



Black Country Living Museum Trust

29 November 2018

Directors' Bi-monthly Report

Report of the Museum's Management Team

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to brief the Board on notable progress under the Museum's six Strategic Aims.

2 Strategic Aim One – Develop Our Distinctiveness and Brand

- 2.1 Products continue to be reviewed across the Food & Drink outlets in order to get the best products and the best pricing structure. This includes the setup of retro deals with key suppliers so the Museum is rewarded for its volume of purchasing. A number of new partnerships have been confirmed, such as Dr Eamers Gin from Rowley Regis and Vegware, for eco-friendly packaging.
- 2.2 The Volunteer Team have formed a new partnership with Sandwell College Photography & Film students. A small group of final year students are now involved in a project to film the Museum's Street Characters. These films will be utilised as an internal training resource, and also as publicity on the Museum's external website. The students are gaining valuable real-life experience in fulfilling a client brief, together with all elements involved in film production. The finished works will also form part of their portfolio of work for their final year.
- 2.3 The Museum hosted four successful Peaky Blinders Nights on 7, 8, 14 and 15 September. This year's events achieved their highest level of visitor satisfaction ever, with 94% of visitors responding to our post-event survey rating their experience as 'excellent/good'. A response of 96% was achieved among first-time Peaky visitors.
- 2.4 Evaluation questionnaires for school groups have been revised for the new academic year. The questions now not only map learning to the standard Generic Learning Outcomes model, but also to Arts Council England's 7 Quality Principles and the Museum's Visitor Promise.

- 2.5 A second trial of LinkEd family vouchers is currently under way, inviting KS2 students (aged 7-11 years) to return with their families during the Museum's Christmas season. Although the uptake was low during the first trial, the scheme reached an important target audience (Facebook Families) and so it was felt that a further pilot was warranted. In this second trial, the scope has been extended to include Birmingham schools.
- 2.6 For the third consecutive year, the Museum hosted an event in celebration of Black History Month. This year's event, 'You Called, We Answered', saw 250 people attend to hear the migration stories of six panel members, all with a background in the NHS. The audience members were asked to give their own memories of the NHS to feed into the recreation of the Lea Road Infant Welfare Centre as part of BCLM: Forging Ahead.
- 2.7 The Museum ran its 'Festival of Light' again at the end of September – earlier than in previous years to tie in with the Historic Lighting Weekend activities. Over 200 members of the local community attended to take part in a parade of lanterns made by community groups during the summer.

3 Strategic Aim Two – Safeguard, Enrich and Use Our Collections

- 3.1 The Volunteer Team are continuing to recruit, induct and train volunteers – with a recent increase in Visitor Engagement roles. New volunteers are being trained by experienced volunteers and staff alike, resulting in greater coverage within volunteer stations and enhancement of the visitor experience.
- 3.2 Woodside Library featured as September's BCLM: Forging Ahead call-out. The call-out was enthusiastically supported by local media – particularly the Dudley News titles. Following the call-out, the Museum has also received a donation of Woodside Library cards from a former Woodside librarian and daughter of one of the Museum's Learning Assistants.
- 3.3 The Museum's 2018 lifelong learning programme, IgnitED, continues to run until the end of November. In total there will have been 55 activities, engaging 514 participants.
- 3.4 In October, the Museum hosted the Arts Connect West Midlands Team Day. During the morning guests were invited to deliver presentations showcasing their learning programmes and offering different perspectives on the arts and cultural provision for communities in the Black Country. As part of this the Head of Learning was invited to deliver a presentation on the Museum's STEAM programmes.
- 3.5 A number of collaborative meetings and activities have taken place at the Museum during this period as part of the STEAM development programme. This has included:
- The Museum's annual Chemistry at Work event, delivered to 295 students over three days. Activities were delivered by representatives from Ecton Hill Copper Mine, University of Birmingham and Robinson Brothers – one of the

UK's largest manufacturers of speciality organic chemicals. The feedback from the teachers attending the event has been excellent – *"I would like to say how brilliant today's event was and that, despite having difficulty with one of our very challenging SEN pupils, the majority of our pupils got a lot out of the day and really enjoyed it."* (Dormston School attending the day for SEND students).

