



# Tenterden & District Museum Association Report and Accounts 2023

Compiled: February 2024

## Highlights from the Curator by Robin Wilkins

This year hit new heights – with visitor numbers the second highest in the last 30 years, our volunteer base expanded to record levels, and a sound financial performance giving us the ability to deliver even more projects than we planned. This is directly attributable to the hard work by the team on the special exhibition and its related talks and activities, members evenings, tours, experience nights and activity in schools.

Our major activities included:

- The winter project in the Agriculture Room. All the tools were re-displayed, labelled, and documented. Some wonderful research was conducted by our Member volunteers Barbara Gatward and Trevor Waite and the steward team of Naomi Dickins, George Beckingham, Jonathan Harrison and Hilary Wilkins.
- The Tapestry Room V&A cabinets were mounted on wheels, by Jonathan and his team and a set of new chairs were purchased to enable us to hold talks and presentations in comfort there.
- The outside of the Museum was given a green/garden theme with new benches and planters.
- A single Special Exhibition themed on Kent: The Garden of England. New wall posters were put up each month to launch a new strand e.g. the Horticultural Society, Managing an Estate in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Cherry Collingwood. These talks were complemented by events and visits, like the talk done by Nat Cohen and our visit to Small Hythe to view the results of this year's dig. Our speakers were first class, and the complementary activities were very popular.
- We launched a new series of free Members Evening talks. On the last Thursday of each month, a knowledgeable speaker treated Members to a detailed explanation about some items in our collection.
- More guided tours were conducted, and an expanded range of Museum Experiences played to larger audiences. The Love Stories were written for us by one of the writers' groups using the Museum.
- At the start of the year, we joined in with the nationwide Wild Escape initiative delivering a programme of stories and arts-based activities into Rolvenden, St Michaels and Tenterden Schools. Funded by South-East Museums, KCC and the Basil Russell Trust and using artefacts from the Museum, the nature-themed activities perfectly complemented the Special Exhibition, and the school children created a wonderful installation of eggs and birds which was displayed in the Museum all year.
- Lessons to over 514 children in Rolvenden, St Michaels, Wittersham and Tenterden schools this year.
- Local Authors Day was run again featuring even more authors whose books we sell in the Museum.
- We took our nature themed activities to the K&ESR event in September to complement their trail.
- We hosted the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition for the Folk Festival. Over 120 visitors viewed the event.
- An Egg Hunt and a Halloween 'Ghost Hunt', with support from Tesco, delighted children and families.
- Talks for the Tenara and St Michael's W.I. were delivered and featured items from our collection.
- Nature-themed art exhibitions from students at The Grange and the Wealden Arts Group.

We were able to hold in-person events for our

- AGM in May, held for the first time using our new presentation space in the Museum.
- Patrons & Guests Evening to coincide with the opening of the Special Exhibition.
- Stewards & Volunteers for both training and social events.

We also

- Ran another Internship for Grace Easton who helped us with our cataloguing activities in exchange for information from the whole management team, learning all about how we run the Museum.

### Strengthening our Organisation

Our Advisory Board met twice this year, in February to review progress in 2022 and in November to review the Forward Plan that they helped to construct. The next meeting will review progress in 2023.

We added 6 new Stewards to the volunteer team this year and have 3 more to train when the new season starts. Half of the Steward team are involved with the management and running of the Museum. We are also utilising skills outside of the Steward team to help us with Social Media, Technology and Research.

Sadly, we lost Alan Topley, steward, and Gerald Webber, former Chair, who both died this year.

12 new members and four new Patrons joined the Association.

Thank you all for your continuing support.

## Accounts Summary for 2023

We had another good year financially. We made a surplus on our ongoing activities of £11,000 due to better than expected admissions, shop sales, donations, donated books and tours/experiences. This almost covered all our one-off/project activities leaving us with over £47,000 in the bank for the future.

