

## MARCH AND DISTRICT MUSEUM SOCIETY.

“Preserving March and District’s Past. Informing its Future.”

### Chairman’s Report November 2024.

#### Museum Trustees.

David Bates

Irene Bates

Nigel Denchfield

Susan Edgoose

Linda Gill

John Gowing

Gordon Thorpe

Membership Secretary

Vice-Chairman

Treasurer

Chairman

#### Non -Trustee Post Holders.

Brenda Bottrell

David Edwards

Collection Co-ordinator

Museum Archivist

Dear Museum Member,

It doesn’t seem like five minutes since writing to you in 2023, crucially the message remains the same, thank you for your ongoing interest and support, the museum could not function without you. Thanks too for the new volunteers who have joined us since last year, refreshingly bringing new skills and perspectives to the process of research, maintenance and presentation.

A variety of displays have been presented during the course of the year celebrating, for example, the humble corn dolly to the relative sophistication of 1920s formal attire. Items from our tapestry collection have been focused upon as have some of our older manuscripts and books dating from the 1500s which seldom see the light of day because of obvious conservation concerns. The museum holds a wide variety of material in store, how to access this always presents a problem. One response has been the display of some articles from our reserve collection being presented temporarily as a group rather than in a thematic context, this can be challenging to view and certainly invites visitor questions.

Following the radical revamp of the History of the Fens in 2023, 2024 saw the turn of our outside Agricultural Displays for attention. The farm machinery was checked and repainted by the maintenance team and the labelling was carefully examined by Margaret Williams who then produced a series of unique painted illustrations that serve to explain the use of each item in a detailed but accessible manner. The museum's extensive model bus collection has also been reunited with a variety of associated ephemera, tickets, clipping machines, conductors identity badges all serving to capture an era of bus travel in the Fens prior to the introduction of the plastic travel card.

Christmas at the museum was suitably festive, Fiona Davis's unique museum volunteer tree gave museum supporters the opportunity to star as ornaments! Foliage especially in the Victorian sitting room, gathered by Linda, dressed the area to good effect. The museum once again opened in support of local events notably the Christmas Fayre and the St Georges Festival. However, with the main focus of celebration at the other end of town and continued disruption caused by road works in the centre, museum visitor numbers for these events remain subdued.

We continue to welcome visitors from home and abroad during 2024 among them travellers from France, Norway, Sweden the U.S.A , Australia and South Africa. That said, organised adult group visits this year are fewer than usual, perhaps caused by the gradual return by many to the more consistent holiday patterns enjoyed pre-covid. However, this has been more than compensated for by a significant increase in the number of local school groups visiting the museum from all the March Primary Schools. As one young scholar commented as he left the museum following a school visit "this is the place to be".

We have been offered a wide variety of objects during the year, sadly many of which we are unable to accept because they do not relate to the locality or are duplicates of items all ready held. Items that have been accepted include an original painting of the long gone Three Fishes Public House, a number of rare photographs of buildings in March and most recently a large number of March Grammar Schools, "Annual Lists" donated by the Lockwood family. The latter will fill a number of gaps in our existing collection. March Libraries offer of its historic collection of maps of March has been gratefully received and the estate agents Grounds



decision to close their commercial office in the town has resulted in the acquisition of a vast collection of fascinating documents which are currently being evaluated for inclusion in our collection with non- local items being offered by us to other museums in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Notable dates remembered this year include the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jim Hocking's bravery in saving his bomber crew and March at the expense of his own life, with contacts re-established with Nambour Museum in Australia, Jim's hometown. Similarly, Ben Gimbert and James Nightall's courage in moving a burning ammunition train 80 years ago was celebrated in Soham with the museum's support.

Museum talks have once again been well received and I would thank all the speakers who came forward to deliver them. 2025's programme is currently in preparation and suggestions as to topics would be gratefully received. Our visit to Taff Gillingham's the "Great War Huts Project" in May was strongly supported by members despite the distance to the venue.

