

THE SANDWICH MEDIEVAL TRUST



**ANNUAL REPORT
DECEMBER 2024**

THE SANDWICH MEDIEVAL TRUST

Registered Charity Number 1178864

TRUSTEES: Dave Batchelor, Julia Baxter, Paul Damon, Steve Laslett, Bob Martin, Lynne O'Donoghue. Website: www.sandwichmedieval.org

The Sandwich Medieval Trust was registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in June 2018 with the stated aim: "To advance education for the public benefit on matters to do with the late medieval period, i.e., approx. 1330 to 1480, with a special focus on the heritage of Sandwich Town, Kent, in particular but not exclusively by providing a maritime and land-based crafts living museum".

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Once more I am pleased and very proud to be able to report on a successful year led by our hard-working and knowledgeable team of volunteers.

Sandwich Town is significantly enhanced by having the Medieval Centre on the Quayside beside the River Stour. It is consistently visited by impressive numbers and tells the story of Sandwich as a major contributor to the history of medieval England.

Our Trust is an educational charity. Its remit is to bring to life the history of medieval Sandwich and keep alive a range of skills and crafts that could so easily be lost forever. I am happy to report that our team has once again succeeded in meeting that objective throughout 2024.

Our volunteers have opened the doors of the Centre every week throughout the year. We have accommodated a good number of school groups and educated medieval history in an engaging way. This includes oversees school groups who are re-booking on an annual basis.

Our reenactors have organised and delivered a very successful programme of outdoor and indoor events to engage with the public, both local and visiting. These included archery, a medieval banquet, one of the biggest reenactor encampment weekends in Southern England, and an ongoing series of workshops teaching medieval crafts and skills.

The Sandwich Medieval Centre itself makes an important contribution to the visitor experience in Sandwich. The visitor numbers and online follower numbers are impressive as shown graphically later in this report. Our contribution is enhanced by the project to create a full-sized replica medieval cog, a single masted, single sail boat, the *Nicholas*, typical of what would have been moored on the quayside around 600 years ago. Unfortunately, the *Nicholas* spent more time this year in dry dock being repaired than had been planned, meaning that

visitors could not appreciate the work in progress at first hand. The *Nicholas* is now back on its mooring beside the Centre, so the outlook for 2025 is good.

The Trust continues to be managed by the original six trustees supported by a steadily growing team of unpaid volunteers. We are grateful to them and of the significant amount of time they give so freely.

We are confident that our finances are sound and that the Trust has a programme in place to ensure a positive future.

The following sections of this annual report illustrate the above in more detail.

Steve Laslett – Chair of the Board of Trustees



Archery on the Quay Green

MARITIME



Evening on the quayside

The presence of the *Nicholas* on its mooring at Sandwich Quay generates a great deal of interest in the project and our work in the Centre. The hull is an asset to the quay area and will contribute to the development of the historic maritime ambience along the banks of the river Stour as envisaged by the Sandwich Heritage Harbour Group.

The main focus of our work during the past year has continued to be on the *Nicholas* project. To this end, we decided to have the *Nicholas* towed to a dry dock for a month, early in 2024, in order that we could complete the repairs to the deck and hull in an efficient and orderly way.

We arrived at the dry dock at Richborough Marine Limited, just upstream from Pegwell Bay on the river Stour, in mid-March and set about cleaning the hull in preparation for repainting.

We estimated that the hull repairs would take us about a month and we set about carrying out the preparatory work concurrently. In so doing, it became clear that the starboard side of the hull was in a much poorer state of repair than we had expected. We decided that approximately two-thirds of the hull planking above the waterline plus the perimeter shear plank would need to be replaced together with repairs and hardening to the exposed timber hull uprights as required.

These works were carried out by a dedicated team of between three and six trustees and volunteers over a period of eight months. The port side of the hull looked to be in a better state of repair and, accordingly, we decided not to carry out any large-scale repair works. By mid-November, we had completed the repair and repainting works and Alan Staley, our marine surveyor, certified that the *Nicholas* was in a fit state to be towed back to our mooring.



The Nicholas returns from dry dock to its quayside mooring

We have installed the windlass and the capstan at deck level. Our blacksmith has continued the fabrication of a second anchor on the forge in the Centre and hopes to be able to forge weld the anchor arms to the shank which will demonstrate the heating capabilities of a medieval forge.



Capstan installed at deck level



Anchor made at the Centre's forge

The fabric cover installed on a temporary timber framework to protect the deck and hull from inclement weather continues to be a great success; it provides sufficient headroom for us to be able to work underneath it in all weathers thus increasing our productivity during the winter and spring months. We will continue to invite members of the public on board on Saturdays and Sundays when the weather is good, using our gangplank, to view our progress.