Museum Accounts 2023	2023 Actual	2023 Budget	2022	Notes
<b>INCOME</b>				
Admissions	6421.00	5250	5643.75	1
Shop sales	2559.90	2000	2468.04	2
Christmas shop	10457.21	10000	11082.39	2
OTC donations & Donated books	1368.44	300	2056.84	3
Big Donations & Bequests	600.00	0	330.00	3
Subscriptions & New members	1320.00	200	906.00	4
Events/Tours/Experiences	1889.00	750	1312.00	5
Grants	1000.00	1000	1000.00	6
Gift Aid	1274.79	300	656.18	7
Bank interest received	276.49	30	27.96	7
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>27166.83</b>	<b>19830.00</b>	<b>25483.16</b>	
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Rent, rates & water	182.21	150	113.15	
Light and heat	2896.40	3200	1734.25	
Insurance	1085.44	575	772.16	
Repairs & maintenance	346.18	300	139.20	
Fire & Security	330.79	400	405.20	
Telephone & broadband	353.82	250	223.78	
Outreach & schools	265.79	250	50.00	
Printing, stationery & postage	294.68	350	333.28	
Sundry expenses	36.56	150	49.83	
Membership	0.00	100	0.00	
Conservation & displays	55.50	550	591.11	
IT	488.46	250	171.92	
Events/Tours/Experiences	675.99	350	315.59	
Training & Team building	242.67	175	174.50	
Advertising	215.65	350	239.77	
Card Payment fees	224.81	250	238.71	
Shop Purchases	1312.08	1500	1557.01	
Xmas Card Purchases	6849.68	7500	5057.91	9
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>15856.71</b>	<b>16650</b>	<b>12167.37</b>	
<b>Surplus/deficit</b>	<b>11310.12</b>	<b>3180.00</b>	<b>13315.79</b>	

**ONE-OFF ACTIVITIES**

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	Income	Expenses	Budget	
Exceptional items		770.55	500.00	11
Agriculture Room		6679.87	10000.00	
Experiences/Mini theatre		798.77	1000.00	
Wild Escape	2240.00	5026.44	4000.00	
Disabled Access Project	1000.00	249.37	2500.00	
Greening Project	1550.00	2304.16	2000.00	
Fire Risk Assessment		540.00	500.00	
<b>Total Income &amp; Expenses</b>	<b>4790.00</b>	<b>16369.16</b>		
<b>Project Deficit</b>	<b>-11579.16</b>			

	This Year	Budget	Last Year
<b>OVERALL Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>-269.04</b>	<b>-15320.00</b>	<b>6641.12</b>

**CASH**

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Savings Account	38583.78		34307.29
Current Account	6551.88		9425.48
Cash in hand	1893.37		3565.30
<b>Total cash</b>	<b>47029.03</b>	<b>31978.07</b>	<b>47298.07</b>

**STOCKS**

3354

2246.80

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**Notes to the accounts****1. Visitors and Events**

	2023	2022	Increase	Comments
Paying Adults	2049	1971	+4%	Free entry from Oct 5 <sup>th</sup> vs Oct 31 <sup>st</sup> last year
Free	2087	1162	+80%	Children, Members, Disabled, Carers, Others
Events	729	523	+39%	All events
Schools	514	138	373%	Visits, Wild Escape, Class lessons
<b>Total</b>	<b>5379</b>	<b>3794</b>	<b>+42%</b>	

2023 is second only to 2010 for the largest visitor numbers in 30 years. Paying visitors were capped by the early start of "free visits" in October. There was a significant increase in children, members and free concessions. Events and School numbers are reported separately this year, showing the huge increase in schools activity.

**2. Shop sales & Christmas sales**

	2023	2022	Increase	Comments
Shop sales	2559.90	2468.04	+4%	Increased book sales
Christmas sales	10457.21	11082.39	-6%	Adverse weather

Book sales continue to boost shop sales. Sales of Christmas cards was slightly disappointing, but it rained almost non-stop through November. Shop and card sales make a very significant contribution to funds.

**3. Donations, donated books and event sponsorship**

Our donations income included £100 from the company who filmed here last year and a £500 bequest in memory of Audrey Holdstock. Donated books brought in £360. Over-the-Counter small donations jumped

from £562 last year to £1008. Generous donations for the Greening Project came from the Schlaijker family, Norman & Laura Brice, Cathy & Maurice Dalton and Nick Hudd. The Patrons Evening was sponsored by Cathy & Maurice Dalton.

#### **4. Patrons & Members**

Paul Summers, Erich Schlaijker, Pat McIntyre and John Crawford enrolled as new Patrons this year and 12 new members joined the Association.

#### **5. Events, Tours & Experiences**

Three Museum Experience Nights were run – Adventure Stories, Love Stories and Ghost Stories. 4 Guided tours were run for Shadoxhurst History Club, Headcorn LHS, Cycling Club and Cranbrook Museum.

#### **6. Grants**

We are grateful to the Town Council who gave us a grant of £1000 this year which will be directed towards our Disability Access Project.

#### **7. Gift Aid and interest earned**

Gift Aid was boosted by the generous donation 'in kind' of the Tenterden Street Names book and other generous donations. Interest rates rose this year giving us a better return on our Savings Account.

