



Kent Museums Group
Protecting Kent's Heritage

Minutes of the General Meeting

held at Rochester Guildhall Museum, 5th June 2015

Present: Chair & Secretary: J Harrison; S Corn, P Divall, D Boston, T West, R Dann, C Ward, L Thompson, M Goodhew, T Hill, A Freeman.

1. Apologies:

J Adamson, M Thomsett, J Jones, S Lace, J Fryer, D Wills, A Edwards, S Gosling, D Greaves, C Foreman, R Morley, C Griffiths, A Boxall, K Macklen.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting & matters arising

Minutes of the 2014 Annual General Meeting at the Masonic Museum, Canterbury on the 16th February 2015 were approved.

3. Future meetings – a new approach

After discussions by KMG Council, a proposal was put to those members present to drop the current format of a business meeting followed by a speaker on a topic of current interest. The proposed format is best described as facilitated developmental seminars/workshops, with three planned already: a philosophical/strategic look at our own institutions to identify strengths, USP's etc; a marketing workshop drawing on the USP's etc; followed by a fundraising/grants workshop to strengthen members' grasp of desired outcomes (fundlers pay for outcomes, we tend to apply for funds for what we want to do). Attendance at these seminar/workshops will be by advance booking. Smaller get-together/network meeting are also planned with MDO presence as available.

This new approach was approved by all present with the following comments: networking meetings and the one-day Conference (see 4 below) should be open and promoted to wider heritage groups; members' news presentations in person will be welcomed at networking meetings; there may – eventually – be a subtle name change for KMG by using the capitals with a strap line indicating a wider heritage role.

4. KMG Development

Following points raised and discussed at the last meeting and circulation of that discussion in the minutes, JH had received no further comments from members.

JH noted that KMG is at an important 'junction': carry on without much impact on members' development (as some members no longer attend meetings), or raise the level of operation by developing aspects detailed below. The ultimate aim of this development is to formalize KMG as a CIO (association model), strengthen its voice and presence and even appoint part-time admin support in order to properly fulfil the Group's aims and mission of supporting and developing museums in Kent & Medway.

JH led discussion through the following points:

- a) **Further development and promotion of KMG website** – including the uploading of selective resources to complement the SEMDP site's offer. And material to reach wider heritage groups.
- b) **Regional museum leaflet to promote members** – Council's conclusion that this would not give much benefit, is a very large and costly project all on its own, and can be achieved more efficiently on the KMG website, was supported by members present so the idea is shelved.
- c) **Development of links with other related organizations** that can benefit our members e.g. University of Kent Marketing Dept, Museums Studies, Business Development, etc; University of Creative Arts campuses in Canterbury, Maidstone, Rochester and Folkestone. Following an SEMDP Seminar on the use of students this week, Sarah confirmed that students from such institutions and courses are keen to be involved with project delivery etc. Andrew noted recent and very successful use of theatre students by Rochester Guildhall Museum. Agreed that this would be useful work to progress.
- d) **Delivering 'clinic' sessions for members** These were tried in 2005 but there was no uptake at all. Now there are sub-regional network groups and a very efficient MDO backed up by resourceful website, it is unlikely to be worth the effort as queries are now resolved through the aforementioned channels..
- e) **Delivery of training additional sessions** – Agreed that the recent evolution of SEMDP training from our MDO and the progress made by members through the Accreditation Scheme reduced the need for such training so KMG will shelve the idea. However, it may be the case that in years to come KMG could be commissioned to deliver training if MDO provision is reduced for any reason.
- f) **KMG annual conference** – Preceded briefly by our AGM, this one-day conference would showcase good practice to a wider heritage audience whilst also allowing time for networking – similar to Sarah's recent SEMDP Showcase event at Chatham Dockyard. This too was agreed by members present.

JH noted that this formed a significant amount of work in addition to his current Chair and Acting Secretary roles and a network development grant would be sought from the SEMDP to facilitate the work.

5. MDO update

Sarah had no new updates for members but discussion centred on the value of such updates at meetings now that a great deal of news and updates were available online along with information on funding availability etc. It was agreed that Sarah's continued presence at KMG networking meetings and sub-regional network meetings is desirable for immediate responses and guidance to museum's own activities and projects.

6. Whitstable, Herne Bay and Dolphin Yard Museums

JH updated members on progress made in the transfer of museum service delivery from Canterbury CC to two community groups: both groups had encountered problems but hoped to open this season.

JH had emailed Clive from Dolphin Yard Sailing Barge Museum (destroyed by fire several years ago) for an update on recent progress; Martin informed members that progress was being made in identifying a Sittingbourne site after tidal height measurements revealed that the bridge wouldn't impede barge access after all and environmental impact assessments were now underway.