Our aim from next year onwards will be to complete the repairs to deck and gunwale planking, to fabricate the fore and stern castles in the workshop and to install them on the hull. We also aim to modify the internal hull area to allow visitors to sample medieval life below deck. This will entail the construction of a timber bulkhead to hide the engine which will be carried out by one of our younger volunteers who is especially interested in carpentry. In time, we aim to erect a small section of mast in order that we can demonstrate how the rigging would have been configured and how the sail would have been raised and lowered using the windlass.

Paul Damon

SCHOOLS AND WORKSHOPS



French Students visiting the Centre

The Centre's Schools and Workshops programmes have continued to grow in popularity throughout the year.

Workshops



Workshops took place at the Centre throughout the year including Blacksmithing (continuing throughout the winter months), Baking, Bookbinding, Calligraphy, Illumination, Egg Tempera Painting, Wheat Weaving, Circular Netting, Mead Making and Tablet Weaving. There still remains a lot of interest for workshops for future dates.

Have-a-go crafts including Calligraphy and Wheat Weaving ran very well during the Archery & Crafts weekend in July and at the Sandwich Festival weekend in August, with many children and adults alike enjoying themselves whilst gaining interest in the range of workshops offered at the Centre.

The calligraphy tables (*see left*) were full both days with all ages, including those that have never tried but always wanted to others that had enjoyed this craft as a child and now were delighted to have another opportunity.

Quills were used to try writing a medieval book hand whilst learning a little of the work of the scribes, aided by reproduction examples and material on display. Visitors were very excited to complete a corn dolly with the Wheat Weaver, who patiently led them through the various stages of making a plait and some visitors stayed for the next opportunity of completing a heart favour.

School Visits



This year has seen a particular increase in student participation in our workshops, both locally and from overseas.

Students from the Spanish language school made a return visit on 22nd April 2024 to take part in a half-day of Calligraphy and Wheat Weaving hands-on workshops.

Two schools from France visited the Centre on 14th and 22nd May for hands-on crafts in Calligraphy and Wheat Weaving, Medieval Board Games and Blacksmith and Baking demonstrations. The schools and students thoroughly enjoyed themselves, particularly learning about medieval life and culture in another language and have booked for 2024 visits already.

A group of students from St. Faith's Preparatory School in Ash visited on 8th May for a couple of hours of demonstrations of our crafts and skills with 28 children. The children responded so well to the Medieval Games session that we have now included this to our list of topics for future visits.

Hope View School, Canterbury visited with eight SEN children on 21st May, for a three-hour visit including demonstrations and a Wheat Weaving hands-on workshop. The children were thoroughly engaged with what they were shown and participated extremely well.



The Centre's workshops appeal to all age groups

During July we had large numbers of language students from St. Andrews School in Canterbury. To cope with this increase in numbers, we divided into smaller and manageable groups and our team of volunteers did our best to entertain.

While we are committed to encouraging school groups, we are now having to limited numbers. On one day, for example, our visitor numbers exceeded 300 – far too large for the Centre's facilities. Baking Workshops are no longer being offered to schools from concern about limited space and hygiene issues.

Our workshops have also continued to appeal to the older age group, booking now done simply on the website. We look forward to another busy year as the success of this part of the Centre continues to flourish.

Julia Baxter



The Medieval Gaming Tables continue to be popular

RE-ENACTMENT



This summer's Le Weekend Medieval attracted over 100 reenactors

This year has been one of the best for events new and old with the traditional start to the year being our wassail event held at the Centre on the first Saturday in January. This event was co-organised with Bringing Alive Sandwich Heritage (BASH) and attracted many visitors to join in with the celebrations which included a story and performance walk through the local orchards and on to the Centre where participants had a cup of hot wassail and joined in with the performance and music.



The Hooden Horse at the Annual Wassailing Event

The next event held was a royal feast, the Boars Head Banquet. This was also co-organised with Bringing Alive Sandwich Heritage. The event was a celebration of Richard III's visit to Sandwich in 1484. A small team of cooks and food historians from the Medieval Centre set out to create an authentic medieval feast for over 100 guests including the Mayor and Mayoress of Sandwich and members of the Trust in the Guildhall.



Dancing in Sandwich Guildhall at the Boars Head Banquet in January

The evening began with a talk about Richard III and his visit to Sandwich given by best selling author, Toni Mount, to an over-subscribed audience in the historic Guildhall Court Room.

The whole evening was a great success with music, entertainment and a spread of the finest food enjoyed by all. The event raised £1,000 for the Trust.



