The project is run by the Skoglund Ancient Genomics Laboratory at the Crick Institute. The study aims to sequence whole genome data from at least 1,000 people who lived in Britain over the last 10,000 years, to investigate how migration and natural selection have shaped the genetics of human populations in Britain. For each individual (where preservation is adequate) the sampling is expected to reveal information on genetic sex, ancestry and close relationships with other sampled individuals. In certain cases there will be DNA from pathogens infecting the individual when they died, potentially providing insight into cause of death or biography of individuals as well as more general information on the dynamics of health and disease in the past.

Dr Andrew Lawson, studying Middle Bronze Age ornament hoards in Wiltshire, examined the Heywood hoard, discovered in 2019 by metal detectorists (WILT-3C2142). The hoard comprises a palstave axe, an incomplete copper alloy twisted bar torc, incomplete copper alloy twisted bar bracelet, copper alloy Liss-type annular bracelet and an incomplete copper alloy quoit pin. Publication is near completion.

Ollie Line (PhD researcher at University College Dublin) spent a month studying worked animal bone from the Bronze Age collections. The aim of the work is to understand how bone tools were manufactured and used and how this might have changed over time. Microscopic analyses on the objects were undertaken, to identify evidence for use-wear and for manufacturing traces such as polishing, impact fractures, striations, edge damage, and metal residues. This work will continue into next year.

Dr Ed McSloy (Finds Manager from Cotswold Archaeology), and Dr Peter Warry, examined the Roman ceramic building material and pottery from Park Farm, Oaksey excavations, to make comparisons with brick and tile from recent excavations at Brandier Farm, Minety, which Dr Warry led. After three seasons of fieldwork,

the excavations at Brandier Farm finished and work to publish the site began. As part of this work Dr Warry initiated a selective programme of fabrics analysis, using petrological (thin section) and chemical (ICPS) techniques. The primary aim was to characterise the fabrics used for the various brick/tile types from the Brandier Farm site. The analysis identified differences in the fabrics between Brandier and Oaksey Park and/or confirm a common clay source.

Professor Sarah Semple (Durham University) carried out XRF analysis on the finds associated with the early medieval bed burial discovered on Roundway Down in 1840. The university re-excavated the site in 2000, and full publication is underway (preliminary note published in the Wiltshire Archaeology Magazine, 2001).

Professor Ellen Swift (University of Kent) carried out analysis of silver artefacts from the Bishops Cannings late Roman hoard (aka 'Blagan Hill'), as part of the AHRC-funded project *Britain's Last Roman Hoards*. Work will continue into 2026.

Lisa Brown

Research: Archive & Library

All visits to the Archive & Library are pre-booked and this year has seen an increase in both the number of visiting researchers by 8% and the number of enquiries by 1% compared to last year.

There were 399 enquiries this year: 112 visiting researchers and 287 email enquiries. Of the 112 visiting researchers 55 were members and 35 were non-members, an increase of 6% and a decrease of 29% respectively. The majority of these visiting researchers were undertaking local history research (52%) mainly in and around Devizes and the surrounding villages, 33% carried out archaeological research and 9% undertook family history research.

There is still a backlog of acquisitions to process but the Collections Officer: Archive and Library and five volunteers have continued to answer enquiries and provide scans of documents or photographs, where possible to the researcher. Donations have been received from some researchers. Research topics have included: Roundway Hospital, Old Park House, Chancel End House in Devizes, mileposts, the Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal, the villages of All Cannings, Little Somerford and Great Bedwyn; the Avebury Great Barn, Aldbourne in 1945, Conholt Park, W.E.V. Young, William Cunningham, William Smith, Philip Crocker, Sir Francis Child, Joseph Burt, Heddington Church, Wilcot Church, Wiltshire crimes, the botanical drawings of Stella Craig-Ross, the Sheriffs of Wiltshire. milestones, Vale of Pewsey Home guard, traction engines and Wiltshire brickworks, 1918 newspapers, LGBTQIA+ history, and assisting with numerous family history requests including the Yerbury family of Trowbridge, The Strattons of Wiltshire, and The Sadlers of Wroughton.

Jane Schön

Operates an archaeological field group which encourages members to become involved actively in the current archaeological scene in the county.

The Wiltshire Archaeology Field Group (WAFG) is a community archaeology group, working to professional standards. It carries out excavations and fieldwork in Wiltshire including geophysical survey, ground survey and field-walking and organises the annual Archaeology in Wiltshire Conference, held each year in Devizes. Anyone can get involved in WAFG projects, which range from researching prehistoric sites to 20th century archaeology, from desk-based research, field walking and excavation.

Membership is open to members of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society. Regular reports appear in our Trilithon newsletter, and on the WAFG Facebook page.

Over the past year WAFG members have been very active, both in running and supporting WAFG projects and supporting broader research projects across Wiltshire.

Seend Excavations

WAFG's initial excavations in 2022 revealed the base of an early 18th century brick kiln, one of the earliest excavated in Wiltshire and one of very few to be fully excavated nationally.

In 2023, to the west of the brick kiln, a number of test pits were excavated on areas where geophysics had indicated more areas of intense magnetic response. In one of these, large quantities of broken tiles, including roof tiles, ridge tiles, floor tiles and even malting floor tiles were recovered. These all seemed to be of a similar date to the brick kiln. As excavations progressed, substantial brick walls, were revealed. In 2024 we fully excavated the feature to confirm that it was a large tile kiln.

The excavation proved that it was of a later 17th century date, so it is therefore one of the earliest tile kilns found in Wiltshire.

In amongst the tiles, a number of pieces of what appeared to be pottery wasters were retrieved. These had a distinctive design similar, but not the same as Crockerton Ware, potentially making it a new pottery type. The pottery assemblage comprised of kiln misfires/wasters suggests there is also a post-medieval pottery kiln nearby, producing Crockerton-like pottery to be used in the local area.

WAFG hope to reveal the possible late 17th century pottery kiln when we return for a further season of excavations in August 2025.

In 2022 and 2023 in another part of the field our excavations had found a quite substantial Roman workshop in which there was a central roofed area with a hardened clay floor and on either side were a number of iron ore roasting ovens. The Romans roasted the ore to remove impurities before it was smelted. Although these are known from other parts of the country those at Seend are considered to be unique in Wiltshire.

In 2024 we were given permission to excavate in the field to the east. The geophysics again showed areas of intense magnetic response, particularly at the top of the field and also in a large area part way down. Running down the slope, probably dragged down by later ridge & furrow ploughing there appeared to be spreads of slag debris. A number of test pits were placed on these features to see if we could find what had caused them. In the centre of one of the test pits we found the base of a Roman bloomery tapping furnace and there was another in the side wall.

The fact that it was a bloomery tapping furnace was proven by the presence of large amounts of tapping slag. In another of the test pits there were no furnace bases but there was more tapping slag and also there were a lot of large pieces of curving slabs of fire hardened clay, with slag embedded on one side, which would have come from the sides of furnaces.

Therefore in the three years of digging we had found evidence of a considerable level of Roman industrial activity related to iron roasting and iron smelting in the area. We are planning to return to the field again in 2025 to see if we can get a fuller understanding of the scale of this operation in terms of level of output and the period over which they were producing iron.

Post Excavation

The WAFG have continued to run post-excavation sessions at Wiltshire Museum in which all WAFG members are invited to participate. This has attracted many who have never done any form of 'hands-on' archaeological activities before, across a broad age range. The sessions have involved the cleaning, recording and cataloguing of archaeological finds assemblages from excavations. Our most recent activities focussed on preparing the animal bone and other bulk-finds from the major WAFG excavation of the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age site at Mothers Anthony's Well for final deposition with the Museum and the cleaning, sorting and cataloguing of finds from the 2022-2023 WAFG excavations at Seend.

A huge thank you must be extended to all WAFG volunteers who supported our 'Post-Ex Sunday' sessions. We look forward to welcoming you back in the autumn of 2025!

*Wendy Bishop, Phil Andrews and
Mike McQueen*

Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine (WANHM)

Our annual magazine continues to be the journal for reports on archaeological discoveries in Wiltshire. Members receive a free copy and it is available to non-members for a modest charge. The 2024 volume (no. 117) included the following articles:

Pinning down the serpent's tail: confirming the course of the Beckhampton Avenue, Avebury by Mark Gillings, Paul Cheetham and Jayme Lewis; *Peterborough Ware from West Amesbury Farm, Wiltshire* by Michael Russell, Julie Dunne, Richard Evershed, Patrick Quinn, Judith Dobie, Peter Marshall and David Roberts; *Middle Bronze Age cremation burials from East Farm, Fovant* by Jaqueline I. McKinley; *Before Melksham – Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and medieval settlement, excavation at Melksham Campus, 2021* by Liam Wilson, Jonathon Hart and Clare Randall; *A Roman Villa and Well near Melksham* by Louis Stafford; *Archaeological Investigations at Willis Way, Purton, 1987-9 and 2016-18* by Andrew Hood; *Edward Seymour's House at The Brails, Wiltshire: The House in Context* by Graham Bathe; *The Inns of Avebury, c. 1600-1800* by Stuart Raymond; *Wardour Castle, the sale of its contents and Sir Edward Hungerford, 1643* by Adrian James Webb; *Grandfather's Stone: the Lake House meteorite, Britain's largest and earliest extraterrestrial sample* by C. T. Pillinger and J. M. Pillinger

Notes and shorter contributions included:

Old Salisbury, St Martin's Church and the Hundred Meeting-place of Underditch by Christopher Daniell; *New Evidence for the Possible Location of the Dead Buried after the Battle of Roundway Down, July 1643* by Norman Beale; *William Walter Wheatley, topographical artist* by Pamela Slocombe.

Reviews were edited by Stuart Raymond; *Excavation and Fieldwork in Wiltshire 2023* compiled by Will Baker and Elizabeth Darlington; *Highlights from the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) in Wiltshire in 2023* (Sophie Hawke) and *Additions to the Collections, 2023*.

The volume (illustrated page 26) was edited and indexed by Dr Stuart Brookes, with editorial assistance from Peter Saunders (who also coordinated the publication for the Society), plus Graham Bathe, Simon Draper, Stuart A. Raymond, Will Baker, Elizabeth Darlington and Sophie Hawke. Thanks are due to all involved in producing such a well-respected journal, and especially to the many authors for their contributions.

Trilithon

This newsletter is a mixture of articles, items of interest and news about events and is sent to members annually. It also contains a summary of the Annual Report, the Balance Sheet and Statement of Financial Activity.

Engaging audiences online

Our e-newsletter is sent regularly and is our main source of engagement for events. We also use the social media platforms Facebook and Instagram to engage and develop our audiences, recently joining Tik Tok and Bluesky, which have gained over 1,000 followers each in their first year of use. Social media is a great way to publicise upcoming events and news at the Museum and is an opportunity to reach new audiences, as well as sharing details about our collections in a more immediate way. We can also engage with audiences unable to physically access the Museum or collections



Activities, Events, Conferences, Lectures and Outings

Organises lectures, conferences and visits to disseminate greater knowledge and appreciation of our heritage, to both the Society's members and wider audience.

During 2024/25, 410 (387) events, school visits and talks took place, including the Archaeology in Wiltshire Conference and Industrial Archaeology Conference, talks in the community, walks in the Wiltshire landscape, courses and use of the Museum lecture hall by external organisations. Over 80 non-school activities for under 18s were held and we also participated in local community events such as the Heritage Open Day and the lantern making workshops.

Thank you to our speakers and walk leaders for their contributions to the Society as most do not charge a fee or claim expenses, and to everyone who helps with organising and running all our activities.

