



Herefordshire Museum Service Support Group (HMSSG), formed in 2015, aims to support the Herefordshire Museum Service to continue to provide a museum service in Herefordshire so that the wonderful county collections can be enjoyed by all.

Newsletter

Autumn 2024

Dear Museum Supporter!

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the newsletter of the Herefordshire Museum Services Support Group (HMSSG). You are receiving this because you have given us your contact details to receive Museum news. Should you wish to cease receiving communication from us, please email us a message to members@herefordshiremuseumsupport.org.uk with the word "unsubscribe" in the message title.

In this edition we update you on the developments in Broad Street and the Black and White House, the Collections and on upcoming events. We also have a short perspective from one of the newer volunteers who works both in front of house and behind the scenes.

Just to remind you, between newsletters you can look for other recent information as well as past newsletters at our website at www.herefordshiremuseumsupport.org.uk and our two Facebook sites at "Herefordshire Museum Service" and "Hereford Museum Service Support Group-HMSSG". (Please note another Facebook site, "Hereford Museum and Art Gallery", is *not* an official site).

EVENTS

HMSSG AGM: Thank you to everyone who came along to our AGM on 9th September. It was great to meet old and new faces. We all enjoyed the opportunity to meet the new team and hear an update on service development and the redevelopment project from Damian.

UPCOMING: Late Night Christmas Shopping 4th and 11th December



Enjoy Hereford High Town in the Advent Season.

Dates and times will be confirmed in the next few weeks, but HMSSG are planning to organise festive refreshments at two open evenings at the Black and White House for late night shopping, on Wednesdays 4th and 11th December.

Do come along to share mulled wine, Christmas tea and mince pies with us.

A perfect opportunity to peruse the shop for Christmas gifts or perhaps treat family or friends to a gift voucher for free entrance to this museum. Annual tickets are available at a very reasonable price. The perfect gift for our supporters!

HEREFORD MUSEUM AND LIBRARY BUILDING BROAD STREET UPDATE

Museum development: consultation

The project to redevelop the Museum building in Broad Street is starting to move forward on various fronts now that planning permission has been awarded.

During November and December, the Museum Service is holding round table meetings across Herefordshire. Each round table meeting will last 90 minutes and provide residents with an opportunity to suggest ideas, stories, events, traditions, local industries and figures they believe should be highlighted because they are part of Herefordshire's rich history and culture. HMSSG would encourage people to come along and share details. This is a real opportunity for people outside of the city to contribute to the plans and make the new venue a truly countywide museum and gallery. The team are still finalising locations, dates and times, but these are already confirmed:

8 November 10.30am–12.00, Fownhope Pavilion, Fownhope, Hereford HR1 4PJ

16 November 10.30am–12.00, Staunton on Wye Village Hall, Weaver's Orchard, Staunton on Wye HR4 7LR

19 November 2.30pm–4.00, Bishops Frome Village Centre, The Green WR6 5AR

23 November 10.30am–12.00, St Michael and All Angels Church, Mansel Lacy, HR4 7HQ

28 November 10.30am–12.00, Edwyn Ralph Village Hall, Bromyard HR74LY

3 December 4.00pm–6.30, Kington Library, 64 Bridge St, Kington HR5 3DJ

6 December 10.30am–12.00, Leominster Library, 8 The Buttercross, Leominster HR6 8BN

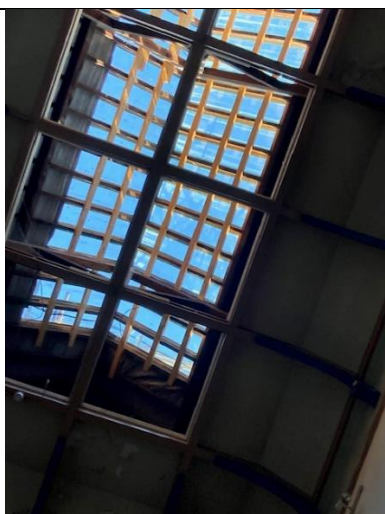
6 December 3.00pm–4.30, Lady Emily Community Hall, Tarrington, HR1 4EX

Please share these dates with anyone you think may be interested in going along. The team want to hear from as many people as possible as plans are developed.

Hard Hat Tours for members of the public and for volunteers

The Hard Hat Tours proved very popular with visitors excited to get a behind the scenes look at the ongoing redevelopment. The tours were featured on BBC Radio Hereford & Worcester, offering a great opportunity for the wider community to learn more about the project and the progress. The feedback has been positive with many expressing their relief that even if the street front aspect of the building is looking vacant, there is much going on behind the scenes.

We took a camera on a tour led by Ben for a group of people for some of whom this was the first visit to the building in many years, and obviously a first for all in its stripped-out state.