- Hosting a Dudley Care Leavers event in October, that attracted over 50 participants, including members from the Department for Work and Pensions. As part of the programme, the STEAM Learning Developer delivered two taster workshops – Pewter Casting and Enamelling – to promote the Museum's IgnitEd programmes to the participants.
 - A collaborative meeting with the STEM School & College Outreach and Community Engagement Team at Wolverhampton University, who will be supporting the Museum in the development and delivery of employability focused activities.
- 3.6 Rationalisation work in the compound behind Lench's Oliver Shop continues. Several items of note have been uncovered, including a wheeled crucible and a hand operated brick press.
- 3.7 Operational procedures for boilers across the site are being reviewed, with the aim of improving the longevity of key components. The historic wooden 'Joey' boat, *Birchills* left the Museum for scheduled maintenance. The boat is expected to return in early December. Work continues on the Newcomen engine, with the removal of the remaining brickwork around the life-expired boiler now complete. Construction drawings for its replacement are being finalised.
- 3.8 The Collections Team have been continuing to collect objects and oral histories for BCLM: Forging Ahead. Objects collected include a standing hair dryer for Laurie Thomas' Barbers, a Birmingham Sound Reproducers recorder for Stanton's Music Shop, and a set of knives from the Marsh and Baxter's factory. The team have collected oral histories relating to Woodside Library, Lea Road Infant Welfare Centre and West Bromwich Building Society. The Curator of Domestic & Cultural Life and the Historic Researcher have also met with representatives from National Grid to discuss the proposed translocation of late 19th century cast iron railings from the Swan Village Gasworks, to be used as perimeter fencing of the Industrial Quarter.
- 3.9 The Archivist & Librarian has now successfully re-catalogued over 2,000 items from The Locksmith's House archive collection, and has supported part of the research sources available for the new Black Country Studies Centre.
- 3.10 Archival material of note accessioned/catalogued by the Archivist & Librarian in the last two months includes: Accles & Pollock, Oldbury; Langley Mill, Oldbury; F.W. Cook, Dudley (145 items); the Cradley Heath Women Chain Makers' Strike; E. Minett, ladies' outfitters, Wednesbury; Kieft Cars, Wolverhampton; R. H. Morgan, Willenhall; and A. Griffiths, Cradley Heath (32 items). 23 books and 1 DVD were catalogued, on subjects such as: gardens in the West Midlands; brick

and tile making; Wolverhampton's railways; Kenrick & Jefferson, West Bromwich; Josiah Parkes & Sons Ltd., Willenhall; 19th century domestic space; and Black Country folk music.

- 3.11 The Collections Team dealt with 280 offers and enquiries in September and October. Objects accepted into the collection include a dancing clog doll made by a Dudley man and used in the folk tradition of clog dancing, a Methodist loving cup from a New Connexion church in Oldbury and a British military sword from the 1830s, which was discovered in tunnels under houses in Wednesbury.
- 3.12 A project to digitise the Limelight Cinema is currently underway, and due to be complete by the end of the year. This will allow the cinema and Pawnbroker's Shop to be opened up all day, every day at no additional cost for staff. Care is being taken to preserve the authenticity of the visitor experience and Costumed Demonstrators will continue to give introductory talks. It is hoped that projection room tours will be opened up in the future.
- 3.13 The Head of Domestic & Cultural Life is currently working with the new Curator of Industry & Transport in reviewing procedures for the Bakery. Current firing methods are causing continuous erosion and damage to the ovens. Working with the Maintenance Team, new working procedures are being trialled to maintain the visitor offer whilst safeguarding the collection for the future.

4 Strategic Aim Three – Transform the Visitor Journey

- 4.1 A small refurbishment in the Workers' Institute has improved the layout and food displays, with more hot and cold food items on view to increase the variety of products and showcasing more of the 'fresh in-house' produced items. The new layout has increased visitor space for queuing.
- 4.2 A refurbishment is also planned for the Rolfe Street Café to give more of a feel of its historic 'tube works' past and to make a more relaxed café atmosphere and layout.
- 4.3 The Museum's digital presence continues to grow year-on-year, enabling us to reach wider audiences and in more places. Instagram growth remains strong with 14.6k people now following the Museum (+113% YoY), as well as increased reach amongst Facebook followers – now 151.7k (+42% YoY). The Museum's website remains a prominent platform with hits increasing YoY (YTD hits: 1.28m, +23% YoY).
- 4.4 2 audio descriptive tours and 2 British Sign Language (BSL) tours have taken place during the period. The latter have been supported by the production of a new BSL video, working with costumed demonstrators to advertise the tours to deaf and hard of hearing people.
- 4.5 Harvest Festival this year was developed with a small focused working group from Visitor Engagement and Collections. Working with external volunteers, coupled with the use of the recently finished Hut 14 allowed for a traditional produce show where visitors could interact and add their votes to the exhibits.

