



Kent Museums Group
Protecting Kent's Heritage

Minutes of the 2014 Annual General Meeting

held at Kent Museum of Freemasonry, Canterbury on 16th February 2015

Present: Chair & Secretary: J Harrison; S Corn, C Boxer, M Thomsett, P Divall, D Boston, C Foreman, R Morley, J Andrews, K Macklen.

1. Apologies:

J Adamson, J Fryer, D Wills, A Edwards, M Esain, S Gosling, T Hill, D Greaves.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting & matters arising

Minutes of the general meeting at Ashford Borough Council on 19th September 2014 were approved.

3. Accounts for period 1st November 2013 – 31st December 2014

JH noted for members that these Accounts were for longer than 12 months as we shift to be in line with the calendar year.

Opening balance at 1st November 2013 £3948-85

INCOME

Subscriptions £430-00

EXPENDITURE

Lecture fee (Babbidge)	£251-88
Lecture fee (Seth-Smith)	£150-00
Travel refund	£25-60
Projector	£321.18
Website domain & hosting	£84-79
Subs to Kent History Fed	£15-00
Sub-total	£ 848.45

Closing balance at 31st December 2014 **£3530-40**

Subscriptions for this year are up from £350 in 2012-13 to £430 after a drop from £500 the previous year. Expenditure up from £353 as a result of investing in equipment and a website; also paid for two of the year's speakers rather than one (as in most years).

JH reported that David Wills has reluctantly resigned as Treasurer due to pressure of other work and JH thanks him for his sterling and important service to the Group.

4. Chairman's Address

JH gave a short address: Without pre-empting our discussion about the Group further down the agenda, I can say that we are enjoying a period of stability – both within the Group and in the museums sector. Our membership numbers are relatively steady with two new members joining the Group whilst one or two fall away; attendance at meetings varies despite this meeting have a low turnout; KMG now

has a website www.kentmusemsgroup.org on which we can build; and financially, we are in a position to spend more on Group development.

Regionally, we have the benefit of a great MDO and all the support she gives whilst the dark days of her contract being 1 day/week for 6 months at a time have been replaced with full time and three year contracts – now planning ahead for the 2015-18 cycle. There is also funding out there for those who can plan ahead, develop interesting/useful projects, and take advantage of the wide range of support to develop a successful application.

As such, it is about time KMG also made some developmental progress so that we can better serve our members whilst impacting more seriously on a wide range of regional developments. I hope that our discussion today (see below) will spark further comments from those not present today and KMG Council can then initiate some projects to raise our game, so to speak.

5. Elections

No nominations were received for Officer positions or for Council membership. JH noted that we need to find a new Treasurer to replace David, and at least one more Council member to replace Peter Boreham and Kim Norton, both of whom had taken early retirement.

A continuance of current Council members and Officers until the next AGM was proposed by David Boston and seconded by Rod Morley and agreed unanimously by those present.

6. KMG Future direction

There was a lively discussion with the following suggestions being put forward:

- a) A shift from apologies to confirmation of attendance would save money as JH could predict catering requirements more accurately (e.g. today!) whilst also avoiding an embarrassingly low turn out when inviting speakers from considerable distance. This will be instituted for meetings from now on.
- b) Wider promotion of KMG and Kent's museums:
 - I. The development of a leaflet style directory of museum in both English and French. This could attract cross-channel funding and replaces a similar leaflet from 15+years ago.
 - II. Further develop the KMG website with more information about heritage assets in Kent, more resources etc, include Engaging With Museums resources (see minutes from Sevenoaks Meeting last May); also spending more time on promoting the site, strengthening links with other sites, etc
- c) Be more proactive about linking with other related organizations that can benefit our Group and membership e.g. University of Kent Marketing Dept, Museums Studies, Business Development, etc; University of Creative Arts campuses in Canterbury, Maidstone, Rochester and Folkestone. Students from these various institutions and courses can bring skills and project delivery with relatively little financial implications for museums.
- d) Delivering 'clinic' sessions for members. These were tried in 2005 but there was no uptake at all, but subject specific sessions with booked 'slots' might attract more interest.