#### **8. Expenses**

Expenses were tightly controlled again this year and came in under budget. Those most at variance to the budget/last year include

- Utilities were all significantly higher than last year due to increased charges.
- Insurance is higher than budgeted due invoice date changes from Ashford Borough Council.
- Repairs and Maintenance was inflated by a £220 spend on a new door lock and keys.
- Outreach & Schools spend included consumables for our children's Saturday Club.
- IT spend included new animation software for our Talking Heads project.
- Events, Tours & Experiences spend was higher due to more activity (generating more profit).

#### **9. Unpaid bills**

£2350 of goods purchased were not invoiced/unpaid at the end of this year compared with £1250 last year.

#### **10. One-off Project Activity**

Both Winter projects were delivered under budget. The **Agriculture Room upgrade** cost under £7k and the **Presentation Facilities** cost less than £1k. The **Wild Escape** project activity was entirely covered by grant income from SE Museums, KCC and the Basil Russell Trust. **Disabled Access Project** was initiated following an audit paid for by SE Museums. A grant of £1k was provided by them to help towards the cost of improvements topped up by £1500 underspend from their previous grant (for Experiences). We have only just started this project and further costs and activities will take place over the Winter and fall into next year. The **Garden/Greening Project** was added to our projects during the year and was part funded by generous sponsors. A **Fire Risk Assessment** has been undertaken (a legal requirement) and some expenses will be incurred on activities during the Winter to address shortcomings.

#### **11. One-off exceptional items**

£144 was spent on new heaters to try to keep the Stewards warm in cold periods. A payment error of £626 was made in relation to an ABC invoice which has been recovered (in 2024 accounts).

#### **12. Cash and Bank**

Our overall deficit for the year was £270, so we end the year pretty much as we started with about £47k in the bank and cash. A useful sum to enable us to continue to upgrade the Museum facilities and maintain a sensible reserve of 12 months funds.

#### **13. Stocks**

Our stock valuation has been increasing over the past years due to increased stocks of books and surplus Christmas cards this year adding about £800.

## Auditors Comments from Chapel Court Accountancy Services

I've reviewed the two files you left with me together with earlier spreadsheets. There are no apparent outstanding anomalies which have been identified.

A couple of observations on the file contents

1. Not all expense claims have been signed off as formally approved by a second party before payment was made.
2. I'm sure there is a working system but there are no physical signs on the invoices in most cases of who has approved payment of specific invoices and, if a higher level of cost incurred that a second person has also agreed the amount as OK to be paid.

## General points

1. Is it worth transferring some of the funds held in the Santander account periodically into an interest-bearing account or would the likely interest be minimal and therefore not worth the hassle involved?
2. I don't know if the Museum has considered whether it might be beneficial from a net income perspective to VAT register – unlikely desirable (but still worth checking if beneficial) given what a complex area VAT for museums can be and the extra time input involved in preparing returns if registration was applied for?

## Advisory Board

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, museums are expected to play a key role by ensuring that local heritage is protected, preserved, and promoted to all sectors of the community. We have created an Advisory Board to help us respond to the needs of the various groups we aim to serve. We have representatives from Tenterden Town Council, Ashford Borough Council Heritage Dept, Arts Council/South East Museums, the Local History Society, The Col. Stephens Railway Museum, Tenterden Schools Trust, local clubs and societies, Museum Association Members and Museum Volunteers to serve on this Board. The Board met twice in 2023 and assisted in the production of the Forward Plan which was reviewed and approved in November. It will meet again in February 2024 to review our progress.

## Publicity, Communications and Social Media by Debbie Greaves

Significant progress has been made by Debbie Greaves on our Facebook and Instagram social media platforms this year.

- Our Facebook page is now enjoyed by over 900 followers, up from 793 last year. We are using Facebook to post pictures such as "Then and Now" and ask questions such as "Where in the Weald"
- Our following on Instagram is now up to almost 900 from 689 last year. We are using Instagram to promote and record Museum events such as short film clips from the Folk Festival.

We continue to provide a quarterly newsletter to our members and maintain a blog site for interested users edited by Sue Hatt. We also track and respond to comments on TripAdvisor, are featured on the Chamber of Commerce website and are grateful to My Tenterden for advertising our activities. Our website continues to be updated and maintained by Jerry D'Arts.

## **Young People and Schools Activities by Peter Foster and Sue Hatt**

Schools activities experienced an enormous increase in activities year. Interactions with the children hit an all-time high.

Wild Escape provided the initial activity in Rolvenden, St Michaels and Tenterden Junior Schools. Helen Tozer, a story-teller took in our egg collection and stuffed birds, introducing the idea of birds hatching and escaping to their perfect world. Anna Saunders, an artist followed up with sessions to make eggs and birds which were made into an installation hanging in the Agriculture and Buildings Rooms at the Museum for Earth Day in April. The project was conceived, managed and funding arranged by Sue Hatt.