April 2024

Curious Kids: Springtime
Easter Holiday Activities: Easter themed; Fossils and nature
Home Education Sessions: Archaeology themed
Museum Explorers Club: Animals in the Museum
Online Talk: *The Story of Clouds House: From a Palace of Art to a Home for Waifs and Strays* (VCH)*
Talk: *Eric Walrond: A Caribbean Writer in Wiltshire*
Walk: Drawn to Oare - Eric Ravilious landscapes in the Vale of Pewsey
Young Curators Club: Animals in the Museum

May 2024

Curious Kids: Pirates!
Walk: Fonthill Estate, with Hidden Wiltshire
Walk: Honey Street and Woodborough, with Hidden Wiltshire
Holiday Activities: Building, landscapes and nature
Walk: Lacock and the Wilts & Berks Canal, with Hidden Wiltshire
Museum Explorers Club: Tudor Portraits
Walk: Folklore of Canalside Plants
Young Curators Club: Tudor Portraits

June 2024

Conversation Cafe: for Loneliness Awareness Week
Curious Kids: Under the sea
Home Education Sessions: Archaeology and Roman themed
Lecture: *Who made Avebury? Exploring the 1930s-1940s diaries of William Young*
LGBTQIA+: Zine Workshop
Walk: Milk Hill and Wansdyke, with Hidden Wiltshire
Museum Explorers Club: Rural Crafts
Online Talk: *From Milan to Draycot Cerne. The Funerary Helmet of Sir Thomas Long*
Online Talk: *Recent Research on Clarendon Park* (VCH)*
Walks: Ranscombe Bottom & Morgan's Hill, with Hidden Wiltshire
Walk: Drawn to Oare - Eric Ravilious landscapes in the Vale of Pewsey
Young Curators Club: Rural Crafts

July 2024

Curious Kids: Stone Age animals
Workshops: Victorian Portrait Photography brought to life!
Talk: *Archaeology revealed on the North Wessex Downs VIP Project*
Lecture: *Exploring photography's history up to 1939*
Museum Explorers Club: Ancient Greek Olympics
Online Talk: *Show and Tell – a look at some new acquisitions*
Walk: The Deverills, with Hidden Wiltshire
Young Curators Club: Ancient Greek Olympics

August 2024

Online Talk: *Assizes for Devizes – reaching a milestone*
Camera Amnesty
Curious Kids: the Circus
Summer Crafts 4 Kids – run by the Youth Panel
Summer Holiday Activities: Prehistoric sea creatures; Saxons vs Vikings; Summer Crafts; Woodland Animals

September 2024

Curious Kids: Dinosaurs
Day course: Stone Carving with Andrew Ziminski
Heritage Open Day
Online Talk: *Wiltshire Pastimes: An Historical Look at Sport*

and Recreation in Wiltshire, by Ally McConnell, (VCH)*
Stonehenge Landscape Walk
Talk: *Devizes Through Time*
Young Curators Club: Mini Museums

October 2024

Conference: Industrial Archaeology 2024
Curious Kids: Bugs
Day course: Wood Engraving with Robin Mackenzie
Family Halloween Session: organised by the Youth Panel
Holiday Activities
Lecture: *New DNA analytical techniques: migration, genetic change and social organisation in the Neolithic and Bronze Age*, by Tom Booth (The Francis Crick Institute)
Online Talk: *Murder by Witchcraft* (VCH)*
Tour: Behind the Scenes at Wiltshire Museum
Young Curators Club: Crime and Punishment

November 2024

Conference: *White Horses, Badges & Giants: Hill figures of Southern England*
Curious Kids: Party Time
Graffiti Workshop, led by Nick Halahan of Olas Art
Lecture: *Church-going*, by Andrew Ziminski
LGBTQIA+ : Badge & Collage Workshop
Online Talk: *The Country House Gate Lodge* (VCH)*
WANHS AGM
Young Curators Club: Ancient Egyptians and the Osiris myth

December 2024

A Saturnalia Celebration
Curious Kids: Winter Fun
Lecture: *Digging for Erlestoke*, by Leigh Chalmers and Dr Phil Harding
LGBTQIA+ Workshop: Crafts and Chats
Young Curators Club: Mid-Winter Celebrations

January 2025

Curious Kids: Vikings!
Lecture: *The dark, the light and the weird: a brief history of Wiltshire*, by Tom Holland
Young Curators Club: January – Journey to the Palaeolithic

February 2025

Curious Kids: Egyptians
Holiday Activities: Henges and Ancient monuments
Home Education Sessions: Palaeolithic Discoveries
Lecture: *Eat Like a Viking*, by Craig Brooks
Lecture: *The Mystery of Wansdyke Revealed*, by Andrew Reynolds
Online Talk: *Assizes for Devizes – online briefing*

March 2025

Archaeology in Wiltshire Conference 2025
Home Education Sessions: Fossils and Prehistoric Sea Creatures
Lecture: *Boles Barrow*, by Richard Osgood
Museum Explorers Club: Amazing Artefacts
Online Talk: *Wiltshire Museum – A Science Research hub*, by David Dawson
Queer in Wiltshire: LGBTQIA+ Heritage Booklet Launch; Crafts and Chats
Young Curators Club: March – Amazing Artefacts

* VCH - all proceeds to the Victoria County History Wiltshire Trust, who organised the lecture.

Members are very important to the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society and in addition to free entry to our award-winning Museum and special exhibitions, they receive other benefits:

- ◇ Free welcome tour of museum and library
- ◇ Discounted events
- ◇ Regular newsletter with the latest news and events
- ◇ Free entry to our Wessex Museum partners: Dorset Museum & Art Gallery, Poole Museum, The Salisbury Museum and, from 1 April 2024, the Swindon museums (Lydiard House, Museum and Art Swindon and STEAM
- ◇ Free entry to English Heritage's Stonehenge Visitor Centre
- ◇ Helping to support our vital educational work and the long-term care of our nationally important collections.
- ◇ Opportunities to:
 - find out more about Wiltshire's story by meeting fellow members and subject experts
 - make new friends by getting involved in the Museum and Society as a volunteer
 - get involved in archaeological fieldwork and excavation with our Wiltshire Archaeology Field Group
 - read the latest archaeological and historical research in your free copy of our annual journal
 - find out about the local area with free research access to the 50,000 books, documents, maps and images in our library and archive.

There were 75 new (or re-joining) memberships in the year (103 members); 65 (82) in 2023/2024.

NEW MEMBERS 2024/25

Ms Joy Ackland, Melksham
Mr Keith & Mrs Melanie Allsop, Swindon
Anaïs Barros, Swindon
Mrs Annie Batchelor-Watkins, Nottingham
Ms Charlotte Bell, Trowbridge
Mr Damon Berrelly, Trowbridge
Mr Christopher & Mrs Jan Bird, Frome
Mr William Bostock, Derby
Mr Alan & Mrs Linda Brawn, Chinnor
Ms Elizabeth Browne & Mr Colin Green, Calne
Ms Sophie Clark & Mr Liam Traveller, Devizes
Mr Mark Clarke, Swindon
Ms Mary Connorton, Pewsey
Miss Rebecca Cort, Devizes
Ms Heather Cross, Devizes
Mr William & Mrs Belinda Cutler, Havant
Mr Paul Deeman & Ms Angela Cromwell, Salisbury
Mr Ian Diddams & Ms Tracey Lawrence, Rowde
Mr George & Mrs Sarah Dixon, Devizes
Mr Richard Domas, Horsham
Dr Michael Earle, Poole
Mr Brendan & Mrs Helen Fletcher, Salisbury
Mrs Freda Fowle, Melksham
Mr Richard Fox & Mrs Natalia Gordina, Calne
Ms Teresa Garraud, Devizes

Mr Michael Gilbert & Ms Anna Lloyd, Salisbury
Mr Barry & Mrs Stephanie Green, Devizes
Ms Tabby Grist Parker, Bath
Ms Alejandra Gutierrez, Andover
Ms Emma Hodgson, Devizes
Ms Susan & Mr Thomas Holden, Warminster
Mr Alastair Holloway & Ms Barbara Trotman, Devizes
Ms Lucinda Hughes, Chippenham
Ms Rachel Humphries & Mr James Bird, Chippenham
Mr Clyde & Mrs Katherine Hunter, Devizes
Ms Catherine Ireland, Kintbury
Ms Kay Johnson, Sherborne
Mr Simon, Mrs Helena & Mr Ben King, Trowbridge
Mr Steve Laister, Devizes
Mrs Wendy Lawrence, Pewsey
Ms Judith Lindfield, Poole
Mr Bernie Maltby
Mr Raymond & Mrs Susan Martin, Salisbury
Dr Richard Massey, Frome
Mrs Heather McCombie, Warminster
Sam McDonald, Malmesbury
Ms Henrietta McNeile, Devizes
Ms Julie Mettyear, Salisbury

Ms Fiona & Ms Diana Miller, Haxton
Mr Andy & Mrs Carol Mortimer, Pewsey
Mr Kim Mulji & Mr Martin Hetherington, Pewsey
Ms Amanda Mullins, Salisbury
Mr Tony Painter, Cranleigh
Mrs Pricilla & Mr Iain Park-Weir, Salisbury
Mrs Anne Reddan, Swindon
Mr Andrew & Mrs Pippa Reis, Salisbury
Mr Hugo Reis, Salisbury
Miss Kathryn Rogers, Potterne
Dr P J Sammes, Devizes
Ms Joan Schwann, British Colombia
Mrs Pamela Scroop, Salisbury
Mr Stephen Sharp, Salisbury
Ms Lucy Smeddle, Frome
Ms Catharine Symington, Devizes
Mr Andrew & Mr Gregory Taylor, Devizes
Mr Billy & Mrs Heather Thompson, Devizes
Mr Mark Thomson, NSW
Prof Andria Tidmarsh-Hackett, Pewsey
Mr & Mrs Graham Twidale, Salisbury
Mr Timothy Venton, Warminster
Ms Diana Wethered, Marlborough
Mr Ian Williams, Torpoint
Ms Joanna Williams, Chippenham
Mr Mark Woodlands, Calne
Mr David Young, Wellington

2024 SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Bronze:

Individual - £46.50

Joint/Family - £59.50

Student* - £20.00

Member Organisation - £60.00

Amber Donor - £72.50

Gold Donor - £135.50

Corporate membership - £125 and £325

Jadeite - £275

Life (over 50) - £1,000

Life (under 50) - £1,500

Subscriptions run for 12 months from the first day of the month of joining.

A variety of subscription and payment options are available, including monthly payments.

* Student membership is open to individuals enrolled on a full-time accredited course of study, or on a part-time course of higher education leading to a recognised qualification in the areas of the Society's interests.

Right: The cover of the 2024 edition of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine showed a rather unorthodox excavation team discovering Neolithic pottery buried in pits at West Amesbury Farm. Michael Russell's report on the sherds gathered through subsequent formal archaeological investigation appears in the volume. Attribution: Judith Dobie/Historic England.



Learning, Outreach And Community Engagement

Provides activities for young people to enable them to appreciate and develop their understanding of the local environment and its history (including school visits to the Museum and workshops at schools).

Engages with local community groups to offer arts, culture and heritage activities for all generations.

This year, we have welcomed a wide range of audiences to the Museum through our education programmes for young people. The overall numbers visiting and taking part in museum-run activities have been lower than in recent years, perhaps due to the financial constraints schools and parents have been facing. However, there has still been a great interest and enthusiasm for the activities we run, with many schools and clubs making repeat visits, a lot of regular familiar faces attending our holiday activities and clubs, as well as lots of first-time visitors the Museum.

We have had school visits from early years classes, primary schools from all over the county, A level groups and schools for those with special educational needs.

Particular highlights this year have included a visit from an alternative educational pathway provider, where the teachers said that *for some it was their first ever school trip, everyone loved it, and it meant so much to be able to enhance their learning.*

It was also great to see the excited faces of a year 2 class in a local Devizes based school, who took part in a hands-on session, linked to the Battle of Roundway Down and the English Civil War, an event that took place very close to their school.

Our home education sessions have continued this year and it has been rewarding to be able to provide a comfortable and welcoming space for these young people to learn. There have been sessions on the Romans, prehistoric sea creatures and the Palaeolithic. The groups have explored the collections, handled artefacts, discovered facts and made some amazing creations, including their own mosaics, cave art and woolly mammoths made from milk cartons!

During the holidays and weekends the Museum welcomes families. There are a good number of local families who come to activities we run throughout the year, as well as visitors from further afield, on holiday or visiting friends or relatives in the area.

We started the year with rural crafts linked to our Wiltshire Thatcher Exhibition and also ran activities for families alongside Dave Gunning's 'Megalithic Connections' exhibition, where the children created artwork themed around prehistoric landmarks and heritage sites. There have also been sessions linked to popular historic themes and seasonal events. We love our holiday activities as it is great to see grandparents, parents and children all enjoying taking part and engaging with the Museum collections. Sometimes our adult attendees seem to enjoy themselves even more than the children!