A trail guided visitors around the site, pointing out key customs and engagement opportunities. The horse's carts were dressed in the local harvest tradition of the Victorian and Edwardian periods and domestic buildings continued the theme through cookery, crafts and storytelling. The weather was not kind on the Saturday but Sunday saw greater numbers and considerable interaction and interest, indicating that this event can be built on for 2019.

- 4.6 The school holiday events planning group developed and delivered a strong October half-term theme of terrifying tales. Trails and mask making activities were well received by visitors and attendance was strong. The interdepartmental input to these holiday themes has proved a valuable way of working and will be continued and hopefully expanded on in 2019.

5 Strategic Aim Four – Increase Visitor Attendance

- 5.1 Following a successful social media and email campaign, the Museum sold out of Halloween evenings two weeks ahead of the events. The re-branding of the Halloween campaign with a clearer proposition around family fun looked to be particularly effective in driving ticket sales for an event where historically we have had some ticket allocation remaining. Traditional Christmas evenings sold out in 6 weeks (vs. 19 weeks last year) and 1940s Christmas sold out in 5 weeks (vs. 16 weeks last year).
- 5.2 The Racecourse Colliery experience for younger children, designed to give families an alternative to the mine, has proved a great success and holds potential for development throughout 2019. New exhibitors and scenarios created by first person interpretation were very popular with visitors and re-established relations with Dudley and Walsall Colleges.
- 5.3 Current projections for Education attendance are estimating a decrease of 0.8% on last year – equivalent to around 459 paying education visitors (students and adults).
- 5.4 The RAF Hut 14 is now in operation for school lunches. Together with three rooms in the Indoor Picnic area, this provides a capacity for up to 300 children in one sitting. Pre-allocated lunch slots for school groups have been trialled, which have been positively received by teachers so far.
- 5.5 The Museum has featured prominently in local press during September and October, including articles talking about our role in supporting the 'Dudley Vision' and positive coverage in the Leicester Mercury showcasing top Midlands attractions for the early half-term.
- 5.6 The number of Food & Drink events for 2019 have been increased following discussion with new suppliers to allow the team to plan for at least 2 events each month. Following the successful trial of hosting the October Gin events in the Workers' Institute, ticket sales increased from 35 to 60 per event.

- 5.7 The Locksmith's House held a free open day as part of Heritage Open Day, with 206 people visiting. A Horrible Histories themed event was held in October, with 90 people visiting. Both events received positive feedback.
- 5.8 The delivery of the Peaky Blinders events was well received by visitors with exceptional visitor satisfaction scores from the post-event survey. Teams are currently working on improving the offer further for 2019, responding to suggestions from visitors and also increasing the number of nights on offer.
- 5.9 Armistice Day saw the commemoration of 100 years since the end of the First World War. Visitor activities included poppy making for a wreath to be transported to the Museum's War Memorial by the horses for the traditional 11.00am service. An evening service also took place this year, organised by the Friends of BCLM. Lights going out across the Black Country at the start of the War was remembered by the relighting of candles. Deputy Chair, Fiona Toye, laid a wreath and attended the evening events.

6 Strategic Aim Five – Achieve National and International Impact

- 6.1 £1,794,350 has been raised so far against the £2.3m fundraising target in support of BCLM: Forging Ahead. This is made up of the following income:
- Trusts & Foundations – £1,748,000
 - Individuals – £34,422
 - Collection boxes & online donations (including the donation prompt) – £8,613
 - Corporate donations – £125
 - Gift Aid (on individuals and online donations) – £3,189
- 6.2 Funding in support of BCLM: Forging Ahead has been confirmed in this period from:
- Holbeck Charitable Trust (Unrestricted, £10,000)
 - Edward and Dorothy Cadbury Charitable Trust (Unrestricted, £5,000)
 - Lord Austin Trust (Unrestricted, £5,000)
 - Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (Unrestricted, £15,000) – The Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund (in partnership with the Museums Association) declined to fund BCLM: Forging Ahead. This gift is by exception and from a separate budget known as Trustee's Areas of Specialist Knowledge, and gifted on behalf of Sir Jonathan Phillips (trustee). Sir Jonathan's late father, Bert Phillips, volunteered at BCLM for a number of years.
- 6.3 The Museum's expression of interest to the Headley Trust, part of the Sainsbury Family Trusts, was approved in October. Karin Hooper, Principal Officer, will visit the Museum on 5 December. Following this, the Museum will submit a full application in December for a decision in February 2019 (Unrestricted, £100,000).

