



Tenterden & District Museum Association

Report and Accounts 2025

Compiled: January 2026

Highlights from the Curator

2025 was a busy year for me and the team, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to the season's successes. Our volunteers give freely of their time, energy, skills and ideas and it's this enthusiastic generosity that keeps our doors open.

The year began with an extensive refurbishment of the Entrance Room and 19th Century Room to better showcase our collection and the stories we have to share. We have made good use of these rooms over the year, particularly with the children of visiting schools who are easily able to view our artefacts at close quarters and at their own eye-level in the new, glass cases.

One of our new initiatives this year was hosting monthly coffee mornings for our volunteers. Jill Carter has partnered with me in running these and they have been a lovely way for our team get to know each other. That team includes our stewards, our trustees, our cleaning party and all those people who offer their time in different ways to support the museum. I would like to say that the popularity of these mornings has been *entirely* due to team-building spirit, but I am very well aware that the home-made cakes on offer are the most significant draw! We will be continuing with these coffee (and cake!) mornings in 2026, and all our volunteers are always welcome.

Another of our 2025 projects was the 'History Explorers' summer activity scheme and 'Past Pass' for families. We offered a programme of historical activities, crafts and hands-on living history demonstrations under our gazebo during the school summer holidays. Children were encouraged to collect stamps and badges for the different activities in which they took part, which also included our regular games such as the *Mouse Trail*, *'What's in the Box'* and *'Haul Away'*. Fiona Eldridge helped organise and supervise these activities and will continue to work as our Family Activities Co-ordinator during 2026.

Our research team created two special exhibitions, *'Tenterden Lives'* and *'Bringing the Harvest Home'* - both designed to highlight local stories and tales of local life. The team is now putting together a display for our upcoming 50th anniversary celebration in May.

2025 saw significant development in our engagement with local schools: Peter Foster and I have worked with Tenterden Juniors, St Michael's and Wittersham primary schools and, this year, we also established a strong link with Homewood School. We have already made a start on our 2026 classroom visits and signed up some work experience students for the summer. We are also continuing with our outreach work with the local care homes, taking the experience of the museum to those who are no longer able to visit in person.

Members' Evenings were overwhelmingly popular this year; for this reason, we chose to relocate to the Social Hub in Church Road rather than disappoint our members, as we do not have sufficient seating capacity. As usual, we offered a fascinating variety of talks and presentations and we have another exciting line-up for you this coming season.

Our 2025 programme of tours (organised by Jo Killick) and talks for individuals, private parties and local societies included Tenara, Headcorn LHS and the Maidstone Inner Wheel. In addition to helping visitors to understand our collection, our tours and talks also help to popularise the museum across the region. This year, Jo is expanding the offering with the addition of 'behind-the-scenes' and 'after hours' tours.

We have maintained and improved our links within the local heritage sector, joining the newly re-formed Ashford Heritage Network; hosting a meeting of the Ashford & Tenterden Tourism Association and strengthening our links with the National Trust at Smallhythe Place and the Brighton & Hove archaeology team. In addition, we are continuing to maintain our links within the community: we contributed towards the Wilder Kent awards scheme with our wildlife-friendly garden planters and supported the 2025 Folk Weekend, enjoying a colourful Morris dancing display and organising our own folk music event; Hukins Hops gifted us a beautiful bine for our harvest exhibition, whilst Nightingales and McCanns brewery supported our Apple Day in October and our volunteers' Christmas party. We also staged a murder mystery play and organised a book launch event for Paul Ryley's biographical novel about a 19th century Tenterden schoolteacher – both events were very popular with Museum Association members and non-members alike. Of course, we continue to support the Local History Society, attending their coffee mornings and afternoon teas and we also continue to support the U3A historical research group, which regularly uses the museum's facilities and resources.

Our shop was redesigned and restocked to incorporate more items for families and children (including play sets made by a family firm in Cranbrook) as well as more local and exclusive souvenirs (like our Tenterden Museum mugs and bags). There is also an area for local artists to display and sell their works, so we now have a truly local and unique retail offering, managed by Jill Carter. From October, we also ran our Christmas shop, managed by Liz Parker. This year's range of charities was even broader than before and locals were also able to purchase our exclusive 'Museum Mice' cards, designed for us by Pippa Phipps. The museum remained open to visitors throughout the entire season and the October-December period brought in significant additional income from entry fees which were reduced to £2 per person. Towards the end of the season we were visited by a local celebrity – Tom Baker, aka Dr Who –, who made a short video, recording a Christmas message for his website. Our brilliant 20th Century Room was the perfect setting for the Doctor of the 1970s.

Perhaps my favourite project of this last year has been the conservation of three of the museum's most beautiful and fragile artefacts, three works of domestic embroidery. Thanks to the extreme generosity of some of our members, we have been able to fund a full, professional conservation plan for these unique pieces which will soon be reframed and returned to display.