Top Table at the Boars Head Banquet



Le Weekend Medieval

Without doubt, however, our biggest and best event of the year was Le Weekend Medieval held on Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th June on the Quay Green. This event attracted over 100 reenactors from more than ten different groups pitching up marquees and tents to create a massive encampment. From full combat demonstrations and an authentic 15th century samurai warrior to cooking demos, axe throwing, archery, music dancing and theatre, the event entertained thousands of visitors who thoroughly enjoyed the authentic atmosphere.



Samurai Swordsman



Live Music at the Centre

In July we turned the Centre into a medieval tavern for the Sandwich Folk and Ale weekend where we hosted two evenings of live music and mead tasting. Later that month we organised a weekend of archery and have-a-go activities on the Quay Green. Visitors were treated to medieval war-bow and longbow archery demonstrations and had the chance to try for themselves, along with several other medieval activities.

In August we supported the Sandwich Festival with medieval activities on the Quay Green and provided a bar for the Sunday evening picnic and musical entertainments.

In September we took part in Heritage Open days, a two-week national festival where we organise extra activities to encourage new visitors to the Centre. This year included extras such as the brilliant potter Rainna Erbas who gave visitors of all ages a chance to have a go at making medieval tiles and throwing a pot.

Cinque Port Speakers Day was held on the 5th October when the Medieval Centre played a major role. We worked closely with Sandwich Town Council to provide banners for the Quayside and reenactors for the procession.



Speakers Day 2024

In November we welcomed the newly appointed Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports to the Centre. Admiral Sir George Zambellas GCB, DSC, ADC, DL, and Lady Amanda Zambellas were given a tour of the Centre and chatted to all the reenactors, demonstrators and trustees.



The Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports and Lady Amanda Zambellas with trustees on a visit to the Centre



Medieval Christmas

In December a Christmas feast for all the reenactors and volunteers was held to celebrate a great year. This included a clout shoot at Cow Leas meadow in the morning followed by a marvellous feast cooked up by our impressive food historians. Hot wassail and mead were served along with ale and Christmas pudding handed out as prizes for the winners of the archery competition.



Re-enactors with Sandwich Mayor at the Christmas clout shoot.



Christmas celebration in the Centre.



Medieval Food at the Christmas Feast



This year we have joined the Wheels of Time Badge collecting scheme which encourages children aged 5 -11 years to visit new museums and heritage sites to learn about the local history. (See www.wheelsoftime.uk for details)

We have also been working with a Spanish writer and magazine editor and have been included in a guide book about medieval pilgrimages and had a magazine article published all about the Centre.

The Centre and its volunteers have also been involved with many other events throughout the year including have-a go-days, games events, heritage visits to other sites, television filming and demonstrating medieval games in London.