Atrium skylight in entrance hall



Original wallpaper outside the Woolhope Room



The curator's fireplace, top floor

The newly uncovered skylight in the atrium stairwell which now lets in so much more daylight drew admiration, though the disappointment that the barrel vaulted glass ceiling is most likely beyond saving and will not get a new lease of life was palpable. The plans to reinvigorate older spaces to new use and expand opportunities for the public to see the collections were well received. As the last few moveable items such as the cinema clock near the Woolhope Room doorway were removed from walls, small samples of original wallpapers were revealed and the possibility that these designs may be reinstated elsewhere raised a question. The once splendid Victorian fireplace in the curator's room on the top floor, recently uncovered by moving bookcases and plywood sheet, should be worthy of reinstating but not as a working fireplace. The corbels which serve as decoration rather than weight bearing on the iron girders may change location but will retain their place as artefacts in their own right. All unique in design they will grace the building and serve as reminders that some things are meant to last!

Great tour Ben and many thanks.



Corbels will be retained to showcase building's history

OPENING HOURS

Monday	Closed
Tuesday	10:00 - 17:00
Wednesday	10:00 - 17:00
Thursday	10:00 - 17:00
Friday	10:00 - 17:00
Saturday	10:00 - 17:00
Sunday	12:00 - 16:00

THE BLACK AND WHITE HOUSE (WHERE KIDS ALWAYS GO FREE)

Our 17th century timber-framed building situated in the heart of Hereford High Town.

Halloween

This Halloween the museum was transformed into The Witches' House, where eerie tales, ghostly witches, and Halloween fun awaited those brave enough to face a chilling story. Those brave enough to visit enjoyed two frightfully fun experiences: a Witches' Trail and seasonal storytelling-Witchy Tales- by Hereford College of Arts performing arts students.



Repair Work

The company Splitlath have completed their work which included removing and replacing most of the modern interventions from the 1980/90s and replacing the lime mortars. The House is now looking resplendent minus the scaffolding clutter and with crisp new outside décor which highlights the carvings and heraldic symbols on the framework - things are definitely looking up for the House.



Magnificently repainted entrance



Childhood area, first floor. Dressing-up clothes are now on each floor.

Black & White House Deep Dive workshop in August

Christy and Denise represented HMSSG at the event along with other volunteers and staff members. Intended via a whirlwind tour of the House to collate ideas for improvements to collection presentation, ambience, practical solutions for improved access and boosting engagement without necessarily costly solutions. Many changes already have been made as witnessed by Jane and Denise last week resulting in clearer walkways, with less clutter in many rooms allowing more of the fabric of the House to be seen. More improvements are planned over the next few months supported by the grant application made by HMSSG to commission new interpretation materials. Other enhancements including refreshing several key areas of the space, updating interpretation stands, adding new sensory experiences, and improving accessibility will continue. Over the next few months further enhancements that make the space more engaging and visitor-friendly will be rolled out as budgets allow. Incidentally, whether inside or outside of it, do look up!

Guided tours

With many years of experience and involvement behind them, the nine additional volunteers now offer guided walks around the building on Wednesdays at 11am and 3pm and on Fridays at 3pm. Highly recommended.

HMSSG were pleased to support the Service in bidding successfully to the Cultural Development Grant programme with the "Heritage Reimagined: Revitalising Hereford's Heritage" project to enhance the interpretative experience at the Black and White House and the Museum Resource and Learning Centre. This project aims to make these venues more accessible and appealing to both local visitors and tourists aiming to attract a wider audience, increase visits, and foster a deeper appreciation of Herefordshire's rich heritage by providing a more engaging and informative visitor experience. With new signage at both sites including exterior and interior signs that ensure consistency in style and messaging, it will be easier for visitors to navigate and appreciate the venues.

Events to celebrate the changes and highlight other ongoing improvements such as updated displays will take place once the materials are installed.

THE MUSEUM RESOURCE AND LEARNING CENTRE (MRLC) AT 58 FRIARS STREET, HEREFORD

The MRLC continues to be the central storage facility for the county's museum collections. Having spent the last year providing a temporary home for the Hereford Library, which proved an excellent opportunity to bring people into the building who have never visited before, and for museum and library staff to work more closely together, the library has now moved into their temporary home in the Town Hall. Shire Hall remains the Library's long term destination and is already undergoing considerable improvements to make it fit for library purpose.

With the space now reverting to the Museum Service the MRLC will be used again for hosting events and meetings and staff are already starting to bring this building back into every-day public use for museum activities. A recent visit was organised for artists from Herefordshire Mind who were astonished at the range of paintings, including two Turners and a very different looking Lowry. Contact the museum team if you would like to arrange a visit.

NEW PROJECTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

New Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund Grant

The Museum has been awarded a prestigious grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund for a new project called, 'Revealing Our Roots: Unearthing Common Ground.' The project will use the Herefordshire Hoard as a starting point for working in three areas of the county with local heritage organisations, community groups and schools. It'll take a few months to get everything set up and then the project will roll out over 24 months. It's an important stepping stone for the Museum to resume being a truly countywide service.