As I write, the improvement works of the winter are coming to an end – please come along and see what we have been up to while the doors were closed ...

Volunteer Team

This year, Robin Wilkins has left the museum team however, we have recruited 5 new volunteers, ready to complete their training and join the stewarding team for the 2026 season, which means that, by the summer, we will have 31 stewards. We have also established a regular cleaning party of 7 who tackle a monthly cleaning of the building's public spaces, both indoors and out, as well as the staff room and bathroom. Jo Killick will be partnering with Liz Parker on this year's Christmas Shop. Debbie Greaves has taken on the role of Facilities Manager and Jill Carter has agreed to stand as Treasurer.

Publicity, Communications and Social Media- Debbie Greaves, Social Media Manager

During 2025 the museum posted pictures, posters and events on Facebook and Instagram. In total, images and information about events at the museum provided our 1,400 followers, with fascinating samples of our local history to encourage them to find out more by visiting the museum.

There is nothing to beat proper face-to-face interaction with other likeminded people, but, social media can provide an extension of this to explore and discover more of what is happening at Tenterden & District Museum with its wealth of history both displayed and stored in our archives as artefacts, documents and pictures.

Website - Naomi Dickins

The museum's website has been professionally overhauled and now incorporates a booking facility for any events we organise. There is also a new contact form in place which will make communication form enquirers more straightforward. Photographs have been refreshed and we now have the facility to play videos; you can currently view the videos made by our work experience students and more will follow as the new season progresses. We will soon be launching our 'Virtual Museum' (more details to follow, in the summer) through the website.

Schools Activities- Peter Foster, Naomi Dickins

It was another busy year with 10 classroom visits to Primary Schools and multiple visits from those schools to the Museum.

The Schools Team now have 11 prepared activities on local history topics such as smuggling, shipbuilding and the Home Front in both world wars, and it is pleasing to see teachers requesting 'repeat' activities for pupils moving up a year, as well as continuing to ask us to develop new topics linked to their National Curriculum requirements.

We developed two new sessions; The Romans in Britain and Tenterden, and The Victorian Classroom Experience, which were both well received at St Michael's and Wittersham Juniors. The Victorian session

involved the pupils dressing up in the appropriate period costume, as well as Naomi and Peter, the two strict teachers!

Three Homewood pupils spent a week at the museum for work experience during the summer and not only enhanced their own knowledge, but proved very helpful, working on museum projects. Between them, they created several information videos for our website and also helped with museum audit preparation. One of these students has continued to volunteer on a regular, weekly basis, also coming in during her free time and school holidays. A student from Hastings College spent one afternoon a week volunteering with us throughout the year and a further Homewood student undertook two museum studies qualifications with our support. We already have work experience placements arranged for 2026 and are in discussion about lesson support & enrichment with Homewood history department.

Children's and Family Activities at the Museum – Fiona Eldridge

We ran our Easter Egg Hunt and a 'Find the Witch's Cat' trail during the two half-term holidays. These are both based on questions and clues leading the seekers around the museum. Our History Explorer 'Hands-on History' sessions were held on each Saturday of the school holidays and started with spinning and weaving wool sessions. These were followed by making clay Roman pots. Next was making Jack in the Green masks, then medieval weaving and corn dolly making.

We attended the Youth Event on the recreation ground with a variety of these crafts along with our archaeology sand boxes in which children could 'excavate' and then to re-bury the objects found. This event was very popular and we ran out of wool for the weaving.

We also had a stand at the Spirit of Tenterden with some family activities which again were popular. We intend to offer the same activities this year with the addition of some new ones, including making medieval envelopes, writing a letter using calligraphy pens and sealing with wax.

Genealogy Enquiries

Genealogy enquiries come in from various sources and we are fortunate to have the support of the Tenterden & District Local History Society research team, Colin Young, Jack Gillett, Debbie Greaves and John Weller, along with Paul Ryley, in answering enquiries from visitors in person or, as is more usual, through our website or social media channels. The information associated with each enquiry of this nature adds to our pool of local knowledge.

Special Exhibitions

We staged two special exhibitions this year – 'Tenterden Lives' and 'Bringing the Harvest Home'. 'Tenterden Lives' explored the stories of several local individuals, each with strong connections to the town and its

community. 'Bringing the Harvest Home' was a celebration of the festival of harvest – now, largely overlooked and undervalued in the wider community, but once such a pivotal point in the rural calendar.

Local Authors' Sessions

This year, we tried a different format for our local authors' sessions, holding an open morning once a month for individual authors or small groups to come into the museum to showcase their work. Nine authors participated. For the 2026 season, we will be holding a one-day Book Fair to which local authors will be invited.