Peter Foster conducted a record number of school visits with new work packages requested by the schools

- January – Tenterden Infants
- March – St Michaels – World War I, the Home Front
- June – Tenterden Junior School visit the Museum
- June – Wittersham School, years 3,4,5 – Hop picking
- October – St Michaels – World War II, the Home Front
- October – Tenterden Juniors visit the Museum to study the 1960's
- December – Tenterden Juniors – Smuggling

In addition to the above, other work packages on Shipbuilding and the New Stone Age are now available for delivery into schools and more can be tailored to meet curriculum needs on request.

### **'Kids Zone' Activities in the Museum**

In addition to What's in the Box, Haul Away, Trap the Rat and a Medieval Ship Puzzle, a Tweet of the Day has been added to complement the Special Exhibition. The Kids Zone in the Reserve Collection Room offers colouring, object handling alongside various museum trails for the children. A special nature-themed trail was added for the Special Exhibition.

## **Genealogy Enquiries by Colin Young**

A total of 63 enquiries have been responded to by Colin Young and the research team (Debbie Greaves, Jack Gillett and John Weller) on behalf of the Museum and the Local History Society.

- 30 relating to family,
- 14 relating to property,
- 19 general enquiries.

In addition to Colin's enquiries, the Museum has responded directly to other queries and supported many local people with pictures and information from our archives.

We are grateful to Colin, Jack Gillett, Debbie Greaves and John Weller for the support they give to answering enquiries from our visitors and other members of the public.

## **Special Exhibitions by Sue Hatt**

This year we had a single Special Exhibition based on the theme, Kent: The Garden of England. Each month introduced a new sub-theme which was reflected in a new wall poster, talk and event. The talks and events were of the highest standard and brought in many visitors.

April – Horticultural Society talk by Cathy Dalton and Mini-plant sale event.

May – Hole Park In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century by Edward Barham and visit to Hole Park with Cream Teas.

June - Cherry Ingram of Benenden talk by Ernest Pollard.

July – Talk and Tasting with Michael Dallaway of Cooks Yard in Northiam (cancelled for family reasons)

August – EC30 – New beginnings, establishing new roots by Sharon Doucy

September – Wine tasting evening (cancelled due to lack of interest)

October – Apple Day – all things apples – apples, produce, cakes and teas from the W.I



## **Members Evenings by Mike O'Neill**

We launched a new initiative this year to make Membership even more special. Monthly evening talks were held, designed to give members an exclusive opportunity to get 'up close and personal' with items from the collection. A talk, with items from the collection on display to examine more closely, followed by tea and biscuits to have the chance to discuss the session.

April – The Plantagenets by Colin Charmer (replacing the original session which had to be rearranged).

May – Take One Book – by Sue Hatt exploring the history of books and print with some of our early books.

June – Small Hythe archaeological digs by Nathalie Cole with follow up site visit in August.

July – The Street Names of Tenterden, by Richard Parsons explaining the origins of U3A's book.

August – Exploring the Museum Digital Assets by Robin Wilkins looking at our digital photos, videos etc.

September – Tenterden's Georgian Theatre by Eva Molloy.

The success of these sessions means we will continue them with another season next year.

## **History Explorers Saturday Club by Sue Hatt**

A full programme of Saturday Club sessions for children was established by Sue Hatt. Story-telling, making and colouring was included in each session due to a huge amount of preparation and work by Sue. Poor numbers, probably due to the competition for Saturday time caused us to shelve this idea for the time being. It was lovely to have the sound of excited young children in on Saturday mornings so we might try this again in future if we can attract a sufficient audience.

## AGM Business

	Resolution	For	Against	Abstain
1	To approve the Report and Accounts for 2023			
2	To re-elect Debbie Greaves as President			
3	To re-elect Robin Wilkins as Trustee			
4	To elect Naomi Dickins as Trustee			

### Audit role

During the year, David Payne resigned his role as Auditor. He advised that we did not need an auditor since our level of income/turnover did not require us to formally audit our accounts. We have continued the practice of having our accounts examined independently, this year by Chapel Court Accountancy. We will keep this under review but need not formally appoint an auditor at the AGM.

### Election of Trustees

Debbie Greaves has decided to stand down as a Trustee and relinquish her Publicity role on the Museum Management Team. She will continue to support Social Media and offers herself again as President.

Under our Constitution, Trustees are required to be elected every three years. The current Trustees were elected in 2022. A third of Trustees should stand down or be re-elected each year. Robin Wilkins will stand down and offer himself for re-election this year. Mike and Jonathan are due to stand down next year.

Naomi Dickins, a member of the Management Team, has offered to stand as a new Trustee for election at this meeting.