

Herefordshire Museum Service Support Group

Registered Charity (CIO) No.1171756



ANNUAL REPORT April 2021 – March 2022

Trustees' Report

2021/22 saw a welcome return to 'business as usual' as restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic were lifted. The Black and White House Museum opened in April 2021 and Hereford Museum and Art Gallery on 18 May 2021. The staff are to be congratulated on delivering a substantial programme of exhibitions and events throughout the year. Some exhibition highlights are noted later in this report.

Throughout 2021/22 HMSSG prioritised (i) lobbying Herefordshire Council (HC) to develop a sustainable strategy for the Museum Service, (ii) supporting their outline plans for redevelopment and (iii) providing practical support to the service, principally through planning work to acquire the Herefordshire hoard.

Significant progress has been made towards HMSSG's original aims to support the development of a sustainable Museum Service for the county. In May 2021 it became clear that the long-cherished project to redevelop Hereford Museum and Art Gallery will be taken forward. Thanks are due to the Stronger Towns Board for recognising the potential cultural and economic benefits of this project which has cross-party support within the Council and from community groups across the county.



Celebrating the news of the museum redevelopment project: May 2021.

2021/22 was also a year of behind the scenes planning for the acquisition of the Herefordshire hoard. HMSSG were partners in this successful campaign which raised over £750,000 from grants and donations needed to acquire these treasures for the county collections. While the campaign ran from April–August 2022 HMSSG trustees and committee dedicated significant voluntary time, skills and experience to this project from summer 2021.

Trustees and Committee members

The 2021 – 2022 trustees were Jane Adams (Chair), Christy Bolderson (Treasurer) and Jacqueline Addis.

The HMSSG constitution allows for between three and eleven trustees with a normal term of service of three years. All three trustees were initially appointed in 2018 and were re-elected for a further three-year term in 2021. The trustees remain committed to the need for HMSSG, or an equivalent charitable organisation, to enable Herefordshire's Museum Service to run in an effective and efficient manner suited to the conditions of the twenty-first century. They are all willing to serve for 2022/23.

All the trustees are members of the committee. The following committee members also served during the year: Denise North (appointed September 2021), Susan Edwards (appointed November 2021), Chris Bucknell (appointed February 2022), Ian Lewis (appointed March 2022). All Committee members have agreed to continue to serve for the year 2022/23.

Jules North supported the Committee with website and social media until 28 November 2021.

HMSSG's objectives

HMSSG is a registered charity which works to support and develop the Museum Service, which comprises the County's History and Art Collections held in trust for Herefordshire's people; the Museum and Art Gallery in Broad Street; the Museum Resource and Learning Centre where the collections are stored; the Black and White House Museum in High Town; and the professional staff team.

Charitable Objects: 1. *To advance the education of the public by supporting the maintenance and development of Herefordshire county museum and art collections and promoting public access to those collections.*
2. *To advance the arts, culture, heritage and science... by promoting public appreciation and understanding of the archaeology, history, heritage, culture, natural science and visual arts of Herefordshire through those collections, and related use, preservation, curation, interpretation, exhibitions and activities.*

Redevelopment of Herefordshire Museum and Art Gallery

In January 2021 Herefordshire Council approved an outline project for the redevelopment of Hereford Museum and Art Gallery in Broad Street as a dedicated museum and art gallery for the county collections. An associated project to move Hereford City Library to Maylord Orchard was also approved. Some eighteen months later, in June 2022, Herefordshire Council approved the second stage business case and confirmed that it would fund £8m of the projected £18m capital sum needed for the museum redevelopment. A grant of £5m is expected to come from the Stronger Towns Project with a further £5m from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

HMSSG wrote letters of support for the redevelopment project for inclusion in bids to these grant funders and has made clear our public support for the project.

In August 2022 outline plans were placed in the public domain and a process for public engagement and consultation began. The project timeline indicates the building will close in spring/summer 2023 and reopen in spring 2025.