Membership – Mary Hogarth

As membership secretary it is up to me to keep the membership list up to date, which I try my best to do. Unfortunately some escape the system as we're not always informed of a change of address or notified when a member is no longer with us. A brief note was put in with the last newsletters asking for up to date information, i.e. was the correspondence was meant for them, do they have an email address, and are they still with us. This resulted in some email addresses being added and others who were no longer here removed. New members receive their membership card with a welcome letter, the local ones I deliver in the hopes that they're in and I can meet them.

Members' Evening Talks

Our series of Members' Evening talks was tremendously popular this year – so much so, that we transposed some events to the Social Hub, in Church Road, rather than turn people away. The hire cost was largely covered by donations and entry payments from non-members but we found that the vast majority of the audiences were members. This year's talks were:

April – Meet the Museum.

May – Mrs Ward's Father – Paul Dickins

June – Bodiam Archaeology – Nathalie Cohen

July – A History of Fingerprinting – Mike Apps

August – Weston & Lee – Terry King

September – Smuggling on the Kent & Sussex Coast – Peter Foster

October – Pluckley, the Making of a Modern Myth – Ed Adams

We will be continuing with another series of talks in the new season and have even more to offer this time. This year there will be a nominal charge of £2 for all members attending, as well as the standard £5 entry fee for non-members to cover the costs of hall hire and any speaker's fees or expenses.

Outreach Activities

This year, Paul Ryley and Naomi took the museum out into the community through talks for local clubs and societies, including talks for the Pilgrims' Hospice, Tenterden Social Hub, Tenara, Headcorn Local History Society, Maidstone Inner Wheel and Maidstone Rotary Club.

We have also taken our 'mobile museum' handling collection of 20th century artefacts out to The Spires, and Halden Heights – and have received a request for a similar visit from Bowles Lodge in Hawkhurst. The 'memory sessions' are very popular with residents, providing valuable opportunities for these members of our community to engage in conversations and activities they might otherwise not experience.

TENTERDEN AND DISTRICT MUSEUM

Income and Expenditure Account for the year to 31 December 2025

	2025 YTD	25 Budget	2024
INCOME			
Admissions	6102.00	6300	7044.00
Shop sales	3427.25	2500	3184.50
Christmas shop	8757.62	9000	9322.00
Raffle	161.00	0	
OTC donations	819.36	450	725.08
Big Donations & Bequests	2279.55	0	1418.00 U3A & TDRA
Subscriptions & New members	660.00	300	820.00
Events/Tours/Experiences	1333.35	1200	2086.00
Grants	0.00	500	0.00
Gift Aid	1787.87	500	1552.95
2024 accruals	408.72	200	626.56 Xmas card refund
Bank interest received	355.98	400	417.95
Total Income	26092.70	21350.00	27197.04
EXPENSES			
Rent, rates & water	231.50	225	208.45
Light and heat	3515.46	3200	3192.00
Insurance	225.30	820	809.11
Equipment, repairs & maintenance	328.99	450	0.00 Induction loop service
Fire & Security	569.74	1000	589.00
Telephone & broadband	335.11	350	307.49 New deal £75 owed
Outreach & schools	297.39	300	184.23
Printing,stationery & postage	270.71	300	149.76
Sundry expenses	110.40	150	4.75
Membership	0.00	100	0.00
Conservation & displays	21.00	600	235.95
IT	499.39	500	69.53 new pc
Events/Tours/Experiences	693.41	800	792.68
Training & Team building	123.62	200	178.72
Publicity	237.81	400	383.00 ATTA,brochures
Card Payment fees	166.36	300	229.70
Shop Purchases	1932.31	1500	1808.84
Xmas Card Purchases	4903.41	5000	6552.31
2024 accruals	851.50	750	2351.34 Xmas cards & QFSM
Total Expenses	15313.41	16945	18046.86
Surplus	10779.29	4405.00	9150.18
ONE OFF ACTIVITIES			
	Income	Expenses	Budget
Disabled Access Project	770.00	1194.92	500.00 Gazebo & printer
Fire Risk Assessment	0.00	0.00	
Entrance Room Project	0.00	0.00	
Special Exhibition	0.00	4999.92	4000.00
Tapestry Room	0.00	144.40	
Sampler Appeal	0.00	8117.54	10000.00
Total One-off Projects	75.00		
	845.00	14456.78	14500.00
OVERALL Deficit			
	-2832.49		

BALANCE SHEET as at 31 December 2025

CURRENT ASSETS		
Savings Account	35357.71	42001.73
Current Account	8253.06	4457.61
Cash in hand	86.28	70.20
Total cash	43697.05	46529.54
STOCKS	3605.53	3465.78



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's
report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
TENTERDEN AND DISTRICT MUSEUM Assoc

On accounts for the year
ended

31 DECEMBER 2025

Charity no
(if any)

1,195,539

Set out on pages

1 + 2

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above
charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2025

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:

Date:

24-3-2026

Name:

DAVID JOHN PAYNE

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

ICAEW

Address:

SPORTSMAN FARM,
ST MICHAELS, TENTERDEN
TN30 6SY