

TRUSTEES REPORT (2023 AGM)

The group has gone from strength to strength over the past year. Membership has increased and the number of people attending our monthly meetings has gone up. Considering how so many other groups have suffered since the pandemic scare this has been very encouraging. In July, Mansols (Preforms) Ltd became our first ever Corporate Member (at £50.00 per year). We are very appreciative of their support. December saw another first for the centre when we offered Membership Gift Vouchers for sale. Although we only sold two we should look at this as a positive and consider further initiatives in the future.

The transfer to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) has finally been completed and the organisational structure within the group is working well with the Trustees overseeing the financial and management of the History Centre and the Management Committee overseeing the day-to-day operations.

We are in discussions with the Town Council regarding a new lease for the History Centre and hope to secure our place in the Arts Centre for a further five years. We thank the Town Council and the staff at the Arts Centre for their continued support during the past year.

The last twelve months have been particularly busy and I would like to reflect on some of our accomplishments and successes.

It is somewhat heartening and encouraging to see younger people interested and engaging with local history so I make no apology for starting with this. In May 2022 we were more than pleased to be able to accommodate Anna, a University undergraduate who had her museum placement here in the History Centre. Having the opportunity to work alongside us, gave her the chance to see the different aspects of running a small history centre. We were also happy to be able to accommodate two architectural University students who visited the centre in February this year. Their primary interest was looking at houses/building on Parkway and Clements.

More recently in March we welcomed a SEN class from Place Farm Primary School who spent the morning hearing about historic buildings in the High Street and taking part in activities to create a 'paper' quilt similar to the one that was now on display in the history centre. Many thanks to Pat Hanlon, a local Town Councillor who gave our group a community grant to finance our work with students from the town.

I can't say that we presently have a formal outreach policy, however we have taken up many opportunities to engage with the public and other groups locally.

Patrick Crouch has given a presentation to both the local Stroke and Dementia groups in the town and more recently to the newly formed Ridgewell Local History Group.

In the Autumn of 2022 we arranged two tours for adults with autism and learning disabilities. One through the High Street and the other at Haverhill Cemetery. It was particularly enjoyable to work with the group who were very keen to learn about the history of Haverhill, each having their own personal project.

In January, this year, Charmian Thompson gave a talk to a local U3A group which was held in the Studio. As the group was quite large it was split into two sessions. They were also given the opportunity to visit to the Centre.

Paul Bond gave a talk to the 41st Club and received really good reviews, so much so that they are considering asking him to return later in the year.

In April this year, Charmian Thompson agreed to do a talk at Weaver's Lodge (Churchill Retirement homes) focusing on 'A virtual walk round Haverhill' - using photographs as prompts. Many of the residents have come from out of town so it was a good opportunity for them to learn about its history and people.

Last summer we attended the Armed Forces Day event in the town and then the Haverhill Show. My thanks to all those who helped out at both of these events.

Not forgetting of course, the Open Day we held in the centre which went very well albeit there were fewer visitors than expected. As part of the Open Day, we held three tours of the Arts Centre which were well received by those who took part. Again my thanks to all those who helped out to make it a successful day.

David and Pat Pearce, Charmian Thompson and I represented our group at the Suffolk Local History Societies day at Elmswell. We put on a small display to promote our latest book, 'Haverhill Board Schools (The Cangle)'.

We have held several exhibitions in the centre, the first in June when we held an display to mark the Queens Platinum Jubilee. This was followed by a display entitled Haverhill for Sale. Towards the end of the year, we displayed Construction kit/toys etc. These displays attracted a lot of interest and I thank all those who contributed to the interesting collections.

In October we finally tracked down Barnabas Webb's waistcoat and quilt which had been held in safe storage at West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village! This now forms part of an amazing exhibition in the centre showing a collection of pictures, books, etc. relating to John and Barnabas Webb and of course the quilt and waistcoat. Visitors to the exhibition have remarked on these wonderful artefacts, particularly members of a local quilting group who were invited to come along and view the stunning quilt.

There were two book launches over the past twelve months, one in late 2022 when we were pleased to host a book launch/signing for Paul Freeman (It's no game of Marbles) in the Centre which attracted some media attention.

The second came in February this year when we launched the group's latest book 'Haverhill Board Schools (The Cangle)'. The response has been outstanding as we have sold most of this first print run. Many of those who came to buy the book attended the school and shared their stories. We were grateful to the New Cangle school for allowing us to display some school artefacts at the book launch. Thanks go to our archivist, Tony Turner, for compiling the book.

