



Kent Museums Group
Protecting Kent's Heritage

Minutes of the General Meeting

held at Maidstone Museum & Art Gallery on 24th May, 2013

Present: Chair & Secretary: J Harrison; S Corn, J Fryer, C Griffiths, R Morley, T West, L Thompson, P Divall, M Goodhew. Speakers: K Pontin, H Thomas (Museum Engagement Officer at Surrey CC), E Palmer (Museums for Schools Project Officer, Maidstone Museum)

1. Apologies:

R Dann, J Adamson, C Ward, K Harris, M Esain, C Reader, D Wills, C Boxer, K Chaney, M Boulding, M Thomsett

2. Minutes of the previous meeting & matters arising

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting at The Beany, Canterbury on 3rd April 2012 were approved.

3. Update on Archaeology in Kent

JH update members on the gathering momentum for a new Kent & Medway Archaeological Working Party to address long-standing storage issues and to develop common policies and procedures for collecting, recording and storage. Following a museum archaeology meeting in March, mapping of collecting area/partners is well under way and should lead to GIS capabilities. Haidee Thomas, Museum Engagement Officer at Surrey CC noted that Surrey has similar problems and a combined approach across the SE may bring better results. JH to represent KMG on the Working Party – though a larger Kent museum with archaeological collections may be a better choice once the Party is up and running.

4. World War I Commemorations

Following a successful session at the Royal Engineers Museum, Sarah mapped out the structure of a new Steering Group to ensure WWI commemorations were coordinated: 4 new subgroups: Education, Research, Marketing, and Coordination. Sarah also found that Visit Kent had formed a group – this has now been absorbed into marketing group and includes KM Newspapers. University of Kent History Department are willing to 'validate' projects and Kent Children's University have developed a 'degree' in WWI history. Martin Goodhew at Swale Borough Council is also coordinating any projects from museums in Swale. Link to Kent & Medway plans is <http://fwwkentmedway.wordpress.com/>

5. Data Collection Survey

Kate Pontin, a consultant currently doing work for Sarah, gave a short presentation on her work surveying collection of user data by museum in order to establish a common template for us all to use in order to compare figures properly. Kate has had over 100 responses and finds that most museums collect data and collect similar data. Kate stressed the importance of such data collection as it informs better and more focussed marketing whilst also recording economic value of museums. Hopefully Kate will report back to a bigger session on data collection when she has finished her work for Sarah.

6. MDO News

Sarah gave report of her current and future work/planning:

- a. A new Museum Development Service website is to be launched. This replaces the Renaissance SE site and will feature information on current programs, funding opportunities, regional and sub-regional aims, news, etc
- b. Sarah has launched Accreditation Club – informal gatherings around the region to help museums working towards Accreditation write policies and plans – Saturday morning sessions; contact Sarah for dates and places
- c. There is a new programme of training for smaller groups looking at specific subjects: sustainable volunteering (July); income generation (24th June at Chatham Historic Dockyard); social media workshops including income generation (Sept); eye catching graphics; WWI follow-up; tours of larger museums e.g. Dover with a talk.
- d. There is now a Kent & Medway Preventive Conservation Officer available for site visits and advice (through Sarah)

7. Any Other Business

None

8. Next Meeting

Many thanks to Maidstone for provision of our meeting room and facilities today! Adrian Babbidge will present on the new CIO Trust status on **September 23rd** at The Fleur de Lis in Faversham; 9.30am for a 10.00am start

Following the business meeting, members were given a very thorough presentation by Haidee Thomas, Museum Engagement Officer at Surrey CC (and Learning Support Officer working with Sarah), and Lyn Palmer from the Education Team at Maidstone Museum. The session gave very practical and succinct guidance on how best to work with schools and teachers; also, Lyn gave insight into Maidstone Museum’s funded project to work with schools, including developing and funding partnership projects between Maidstone and other museums. Presentations will be sent with these minutes.

Members’ News

Fleur-de-Lis Museum, Faversham

Recent Visitor numbers are down on last year but picking up at last.

Griff Rhys-Jones paid us a visit last Friday during his 4 day tour of Kent to publicise ‘Civic Voice’. This organisation persuades and assists local organisations to preserve and publicise their heritage, rather than

depend on our Councils to do this for us. He was impressed by the Museum and the work of the Faversham Society regarding local heritage. He also visited the 'Purifier Building', being restored by the Faversham Creek Trust so that it may be used to bring back maritime crafts and apprenticeships to the Creek Basin.

Our Learning Manager, Dr. Moya Dean, is still keeping very busy improving our educational facilities – yet another enjoyable Family Fun Day in the Library with lots of hands-on activities takes place this week. A 'hands-on' 'Explorer trolley' has just been placed in the Museum, with several activities designed to amuse and educate our young visitors. Moya is also working on an archaeological extravaganza called "Faversham in the Making" on Saturday July 20th – using the Alexandra Centre, the Fleur Museum and the Old Vaults Inn on Preston Street there will be activities, displays, actors and an actual dig in the Old Vaults Inn.

Minster Abbey Gatehouse

Although individual visitor numbers have been low during the Spring, events have brought visitors to the Museum. The volunteers have been participating and promoting events in Minster which have increased awareness of the museum and raised funds.

Small groups have been received during May and 81 pupils from a nearby school spent the day in the Museum when various activities were arranged.

A very successful 'Finds Day' was organized.

Work is continuing on reorganizing the early history displays. Various items of local ephemera have been left to the Museum by deceased members, which will be useful in illustrating the social history between the World Wars.