Our weekend clubs have covered a range of popular topics this year. Our 'Amazing Artefacts' and 'Mini Museum' sessions have given the children the chance to explore our wonderful collections, as well as to have the chance to think about plans and ideas for the Devizes Assize Court Project. It is always great to get the opinions of our younger audiences as to what they would like to see in the new Wiltshire Museum. With more sessions for our Museum Explorers (aged 5-7) planned, alongside our popular Young Curators (8-13) and a new teen craft club, we aim to increase opportunities for young people to engage with our museum and collections.

We are looking forward to next year where we will hopefully have chance to test some of ideas and activities for the new Museum with our existing and new audiences, whilst making sure we are still offering a wide range of activities and opportunities for children and young people at our existing site. It is certainly going to be a busy year for us all!

Ali Rushent



Taking part in planned activities; Woolly Mammoths created during a Home Ed session

The Community Curator post is funded by the Art's Council NPO via Wessex Museum.

This year we have continued our relationships with local community partners, including the local Wiltshire libraries and with Spurgeons, who run the Sure Start Centres. We achieved 3 years of funding to continue with our Explore it! Program which gives families a chance to learn about the museum collections through handling objects, doing fun crafts, and having a meal. In March they were treated to a session with Zoolab (funded by Wessex Inspirational Learning Limited) and had the opportunity to touch and see up close, critters from around the world.

We have also continued working with the Youth Justice Service through our Street Art project, which works with young people at risk of offending to give them artistic skills, a chance to express themselves, and a chance to build up their confidence. In 2024 they created art displays for the Boxing Club in Devizes and for a food truck in Bradford on Avon. In 2025 we will continue working with youths identified by the service and will even be offering a placement for to a young person previously engaged with the service to provide them with work experience.

In 2025, as part of the Folk Exhibition, we engaged with the Nepali ladies craft group again, who during our last project together (Lest we Forget) were eager to have the opportunity to see their culture reflected in the museum. They wished to learn how to make a nanglo, a flat basket used for a wide range of purposes in Nepal. During the project the ladies commented how they had taken for granted the level of skill needed to make a nanglo and would even offer the weavers at home more money when they purchase their next one. In May we will be taking the ladies to Avebury to teach them more about Wessex folk and bringing them to the museum to see their creations displayed.



Aside from the projects already mentioned other community projects on the horizon for 2025-2026 are working with the Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living (Wilts CIL) team to help build the confidence of survivors of domestic violence to help them rebuild social circles and support them in their journey away from their old lives. We will do this through a range of craft activities that will promote wellness. After this pilot we will be seeking to expand this and have the group work on a group project that could be displayed at the museum.

As part of our partnership with Wessex Museums we will be part of a project with Girlguiding SouthWest to launch a resource pack for guides to work on at their centres based on the museums' collection. We will also be hosting an activity day for guides in late 2025. If the guides take part in either of these events then they will be able to achieve their very own Wessex Museums badge.

Further to this we hope to, in the near future, launch new regular programs to attract and engage teens and those living with dementia or are socially isolated.

Amy Hammett



*Top Right: the Girls Guides Wessex Museum badge
From the left: Zoolab session; a member of the Nepali ladies craft group; Street Art project.*

Community activities including LGBTQIA+ workshops, queer events and activities.

In November 2024, £3,050 was received from Wessex Museums for the 'Queer in Wiltshire: Queering Wiltshire' pilot LGBTQIA+ heritage project'. The project, funded by Wessex Museums and The National Lottery Heritage Fund as part of the Assizes for Devizes project, resulted in a 56-page LGBTQIA+ heritage booklet. An anthology of oral history interviews with LGBTQIA+ people, queer stories from our archive and collections and artwork created at LGBTQIA+ events, the *Queer in Wiltshire: Queering Wiltshire* booklet captures a wide range of queer identities and experiences, and contemporary and historical LGBTQIA+ stories from across the Wiltshire area. The project and booklet were met with an overwhelmingly positive response.

In early 2025, the Museum received £16,574 from The National Lottery Community Fund for a 'Queer in Wiltshire community project'. As part of this project a free 5-month programme of LGBTQIA+ artist-led workshops, and other queer events and activities was created. A queer exhibition is also being co-produced with a small LGBTQIA+ advisory group.

In April and May 2025, the Museum hosted a Queer Nature Walk led by artist James Aldridge, a fabric banner making workshop led by artists Al Hill and E L West, queer evening events and coffee mornings. During Pride Month, the Queer in Wiltshire programme will include three LGBTQIA+ artist-led workshops, and the monthly evening event and coffee morning. The Museum will also have its first booth at Devizes Pride on 28 June 2025. This will be followed by more events and the launch of the LGBTQIA+ exhibition in July.

Friday Schoemaker



Using the word 'Queer'

Wiltshire Museum recognises that the word "queer" has a complex, painful history and can be uncomfortable and divisive. We have decided to use the word "queer" as it has been reclaimed in recent years and is now widely used within the LGBTQIA+ community and academia as an umbrella term for non-heterosexual/cisgender and gender nonconforming people. For us, "queer" is the most inclusive term we can use, and we use it as a positive word, not seeking to erase or disregard anyone's identity and history but instead aiming to reflect the diversity of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Wiltshire Museum is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and we take seriously our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2025.

Wiltshire Museum thank the following for funding the projects:

Queer in Wiltshire: Queering Wiltshire: Wessex Museums and The National Lottery Heritage Fund

Queer in Wiltshire: The National Lottery Community Fund



From the left: A Queer in Wiltshire walk, Friday receiving funds from the Community Foundation; the 'Queer in Wiltshire: Queering Wiltshire' booklet

Provides opportunities for volunteers, without whom the Society would not be able to offer the scale and variety of activities.

It has been another busy year for our volunteer team and we were delighted to welcome many new faces, including new members to our youth panel, front of house and maintenance teams.

Over 4,000 hours of volunteer time was logged between April 2024 and March 2025. This equates to a financial value of approximately £88,000, calculated using National Lottery Heritage Fund methodology. Hours are slightly up compared to the 3,213 logged in 2023/24.

Volunteers play a vital role in all aspects of running the Museum and Society. They welcome visitors, look after researchers in our Library and Archive, assist with school groups and family activity days, help with maintenance and decorating, gardening, administration, mailings and events. We have a growing student volunteer programme, focusing on skills development through creative projects. Trustees are also volunteers and we are thankful for the time and expertise they continue to dedicate.

Archive & Library

A team of 19 Library volunteers usually catalogue the Archive and Library collections, adding to the online catalogue and scanning the photograph collection. Five Reader Services volunteers are currently assisting the Collections Officer with cataloguing the backlog of acquisitions that arrived during the lockdowns and since. The remaining volunteers are yet to return but many have continued to undertake their own research whilst at home and answer the occasional enquiry.

The Reader Services volunteers have been answering enquiries and assisting with some visiting researchers and their requests. We could not provide the service we deliver without our excellent team of volunteers and hopefully we can welcome some of the team back soon.

Community

Every month a volunteer, Graham Lever, has assisted with our Explore it! Sessions where the museum hosts handling sessions, craft activities and a meal for families with additional needs or from low income families. The volunteer will help set up and close down, assist with serving meals, and take the children around the museum for an activity or quiz. In addition, Graham gallantly agreed to play the role of Father Christmas and give out gifts to the children present.

Our Youth Panel are particularly keen to work with young children and have hosted a variety of events including a Summer event and a Halloween event. They were also the judging panel for a U3A photography competition, where they selected the winners for the U3A celebration display in April. The beginning of 2025 also saw the Youth Panel planning for the year and they are very eager to explore the environment as a theme for their work.

A recent project linked with our Folk Exhibition, saw one volunteer, Louise, using her experience travelling in Nepal and studying their local fabric art to assist with the teaching of a group of older Nepali women associated with the British army on how to make the traditional Nanglos (a flat woven basket).

Looking ahead

We are looking forward to another year working alongside our enthusiastic team. Areas of focus will be to develop an exciting training programme for volunteers and 'growing' our gardening and community teams! Our thanks to every individual who has offered their time in supporting the Museum.

*Amy Hammett, Jane Schön,
Emma Sykes and Helen Meikle*



From the left: Louise working with a local Nepali ladies; publicity for the Halloween Party, created by the Youth Panel..

Thank you to our volunteers:

Phil Andrews	Alexandria Fraser Curran	Bill Perry
Robin Ault	Cynthia Ganabadhi	Ivan Philips
Geraldine Bateman	Jackie Gardiner	Sue Power
Eliza Bates	Jeff Goatman	Penelope Price Jones
John Baumber	Jill Goatman	Amanda Ralfe
Judith Bishop	Sandy Haynes	Stuart Raymond
Wendy Bishop	Abigail Hooper	Mary Rennie
Mike Borro	Jonathan Hurwitt	Sue Roderick
Dave Brown	Mary Kane	Doug Roseaman
Jane Brunning	James Kay	Anita Sala
Jan Bryant	Alexandra Kelly	Jonathan Sanigar
Bliss Burnett	Dallas Kendall	Jessamy Saunders
Sandy Corbyn	Ann King	Peter Saunders
Michael Cornwell	Xander King	Harvey Skinner
Jean Covington	Wendy Lansdown	Emerson Smith
Dave Coward	Madeline LeStrange	Mike Stone
Michael Cox	Graham Lever	John Surowiec
Carol Creed	Ralph Lewis	Louise Surowiec
Jan Dando	Stella Maddock	Michael Teale
Tim Daw	Ella Marsden	Alistair Thompson
Catherine Dawson	Christina McClean	Esme Thompson
Dylan Deloughery	Mike McQueen	Peter Tolhurst
Phil Edwards	Peter Melsom	Christine Tucker
Amy Ellis	Susan Miles	Laura Turner
Paula Evans	Philippa Morgan	Elspeth Wales
Pauline Ferguson	Sara Morgan	Wendy Weller
Remi Ferreira Pike	Jo Noble	David Weston
David Field	Philip Nokes	Jirina Wheatley
Helen Fishlock	Sonny O'Sullivan	Mike Williams
Michael Fletcher	Kaz Page	Heather Wilson
James Flood		Paul Wilson

Committees and Working Groups follow up on specific issues

We are always looking for more people to be involved in our work, a great way to meet people and to develop skills and experience.

A303 Working Group

In July 2024 the new Government cancelled the A303 Tunnel scheme at Stonehenge. The Working Group has not met, but remains as there may be other issues for it consider, including issues relating to byways at Stonehenge.

David Dawson, Director

Buildings and Monuments

This working group no longer meets, but if a significant case arises in Wiltshire, then the Working Group will be reformed.

Industrial Archaeology

The 2024 conference was a success with many people from all over the South West attending. Plans are in hand for the 2025 conference. The committee continues to act as a focus for Industrial Archaeology matters in the County and liaises with other interested bodies

Doug Roseaman, Committee Secretary

Finance Committee

This committee ensures that the assets of the Society are managed in compliance with the various rules and guidelines pertinent to the WANHS status as a registered charity and limited liability company, and promulgates appropriate policies and procedures.

The routine and day-to-day monitoring and management of approved budgets is delegated to the Review & Development Committee.

The Finance Committee meet when events demand it.

Rathbone Investment Management provide regular reports on the investment situation.

DEVELOPMENT

Working with Partners and Plans for the Future

Stonehenge Museums Partnership

We have kept in regular contact during the year, developing joint marketing initiatives through social media. English Heritage has been implementing a new ticketing system, which significantly improve the purchase of tickets for both Wiltshire and Salisbury Museums alongside entry to Stonehenge. We hope that this will increase our ticket sales in 2025/26.

Strategic and Forward Plans

We are continuing to work towards achieving the objectives set out in the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan for the Society and Museum to continue to thrive as the Assize Court project proceeds following the delays from the COVID pandemic. An Interim Strategic Plan was adopted in July 2024, extending the ambition of the 2019 Strategic Plan for a further two years, up to the point when we hope to be awarded Delivery funding for the Assize Court Project.