Five Year Action Plan

Under the terms of the grant, the Service needs to start progressing a Five Year Action Plan detailing activities over the next three years, developing Herefordshire Stories around which the permanent and temporary exhibits would be arranged, with the fourth year in the finished building actually making those stories happen through the exhibits. In addition, there would be discussions around additional ways to make the MLRC more accessible to the public, and the B&W House presentation up to date and informed by those stories too. The Museum Director, Damian Etheraads, has met with over 35 partner organisations around the county to create these stories together.

The Sensational Museum Project

Lewis, Kate and Lara successfully hosted taster meetings for the Sensational Museum Project last month. There was an excellent turnout with a range of people attending. The level of engagement and interest in the project has been encouraging, setting a strong foundation for the next phase. Following these successful taster sessions, staff are now in the process of setting up a co-production group. This group will play a crucial role in working collaboratively on the development of the project, ensuring that diverse voices and perspectives are represented throughout the process.

Voices of the Wye

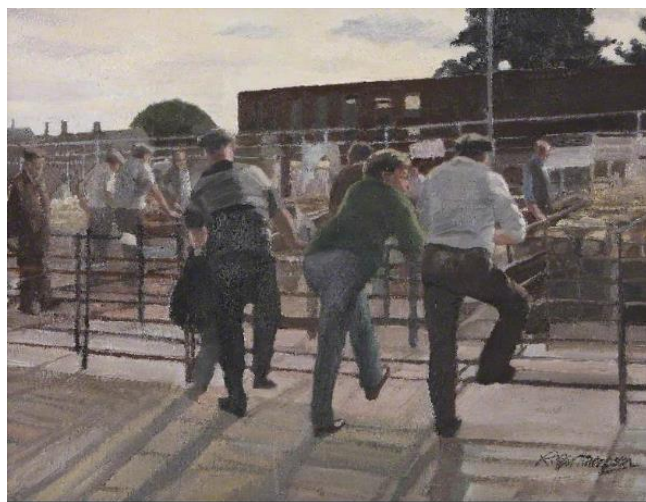
It's great to hear that Marsha O'Mahoney has been appointed oral historian for this project. The project will run through January 2025, and during this time Marsha will capture the stories of people who have worked or lived by the river. Many of you will be familiar with Marsha's work through her books *River Voices: Extraordinary Stories from the Wye* and *Scratch of the Hop*, a social history of the hop growing industry or her work with *Herefordshire Lore* and Catcher Media's project *Carousel*.

Do you know how to access art from the national collections through the Art UK website?

While there is limited access to the county collections at present why not explore them via Art UK? It is the online home for every public art collection in the UK with a website which enables access to art from over 3,400 British institutions- including Herefordshire Museum and Art Gallery. Start exploring by going to artuk.org and search for Hereford Museum and Art Gallery. Access is free and you can choose to sign up for their regular emails which provide art news from across the country direct to your inbox.



Edward Ward Gill, *Hereford Cow*



Roger Hampson, *Sheep sale, Hereford Market*

MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY STAFF TEAM

A reminder of the new staff team. We hope to have pictures of them to share with you in the next edition.

Damian Etheraads: HEAD OF ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM

COLLECTIONS AND ENGAGEMENT TEAM

Dr Kate Riddington: Senior Curator (Collections & Engagement)

Responsibilities:

- Lead the collections and engagement team with a focus on community involvement
- Manage collections to Accreditation standards
- Spark innovation and dialogue with local communities

Kate is supported by

Sally Mansell - Costumes and Textiles – working to gain 'designation' for this sub-collection

Ben Moule - Nat. Science and Social History

Emalee Beddoes - Art and Exhibition Strategy

Lewis Monkley - Curator: Social History, Conservation and Documentation

Dr Kathryn Miller - Archaeology

Alfred Williams - Collections and Information, from Science Museums Group

Katrin Cross - Projects Coordinator (including reporting to HLF/ Funders).

Education

Lara Lourie heads up the education team supported by Jo and Caroline.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE TEAM

Samantha Shuman: Senior Visitor Experience Officer

Responsibilities:

- Collaborate with colleagues to make sure every visitor has a great experience
- Support income-generating activities to ensure financial sustainability
- Help to drive initiatives to boost shop sales and promote events

Samantha's team consists of two Visitor Experience Officers: **Tom Taysom** and **David Hughes**
Supported by two Visitor Experience Assistants: **David Hodges** and **Natalie Price**

"A View of the Museum: From the Perspective of a Volunteer" by Derek Atkinson

I began volunteering at the Broad Street Museum two years ago in a meet and greet function. At the time I was able to meet the team of curators who were very supportive and when the museum closure was planned was delighted to be asked to help in the wind down process.