Various artefacts were donated throughout the year including a Drabbet Smock. In May, Dennis Backler was given a photo album and after a bit of detective work we were able to re-unite this with the Barber family in Twickenham who were obviously delighted to receive it. The photos of course were scanned for our records before returning.

We also received a framed certificate originally presented to re-Arthur Dunt, organist at St. Mary's Church which was donated by Clare Rand from Hertford. It was agreed that it should go on permanent loan to St. Mary's Church. Following a long drawn out process to get permission to hang the certificate on a wall I am delighted to report that this is now on display, appropriately, next to the organ that Arthur Dunt played.

On the social side we had a trip to Ashdon Museum which was enjoyed by all those who attended. The Friday before the Christmas break saw an informal 'social' meeting in the history centre where all members were invited to come along, meet up and enjoy some seasonal refreshments. This was a great success, perhaps something that should become a permanent feature. After Christmas, we had a more formal group 'social' meeting when we had lunch/dinner at Wratting Red Lion. Everyone who attended spent a really pleasant and congenial afternoon. Our thanks to Madeleine Turner for organising.

Reflecting on what has happened over the past year we have been particularly pro-active. It is great that we have put on interesting exhibitions in the Centre, it is great that we have been asked to give talks and presentations to various groups and it is great to be able to respond to request from schools.

Besides all this of course we have held our normal monthly meetings and my thanks to the sub-committee, headed by Bryan Mills who put the programme together. As many of you that attend these meetings are aware, many of the talks are 'in-house' given by our own members. This does not make them any less interesting but it does put pressure on the few if others do not volunteer. The reason we do not call on outside speakers for all our meetings is down to cost. We could not afford to do this on a regular basis. Indeed taking into account the meetings over the past year we made a lost on average of over £50.00 per meeting when we have an outside speaker. Overall, we lost just under £115.00 across eight meetings.

We should not forget, of course, the day-to-day operations of the centre itself. Our tremendous volunteers allow us to open up to the public on four days of the week. Who knows perhaps one day we can increase this to six days?

A special thanks to our Archivist, Tony Turner, who besides being kept busy with our fabulous collection has also been transcribing 'Jottings from British Museum' (these are articles at the British Museum that mention Haverhill), all those who research for exhibitions, talks etc., Paul Bond who has spent the best part of the year digitising records eventually making them more accessible and not forgetting of course those who submit articles for the Historian which I am pleased to say is published twice a year.

To all these people, Trustees, Committee and Volunteers, I thank you all for your dedication and time, ensuring that we offer the best experience for the local community when they visit or via our outreach program.

The future looks bright and although I am sure that there will be some challenging times ahead, I am positive that together we will deal with them as they arise. Finally in 2034 we will be celebrating our 50th Anniversary. What a tremendous achievement! I wonder how many groups locally can boost such longevity?

Quoting from my previous report 'More than anything I want everyone to enjoy being part of this fantastic group'.

BRIAN THOMPSON (SECRETARY TO THE TRUSTEES)

HAVERHILL & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Financial Statements for the year 1st April 2022 to the 31st March 2023

	Income	Expenditure
<u>Brought Forward 2021/22</u>	<div>£7,880.85</div>	
Unpresented Cheques 2021/22		-£135.00
<u>History Centre</u>		
	£1,256.10	
Donations rec'd	£4,533.20	
Grants transferred:		
H/W & S/W Equipment		-£626.86
Insurance		-£215.60
Maintenance/fixtures		-£29.32
Other equipment		-£22.99
		-
		£3,564.00
Rent		0
Stationery		-£48.69
Subscriptions		-£243.00
Acquisitions		-£30.58
<u>Members</u>		
Annual Subscriptions	£815.00	
Postage & stationery		-£37.70
<u>Events/Meetings</u>		
Entrance fee	£172.00	
Room hire		-£341.00
Speakers		-£207.10
Refreshments		-£24.74
Raffle	£184.20	-£16.99
Misc		-£28.85
<u>Publications</u>		
	£1,093.05	
Book sales (incl. CDs)		-£155.00
Production of 'Haverhill Historian'		-£398.00
Production of Cangle book 2023		-
		-
Totals	£8,053.55	£6,125.42

Balance Carried Forward
21/22

£7,880.
85

£8,053.
55

Income

-

£6,125.
42

Expenditure

Balan ce	£9,808.9 8
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Unpresented Cheque
(000624)

£68.00

£9,740.9

Total 8