The Forward Plan for 2024-2025 detailed priorities for the year ahead, including the implementation of the Development Phase of the Assizes for Devizes Project, the exhibition programme (Wiltshire Thatcher, Oexmann and Dave Gunning) in addition to our usual wide range of activities. The Plan has monthly objectives and is reviewed by the Board on a quarterly basis.

The majority of the targets set at the beginning of the year were achieved.

Wessex Museums Partnership

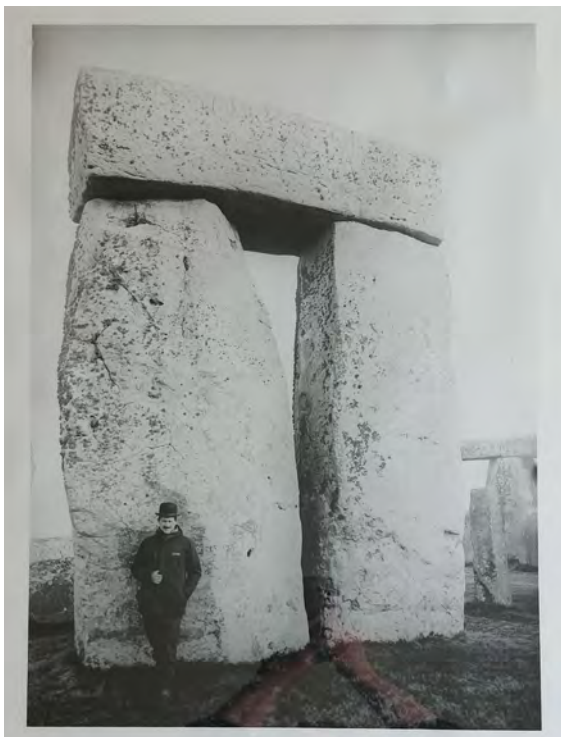
The Wessex Museums Partnership brings together Dorset Museum, Poole Museum, The Salisbury Museum, Swindon Museums and the Wiltshire Museum.

During the year the Wessex Museums Partnership progressed delivering the four year, Arts Council supported National Portfolio Organisation (NPO), project to improve collections care, enhance the exhibitions programme and work with new audiences. Our Community Curator built links with community groups and our Exhibitions Officer supported the exhibitions programme and developed plans for future joint exhibitions, including a John Piper exhibition planned for 2026. A wide range of staff were involved in the development of the *Un/ Common People* exhibition, which celebrates folk culture in Wiltshire and Dorset. This highlights many objects and stories from our collections and opened in Swindon in November, before touring to Wiltshire Museum and the other museums in the partnership.

The Partnership is supported by the Wessex Museums Trust, a charity that aims to support museums in Wiltshire and Dorset. The Trust fundraises to enable the delivery of projects that the individual museums are not able to undertake on their own and take a more active role in the management of the NPO. The Society is represented on the Board by the Director.

In 2024 Arts Council England announced that the Wessex Museums National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status would be extended for a further year, ending in March 2026, and in 2025 that, pending the Spending Review, that the status would continue for another year until 2027.

David Dawson



Black and white photograph of Stonehenge, 2024, recreating photographs taken by Ernest Farmer in 1892 (2024.7008), see pages 13 and 19).

Wessex Museums

In June 2023, the Museum was awarded development funding of £300,748 by The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for our ambitious project to revitalise the Devizes Assize Court as a new home for Wiltshire Museum and its internationally important collections. This funding supports a two-year planning period to develop architectural plans; gallery designs and the creation of an exciting programme of community activities and events.

Over this past year, the Project has made huge leaps forward, working towards its goal of submitting a NLHF Delivery funding application in Summer 2025. The Museum have worked closely with the Devizes Assize Court Trust, Project Consultants and the Community in order to create a shared vision for the new site as a cultural and community destination at the Heart of Wiltshire. The plans include two large, designated learning and event spaces, new interactive galleries, a special display space capable of hosting national-standard exhibitions, and a café that makes use of the new open space behind the Assize Court.

The Assize Court Project has now engaged with over 3,000 people through a mix of community outreach and projects. Most notably in August 2024, we worked with Devizes Public Living room and White Horse Arts in order to create a set of carnival banners for Devizes Carnival that were then accessioned into the Museum's collections (see pages 6, 17 and 19). It is the hope that these will then go on display in the new Museum's Devizes gallery, to showcase both Devizes town tradition and the amazing community work that takes place within it.

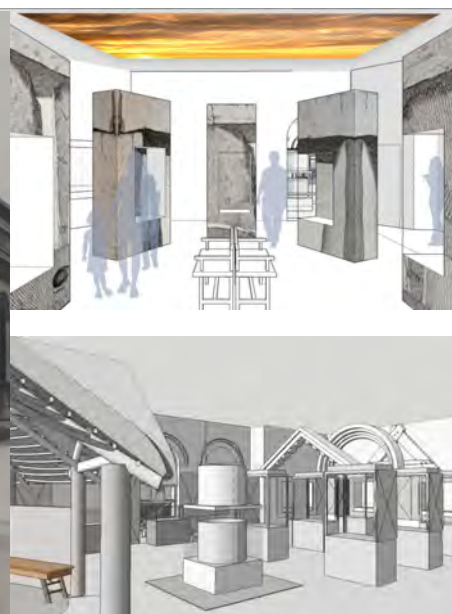
Claire Slack, our engagement officer, has consulted with a wide range of audiences to create a plan of activities and events we want to run during the project and after we open the new site. Several advisory groups have been set up to help guide and bring discussion surrounding the project, such as interpretation, activities and access. In September 2024, our Project Intern Friday Schoemaker created a small exhibition on the History of the Assize Court and our vision for the site. Over 600 people visited to see our plans for the future and vote on what they wanted to see in the new building.

In December 2024, we submitted a planning application to Wiltshire Council. Our plans to restore the 'at risk' Grade II* listed Assize Court has been met with great enthusiasm at the public consultation stage, and we now await the final response from Wiltshire Council.

Over the next few months, we are preparing funding applications to Trusts and Foundations as well as seeking support from philanthropists and benefactors to provide match funding for our National Lottery application. In early 2025 we received pledges from The Rothschild Foundation and the Julia Rausing Trust, both of £500,000. A major public appeal will be launched once the major commitment from the National Lottery Heritage Fund has been secured.

The application to the National Lottery Heritage fund will be submitted in August 2025 for the major funding needed to make the project a reality. If successful, work on the building will begin during 2026, with the aim to open the building in 2030.

Helen Meikle



Pen and ink drawing of the Assize Court by Sidney G. Smith, 1947 (DZSWS: 2024.1004, see page 18); artist's impression of the planned new galleries, (c) Image Makers

TRUSTEES' FINANCIAL REVIEW FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

TRUSTEES' FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees (who are directors of the company for the purpose of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under the Law the Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (UK Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Society and the Income and expenditure for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently.
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate.
- Presume that the company will continue to operate.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Internal risks are minimised by the establishment, documentation and regular review of a robust system of internal controls. Procedures have been implemented for the authorisation of all transactions and projects are costed initially and monitored on a regular basis.

The Board continued to employ Rathbone Investment Management Limited to manage both the investment portfolio and the endowment fund with the primary objective to achieve a balanced return from income and capital at the low end of a medium level of risk.

The Society does not hold any indemnity insurance against any liability for negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust by a Trustee.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The risk assessments for all galleries are reviewed regularly and a risk assessment is made of all activities undertaken. On the financial side, a budget is prepared each year assessing the likely income receivable and costs of activities, which is monitored carefully and reported to the Trustees on a quarterly basis.

PRINCIPAL RISKS

The principal risks facing the Society include falls in the Stock Market which affect the investment portfolios, long-term staff or Trustee absence, inadequate staffing with dependence on a small team of full-time employees, physical risks to the collections or buildings from fire, theft or floods and reductions in grants from local authorities. The Trustees manage these risks by having an investment policy at the low end of medium risk with regular reviews from the investment managers, by having processes for trustee succession, by conducting reviews of staff availability and development and by regular reviews of security.

The Trustees consider, in line with the Charity Commission advice, that the Society should have unrestricted funds (i.e. designated funds plus unrestricted reserves) equivalent to at least one year's core costs, that is some £400,000 to provide a measure of security; however, as the Society has become heavily dependent on its investments to provide ongoing but uncertain income for its operations, unrestricted funds have to be greater than £400,000 to provide a measure of security since unrestricted funds are used to support the charitable activities of the Society where there is a deficiency of net income on core activities or to take account of new opportunities.

The Unrestricted Funds balance at 31 March 2025 was £437,629 (£571,833 at 31 March 2024).

The balance of Designated Funds (which are part of total unrestricted funds) was £404,092 at 31 March 2025 (£415,223 at 31 March 2024). The purpose of Designated Funds can be changed by the Board of Trustees. However, it must be borne in mind that the Designated Funds are and have been used to meet expenditure not charged to core activities such as the running costs of the Hopton Store, the Librarian's salary, the Wiltshire Archaeology Field Group and the depreciation charge on the Art Gallery and high security cases. Therefore, Designated Funds can only be utilised for other purposes if the expenditure they defray either ceases to exist or is charged to core activities.

Restricted Funds at 31 March 2025 of £415,878 (£376,241 at 31 March 2024) must be used for a specific purpose. The capital at 31 March 2025 of £525,347 (£511,473 at 31 March 2024) in the Endowment Fund is not distributable.

Included within the net book value of tangible fixed assets of £298,284 is the land and buildings of the Museum. These assets are carried in the accounts at a net book value of £277,412 (£283,426 at 31 March 2024). The net book value of this property is substantially smaller than its actual market value. There is provision in the Charity Accounting rules for tangible assets like the Museum land and buildings to be shown at market value in the accounts. However, the Trustees have decided that, for the moment, the property should be shown at net book value. This property is now used for the purposes of charitable activities but, if the Museum were to move, it may be available to generate funds to support the new opportunities.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Society continued from last year to be operating at full capacity with an extensive programme of activities associated with the museum and library. In addition, the work on the development stage of the Devizes Assize Court Project took a considerable amount of resource. Total revenue for the year was significantly higher at £637,111 (£560,646 at 31 March 2024). Income associated with museum, library, outreach and other charitable activities was the main contributor to this increase at £391,061 (£331,070 at 31 March 2024). Grants and contributions associated with the Devizes Assize Court Trust Project also increased, but to a lesser extent at, £214,160 (£153,895 at 31 March 2024).

The total expenditure for the Society increased to £718,338 from £645,351 last year. This increase was due to expenditure incurred in the development phase of the Devizes Assize Court Project. Expenditure on core activities fell by 6.1% to £439,855 mainly driven by a focus of resources on the Devizes Assize Court Project.

The Society's investment portfolio managed a very modest gain of £534 compared to last year's gain of £57,710. This result reflects the disruption in the capital markets following the presidential elections in the United States and the incoming administration's approach to world trade. The overall deficit for the year was £80,693 compared to the previous year of £26,995. As referenced above the underperformance of the Society's investments was a significant element in the negative movement. However, it should also be noted that the Society contributed £59,785 to the funding of the Devizes Assize Court Project.

Unrestricted reserves (i.e. Unrestricted Funds less Designated Funds) decreased in the year by £123,074.

Designated Funds decreased during the year by £11,130 reflecting the lack of legacy revenue or investment gains in the year, resulting in the brought forward reserves being consumed by the costs associated with the activities for which these funds were established.

The Society continues to receive support from Wiltshire Council with a grant of £12,780 and Devizes Town Council of £4,000. Both grants will be maintained in 2025/26 but their continuation at this level or at all is not certain for future years. These funds are very valuable as they support core expenses. Specific project grants enable the Society to extend its work in ways it would be unable to undertake without such support and the Society is extremely grateful for all the grants it receives.

Restricted Funds increased by £39,637 due to the receipt of a legacy of £55,847.

Investment income from the Society's main portfolio and from the Sandell Trust was £38,300 which was a increase on the previous year of £5,361. The overall return on investments on the combined main and endowment portfolios and including income and revaluation and trading losses was a gain of 2.83% compared with a gain of 7.58% the previous year. This deterioration in the value of the Society's investments reflects the general uncertainty seen in the world's capital markets referred to above. The overall income return before investment management expenses was 2.79% compared with 2.90% the previous year.