- 6.4 Applications have also been submitted to:
- Fidelity UK Foundation (Unrestricted, £150,000)
 - Roger and Douglas Turner Charitable Trust (Learning Activity, £10,000)
- 6.5 Work continues on the following grant applications in support of BCLM: Forging Ahead:
- George Cadbury Trust (Unrestricted, £10,000)
 - MacRobert Trust (STEAM Learning, £25,000)
 - Steel Charitable Trust (Unrestricted, £5,000)
 - Michael Marsh
- 6.6 A direct mail campaign to recruit Patrons took place in October and as a result six new Patrons have signed up to the scheme. Income (that will be allocated to BCLM: Forging Ahead) so far totals £4,237.50 (including Gift Aid).
- 6.7 Plans are well underway for the Big Give Christmas Challenge (Tuesday 27 November – Tuesday 4 December) including a new landing page on the Museum's website for the week, a series of challenge videos for social media to spread the message that donations can be doubled for that week, and a presence at the Stourbridge Christmas lights switch on (Saturday 1 December) with the vintage bus and jive dancers. The target for the campaign is to raise £15,000 in donations.
- 6.8 News of the Museum's Santa Hunts has been featured in national media, with coverage appearing in Hello magazine and on ITV's This Morning show in November.
- 6.9 In October, the Head and Assistant Head of Learning attended the LLOAM (Lifelong Learning in Open-air Museums) conference in Holland and delivered a presentation on the Museum's STEAM learning programmes. LLOAM is a sub-group of the AEOM (Association of European Open-air Museums) and meets every two years. This year the conference explored the theme of 'Big History versus Small History' and was held at the Dutch Open-air Museum in Arnhem. It was attended by 17 different museums from 9 different countries.
- 6.10 The Historic Researcher attended a number of community engagement events to promote BCLM: Forging Ahead, including a presentation at the Museum's Black History Month event 'You Called, We Answered' about the Lea Road Infant Welfare Centre.
- 6.11 The Head of Visitor Engagement attended a conference focused on Immersive Heritage Performance. There were some excellent discussions on retail in the museum space, which saw attendees taking note of BCLM's successful introduction of appropriate items for sale on site. In addition, Wolverhampton University gave a presentation on 'Back in 10' – a project run with the Museum and Black Country Touring during the summer.

- 6.12 As part of a working agreement in knowledge sharing, the Costume Team have created a number of World War II Women's Voluntary Service dresses for the Royal Voluntary Service's national photo shoot to commemorate 80 years since the founding of the organisation. The costumes received excellent feedback on social media, with many wanting to know where they could buy one! The Museum now has the patterns for some of the most truly authentic replicas in the heritage industry today.

7 Strategic Aim Six – Grow and Diversify Our Income

- 7.1 The relocation of the Women's Voluntary Service van has given a fresh focus as an alternative food and drink outlet as it is more visible for the visitors. This will continue to be open throughout the winter months.
- 7.2 Business Partners income for the year stands at £22,500 (£17,000 new and £5,500 renewals). Thomas Dudley confirmed as a Brass Partner this month at £6,000 +VAT for 12 months. Venue Hire income year-to-date is £61,492 with a profit of £36,442 (£19,344 above budget). October alone saw an income of £16,279, which yielded a profit of £8,992.
- 7.3 Sponsorship target of £20,000 has been exceeded at £21,000. Work on 2019 activity is now taking place. A positive meeting has taken place with the Senior Manager of Sustainability from Tarmac with a view to begin with corporate volunteering and build the relationship to a higher level of support. Conversations are also in progress with Sadlers regarding 2019 involvement.
- 7.4 Membership income for the year-to-date is £65,032 net against a target of £35,000. The Museum currently has 2,030 memberships. Prices for 2019 will increase slightly as they have remained the same for the past 3 years.
- 7.5 The Museum has been in demand as a filming location over the last two months. Three productions for Channel 4 have been filmed on site, for transmission in 2019. These included a property show fronted by Phil Spencer, 'Drag Lab' – a show featuring local people transformed into drag queens, and 'Car SOS'. In addition, an advertising shoot for a high-end fashion brand, Hackett, took place. Peaky Blinders series five then took over the Museum's Boat Dock between 6 and 16 November.
- 7.6 Adey's Greengrocer's Shop is now a collaborative enterprise between Heritage Shops, Visitor Engagement and Retail. Initial visitor reactions have been good, with sample tastings and sales of linked recipe items to the cooking that takes place in the buildings proving popular. Working with Collections, further ideas are being developed for Christmas sales.

8 Annex

- 8.1 None.