Historic features of the building, including the façade and the Woolhope Room, will be retained but the design will also incorporate new features including a rooftop terrace and a flexible education/events space seating up to eighty people. Gallery space will be increased allowing for enhanced permanent displays as well as temporary exhibitions. Indicative designs denote the ground floor foyer will be opened up to provide a welcoming café, shop and reception area. See Herefordshire Council website <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/hereford-2020/5>

Herefordshire Hoard

HMSSG has been a vital partner in the successful campaign to acquire the Herefordshire Hoard. HMSSG was able to apply for grants not available to Herefordshire Council, to claim Gift Aid on donations and to write letters of support for the campaign. Particular thanks go to Denise North and Christy Bolderson for all their hard work in delivering HMSSG's responsibilities on this project.

HMSSG committee and membership also played a key role in the delivery of community events around the county. Significant volunteer effort was essential in supporting the small professional team. This project demonstrated the tangible benefits of a charitable support group. HMSSG will continue to deliver these benefits to the Museum Service in the coming year as well as participating in discussions on the most appropriate model for a support group for the future service.



Judy Stevenson (Museum Team Leader) and Julia Radburn (Museum Supervisor) surrounded by the team of volunteers and staff who helped out at Viking Day.

HMSSG Financial Statement for 2021/22

Financial Accounts 2021/2022		Cash at 1/4/21		Actual 2020/2021		Cash at 31/3/22	
Hereford Museum Services Support Group (HMSSG)				Income		Net	
Restricted Activity				Expenditure			
Maintenance & development of museum and art collection							
Revenue Development		170.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	170.00
Promotion of public access to collections							
Website Development		(30.00)		30.00	0.00	30.00	0.00
Lego Exhibition		365.95		0.00	0.00	0.00	365.95
Advance arts, culture, heritage & science appreciation and understanding							
Donations received in Museum Collections		1,891.89		433.47	-800.00	(366.53)	1,525.36
Unrestricted Activity		2,519.20		320.00		(476.31)	
Subscriptions				320.00	(1.84)	318.16	
Gift Aid				0.00	(433.47)	(433.47)	
Website Fee (pre-paid 2018-2020)				0.00	(235.00)	(235.00)	
Printing & Postage				0.00	(126.00)	(126.00)	
Profit / Loss				783.47		(1,596.31)	
Total Balance Sheet Reserves		4,917.04				4,104.20	

Other activities and support for the Museum Service

GIFT AID and processing of public donations

HMSSG's charitable status brings direct financial benefits to the Museum Service. Donations by visitors to boxes in the gallery spaces are processed by HMSSG so that Gift Aid can be claimed and thus increase funds available to support the collections. Donations from visitors fell in the year as the galleries were only open for a few months. In 2021/22 all donations received were for the general collections.



Recognition of HMSSG's achievements

We are delighted to report that HMSSG has been shortlisted for an Achievement Award in the annual scheme run by BAfM (British Association of Friends of Museums). This is in recognition of our partnership work on the 'Bring the hoard home' campaign. Details of shortlisted schemes will be published in the BAfM journal.

Membership, communications and events for members

We are very grateful to loyal members whose support is vital to enable the charity to continue to operate.

A written Annual Report and Accounts for 2020/21 was distributed to members in September 2021 in advance of the AGM held on zoom on 29 November 2021. The trustees also issued regular newsletters to members. Sadly most talks and events were suspended due to ongoing restrictions. A socially-distanced guided tour of Susan Edward's exhibition 'Local Heroes' went ahead.

AGM 13 September 2022 2pm

The HMSSG AGM will be held at 2pm on Tuesday 13 September 2022 at MRLC, Friar Street, Hereford HR4 0AS. AGM papers and this Annual Report will be sent to members by email and be available at <https://herefordshiremuseumsupport.org.uk>.

HMSSG Trustees: Jane Adams, Jacqueline Addis, Christy Bolderson, August 2022

Herefordshire Museum Service: some highlights of 2021/22

Museum service staffing levels

Herefordshire's county Museum Service has a skeleton staff who do an amazing job in caring for the collections, running three sites and putting on a varied programme throughout the year. In 2021/22 they were also working on two major projects. The indicative Whole Time Equivalent staff in various functions are.