The Society does not have a specific policy on social, environmental or ethical considerations. However, its investment managers have a corporate strategy that means that these are taken into account in all aspects of their business activities.

ENDOWMENT FUND

The Fund's portfolio is managed at the low end of a medium risk mandate. The Endowment Fund balance increased during the year by £13,874 due to receipt of a £10,000 legacy, gains on securities and the gain resulting from the year end revaluation.

Under the terms of the Endowment Trust the capital is not available for distribution but must be invested to provide income for the Society at some future date to be decided by the Trustees. The Trustees have reserved the right to transfer income received by the Fund to unrestricted reserves from the year ended 31 March 2010. Net investment income of £14,540 after investment expenses of £3,152 was transferred to the unrestricted reserves during the year ended 31 March 2025.

COLLECTIONS TRUST

There are over 500,000 items in the Collections Trust of which 2,500 are displayed in the Museum. There are also some 30,000 items in the Archive and Library collections. Most of these items are assets which were acquired before 1 April 2005 and have no value placed on them in the accounts. These continue to be catalogued and conserved with some items on loan elsewhere as described on page 15. More recent items costing over £1,000 each and totalling £48,741 are included in the balance sheet at cost. During the year donations and grants of £9,189 were received by the Trust and acquisitions of £9,998 of items costing less than £1,000 were made. These acquisitions are described on pages 17 to 20.

INCOMING RESOURCES AND LEGACIES RECEIVED

Incoming resources are allocated on the basis of the purposes for which they are raised, the income for designated and restricted funds being credited to the unrestricted fund and restricted funds respectively. The accounts include £415,878 for restricted funds and £525,347 for the Endowment Fund. These funds are not available to the Society for general use and must, therefore, be disregarded when assessing the Society's financial position.

FORWARD PLAN

Each year the Board approves a Forward Plan that contains objectives and targets for the year. The 2024/25 Forward Plan contained targets within the following categories: exhibitions and displays; collections; development; projects; Assize Court; learning and outreach; and governance and core activities. Within the context of management resources good progress was made in most of these areas - see page 32.

PARTNERSHIPS

For many years the Society has enjoyed a close relationship with the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum as demonstrated by the reciprocal arrangement for free entry to the museums for members of each organisation and co-operation on exhibitions. Although, by mutual consent, the Directors have ceased to be nominees on the other's Board, good communication is maintained through the Wessex Museums Partnership. Supported by Arts Council England and led by Poole Museum Service, the partnership also includes The Salisbury Museum and Dorset Museum.

The support of Wiltshire Council and Devizes Town Council in providing revenue grants to the Museum is gratefully acknowledged together with the contributions to the Board of their nominated Trustees. We are pleased to continue working in partnership with English Heritage and Salisbury Museum through the Stonehenge Museums Partnership.

The Board is aware that progress through partnership is the most effective pathway to success and will be pursuing every available opportunity to build strong partnerships.

AUDITORS

David Owen & Co. were re-appointed as auditors of the Company at the Annual General Meeting on 10 November 2024 and have expressed their willingness to continue to act.

This report has been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) and in accordance with the special provisions of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small entities.

The Trustees have taken all steps which they ought to have taken to be aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Society's auditors are aware of that information. So far as the Trustees are aware there is no relevant audit information of which the Society's auditors are unaware.

Approved by the Trustees on 25 September 2025, and signed on their behalf by:

Caroline M Kay
Chair, on behalf of the Board of Trustees

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Constitution

Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society (the Society) is a company limited by guarantee, registration number 3885649, governed by its Articles of Association and a charity, registration number 1080096. The latest Articles of Association were agreed by the members at the October 2015 Annual General Meeting. The Objects of the Society are detailed on the inner cover. The members of the Society are subscribing members; in the event of the Society being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £10 per member.

The Society is the corporate trustee of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Collections Trust, a linked charity, registration number 1080096. The Collections Trust holds all the heritage assets in its collections. The Society does not hold the endowment of the Collections Trust as corporate property.

The Society is also the corporate trustee of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Endowment Fund, a linked charity, registration number 1080096. Under the terms of the Charity Registration the accounts of the Fund are included in the Society's accounts but as a separate charity its funds do not form part of the Society's assets.

Directors and Trustees

The Directors of the charitable company (the Society) are its Trustees for the purpose of charitable law and throughout the report are referred to collectively as "the Trustees".

The Society can have a maximum of 20 trustees. The Chair, Deputy Chair and Treasurer (the Officers) and nine Trustees are elected by the membership, with re-election after three years. Trustees, excluding the Officers, can serve a maximum of six years. Officers are elected annually from amongst the Trustees but can serve for no more than six years in any one role. As nominating bodies, Devizes Town Council and Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum Trust, can each appoint one Trustee, and Wiltshire Council can appoint two Trustees. The Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum Trust no longer appoint a Trustee to the WANHS Board. The Trustees have the power to co-opt additional Trustees who serve until the end of the next Annual General Meeting (AGM) at which they may be nominated and elected.

The Society is governed by the Board of Trustees which meets regularly throughout the year. It determines the general policy direction of the Society and discusses matters of importance to the Society. It approves and monitors budgets,

Forward and Strategic Plans, all developments, the prioritisation and allocation of resources and approves trustee appointments. Trustees bring outside experience and knowledge which supports that of our small staff.

There is a Review and Development Committee which meets regularly to review the management and financial affairs of the Museum delegated to the Director and his staff. Standing committees and working groups are formed as needed to deal with specific issues.

Risk Management

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the Charity is exposed including those related to the operations and finances of the Society and Museum, Archive & Library, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate any exposure to major risks. The Risk Register is regularly reviewed and updated as necessary.

Investment Powers

The Trustees have the power to invest in such stocks, shares, investments and property as they see fit. The Trustees have engaged Rathbone Investment Management as investment managers and a Finance Committee reviews the portfolio and investment strategy.

Trustee appointment, induction and training

The skills and experience of existing Trustees is reviewed annually and, together with future needs, taken into account when seeking new trustees. The Board has a succession plan and has drawn up a trustee role description. Vacancies are advertised to members and through archaeological and voluntary media. Prospective Trustees are invited to visit the Museum to discuss the role prior to a formal interview. A panel, including the Chair and Director, reviews applications and interviews candidates. References are obtained and checks on eligibility to be a trustee and company director made. Those who are considered suitable are recommended to the Board to go forward to the Society's AGM for election by members.

There is an induction process to help Trustees understand their new role. An induction pack includes information on governance, accounts for recent years, forward plans, minutes of recent Board meetings, policies and other relevant information. New Trustees receive copies of Charity Commission advice (e.g. *The Essential Trustee*), are signed up for their e-mail updates and receive a personal tour of the Museum, Archive & Library buildings. From time to time Trustees are offered training courses.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

LEGAL INFORMATION

Names and registration numbers

Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society (the Society) is a company limited by guarantee, registration number 3885649 and a charity, registration number 1080096.

The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Collections Trust is an unincorporated, linked charity, registration number 1080096.

The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Endowment Fund is an unincorporated, linked charity, registration number 1080096.

PATRONS

Phil Harding, DUniv, FSA, MIFA

David Inshaw

Mrs Sarah Rose Troughton, CSt.J, HM Lord-Lieutenant for Wiltshire

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chair:

Alison Hems, BA, PhD, AMA, FRSA (*from 28/3/24 to 26/9/24*)

Caroline M Kay, BA, MA, MSc (*co-opted 26/9/24*)

Deputy Chair:

Vacant

Hon. Treasurer:

Chris R Kelly, BSc, FCA, FIOD

Elected Trustees:

Richard Cardiff

Claire Dobbin, MA, BA (Hons)

Nicola Harris, BSc (Hons)

Bethany Hocking, BA (Hons) (*co-opted 1/1/25*)

Ruth B. Kerr, MA, BA (Hons)

Earl Kerry, PhD, MA, MBA, MSc

Adelaide Longhurst, BA (Hons) (*co-opted 28/11/24*)

Katie Marsden, BSc (Hons)

Martin Nye (*to 11/11/24*)

Grace Payne-Kumar, BA (Hons) (*elected 11/11/24*)

Lachlan Robertson, MA, BSc (*to 11/11/24*)

Peter Wragg, DMS (*elected 11/11/24*)

Nominated Trustees:

Director, Wiltshire Museum (Trustee *from 1/1/25*):

David Dawson, BA (Hons), AMA, FSA

Member, Devizes Town Council (*from May 2021*):

Cllr. Mrs C Gay, BA (Hons), Dip Ed, FPS

Members, Wiltshire Council:

Cllr Iain Wallis (*from 26/9/2024*)

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

STAFF AS AT 31.3.2025

Director: David Dawson, BA, FSA, AMA

Curator*: Lisa Brown, BA (Hons), MA

Marketing & Administration Manager:
Karen Jones, BA (Hons)

Museum Assistant: Administration:
Emma Sykes, BA

Collections Officer: Archive & Library*:
Jane Schön, BA (Hons), MA

Community Curator*:
Amy Hammett, MPhil, MA, BA (Hons)

Exhibitions Officer*: Heather Ault, BA

Finds Liaison Officer: Sophie Hawke (employed by The Salisbury Museum, funded through the British Museum and other partners)

Finance Officer*: Mandy Dixon

Learning & Outreach Officer*: Ali Rushent, BA, MA

Museum Assistant*: Carol Johnston

Project Officer*: Friday Schoemaker

Assizes for Devizes Project Staff:

Programme Manager: Nicola Trowell, BA (Hons)

Engagement Officer: Claire Slack, BA (Hons), MA

Support Officer: Helen Meikle, BA (Hons), MA
[*part-time]

FORMAL APPOINTMENTS

Auditors:

David Owen & Co., 17 The Market Place,
Devizes, SN10 1BA

Bankers:

Lloyds TSB plc, 38 Market Place,
Devizes, SN10 1JD

Investment Managers:

Rathbone Investment Management,
8 Finsbury Circus, London, EC2M 7AZ

Company Secretary:

Mrs K P Jones, BA (Hons)

Hon. Solicitors:

Wansbroughs, Northgate House,
Devizes, SN10 1JX

Editor - Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine:

Stuart Brookes, BA (Hons), MA, PhD, PGCTiLL

REGISTERED OFFICE

41 Long Street
Devizes
Wiltshire
SN10 1NS

REPORT OF THE AUDITORS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

Independent Auditors' Report to the Members of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise of the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Generally Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK".

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs UK) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standards, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concerns

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other Information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and,

except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report, which includes the Directors' Report prepared for the purposes of company law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Directors' Report included within the Trustees' Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Directors' Report included within the Trustee's Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate and proper accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies' regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the Trustees' Report.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement (set out on page 34), the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company or the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a

true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees' are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustee's either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an Auditor's Report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our Auditor's Report.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

We identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and then design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, including obtaining audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

In identifying and addressing risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, our procedures included the following:

- We obtained an understanding of laws and regulations that affect the company, focusing on those that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on its operations. Key laws and regulations that we identified included the UK Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, tax legislation, data protection legislation and regulations imposed by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) with regards to the provision of insurance policies.
- We enquired of the trustees, reviewed correspondence with HMRC and reviewed meeting minutes for evidence of non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations. We also reviewed controls the trustees have in place to ensure compliance.
- We gained an understanding of the controls that the trustees have in place to prevent and detect fraud.
- We enquired of the trustees about any incidences of fraud that had taken place during the accounting period.

- The risk of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations and fraud was discussed within the audit team and tests were planned and performed to address these risks. We identified the potential for fraud in the following areas: misappropriation of cash and other assets, undisclosed related party transactions outside the normal course of business.
- We identified the greatest risk of material impact on the financial statements from irregularities, including fraud and revenue recognition of legacies, grants and investment income.
- We critically reviewed judgements and provisions included within the financial statements and examined the associated cut-off issues. Prior period forecasts were compared to actual results to ensure past judgements made were reasonable in comparison with eventual outcomes.
- We reviewed financial statements disclosures and tested to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above.
- We enquired of the trustees about actual and potential litigation and claims.
- We obtained independent confirmations from your bank regarding balances at the year-end in addition to any outstanding charges.
- We performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships that might indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud.
- In addressing the risk of fraud due to management override of internal controls we tested the appropriateness of journal entries and assessed whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates were indicative of a potential bias.