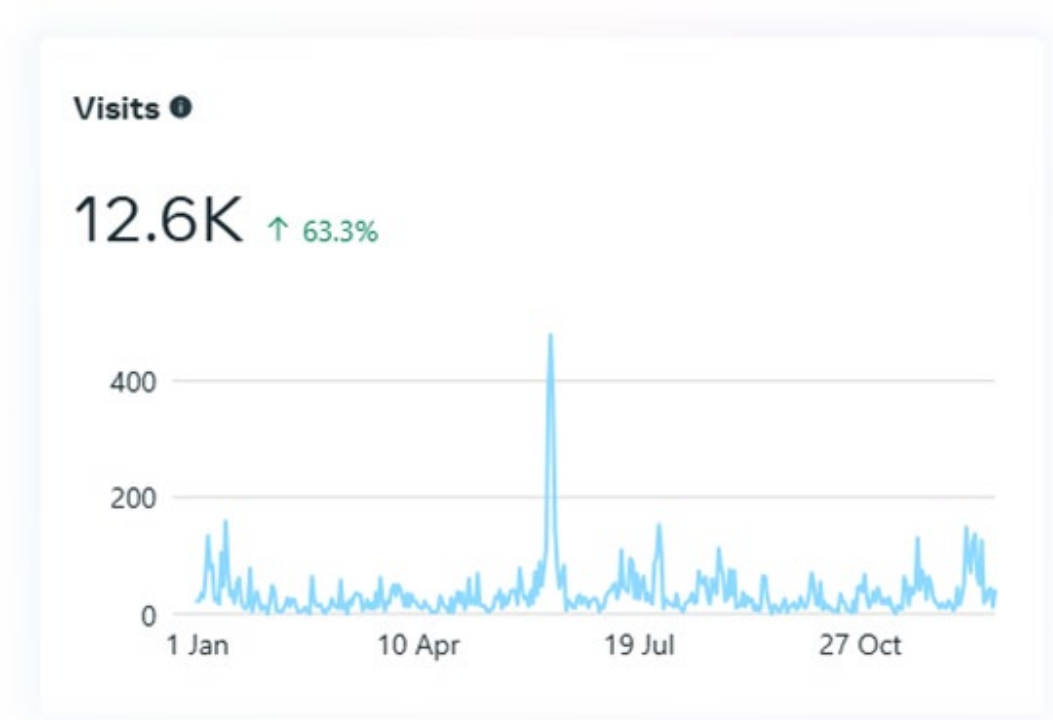
Dave Batchelor



SOCIAL MEDIA

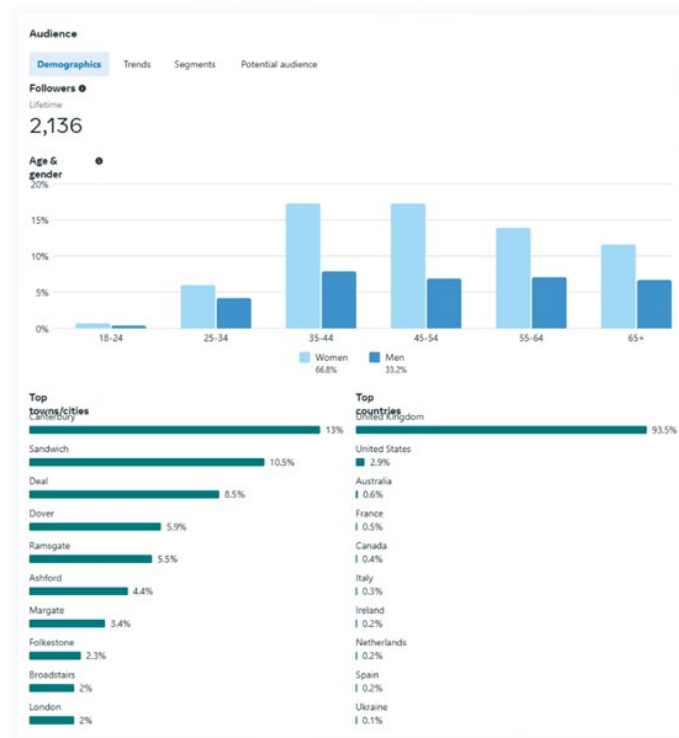
Both the website and the Facebook page are key platforms to communicate with the general public with over 2,000 followers on Facebook. As the analyses below underscores, usage of the sites has continued to increase on a huge scale. Essential to this success is regular updating with news and photographs.

Facebook Analytics

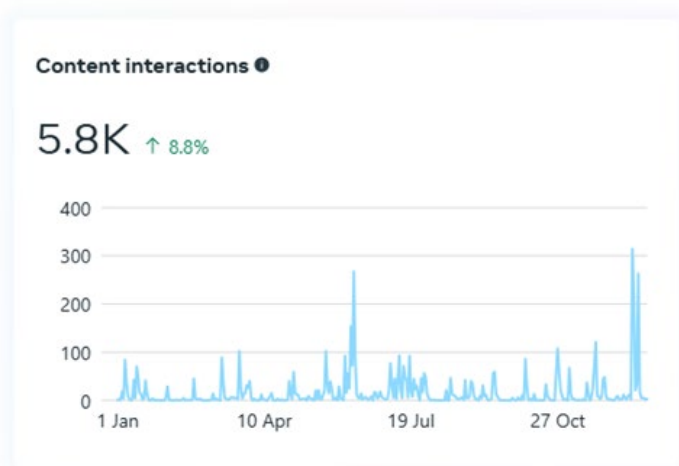


The above graph above shows the number of visits to our Facebook page in 2024.

