

2024/2025 Trustee's Report to Members

The year 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 was as busy for volunteers at the Darwen Heritage Centre as any that have gone before. The only item on the Business Plan was to make progress towards attaining Independent Museum Accreditation and many volunteers were involved in the creation of Policy and Process documentation required. If not involved in the creation of the documentation all volunteers were instrumental in the application of the processes to make the running of the Heritage Centre a success. This year, in order to be able to continue with our application for Museum Accreditation we had to make a minor alteration to the wording of point 29.2.a and this was carried out with the approval of the Charities Commission.

Having previously hosted a visit to the Centre by the Mayor and Mayoress of Blackburn with Darwen we were pleased to be able to start the year by being chosen by the Mayor to bring the Mayors of the County on a visit to Holker House. The event was to support the Mayor who had to entertain his visitors for the day by choosing interesting venues within the Borough for his guests to see. This is an endorsement of the success we have attained so far in providing a high quality experience for visitors who wish to find out more about the history and heritage of Darwen.

In May we supported the Darwen Live event by opening on both Saturday and Sunday. As support for the event organisers we brought out the substantial history of Darwen music exhibition created by Ian Gillibrand for the occasion.

On the day in May when we were closed due to the German WW2 Detonator being brought into the Centre (all publicity is good publicity), we also received evidence of our reach beyond the County when the Darwen & District Agricultural Show Trophy for 'Best Pig in Show' was returned to us and placed on display in our Museum quality display case.

Also in May we continued to provide support for local students by allowing Sian Garth to hold her end of year Degree Course photographic exhibition at the Centre free of charge.

In June the Centre put on a display to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of D-Day with examples of how Darwen had been instrumental in this momentous occasion. This also supported the continuing commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the loss of Darwen service people during WW2 through our Facebook Page which was done month by month over the duration of the war.

Having completed the year of displaying the paintings of James Hargreaves Morton we were pleased to follow that with another major art exhibition this time by Walpamur artist Reg Ball. To complement this exhibition we put our growing collection of paintings by Albert Hurst on display in the main room from July onwards.

Also in July Ruby, one of our young student volunteers, was responsible for creating her first display by arranging the medals cabinet and this display continues to be the basis for how the medals are shown today. Giving our younger volunteers the opportunity to create effective displays is one way in which we can help them to develop transferrable skills for their future.

In August we received further evidence of the reach of the Heritage Centre through its on-line presence when we were contacted by the son of Herbert Briggs who donated the Trophy awarded to Bill Hunt by E. Forbes for a feat of immense strength.

This was followed by a further loan agreement, this time with the Ribchester Roman Museum who allowed us to display the stone head which used to stand at Old Lyons Farm on the moors. This is initially with us for a loan period of two years but will, no doubt, be extended at the end of the period of the loan.

In September we took part in the Heritage Open Days Week again and as part of the experience provided guided walks around the town centre of Darwen which were well received. Blackburn with Darwen Council showed their support for us once more and the Mayor of Blackburn with Darwen paid us a visit during the week.

The Autumn talks series commenced with the long awaited talk by Brian Hilton on Sough Station and this brought in much appreciated revenue with a large attendance of paying guests. This was followed up with another well supported talk in October, this time by Tony Foster entitled 'Was Your Ancestor a Registrar'.

November commenced with a display of artwork for sale by Hubert Bentley. These are always popular and Hubert has been generous every time with donations to the Centre of 20% of all takings.

Another source of revenue, the sale of Christmas Cards and Calendars, also commenced in November. Next year it has been decided to start these sales in October in order to boost sales and income. The Christmas cards proved very popular and we are grateful to Hubert Bentley for allowing us to use images of his paintings as the pictures on the cards.

November saw the return of the Remembrance display in the Heritage Centre covering both WW1 and WW2. This display is growing as more and more people come into the Centre, see what we are doing and then contribute their own photos and stories of ancestors to the display. This display was once again supported by a visit from the Mayor of Blackburn with Darwen. The talk for November continued the theme with 'Darwen's D-Day' by Albert Gavagan.

In December around 30 people enjoyed the Christmas meal at the Darwen Cricket Club showing once again the depth of support for the Heritage Centre. This was followed by a team quiz with Gordon Smith as the quiz master.

The New Year began with a display of the talent on offer in Darwen through the artwork of various Darwen artists in an exhibition of their work in the main room. Also in January there was the long awaited exhibition of the Coal Mining in Darwen display. This was a well received display which provided many surprises for visitors, many of whom looked through the maps to see if their own house was near a mine. A number of items had been either loaned or donated to the Centre for this display and we are grateful for their involvement in assisting the Centre to put on interesting and varied displays.

In March we collaborated with the Darwen Transport Group who brought the Darwen bus back to Darwen and ran trips throughout the day. These trips proved very popular and the organisers were grateful for our support in providing warmth and refreshment to see them through the day.

We received additional funding from the Nisa Local Community Support and this helped us to fund storage and display equipment to enhance the visitor experience at the Centre. The Darwen Heritage Centre is grateful for the support shown by Nisa.

March also saw the first talk given by one of our young volunteers. A new experience for Katie in public speaking, her talk entitled 'Leading Ladies' proved very popular and the room was full to bursting.

Other noteworthy items from the year include the renewal of the loan agreement with Blackburn Council for the retention of the Mace, Casket and Band Trophy for two more years.

The support for schools in enhancing their curriculum with visits from four separate schools: St Barnabas, Sudell Road twice, Avondale and Crosshills.

The continued activities of the maintenance crew who look after both the external and internal appearance of the building and provide the services necessary to make the Centre perform safely and securely.

With the help of all our volunteers we can look forward to another successful year in the next twelve months. The three year period of working towards Independent Museum Status comes to an end next year when we will be hoping for a positive outcome.

Reciepts and Payments for the Year to 31 March 2025

31 March 2024 bank Balance	£	50,341.51
31 March 2024 cash Balance	£	38.31
	£	<u>50,379.82</u>

Income

Rent	£	7,819.62	
Room Hire	£	4,643.00	
Donations	£	8,754.00	
Talks/Events	£	1,040.00	
Sales	£	2,457.44	
Membership	£	795.00	
Grants	£	3,450.00	
100 Club	£	1,614.00	
Interest from Savings Account	£	389.28	
Rebate	£	771.02	£ 31,733.36
Total	£	31,733.36	£ 82,113.18

Expenditure

Rates	£	-	
Electric	£	3,181.46	
Gas	£	5,506.83	
Water	£	681.22	
Phone/Broadband	£	714.49	
Insurance	£	3,629.86	
TV & Music Licence	£	160.75	
Website	£	1,102.83	
Security	£	2,181.00	
Capital Purchases	£	8,170.30	
Building	£	1,048.22	
Storage	£	495.03	
Purchases for resale	£	1,458.90	
Admin	£	1,069.95	
100 Club	£	663.00	
Subscriptions	£	71.00	
Petty Cash	£	85.28	
Total	£	30,220.12	£ 30,220.12
			£ 51,893.06

Balance per Bank Statement	31/03/2025	£	51,890.03
Petty Cash Balance	31/03/2025	£	3.03
		£	<u>51,893.06</u>

I have examined the books & records for the above year & found everything to be correct & in order.

Diane Walsh 3/6/25



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
Darwen Heritage Centre

On accounts for the year
ended

31 March 2025

Charity no
(if any)

1183239

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31/03/2025**.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

D. Walsh

Date:

2/6/25

Name:

DIANE WALSH

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

Address:

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