

APPENDIX 1

BEWDLEY MUSEUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
REGISTERED NUMBER 527511
ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st MARCH 2009

Wyre Forest District Council became Trustee of The Bewdley Museum in May 1975, and operates the Museum as a local service under powers contained in the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

Bewdley Museum Management Committee is purely of an advisory status with no powers to expend money or set admission fees and is composed of Wyre Forest District Council Councillors, together with representatives of the Friends of Bewdley Museum. Non voting advisory members of the Management Committee are also appointed by Worcestershire County Council, Bewdley Town Council and The Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) Council; West Midlands are occasionally represented as required.

The Trustee makes acknowledgement to Wyre Forest District Council for the resources provided over the years for the operation of the Museum from public funds.

Funding of £480,000 was secured from 'The Heritage Lottery Fund' in December 2007, towards works including the building of three new craft units, a cafeteria (for which the licence is to be franchised) and various other building works including elements of educational facilities. The overall project budget is £648,348, including £96,000 match funding from Wyre Forest District Council, £15,000 match funding secured from; The Friends of Bewdley Museum, The Earth Heritage Trust, Worcestershire Museums Association Small Grants, Civic Society & Bewdley Town Council. The remainder, 'in kind' support from volunteers and Wyre Forest District Council officers.

The Tendering process for the building works took place in July and August and the Contractor's Charnock and Slater were appointed on 9th September 2008. The building work commenced on 1st October 2008 with an anticipated completion date of early March 2009. The preview and press day was arranged for 1st May with the opening of the 2009 Season on 2nd May. The Official Launch took place on Sunday 3rd May 2009.

The ever popular evening concert to support Bewdley Carnival took place on Friday 6th June 2008 with local musicians Geoff Goodwin's Jubilee Jazz Band sponsored by Bewdley Festival and Wyre Forest District Council.

The "Music in the Gardens" programme on Sunday afternoons ran over five weeks during July and August. We are grateful to the Friends of Bewdley Museum for their contribution and sponsorship for the July concert and the District Council for funding the August programme.

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The Museum continues to support the revival of traditional and contemporary craft practices with a changing programme of courses and workshops each year.

Currently there are six resident craftspeople including, a stained glass maker, textile artists, cabinet maker, fine artist, French polisher and education specialist. A ceramicist potter has temporary residence in the saw yard building.

Admissions continued to rise despite the Museum closing part of the site one month early in September. The free visitor admission provided a total of 93,491 visitors during the season compared to 92,519 last year.

At the close of the school and group visits season, total figures for 2008 showed a decrease for the first time in 5 years. This can partly be attributed not only to the loss of bookings for October and increased competition, but also (as noted by other competitors after consultation), the increasingly adverse cost of coach hire. There were however 17 new enquiries and schools came to visit from as far away as Cheltenham, Market Drayton and Gloucester. 90% of the visiting schools returned a level 5 – very satisfied evaluation of their visit.

This continuing increase in visiting schools and groups was again due mainly to the popularity of the Severn Valley Railway (SVR) programme 'Blitz & Evacuation' with 35 schools participating including those from as far afield as mentioned above. With replica gas mask boxes, labels and identity cards provided as part of the programme, the majority of schools participated fully in creating the right atmosphere for their visits by coming dressed in appropriate clothes.

The other SVR partnership programmes – 'River and Rail' and 'Town Trail' also proved popular in their third year. The last joint programme in this series 'Bewdley Trades' also proved popular. In these sessions, children learnt about the various trades and crafts important in the town's history with an illustrated introductory talk plus hands-on sessions and an opportunity to look at related artefacts and skills demonstrated by Museum Technician Dave Darby. The Anglo Saxon programme offered as part of KS2 Invaders and Settlers proved to be very popular as this year as it has become a more and more hands on experience.

As usual other pre-booked adult groups visiting included care homes and adult day care centres where general tours of the site and the regular craft demonstrations as well as refreshments were popular. A very enjoyable special session of the previous year's Anglo Saxon model house making was tailored to suit a visit from members of Bewdley Stroke Association.