Due to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. For example, as with any audit, there remained a higher risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls. We are not responsible for preventing fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations and cannot be expected to detect all fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations

Use of our Report

The report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Mr Joseph Bunton (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For an on behalf of David Owen & Co, Chartered
Accountants and Statutory Auditors
17 The Market Place, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 1BA
Date: 25 September 2025

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total Funds 2025	Total Funds 2024
	Note	£	£	£	£	£
Income and Endowments from:						
Donations and legacies	1	123,697	55,847	10,000	189,544	118,466
Charitable activities	2	357,966	-	-	357,966	344,104
Other trading activities	5	56,919	792	-	57,711	62,395
Investments	7	10,015	7,335	14,540	31,890	35,681
Total		548,597	63,974	24,540	637,111	560,646
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds	8	59,978	1,670	3,152	64,800	66,566
Charitable activities	9	632,283	21,255	-	653,538	578,785
Total		692,261	22,925	3,152	718,338	645,351
Net gains/(losses) on investments	14	(1,928)	(1,412)	3,874	534	57,710
Net income/(expenditure)		(145,592)	39,637	25,262	(80,693)	(26,995)
Transfers between funds		11,388	-	(11,388)	-	-
Net movement in funds		(134,204)	39,637	13,874	(80,693)	(26,995)
Reconciliation of funds:						
Total funds brought forward		571,833	376,241	511,473	1,459,547	1,486,542
Total funds carried forward		437,629	415,878	525,347	1,378,854	1,459,547

WILTSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 March 2025

		2025	2024
	Notes	£	£
Fixed Assets			
Tangible Fixed Assets	15	298,284	315,125
Managed Investments			
Securities	16	528,262	707,615
Cash		5,046	12,556
		533,308	720,171
Managed Endowment Investments			
Securities	16	514,822	495,486
Cash		10,075	15,537
		524,897	511,023
Total Fixed Assets		1,356,489	1,546,319
Current Assets			
Stock		16,808	14,467
Debtors	17	85,921	123,175
Cash at Bank		156,930	60,036
Total current Assets		259,659	197,678
Liabilities			
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	18	137,638	170,197
Net Current Assets		122,021	27,481
Total assets less current liabilities		1,478,510	1,573,800
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year	19	99,656	114,253
		1,378,854	1,459,547
The funds of the Society			
Endowment Funds	22	525,347	511,473
Restricted income funds	23	415,878	376,241
Unrestricted funds (including Designated funds)	24	437,629	571,833
		1,378,854	1,459,547

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime and FRS 102 Section 1A.

The notes on pages 44 to 54 form part of these financial statements.

Caroline M Kay, Chair

Chris R Kelly, Honorary Treasurer

25 September 2025

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

	Total Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2024 £
Cash flows from operating activities:		
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	(a) <u>(104,450)</u>	<u>(159,727)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities:		
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	31,890	35,681
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(4,070)	(6,212)
Proceeds from sale of investments	268,461	253,731
Purchase of investments	(107,909)	(206,682)
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	<u>188,372</u>	<u>76,518</u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period	83,922	(83,209)
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April	(b) <u>88,129</u>	<u>171,338</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March	(b) <u>172,051</u>	<u>88,129</u>

(a) Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities

	2025 £	2024 £
Net income/(expenditure) for the year as per the Statement of Activities	(80,693)	(26,995)
<i>Adjustments for:</i>		
Depreciation charges	20,911	20,626
(Gains)/losses on investments	(535)	(57,710)
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	(31,890)	(35,681)
(Increase)/decrease in stocks	(2,341)	(1,538)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	37,254	(84,467)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	(47,155)	26,037
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	<u>(104,450)</u>	<u>(159,727)</u>

(b) Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2025 £	2024 £
Cash at bank and in hand (incl. investment cash)	<u>172,051</u>	<u>88,129</u>
	<u>172,051</u>	<u>88,129</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

Statement of Accounting Policies

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with:

- (a) Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2005), and
- (b) the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK (FRS102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The Company qualifies as a small company under the Companies Act 2006 and under SORP. However, the Company has continued to comply with the requirements of large charities and to this end has produced a cash flow statement for the accounting period and comparative figures for the previous accounting period.

The Company meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value except for the discounting of the liability for the pension deficit or unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

Company Status

The Company is a company limited by guarantee. The members of the Company are subscribing members. In the event of the Company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £10 per member.

Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Tangible fixed assets costing more than £4,000 are capitalised and included at cost. Grant funded purchases are written off in the year of acquisition unless capitalisation is required as a condition of the grant. Depreciation is provided on all fixed assets at rates calculated to write off the cost on a straight-line basis over the expected useful economic life as follows:

Freehold Land	Nil
Freehold Buildings	Over 50 years
Fixtures, fittings and equipment	Over 5 years

Investments

Net gains and losses are taken to the Statement of Financial Activities and analysed between realised gains and losses and unrealised gains and losses in note 14 to the financial statements. Investment income has been accounted for on the basis of the due date of payment. Investment income and gains and losses in the Main Fund are allocated between Unrestricted Funds (including Designated Funds) and Restricted Funds on the basis of the average net assets of those funds.

Stock

Stock consists of purchased goods for resale and unsold publications. Stocks are valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value after making allowance for obsolete and slow-moving stock.

Incoming Resources

- Legacies are normally accounted for when received and, if not given for specific purposes as a condition of the will, are utilised either for general expenditure or for the purposes which the Trustees believe the Testator would have approved.
- Donations of items for resale are included in receipts when received.
- Subscriptions are spread over the year in which they are received.
- All receipts and expenditure are shown in full in the accounts.
- Grants. Where a grant is, wholly or partly, in respect of expenditure to be incurred in the following financial year, the appropriate sum is deducted from income and included in liabilities as grants received in advance. In the following year this procedure is reversed with grants being withdrawn from grants received in advance and treated as income of the current year.

Allocation of Expenditure

Throughout the financial statements, where it is necessary to allocate staff or other costs over objective heads (i.e. Museum Services, Library Services, Educational Services, etc.) this has been done on the assessment of the Director.

Pensions

During the year to 31 March 2025 pension provision was made for 11 employees by membership of a Pension Trust Scheme which is principally a defined contribution pension scheme. All employees who are not in the scheme are offered pension auto-enrolment into the scheme where applicable. Employer's contributions of £13,863 have been charged to staff costs as incurred. The Scheme has a limited guarantee on losses under the scheme for those members of staff who transferred to it. This has led to small additional amounts in respect of a deficit being recovered from the Society.

Some years prior to the year ended on 31 March 2017 the Society ceased to be a scheme employer in the Wiltshire Pension Fund and, as stated in the 2012 report, entered into an agreement with Wiltshire Council to reimburse the deficit by payment of £21,000 for each year up to and including December 2031. Full provision of the liability was originally made in the accounts to 31 March 2016 for the amounts payable to December 2031, discounted at 5% per annum over the payment period. An amount of £6,403 was charged in the accounts to 31 March 2025 (£7,114 (2024) and £7,790 (2023)).

Reserves

The reserves at 31 March 2025 are allocated to Unrestricted Funds, Restricted Funds and Endowment Funds. Unrestricted Funds include Designated Funds.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

Going Concern

These financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The Trustees consider the use of the going concern basis of accounting appropriate as there are no material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt about the ability of the company to continue as a going concern.

The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Endowment Fund

The Endowment Fund is a charity established to raise and hold capital, the income from which will be used to support the activities of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society. The Company is the corporate trustee of the Fund which shares the Company's charity registration number. Under the terms of the Charity Registration the accounts of the Fund are included in the Company's accounts but, as a separate charity, these funds do not form part of the Company's assets. The investment income from the Endowment Fund is credited to the Unrestricted Funds.

The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Collections Trust

The Company is the Corporate Trustee of the Collections Trust which own the Collections. On 3 March 2004, the Charity Commission issued a Uniting Direction under Section 96(5) of the Charities Act 1993 stating that the Collections Trust shall be treated as forming part of the Company for the purposes of registration and accounting. The Direction points out that the Company will be the reporting charity and the Collections Trust will be the linked charity. However, *"the Company does not hold the endowment of the Collections Trust as corporate property. The Company is the trustee of the endowment and hold the property in trust. At no time can the endowment of the Collections Trust be considered an asset of the Company"*.

Accounts for the Collections Trust have been set up within the Company's books and separate bank accounts have been established. Acquisitions for the collections are made by the Collections Trust. The Collections Trust Accounts are included as a separate schedule with these financial statements.

WILTSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
1 Income from Donations and Legacies						
Membership Subscriptions		46,687	-	-	46,687	45,781
Donations and Tax Refunds		38,709	-	-	38,709	34,745
Legacies		-	55,847	10,000	65,847	5,000
<u>Income transferred by Old Society</u>						
Sandell Trust		38,301	-	-	38,301	32,940
		123,697	55,847	10,000	189,544	118,466

Income from Donations and Legacies for Unrestricted Funds includes £50 (2024 £50) for Designated Funds.

2 Income from Charitable Activities						
Grants and Contributions	3	304,173	-	-	304,173	288,626
Admissions		35,692	-	-	35,692	39,676
Exhibitions Commissions		11,032	-	-	11,032	5,237
Education Receipts		7,069	-	-	7,069	10,565
		357,966	-	-	357,966	344,104

3 Income from Grants and Contributions						
AIM/HF Lest we Forget		-	-	-	-	13,890
Cardiff University		-	-	-	-	-
Cauldrons - Broomsgrove		556	-	-	556	-
Community Curator Projects		13,345	-	-	13,345	1,750
Community Kick Start Project		-	-	-	-	1,500
Devizes Assize Court Trust		214,160	-	-	214,160	153,895
Devizes Area Tourism		1,257	-	-	1,257	-
Devizes Town Council		8,000	-	-	8,000	29,000
National Heritage - Walround		-	-	-	-	6,998
National Lottery Community		-	-	-	-	-
Police & Commissioner for Wiltshire & Swindon		4,453	-	-	4,453	-
Stonehenge Avebury Bus		5,153	-	-	5,153	-
Swire Foundation		-	-	-	-	20,000
Wessex Museum Partnership		30,787	-	-	30,787	43,600
Wessex Museum Partnership - Piper Exhibition		6,000	-	-	6,000	-
Wessex Museum Partnership - Queer in Wiltshire		3,050	-	-	3,050	-
Wiltshire Community Foundation		3,000	-	-	3,000	-
Wiltshire Council		12,780	-	-	12,780	12,780
Sundry Contributions for Projects		1,632	-	-	1,632	5,213
		304,173	-	-	304,173	288,626

4 Grants carried forward					2025 £	
Cardiff University					3,000	
National Lottery Community					16,574	
Wessex Museum Partnership - Piper Exhibition					30,000	
Wessex Museum Partnership					-	
Wiltshire Community Foundation					3,270	
Sundry Contributions for Projects					-	
					52,844	

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total 2025	Total 2024
		£	£	£	£	£
5 Income from Other Trading Activities						
Shop Sales	6	27,376	-	-	27,376	32,904
Other Sales		-	-	-	-	-
Museum Income		29,496	792	-	30,288	27,326
Fund-raising Events		47	-	-	47	2,165
		56,919	792	-	57,711	62,395
6 Shop Sales						
Shop sales		27,376	-	-	27,376	32,904
Less Purchase cost		12,341	-	-	12,341	22,732
Gross Profit		15,035	-	-	15,035	10,172
Gross Profit % on sales					54.92%	30.91%
7 Investment Income						
Income from Investments		10,015	7,335	14,540	31,890	35,681
		10,015	7,335	14,540	31,890	35,681
8 Expenditure on Raising Funds						
<u>Cost of Sales</u>						
Shop		12,341	-	-	12,341	22,732
Salaries		17,565	-	-	17,565	10,668
Members' services		3,535	-	-	3,535	3,444
Marketing		765	-	-	765	5,436
Fundraising costs		20,307	-	-	20,307	11,926
Investment management costs		2,281	1,670	3,152	7,103	7,188
Support costs		3,184	-	-	3,184	5,172
		59,978	1,670	3,152	64,800	66,566
9 Expenditure on Charitable Activities						
Museum Services		302,421	2,400	-	304,821	236,443
Library Services		46,028	-	-	46,028	38,381
Educational work		37,505	-	-	37,505	39,991
WANHM		6,584	-	-	6,584	16,547
Support and governance costs		239,745	18,855	-	258,600	247,423
		632,283	21,255	-	653,538	578,785

Expenditure on Charitable Activities for Unrestricted Funds includes £15,966 (2024 £16,455) for Designated Funds.