7. Any other business

- a) There is a new museum in Rochester which deals with the Huguenot immigration to Kent resulting from religious strife in France <http://huguenotmuseum.org>
- b) Folkestone Museum is awaiting HLF Phase 2 approval
- c) A new Mining Museum is being developed in Betteshanger.
- d) JH had been approached by a commercial company offering Volunteer Management software for sale at £80. Agreed by those present that most of our members would have little use for it. Email kate@betterimpact.co.uk for more details.
- e) Court Hall Museum at Milton Regis, Sittingbourne is now open to the public – Saturday only.
- f) Cliff informed members of a development by the Smarden Historical Society – a digitisation project using bespoke software which, through Kent Archaeological Society, equipment would be available for others to use.

8. Date, time and place of next meeting

Next meeting date and venue yet to be confirmed

Presentation on reduction of energy use and associated costs

Rowan Wallis from Sustainable Business Partnership gave a very practical and inspiring guide to reducing energy costs and, with Andrew Freeman from Rochester Guildhall Museum giving very positive feedback from employing Rowan's talents at the Museum, it was very clear that dramatic savings – up to 90% in some case – could be made!

The audit and recommendations given by Rowan to Andrew will be circulated as an attachment with these minutes. Email JH if you do not receive it.

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Members' News

Bexley Heritage Trust

Hall Place:

Watershed- art, play and the politics of water March 28- September 6 2015

Watershed is a contemporary art exhibition that brings together international artists whose work celebrates water, through photography, video and installation in ways that are thought provoking and sometimes political. Artists include: Laura Ellen Bacon, David Buckland, Susan Derges, Noemie Goudal, Chnag Kyum Kim, Tania Kovats, Susie MacMurray, Ttasuo, Miyajima and Gavin Turk amongst others.

All about Owls

Meet Jams Owls and their visitor friendly barn owls and learn how the owls survive in the wild, what they like to eat and their nocturnal habits. 10am-4pm every Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday (Weds and Thurs during school holidays).

Butterfly Jungles Experience & Plant Centre

Open daily- Walk amongst stunning free flying butterflies from around the world in a rainforest environment full to the brim with beautiful exotic flowers.

Danson House:

Vivienne Westwood: Cut from the Past 1 April- 31 October 2015

The impact of 18th century art and design on the work of distinguished British fashion designer Vivienne Westwood is celebrated in a new exhibition at Danson House. Vivienne Westwood: Cut from the Past brings together for the first time a number of her ground-breaking designs, and explores the collections that proved to be her turning point both critically and commercially. Designs and outfits on show make particular reference to the Rococo paintings of French artists Watteau and Boucher. Westwood's passion for 18th century design is also reflected in some earlier pieces. Danson House provides a tailor-made backdrop to the exhibition which highlights Westwood's seminal work of the 1990s influenced by the 18th century.

Tenterden Museum

Tenterden Museum is working with The University of Lincoln Conservation Unit, to interpret Georgian era wallpaper discovered in Tenterden. The wallpaper, which has survived for over 200 years, is from a time when conflict with the superpower of France drove innovations such as the Royal Military Canal and the Turnpike Trusts.

The new display of wallpaper from the Georgian Theatre Tenterden will be used to transport visitors back to a time of extensive building of houses, the revolution in the quality of roads, communications and social expansion. The now restored Georgian Theatre wallpaper captures the essence of social change when travelling players were at the leading edge of what has become 'theatre' today.

The exhibition will show how the Georgian period, especially during the reign of George III, changed Tenterden and the surrounding area from a largely unsophisticated and isolated rural community to one which would have connections across the county.

If any clubs or societies would like to book a private viewing, from Easter onwards, which may include a guided tour and/or wine & cheese please contact the Curator, Debbie Greaves - details below.

Wine & Cheese Party costs:

Wine & Cheese Party

2015 – Tenterden Museum

A lite bite not a meal!

Here follows a list of what we will provide.

You have full use of Tenterden Museum, food preparation and layout, plus two willing helpers, for free.

I have an additional wine waitress/helper available if there are more than 40 guests, I usually pay her £10.

Please let me know numbers at least a week before the party date so that I can order sufficient wine glasses and arrange the food and table decorations etc.

Venue cleared and wine glasses returned, all included.

The Wine & Cheese Party will include a good selection of cheese-based finger food and a selection of Red/White/Rose wines plus orange juice for those who do not drink alcohol.

Cost £4 per person including the wine/ soft drinks

Or £3 per person for a wine-free event

Guests are welcome to browse the museum which is six rooms on two floors.

Tenterden Museum sits comfortably within a collection of similar Victorian weatherboard industrial buildings circa. 1850. Built as a stable and store, it contains fascinating local history, including the local architecture in our eclectic buildings room and mediaeval ship building, which drove this areas thriving economy during the 15th century. In addition to the new Georgian Era Project during the four years commemorating the centenary of WWI we also have an absorbing exhibition highlighting how this conflict impacted on people who lived in our area.

For opening times contact details and other special events please see our website:

www.tenterdenmuseum.co.uk or email enquiries@tenterdenmuseum.co.uk

We very much look forward to your visit.

Sevenoaks Museum

We are planning a new exhibition for October called 'What's your Passion', inviting local people to say what they really enjoy doing and exhibiting their collections, photos and other material to support this. And this morning we have a potter making 'Magna Carta seals' with a group of children. I have just shown them some of the seals in our collection.