One piece of very good news received by the museum this year was the payment of £10,000 from the Post Code Lottery. When first notified of the award we were initially somewhat sceptical when asked for detailed information about the museum. In conversation with the Lottery however, they pointed out that when the money for charities in the March area became available they had carefully researched the museum and received very positive local feedback about us, which in turn triggered the donation. Needless to say this funding provides a very welcome boost to our finances. I would thank Post Code Lottery for the money but also extend thanks to those March residents who were consulted on and were supportive of the museum receiving the money.

The museum has long had a rack selling a limited number of booklets and postcards, this has recently been extended, on the initiative of Brenda Bottrell, into a small shop selling low cost items that have not been acquisitioned but offered by donors for sale for the benefit of the museum. Hopefully this will create additional interest to visitors wishing to augment their personal collections.

Publicising the museum remains an ongoing issue, to this end Margaret Williams has produced a simple flyer highlighting the location and



contents of the museum, we envisage supplying these to other local museums, hotels and attractions which should in turn support visitor numbers throughout the area. If you operate an establishment that might benefit from displaying these flyers please let the museum know.

Our museum trustees continue to be extremely hands on in terms of running the museum, the role is not an occasional attendance but an ongoing commitment to maintaining the building and its collection and I would take this opportunity of thanking them on your behalf. Thanks too for the work of our collection co-ordinator and archivist, Discovering March correspondent Peter Wright and all the volunteers who steward and work in a variety of capacities throughout the museum.

Supporting the museum on an external basis it is vital that we acknowledge the role of March Town Council, Sarah Lemmon, museum member and Town Clerk, Godfrey Smith museum member and independent auditor, Emma Bunbury Museum's Advisor and Helena Rodwell our Accreditation Mentor, (a process yet to recover from the disruption of covid). Finally, thanks to The Oliver Cromwell Hotel for liaising with stewards so amicably.

**Notice Of Museum A.G.M. Which will take place on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November at 7.30 pm at St Peter's Church Hall, St Peters Church, High Street, March, PE15 9JJ.**

Copies of accounts will be available prior to the A.G.M. with hard copies of all documents available on the night. All paid up members of March Museum Society will be eligible to vote. Memberships are now due for 2025-2026 if you have not yet renewed

The A.G.M. will be immediately followed by a talk by Museum Archivist David Edwards titled –“**War Memorials of Cambridgeshire**” which will take an unusual look at some of the counties memorials, some dating back to 1854.

I very much look forward to seeing you all there on the 8<sup>th</sup> and I would once again thank you for your interest in and support for March Museum.

Kind regards Gordon Thorpe.

March and District Museum Society Chairman.

8/10/2024.