Support and governance costs include audit fees of £8,000 (2024 - £7,200)

	Total 2025	Total 2024
	£	£
10 Staff costs		
Wages and Salaries	316,367	259,497
Social Security costs	21,798	15,102
Pension costs	23,520	21,427
	361,685	296,026

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

	2025	2024
	£	£
Staff costs attributable to activities :		
Cost of raising funds	17,565	10,668
<u>Charitable activities:</u>		
Museum	233,056	175,603
Library	31,398	29,720
Education	31,300	31,717
Governance	48,366	48,318
	<u>361,685</u>	<u>296,026</u>

In 2025 £163,973 of staff costs were funded from grants for projects (2024: £77,998).

Pension costs include £6,403 (2024: £7,113) relating to charges for deficits in previous years.

During the year £21,000 (2024: £21,000) was paid towards the liability for the Wiltshire Council Pension deficit (see note 20).

One employee received emoluments for the period exceeding £60,000.

Key management personnel which consist of the Trustees and the Director were paid a total of £61,633 (2024: £61,633).

This amount is gross of employer's contributions towards pension and National Insurance.

The average number of employees in 2024/25 was 6 full time and 7 part time (2024: 4 full time and 7 part time), including staff employed on the Assizes for Devizes project..

11 Trustees' Expenses

No trustee either received or waived any emoluments for acting as Trustee during the year.

Trustees' expenses totalling £0 (2024 £0) were paid during the year

12 Transactions with Related Parties

There were no transactions with related parties during the year 2025 (2024 - £0).

13 Operating Leases

Payments for operating leases for a telephone system and for a photocopier amounted to £4,094 (2024 £3,850) during the year. Minimum lease payments are payable as follows:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Not later than one year	4,094	4,094
Later than one year and not later than five years	8,424	12,518
	<u>12,518</u>	<u>16,612</u>

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Main Portfolio £	Endowment Portfolio £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
14 Gains/(losses) on investment assets						
Realised gains/(losses)	(697)	(511)	(1,208)	(1,820)	(3,028)	(11,218)
Unrealised gains/(losses)	(1,231)	(901)	(2,132)	5,694	3,562	68,928
	<u>(1,928)</u>	<u>(1,412)</u>	<u>(3,340)</u>	<u>3,874</u>	<u>534</u>	<u>57,710</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

15 Tangible Fixed Assets

	Freehold Land £	Freehold Buildings £	Fixtures, Fittings & Equipment £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Opening Cost at 1 st April	72,750	298,487	97,701	468,938	462,726
Addition - Amesbury Storage Facility	-	-	4,069	4,069	6,212
Closing Cost at 31 st March	<u>72,750</u>	<u>298,487</u>	<u>101,770</u>	<u>473,007</u>	<u>468,938</u>
Accumulated Depreciation at 1 st April	-	87,810	66,002	153,812	133,187
Charge in year	-	6,015	14,896	20,911	20,626
Accumulated Depr. at 31 st March	<u>-</u>	<u>93,825</u>	<u>80,898</u>	<u>174,723</u>	<u>153,813</u>
Closing Net Book Value at 31 st March	<u>72,750</u>	<u>204,662</u>	<u>20,872</u>	<u>298,284</u>	<u>315,125</u>

The freehold land and buildings transferred from the original unincorporated Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society (Charity no. 309534) in November 2003 were included in the balance sheet at book values. Other tangible fixed assets acquired or created since have been included at cost. The Trustees have decided not to apply a valuation to the property.

	Main Portfolio 2025 £	Endowment Portfolio 2025 £	Main Portfolio 2024 £	Endowment Portfolio 2024 £
16 Quoted Fixed Asset Investments				
Opening Market Value at 1 st April	707,615	495,486	731,781	460,659
Purchases	<u>22,624</u>	<u>85,286</u>	<u>110,653</u>	<u>96,028</u>
	730,239	580,772	842,434	556,687
Sales	<u>198,637</u>	<u>69,824</u>	<u>171,064</u>	<u>82,667</u>
	531,602	510,948	671,370	474,020
Net profits/(losses) :				
Realised	(1,208)	(1,820)	(5,042)	(6,176)
Unrealised	<u>(2,132)</u>	<u>5,694</u>	<u>41,287</u>	<u>27,642</u>
Closing Market value at 31 st March	<u>528,262</u>	<u>514,822</u>	<u>707,615</u>	<u>495,486</u>

	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
17 Debtors		
Trade Debtors	32,410	79,166
Prepayments	9,380	5,427
Grants and Donations receivable	34,092	25,341
Gift Aid refund receivable	-	-
VAT recoverable	7,299	10,501
Monies owed by the Collections Trust	-	-
Monies owed by the Old Society	2,740	2,740
	<u>85,921</u>	<u>123,175</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

18 Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Grants received in advance	52,844	18,116
Trade Creditors	18,230	69,154
Accruals	14,256	9,381
Taxes including NIC	5,792	4,967
Pension deficit (see note 20)	20,442	20,442
Prepaid membership subscriptions	-	121
Other income in advance	22,518	24,284
Monies owed to the Collections Trust	3,556	23,732
	137,638	170,197

19 Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year	99,656	114,253
Pension deficit (see note 20)	99,656	114,253

20 Pension Deficit

The Society has an agreement with Wiltshire Council to reimburse a deficit with the Wiltshire Pension Fund in relation to two former employees by payment of £21,000 for each year up and including December 2031. Full provision, subject to discounting at 5% over time from 31 March 2018 has been made in creditors. The charge for the year to 31 March 2025 for the discounted part of the provision was £6,403 (2024 £7,714).

21 Analysis of net assets between Funds

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
<i>Fund values at 31 March are represented by:</i>					
Tangible Fixed Assets	119,301	178,983	-	298,284	347,224
Managed Investments	422,797	110,511	524,897	1,058,205	1,506,489
Current Assets	132,825	126,384	450	259,659	155,230
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(137,638)	-	-	(137,638)	(111,814)
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year	(99,656)	-	-	(99,656)	(141,349)
	437,629	415,878	525,347	1,378,854	1,755,780

22 Endowment Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Income £	Investment expenses £	Gain on investments £	Inter-Fund Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
Endowment Trust Fund	511,473	24,540	(3,152)	3,874	(11,388)	525,347
<i>Income in the Endowment Trust Fund includes:</i>						£
Legacies			10,000			
Investment Income			14,540			
			24,540			

The Endowment Trust Fund is a separate charity, of which the Company is the corporate trustee. It is established to raise capital, the income from which will be paid to the Company for its general use. The funds are invested separately and do not form part of the Company's fixed assets.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

23 Restricted Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Income £	Investment income £	Expenses (incl. investment expenses) £	Gain on investments £	Inter- Fund Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
English Heritage Fund	7,728	-	142	(32)	(27)	-	7,811
Legacies and Donations	143,504	55,847	3,244	(739)	(624)	-	201,232
Oexmann Fund	15,689	792	274	(2,463)	(53)	-	14,239
Amesbury Storage Facility	195,850	-	3,427	(19,635)	(660)	-	178,982
Wiltshire Environment Gallery	13,470	-	248	(56)	(48)	-	13,614
	376,241	56,639	7,335	(22,925)	(1,412)	-	415,878

Income in the restricted funds includes:

	£
Legacies	55,847
Grants	-
Other trading activities	792
	56,639

The restricted funds may only be used for specific purposes :

Amesbury Storage Facility	Storage facility for archaeology archives deposited after 2021.
English Heritage Fund	To finance specific publications and projects.
Legacies and Donations	Legacies and donations received for use in future projects
Oexmann Fund	To finance a biennial art exhibition.
Wiltshire Environment Gallery	This fund was originally set up to cover the cost of Museum refurbishments to create a new Environmental Gallery. Discussions are proceeding to enable the Society to use some or all this money for the refurbishment of the office suite and the purchase of essential equipment.

These fund balances at 31 March 2025 are held as part of the Company's overall assets and cash at bank. Investment returns have been allocated pro-rata to the average balance of individual funds in the year to 31 March 2025.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

24 Unrestricted Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Donations and Legacies £	Other Income (incl. investment income) £	Expenses (incl. investment expenses) £	Gain on investments £	Inter- Fund Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
<u>Designated funds:</u>							
Improvement Fund	14,594	-	268	(61)	(52)	-	14,749
Library Fund	3,880	151	70	(344)	(13)	-	3,744
Archaeological Field Group	2,975	-	826	(232)	-	-	3,569
Programme Committee	18,181	-	334	(76)	(64)	-	18,375
Publications Fund	25,958	-	477	(109)	(92)	-	26,234
Ready to Borrow Applied	38,347	-	-	-	-	-	38,347
Shearing Library Fund	87,825	-	1,524	(10,297)	(293)	-	78,759
The Crofton Story	429	-	8	(2)	(2)	-	433
Wiltshire Life	223,034	-	4,050	(6,422)	(780)	-	219,882
	415,223	151	7,557	(17,543)	(1,296)	-	404,092
Other unrestricted funds	156,610	76,860	464,029	(674,718)	(632)	11,388	33,537
	571,833	77,011	471,586	(692,261)	(1,928)	11,388	437,629

The purpose of the designated funds (which may be changed by the Company's Board of Trustees and which remain part of the unrestricted funds) is currently:

Archaeology Field Group	To finance archaeological activity.
The Crofton Story	Income from the sale of this publication.
Improvement Fund	Established by the original Society to finance improvements to the Museum.
Library Fund	To finance items of library conservation and management.
Programme Committee	To finance members' events.
Publications Fund	To finance publications (the expenditure is the cost of a write down in the value of stocks).
Ready to Borrow Applied	The balance represents capital expenditure funded by Ready to Borrow Grant and contributions used to defray the depreciation costs of new tangible fixed assets over their useful life.
Shearing Library Fund	To finance the cost of employing a part-time Librarian and small library equipment purchases.
Wiltshire Life	To finance the care and development of the Wiltshire Life Society Collections. The expenditure consists of direct costs and does not include curatorial charges.

Allocation of expenditure from Designated Funds is reviewed regularly. The timing of expenditure is over a period which matches requirements of each purpose, potentially over a number of years. These fund balances at 31 March 2025 are held as part of the Company's overall assets and cash at bank. Investment returns have been allocated pro-rata to the average balance of individual funds in the year to 31 March 2025.

COLLECTIONS TRUST - Linked Charity Number 1080096
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2025 Total	2024 Total
	£	£	£	£
Income and Endowments from:				
Donations and legacies	2,889	-	2,889	8,879
Charitable activities:				
Grants	6,300	-	6,300	-
Sale	-	-	-	-
	<u>9,189</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>9,189</u>	<u>8,879</u>
Expenditure on charitable activities:				
Acquisitions costing less than £1,000				
Museum	9,998	-	9,998	3,233
Library	-	-	-	8,355
	<u>9,998</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>9,998</u>	<u>11,588</u>
Costs				
Sundry	-	-	-	-
	<u>9,998</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>9,998</u>	<u>11,588</u>
Net income/(expenditure)	<u>(809)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(809)</u>	<u>(2,709)</u>
Balance at 1 April 2024 brought forward	62,074	4,252	66,326	69,035
Balance at 31 March 2025 carried forward	<u><u>61,265</u></u>	<u><u>4,252</u></u>	<u><u>65,517</u></u>	<u><u>66,326</u></u>

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 March 2025

Heritage Assets		
Opening Balance at 1 April	48,741	48,741
Acquisitions over £1,000	-	-
Closing Balance at 31 March	<u><u>48,741</u></u>	<u><u>48,741</u></u>
Current Assets		
Cash in Bank	16,776	17,465
Intercompany Debtors	-	120
	<u><u>16,776</u></u>	<u><u>17,585</u></u>
Liabilities		
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	-	-
Net current assets	<u><u>16,776</u></u>	<u><u>17,585</u></u>
Total assets less current liabilities	<u><u>65,517</u></u>	<u><u>66,326</u></u>

The Funds of the Trust	Balance at 1 April 2024	Income, Grants & Donations	Inter Fund Transfers	Expenditure	Balance at 31 March 2025
	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted Funds - Museum and Art	62,074	9,189	-	9,998	61,265
Restricted Funds	4,252	-	-	-	4,252
	<u><u>66,326</u></u>	<u><u>9,189</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>9,998</u></u>	<u><u>65,517</u></u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2025

Museum and Art Collections: The collections fall within the definition of heritage assets for the purposes of the Charities SORP.