Children's holiday groups also used the site for pre-booked activities such as the local Wyre Forest ones based at St Anne's First School and BOOST at Bewdley Primary School. The children's holiday workshops at Easter as well as those in August (including the WFDC Summer programme activities)

gained a 63% occupancy rating. Drop in additional brass rubbing sessions also continued to be very popular as well as sessions of collage making run by a volunteer.

Continuing with the Education Services' partnership work with local schools on work experience, Bewdley High School student Alex Page and Stourport High School student Rebecca Hill both spent a varied week on site assisting in many areas.

Due to the decision by Education Officer Monica Rees to reduce her hours to part-time, Education Officer Sue Duffield joined the Service on the 1st October. The post is a job share with each officer working 2.5 days each.

The Tea Shop licence was relinquished at the end of September 2008 in readiness for the building works to commence. The tendering process for the operation of the new museum Coffee Shop/Restaurant took place during August with the lease being granted to Melanie Potter in early October 2008. The lease commenced in March 2009, allowing a short period for the fit out of the premises prior to the opening of the 2009 season.

The Friends of the Museum continue to offer valuable support in many different ways including; administration of the donations, active fundraising at the 'Music in the Garden' events, stewarding galleries, brass rubbing & summer workshop activities, gardening duties, assistance with research, air raid shelter wardens and local publicity . Opening of the Air Raid Shelter has been a great success and it is planned to extend opening hours to everyday during the school holidays for the 2009 season.

The Friends once again organised the extremely successful 'Bewdley Open Studios' event. Over 40 local artists signed up and over 1500 visitors came through the Museum doors. During the summer they presented an exhibition of considerable local interest about Tickenhill Manor. It was also supported by a very well attended talk in St Georges Hall. A small number of volunteers have undertaken a project to produce an itinerary of objects held at the Rushock store. This work was required as part of the museum's forward plan required to meet the nationally recognised standard of Museum Accreditation.

Various projects took place during 2008/2009 in relation to the Heritage Lottery development. Volunteer groups were actively involved in this work, notably, clearance of the brass foundry, design of the new galleries, installation of the archive photo interactive, preparation of the site for opening.

Overall the Friends membership and the number of active volunteers continue to grow, their support remains of great value to the museum.

External funding was received throughout the year: £999 from Worcestershire Museum's Association, towards the purchase and installation of the archive photo inter active, £9,000 The Friends of the Museum (partly made up of donations income), £750 Earth Heritage Trust, £500 Bewdley Town Council, £200 Bewdley Civic Society, £100 Brinton's. £752 received indirectly through

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the Friends of Bewdley Museum from the Elmley Foundation for the Bewdley Open Studios Event.

An application for Museum Accreditation was submitted to the Museums Libraries and Archives Council in November 2008. The Accreditation Scheme sets nationally agreed standards for museums in the UK.

There was a varied exhibition programme for the 2008 season which included work by local and regional artists and items from the museum's reserve collection. The Bewdley Festival exhibition in October featured the Methodist Church Collection of Modern Christian Art. The exhibition allowed visitors to view a nationally significant art collection.

As part of the HLF project new displays have allowed more of the collection to be put on display. The Story of Bewdley gallery also features the Baldwin Collection on long term loan from the Worcestershire County Museum and the Bewdley Town charters on loan from Bewdley Town Council.

80 oil paintings from the collection have been listed in the Public Catalogue Foundation's Worcestershire Catalogue. The project was set up to list all oil paintings in public ownership.

During the year, the Bewdley Museum Management Committee met four times to consider reports on the running of the Museum.

The Museum and Brass Foundry is now insured jointly with the Guildhall at a total value of £10.6 million. The Exhibits and Displays are insured to a total value of £106,000.

There was no income or expenditure accruing to the Trust.

Signed: 

Linda Collis, Director of Community and Partnership Services

Date: 4th September 2009