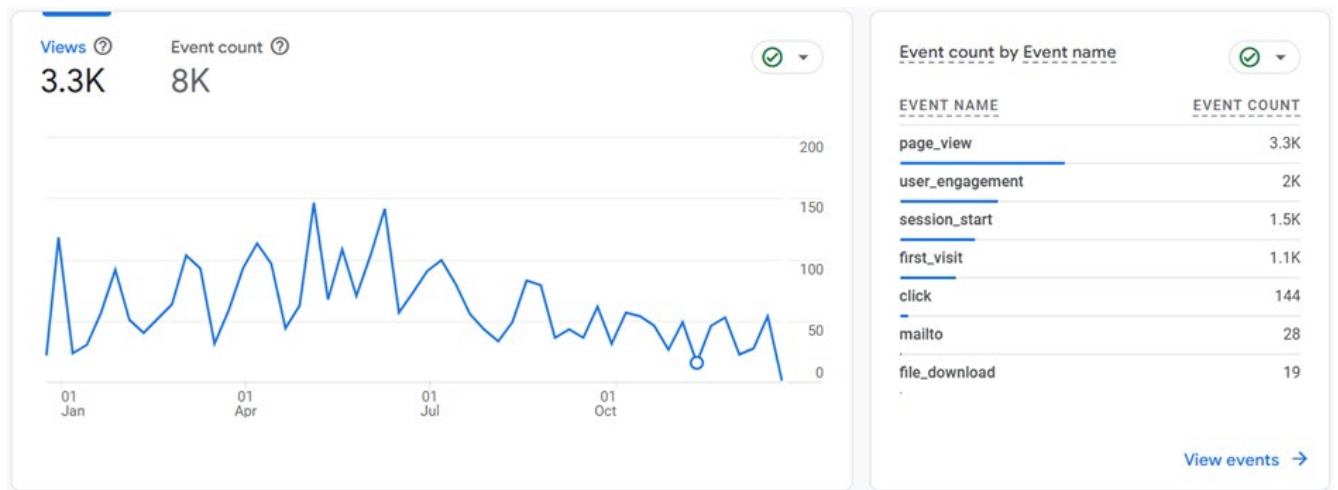
Interaction



The graph above shows Facebook followers and demographics



The graph above shows the total number of Facebook content interactions



The graph above shows interactions with the Sandwich Medieval Trust website through Google.

Dave Batchelor



FINANCIAL REPORT



Archers on Cow leas meadow

The Trust spent £14,144 more than income in the financial year to 31st November 2024. This is not an alarming situation; the majority of the spend was on the replica medieval cog, the *Nicholas* which spent most of the year in dry dock with volunteers making essential repairs. It returned to Sandwich in October, so there will be no more expensive dry dock fees going into 2025.

Income was a healthy £15,972 which is sufficient to keep the Trust in a sound financial position. Grants of £1,000 from the Kent Community Fund at the Royal St George's Golf Club and a donation of £1,000 from the local group BASH following the very successful medieval supper, were very welcome. Donations from the public amounted to £4,139 and our volunteers earned £6,812 by putting on a number of public events throughout the year.

The total expenditure on the cog *Nicholas* project was £21,038. Other major items of expenditure were £3,818 on insurance and £2,245 for equipment. These costs can be met by earned income in 2025 and 2026 when expenditure on the *Nicholas* will be modest.

The accounts overleaf show a bank balance of £14,946 which is considered reasonable for forward planning.

The Sandwich Medieval Trust

Summary Accounts 2024

Income

Grants

	2024	2023
Kent Community	1000	
	<u>1000.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>

Events

Hooden		450.00
Spanish Students before costs		187.84
Richard III banquet	466.03	
40s	1902.61	
Le Weekend	1744.72	2381.37
Folk & Ale	508.33	
Archery	897.04	2591.60
Festival	1042.08	
Folk McCabre	252.07	

	<u>6812.87</u>	<u>5610.81</u>
Donations from BASH	1000	
Donations from the public box	4139.66	3586.90
Sales after costs	217.89	240.61
Workshops (inc French)	1556.79	1442.76
Heritage Visits	300	
DDC Lotto	119.50	78.00
St Mary's Concerts Support.	825.44	3872.91
Total Income	<u>15972.15</u>	<u>14831.99</u>

Expenditure

(Net of VAT)

Web		165.00	0.00
Orlestone Oak	4165.00		
Richborough Marine	14646.40		
Boat and Tools		21038.71	2111.98
Building Costs		0.00	563.28
Learning Centre		49.17	0.00
Equipment, inc:			
Tables			484.52
Storage boxes/Tools	364.77		351.66
Acrylic Cups			1360.00
Black Friday/Touch Screen	987.71		477.48
Kiki Gibb Clothing/Costumes	324.17		120.00
Arrows			208.50
Blades, extractor system			201.67
Equipment Total		<u>2245.12</u>	<u>3203.83</u>
Consumables		1821.56	794.80
Professional Services		186.87	219.60

Insurance	3818.83	3802.95
AGM & Miscellaneous	316.45	0.00
Publicity	475.00	890.00
Total Expenditure	30116.71	11586.44
Net improvement	-14144.56	3245.55
Adjusted Balance brought forward	29090.74	25096.69
Available Funds	14946.18	28342.24
Represented by Current Account	14266.18	29042.74
VAT Account	680.00	-700.5