Accounting Policies:

1. No value has been placed on the collections held prior to 1 April 2005. To establish a value would involve significant costs, onerous compared to the additional benefit derived by the users of the financial statements.
2. The Trustees have adopted a policy whereby acquisitions costing less than £1,000 are not capitalised but are written off in the year of purchase.
3. Acquisitions costing in excess of £1,000 are capitalised and stated at cost as heritage assets.
4. No depreciation is provided on heritage assets as all are deemed to have indefinite lives.

Policies for acquisition, disposal and conservation of heritage assets meet Accreditation Standard, which has been awarded by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), and have been approved by the Board of Trustees.

Summary of Transactions:

	Year to:				
	31.03.2025	31.03.2024	31.03.2023	31.03.2022	31.03.2021
	£	£	£	£	£
Cost of acquisitions of heritage assets	-	-	-	-	2,470
Value of assets acquired by donation and not reported in the Balance Sheet					
Carrying amount of heritage assets disposed of and proceeds received					
Cost of assets written off in year of purchase as per accounting policy	9,998	11,588	1,848	3,530	1,370

MINUTES OF THE 25th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE COMPANY

held on Sunday 12 November 2024, commencing at 3.00 pm
at Wiltshire Museum, Devizes

01/24 Present

Trustees: Ms Caroline Kay (Chair), Mr Chris R Kelly (Hon Treasurer), Ms Claire Dobbin, Mrs Chris Gay, Mrs Nicola Harris, Dr Alison Hems, Mrs Ruth Kerr, Ms Katie Marsden, Ms Grace Payne-Kumar, Mr Iain Wallis, Mr Peter Wragg and 31 members of the Society.

In Attendance

David Dawson (Director) and Karen P Jones (Minute Taker and Company Secretary).

02/24 Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from: Richard Cardiff (Trustee), Peter Henden, Earl Kerry and Martin Nye.

03/24 Chair's Welcome

The Chair, Caroline Kay, welcomed members to the Annual General Meeting of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society (Company limited by Guarantee). She had been elected Chair by the Board of Trustees in September 2024, as Martin Nye stepped down at the end of his term of office in March 2024. Dr Alison Hems, Deputy Chair had stepped into the role between March and September. The new Chair thanked both Martin and Alison for their service to the Board. Caroline outlined her background, which included fundraising and delivering major capital projects for cultural organisations. She was CEO of Bath Preservation Trust, for whom she worked for 14 years and latterly has been busy on various committees for the National Trust and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. She has spent much of her spare time and interest exploring archaeological sites as both a visitor and occasionally as a participant in excavations. As she said in her application letter 'I believe that I can add value to this important and already well-led institution at a time of significant change. I am passionate about the significance and interest of your collections and the need to ensure their maximum appreciation by the widest public'.

The meeting acknowledged those members of the Society who had died since the last AGM,

Mr Les Antrobus, Mr Ewart Baldwin, Mr John Bush (WANHS Patron), Mr Michael Darby, Prof Timothy Darvill, Mr Chris Gingell, Mr J M Graham, Ms Brigid Harpham, Mr R W Knight, Mr Michael Smith, Mr Anthony Thombs. In addition, Mr Michael Corfield, Mr Jeff Ody (a former Trustees) and Mrs Marianne Walker were remembered.

Note: these names are those notified to the Membership Secretary; the Society apologises for any omissions.

04/24 Minutes of meeting held Sunday 12 November 2023

Proposed by Peter Saunders and seconded by John Baumber, the minutes of the AGM held on 12 November 2023 were adopted as a true record of the meeting. The resolution was passed (one abstention).

05/24 Board of Trustees' Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024**i) Report by the Chair**

As the Chair had not been in office for any part of the financial year under review the new Chair paraphrased the overview in the Annual Report from the previous Chair, Martin Nye.

The most momentous event in the year was the grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund of a large Development Grant to allow the Museum to develop in more detail and depth both the capital project at the Assize Court and the accompanying activity programme that would bring the project to life. The project had been under discussion for some time and the grant provided external affirmation of the project, as well as a cash injection!

She highlighted that one of the challenges for a small organisation taking on a large project was not to be derailed by it and that it was clear from the Annual Report that the 'day-job' of the Museum had continued with many activities across research, education, exhibitions, our collections and digital access.

Financially the accounts were in a better position. The Chair remarked that the members continued to be a vital and significant part of our income stream and donations and legacies also made their essential and generous role in continuing to underpin the Society. We are most grateful to members, donors and legators for their generous and valued support.

ii) Report by the Treasurer

Chris Kelly presented his report highlighting the financial situation with a series of slides.

As in previous years the Hon Treasurer highlighted the finances of the Society in a series of charts, highlighting the financial results for 2024, a review of investments and challenges. Members were invited to contact him if they required more information.

The Society had generated income of £561,000, and expenses had totalled £646,000. However, with gains on investments there had been a modest 'loss' of £27,000 in the financial year. The Treasurer had analysed income streams, which showed that in most areas income had remained similar to previous years, but, excluding expenditure on the Assizes for Devizes Project, the increase in expenditure was mostly due to inflation, including in the payroll budget, which accounted for approximately 50% of costs.

The investments, managed by Rathbones, continued to meet expectations, and also to provide income to the Society when required.

The challenges remained the same as in previous years: to overcome constrained resources, to continue to maximise existing revenue streams, to develop and grow new revenue opportunities, to reduce reliance on revenue that we can not influence and to leverage the Society's assets – people, collections and facilities. It was envisaged that the potential would come with the completion of the Assizes for Devizes project.

The Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 are available from the Museum's website or Museum Office.

iii) Report by the Director

The Director highlighted the many activities undertaken in 2023/24 and looked forward to activities taking place during the 2024/25 financial year, particularly the people involved.

A Halloween event has been organised and run by the Youth Panel and the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History magazine, published annually, highlighted local archaeology and historic research. Dr Stuart Brookes and Peter Saunders were thanked for all their work in ensuring the publication was printed and continued to be a well regarded volume. The Wiltshire Archaeology Field Group had been busy at Seend excavating a brick kiln.

Exhibitions in the year included *A Love Letter to Wiltshire: an exhibition of paintings by Joanna May, Wessex – Landscapes of Association – an exhibition of works by Rob Pountney, Eric Walrond: a Caribbean Writer in Wiltshire* and *Lest We Forget: the Black Contribution to the World Wars in Wiltshire*.

Eric Walrond was born in the Caribbean, but was part of the Harlem renaissance in 1920s New York. He moved to England before World War II, lived in Bradford on Avon during the 1940s and also spent a few years in Roundway Hospital, Devizes. A portrait was commissioned from Clifton Powell, funded by the Art Fund. The exhibition was also shown in Bradford on Avon. The *Lest We Forget* exhibition highlighted the service of Black people from the Commonwealth and was also displayed at Lydiard House, Swindon. A small element of the exhibition, with a connection to Marlborough, would be displayed at the Merchant's House, Marlborough. A banner in the exhibition, telling the story of Albert Jarrett who had fought in the war and then founded a charity, had been created by the Nepali ladies group from Tidworth and had been taken into our collection.

In complete contrast was *Wessex Airscapes: Elevating Wiltshire*, a collaborative exhibition between aerial photographer Hedley Thorne and landscape painter Anna Dillon, exploring aerial landscapes. Their respective art forms offered a complementary and contemporary take on the landscape of Wessex.

Highlights of the collections included the conservation and display of the Wilcot hoard of Roman vessels, the purchase of a scale model of Springfield House, Potterne Road, Devizes (which would be used to tell the story of the architecture of the town), and the conservation of a presentation volume, given to a former WANHS Secretary, the Rev A C Smith, by members of WANHS on the occasion of his daughter's marriage in 1884. It had been rescued from a skip, and following a fundraising campaign for its conservation, had been displayed as part of our 150 year anniversary in September. The library continued to acquire books, often donated by authors who had carried out research on the collections. Rounding off the financial year was the Archaeology in Wiltshire conference, which continued to be very popular.

Highlights of the 2024/25 year to date included the carnival procession of two banners created by local people, aimed at tackling loneliness. The new Devizes MP, Brian Mathew, had joined the procession. The banners were now in the Museum's collection. Consultation work on the Assizes for Devizes project was well underway with mini-exhibitions and events highlighting the plans and what we wanted to do. Working with Wessex Archaeology and prisoners at Erlestoke Prison, the Museum had assisted with the project and a mini-exhibition of finds - called *Digging*

for Erlestoke – a community dig with a difference - had been displayed in the library Long Room. The exhibition *A Wiltshire Thatcher – a Photographic Journey through Victorian Wessex*, highlighted the album discovered by Brian Edwards containing the original image used on a Led Zeppelin album cover and the work of the photographer Ernest Farmer. The album and exhibition attracted worldwide publicity, and the T-shirts proved very popular in Japan! The 2024 volume of the *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine* contained many interesting articles, including one about a meteorite discovered at Lake House. The Director had recently recorded a video for the Gen Z audience, which had received thousands of views and comments about how mad we were!

Over the last couple of weeks there had been a large range of events, from holiday activities for under 11s, activities linked to the Assizes for Devizes project, to a conference about White Horses and Hill Figures of Southern England, held at the Corn Exchange. The Director thanked his colleagues, supporters, Trustees, volunteers and members for all their support, without which most of what we did would not happen!

Member, Peter Saunders also thanked the Director for being the driving force behind all this activity. Dr Colin Shell also advised that the Director's contribution on the WHS management committee had been invaluable. The Chair also thanked the Director and his team for their work too.

Proposed by Peter Saunders and seconded by Colin Thomas the meeting approved the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024, together with the Auditors Report. The resolution was passed *nem con*.

06/24 Election of Trustees

There were three nominations for three new vacancies and three trustees to be re-elected. All candidates had been proposed and seconded by the Board of Trustees and the meeting duly elected Caroline Kay, Grace Payne-Kumar and Peter Wragg and re-elected Claire Dobbin, Ruth Kerry and Katie Marsden, to the Board of Trustees

07/24 Appointment of Auditors

Proposed by Alan Sims and seconded by Colin Thomas, the meeting re-elected Messrs David Owen & Co as Auditors, and authorised the Trustees to determine their remuneration.

08/24 Special Business

Following agreement by the Charity Commission it was proposed that the WANHS Article of Association be updated, principally to allow the senior member of staff (currently the Director, David Dawson), to be appointed to the WANHS Board of Trustees. Details of the change had been circulated to all members and the proposed new Articles published on the Wiltshire Museum website prior to the AGM.

Proposed by John Surowiez and seconded by John Baumber the Articles of Association of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society (WANHS - Charity no. 1080086/Company no. 3885649) were approved and adopted as the new Articles of Association, in substitution for and to the entire exclusion of any articles of association for WANHS previously registered with the Charity Commission or the Registrar of Companies.

The resolution was passed by a majority. There had been one vote against and two abstentions received by proxy vote.

09/24 Any Other Business

The meeting was opened to members but no items were raised.

In closing the Chair awarded Honorary Life Membership to Brian Edwards who had been actively involved in research and fundraising for the Museum over many years.

She also thanked the Board of Trustees, Director and his staff and members for their ongoing support and enthusiasm.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 3.52 pm.

The meeting was followed by an update on the Assizes for Devizes project by the Director, David Dawson

Date of next Meeting: 16 November 2025, at Wiltshire Museum, Devizes, Wiltshire



Above: 'Stonehenge Landscape – a Favourite Walk of Kate Fielden', by Mark Wickham, 2024.
Painted in Kate's memory and donated by members of the Stonehenge Alliance (2025.1001), see page 18

Below: 'Stonehenge from the East' by Ernest Farmer, see page 13