**MARCH and DISTRICT MUSEUM SOCIETY**  
(Registered Charity Number 266115)

**RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2024**

|  | 2023-24                 | 2022-23                 |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>GENERAL ACCOUNT</b>                                   |                         |                         |
| <b>Income</b>  |                         |                         |
| Subscriptions  | 396.00                  | 364.00                  |
| Donations  | 1,200.36                | 1,608.45                |
| Meetings Income  | 1,064.00                | 554.80                  |
| Vist income  | 126.00                  | 126.00                  |
| Sale of Cards, Postcards & Bookmarks                     | 6.00                    | 11.50                   |
| Sale of Books  | 100.10                  | 197.50                  |
| Sale of goods  | 37.50                   | 83.32                   |
| Post code Lottery Grant                                  | 10,000.00               | -                       |
| Cambs & Hunts Family History Society donation            | 1,000.00                | -                       |
| Book protector boxes grant from Cambridgeshire CC        | -                       | 625.00                  |
| Photocopies  | 3.80                    | 7.00                    |
|  | <u>13,933.76</u>        | <u>3,577.57</u>         |
| <b>Expenditure</b>                                       |                         |                         |
| Exhibits & maintenance                                   | 245.74                  | 122.53                  |
| Book display boxes                                       | -                       | 638.36                  |
| Display banners  | -                       | 163.20                  |
| Printing, Postage, Stationery                            | 275.39                  | 147.24                  |
| Modes, Fast Hosts, web security & technology             | 320.40                  | 275.87                  |
| Equipment purchases                                      | -                       | 236.89                  |
| Meetings Expenses  | 302.00                  | 254.00                  |
| Visit expenses   | 200.00                  | 119.00                  |
| Sundry Expenses  | 56.00                   | 12.79                   |
| Subscriptions  | 70.00                   | 70.00                   |
|  | <u>1,469.53</u>         | <u>2,039.88</u>         |
| <b>Excess of income over expenditure during the year</b> | <u>12,464.23</u>        | <u>1,537.69</u>         |
| <b>Transfer from Premises account</b>                    | <u>5,822.90</u>         | <u>6,425.39</u>         |
|  | <u>18,287.13</u>        | <u>7,963.08</u>         |
| <b>Balance brought forward</b>                           | <u>47,334.24</u>        | <u>39,371.16</u>        |
| <b>Balance carried forward</b>                           | <u><u>65,621.37</u></u> | <u><u>47,334.24</u></u> |
| <b>PREMISES ACCOUNT</b>                                  |                         |                         |
| <b>Income</b>  |                         |                         |
| March Town Council Grant                                 | 12,000.00               | 11,000.00               |
| March Town Council - maintenance grant                   | 3,669.67                | 2,644.63                |
|  | <u>15,669.67</u>        | <u>13,644.63</u>        |
| <b>Expenditure</b>                                       |                         |                         |
| Rent   | -                       | 50.00                   |
| Repairs & Maintenance                                    | 702.99                  | 798.89                  |
| Water & Sewerage   | 160.77                  | 288.93                  |
| Electricity  | 958.41                  | 913.84                  |
| Gas  | 1.23                    | 2,130.94                |
| Telephone  | 1,277.98                | 1,007.52                |
| Security   | -                       | 1,310.40                |
| Insurance  | 745.39                  | 718.72                  |
|  | <u>3,846.77</u>         | <u>7,219.24</u>         |
| <b>Transfer to Repairs &amp; Decoration Provision</b>    | <u>6,000.00</u>         | <u>-</u>                |
|  | <u>9,846.77</u>         | <u>7,219.24</u>         |
| <b>Surplus to General Fund</b>                           | <u><u>5,822.90</u></u>  | <u><u>6,425.39</u></u>  |

**MARCH and DISTRICT MUSEUM SOCIETY**  
(Registered Charity Number 266115)

**BALANCE SHEET AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2024**

|   | <b>2023-24</b>    | <b>2022-23</b>   |
|---|-------------------|------------------|
| Balances at Bank                            |                   |                  |
| NatWest Liquidity Manager                   | 15,000.00         | 15,000.00        |
| NatWest Reserve Account                     | 92,629.56         | 73,982.23        |
| NatWest Current Account                     | 9,939.80          | 3,227.25         |
| Cash Floats and cash in hand                | 609.69            | 35.11            |
|   | <u>118,179.05</u> | <u>92,244.59</u> |
| Represented by                              |                   |                  |
| <b>GENERAL FUND</b>                         |                   |                  |
| As shown in Receipts & Payments Account     | 65,621.37         | 47,334.24        |
| <b>REPAIR &amp; DECORATION RESERVE FUND</b> |                   |                  |
| Balance brought forward                     | 44,910.35         | 43,963.64        |
| Interest                                    | 1,647.33          | 946.71           |
| Transfer from Premises Account              | <u>6,000.00</u>   | <u>-</u>         |
|   | 52,557.68         | 44,910.35        |
|   | <u>118,179.05</u> | <u>92,244.59</u> |

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of March and District Museum Society**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 30th September 2024

**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 Charities 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 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 proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Godfrey Smith**  
**Chartered Accountant - England & Wales**  
3 Mills Gardens, March PE15 9FB

**18th October 2024**



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(Registered Charity Number 266115)

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