Decanting the cabinets was the highlight of my museum experience. It was fascinating to open the cabinets and handle the artefacts (with gloves of course) including the Marden Bell which has an interesting history and mermaid legend attached. Packing the delicate artefacts was painstaking but rewarding to see them safely packaged and stored.

I then worked in the Museum Resource and Learning Centre (MRLC) in Friars Street, cutting foam cut-outs for bronze-age daggers and axes. I was present on four occasions inviting guests to see the removal of the mosaic and viewing the Viking Hoard. Alongside this I worked at the Black and White Museum, introducing visitors to the town of 1621 and the Civil War siege.

I have enjoyed working with museum colleagues, learning something new every day, alongside meeting some interesting visitors on the way.

HOT OFF THE PRESS HOARD NEWS

In earlier editions of the newsletter we have included items and updates around the HOARD story. On 30th October a news release reported that the two thieves jailed in Durham for the handling and attempted sale of 44 coins had appealed against their sentences on the grounds that they were "manifestly excessive" for the crime.

Three judges dismissed their pleas on the grounds that, had they succeeded with their plan to sell the coins linked to the Herefordshire Hoard, they would have "significantly diluted the nation's shared history".

HEREFORD CITY LIBRARY

'In Celebration of Libraries': On 8th October some 85 people enjoyed the conference held to mark the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Free Library and Museum in Broad Street Hereford. Professor Steven Pepper illuminated the national context highlighting that it was the Public Libraries and Museums Act of 1850 which first gave local boroughs the powers to establish these public amenities. He explored the changing architectural styles of these institutions which reflected shifting attitudes towards issues such as whether their prime purpose was education or entertainment and the move from locked to open-access bookshelves for access to the collections. From their inception these institutions catered to both men and women with increasing provision made for children. Howard Tomlinson celebrated the campaign to create the institution in Broad Street and the important contribution made by members of the Woolhope Club to the museum collections. The conference ended with Damian Etheraads and Jon Chedgzoy presenting Herefordshire Council's plans for the redevelopment of the Museum and Art Gallery and the City Library. We look forward to seeing these projects come to fruition in 2026/27.

On 22nd October Hereford City Library opened at the Town Hall, Hereford. Although there is still limited space, it is a great improvement on the facilities at the MRLC. The library is spread over several small

rooms and now includes a small local studies collection as well as more IT terminals. It is lovely to see parents and toddlers enjoying the separate Children's Library with its cosy feel. The service will remain in the Town Hall until the new library opens in the Shire Hall. Don't forget to visit the exhibition on the new development and join in opportunities for consultation - all in the library space at the Town Hall.

INDEPENDENT MUSEUMS AROUND THE COUNTY

Although many of the independent Museums in Herefordshire have now closed at the end of the summer opening season, some remain open throughout the year. Many of you will have enjoyed the opportunity to explore 'Space and Other Worlds' held in Hereford Cathedral's various venues. Perhaps you saw the fantastic annual display of cider apples at the Cider Museum - another museum open throughout the year. Missing seeing work by Brian Hatton? On a recent visit to the Mayor's Parlour in the Town Hall, Hereford, we were thrilled to see some of Brian's work along with fine views of the city, several beautiful pieces of Meissen china and the City's plate and regalia. Another collection well worth a visit - usually open on Wednesdays but check their website or ask in the City library.

ABOUT US AT HMSSG

HMSSG was formed in 2015 with the aim of supporting the Herefordshire Museum Service to continue to provide museums in Herefordshire so that the wonderful County Collections can be enjoyed by everyone. If you would like to support us please become a member. Membership is £10 individual and £15 joint; pick up a membership leaflet at one of the museum venues or email membership@herefordmuseumsupport.org.uk. We are a Registered Membership Charity and work to support and develop Herefordshire Museum Service, which comprises the County's History and Art Collections held in trust for Herefordshire's people; the Museum and Art Gallery in Broad Street; the Museum Resource and Learning Centre in Friars Street where the collections are stored; the Black and White House Museum in High Town; and the professional staff team.

Our trustees are committed to the need for HMSSG to support the Museum Service run in an effective and efficient manner suited to the conditions of the twenty-first century. Current trustees are Jane Adams (Chair), Jacki Allison, Christy Bolderson (Treasurer), and Denise North. All the trustees are also members of our Committee, alongside Chris Bucknell and Kate Seekings.

We need more people to help with administration, newsletter, events and social media so please get in touch if you have time and skills to share in this rewarding task: most tasks can be done from home at a time to suit. If you are interested, please contact any of us at herefordshiremuseumsupport.org.uk.

Produced by Jane Adams, Denise North and Kate Seekings for Herefordshire Museum Service Support Group (HMSSG), November 2024



Herefordshire **Museum**
Service **Support** Group