Curatorial, exhibitions and collections	2.08
Museum front of house	1.96
Administration	0.13
Project Officer (shared across all MLA)	0.16
Total	4.33 FTE

The business model for the operation of the redeveloped museum indicates a significant increase in income and in staffing levels.

Volunteer support

Our thanks are due to the enthusiastic volunteers who regularly dedicate time to support the Museum Service.

Museums Reopening

Both the Black and White House Museum and the Museum and Art Gallery reopened in spring 2021. In common with many other visitor attractions audience levels did not return to pre-pandemic levels.

Audience numbers in Broad Street were severely reduced from October 2021 when a maximum limit of 10 visitors in the upstairs galleries was imposed for safety reasons and the lift taken out of action. These restrictions continue and will not be resolved until the redevelopment is complete.

2021/22 Exhibition programme at Hereford Museum and Art Gallery

Hereford's May Fair: celebrating 900 years	18 May to 23 June
Alfred Watkins (museum & Woolhope Club room)	19 June to 11 Sept.
'Round the year from Stonewall Hill: Mary Rennell and contemporary artists Richard Gilbert & Brian Griffiths	3 July to 21 Aug.
Susan Edwards 'Inspired by Local Heroes'	1 Sept. to 25 Sept.
Grayson Perry 'The Vanity of Small Differences'	8 Oct. to 18 Dec.

A reminder of some of the highlights of the year is below.

Celebrating 900 years of the Hereford May Fair

This exhibition was part of city-wide events marking this anniversary. Items on display included fairground objects on loan as well as photographs and memorabilia from the local collections. The colour and gaiety of the exhibits lifted everyone's spirits.



Visitors at the May Fair exhibition

Mary Rennell: Round the Year from Stonewall Hill

This show displayed some remarkable works by local artist Mary Rennell. Her masterwork (below) is a composite of twelve panels painted from right to left inspired by Chinese ink drawings on rice paper.



Mary Rennell's 'Round the Year from Stonewall Hill' displayed on the Gallery wall.

Curated by Hugh Fowler-Wright, the show brought together Rennell's work, on loan from the National Library of Wales, with new pieces by artist Richard Gilbert and photographer Brian Griffiths. The curators were on hand to explain their work and inspiration to the many visitors to this popular exhibition.



From left: Brian Griffiths, Richard Gilbert and Hugh Fowler-Wright

Alfred Watkins- a celebration

This multi-media exhibition which included objects, text panels, photographs and film was mounted in the Museum Gallery and the Woolhope Room to celebrate the life and work of Herefordshire polymath. The year marked the centenary of the publication of Watkins' controversial work on ley lines 'The old Straight Track'.

Ben Moule from the Museum Service and David Whitehead and Derek Foxton of the Woolhope Club collaborated in the preparation of displays. These included a first chance to see some rare film footage taken by Watkins.



Visitors in the Woolhope Room viewing some early film footage taken by Watkins

Susan Edwards, 'Inspired by Local Heroes '

Susan's successful selling exhibition of portraits and landscapes was mounted to coincide with h.Art week. Her work was accompanied by a selection of pieces from the Herefordshire collections by Dame Laura Knight, John Ward and David Cox. HMSSG members were treated to a private tour by Susan who explained why she admired the work of these artists and how they have inspired her.



The artist in the gallery with HMSSG members (left) and Zoe Rose (right)

Grayson Perry 'The Vanity of Small Differences'

The professionalism and dedication of the museum team and volunteers was called upon to ensure the successful delivery of this exhibition on loan from the Arts Council Collection. Following a fire assessment around the date of the opening, the lift was deemed to be unfit for use. Health and safety requirements meant that visitor numbers were restricted to a maximum of just 10 in the Museum and Art Gallery at any one time with 4 staff or volunteers needing to be on duty. Sadly the lack of lift access meant that the exhibition was not accessible to everyone.

There were frequent queues which sometimes meant waiting up to an hour for entry. The majority verdict of visitors was that it was well worth the wait.

A total of 4,066 people (3,655 adults and 411 children) visited. Income of around £20,000 was generated which was sufficient to cover the direct costs incurred.



Queuing in the foyer of the Museum and Art Gallery

The exhibition needed substantial volunteer input to run safely. Wendy Healey is one of those who generously gave her time to ensure that as many people as possible could see Perry's works.

An artist herself, Wendy took inspiration from the show to create this watercolour while attending to her duties as gallery guide.



Wendy Healey sketching in the exhibition (left). A page from Wendy's sketchbook (right)



The restriction on numbers in the gallery gave visitors space to enjoy the Grayson Perry show.



The film and information sheets available encouraged close study of the tapestries.

Herefordshire Gets Creative

The call out to the public to submit works inspired by Grayson Perry for inclusion in the accompanying show led to a wonderful response. Several of those who contributed work also volunteered as gallery stewards.



Rosie Merriman, a student at Hereford College of Art and volunteer gallery guide at the exhibition, is seen here with her submission. Rosie explained that this was inspired by Perry's tapestry depicting a deer being hunted by hounds. This led her to explore how our relationship with animals has changed over time; where once we depended on them for survival, today we take them for granted. Rosie created a hybrid animal that has been destroyed by human forces, but whose complex beauty is still worthy of celebration.

Ferrous: Forging Replicas and Artefacts- March 2022

The final exhibition to be held in the Art Gallery presented the practical culmination of a three year project led by Dr John Grayson and second year undergraduates at Hereford College of Arts. Students analysed a series of iron and steel artefacts in the Hereford Museum Resource Centre to identify methods of making and created replicas to develop tacit craft knowledge. Finally, the relevance of defunct objects and skills were explored by making a contemporary creative response. The exhibition presented historic items — an eel spear, a set of sugar-nippers or a rush light for example — with contemporary art, craft and design objects.

This will be the final exhibition in the Art Gallery before redevelopment.

	<h2 style="color: #0070C0;">400 years of the 'Old House'</h2> <p>2021 marked the 400th anniversary of the Black and White House.</p> <p>Activities were arranged throughout the year particularly to coincide with school holidays such as October half term. Access to the Museum was free on Heritage Open Day.</p>
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The anniversary was celebrated with a full day of talks held at the Museum Resource and Learning Centre. This brought together academics and local experts to explore the building's history and its remarkable survival and celebrate the value of its collections.

The conference opened with Dr Tara Hamling who explored 'Domestic life, rooms & furnishings in the first half of the 17th century'. Her talk was followed by Dr Kathryn Davies who spoke on 'The significance of wall paintings and what they tell us about the lives of ordinary people'.

In the afternoon Duncan James talked about 'Timber-Framed Treasures of the County and why we need them'. The final session by Elizabeth Pimblett explored the individuals who had lived and worked in the 'Old House'.

Looking ahead to 2022/23 and beyond

As we approach the halfway point of 2022/23, HMSSG celebrate our role in acquiring the Herefordshire Hoard for the county collections. Thank you to all who helped the campaign team achieve this.

Keep up to date with plans for the Hoard on the dedicated website.

Bring the hoard home...



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HOARD
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www.herefordshirehoard.org



The future for Herefordshire Museum Service is bright. HMSSG's priorities for the remainder of 2022/23 are to support and promote

- The development of a strategy for the Museum Service
- The redevelopment project for Herefordshire Museum and Art Gallery
- The development of a robust operational model for the service
- Development of the collections and access to them - including the Herefordshire Hoard.

Support HMSSG and the Museum Service

HMSSG needs to develop in order to offer the service effective support. Please help us to do that.

- Join as a member. Find us on <https://herefordshiremuseumsupport.org.uk/>
- More time and energy to contribute? Why not join the committee or find out about becoming a trustee. Contact Jane Adams on herefordmuseumgroup@gmail.com.



Produced by Jane Adams for Herefordshire Museum Service Support Group, August 2022