- e) Deliver training sessions over and above our members' meetings – especially in conjunction with sub-regional networks. This would give more support to our MDO whilst also keeping step with ACE priorities in rationalizing networks across the SE.
- f) Hold an annual conference (perhaps preceded briefly by our AGM) where we could invite wider interests to hear about good practice and progress – a Kent & Medway version of the Brooklands Museums event for the SE Region last autumn.
- g) Develop a stronger voice regionally. This is a longer process involving the Group's evolution to having a permanent host address and even a paid representative. The completion of b-f above (and any other suggestions) would generate more momentum and impact from the Group, making us a stronger lobbying force.

Any comments or further suggestions from members not present today are welcomed – please email John asap so that Council can discuss and report progress in the May meeting.

7. MDO and ACE News

- a) Friday 20th March at the Historic Dockyard, Chatham – the launch of the 2015-18 South East Museum Development Programme. Starts with a networking lunch at 12pm.
- b) On Tuesday 3rd February, a group of staff and volunteers from across Kent & Medway museums and heritage sites got together to find out how to create an effective and enjoyable workshop for schools. It is an easy it is to offer something that supports Arts Award especially using the new Arts Award Supporter website.
- c) A short film shot last year featuring teachers and museums using collections to teach the curriculum. [View the film here and register your museum on the 'Engaging with Museums' website here](#)
- d) Going Digital in Kent Thursday 19 March, The Beaney, Canterbury
'[Going Digital](#)' is the Collections Trust's back-to-basics flagship campaign to support museums in improving their use of technology to manage collections, build audience and enhance the visitor experience.
- e) **Peer2Peer: Learning Volunteers** Thursday 26th March, Rochester
Are you currently managing a team of volunteers and want to share some top tips; or you are just about to recruit more volunteers to support delivery of a new learning programme? Then come along and have a chat with some friendly local faces at the second in our series of [Peer2Peer](#) networking opportunities, this time led by Rochester Cathedral and the Guildhall Museum.
- f) Our Preventive Conservation Officer, Siobhan, has updated our [Conservation Advice](#) pages with information on light, temperature and relative humidity, mould and pollutants
- g) Giving Digitally Through DONATE
Set up in March 2013, DONATE is the mobile platform and the public-facing brand of the National Funding Scheme - a registered charity specifically set up to support the arts, heritage and culture sector.
- h) #MuseumWeek is back and will run from 23 - 29 March. Last year, more than 630 European museums and galleries got involved. A different hashtag and theme are provided for each day so

everyone can take part. Get involved, be social, engage with new international audiences - and have fun!

- i) Opportunity to host a commemorative art project, 'Ghost'
Artist [Simon Withers](#) is looking for a museum host and partner to support an exciting '14/18 Now' application, due to be submitted in March. The project will commemorate the introduction of the tank: the first offensive using Mark 1 tanks took place on 15th September 1916 during the Battle of the Somme.
- j) AIM has published a new Advocacy Impact Toolkit to support museums of all types in making their own cases for the many ways in which they benefit the public, their communities and society. [Advocacy Impact Toolkit →](#)
- k) Last year, [Jayne Franck](#) from the Institute of Manufacturing at the University of Cambridge ran an open survey for all museum and cultural organization to share information about the performance of their donation box. <http://southeastmuseums.org/news-and-opportunities?item=1340#.VOFHvmsXp9>

8. Voluntary Arts Week

SE Development Officer for Voluntary Arts, Katie Rees, gave a presentation (attached to the email circulating these Minutes) showing a wide range of very useful support from which our members could benefit widely.

9. Annual Returns

Tom Newman from the SW Museum Development Programme gave a presentation on the new Annual Returns to be circulated to museums in the SE and highlighted the benefits for advocacy and provision of evidence for funding. Presentation attached to the email circulating these Minutes.

10. Culture24 and Museums at Night

Rosie Clark from Culture24 gave an extensive presentation on the database of museums held and promoted by Culture24 and showed how museums can easily benefit from adding information to the database, including info on upcoming events which Culture24 can then promote nationally on your behalf. Rosie proceeded to highlight the ever popular Museums at Night activity programme, again showing how museums can easily gain very wide national promotion especially when activities can be photographed. Rosie is also working on the Connect! Programme which unites artists and performers with venues and projects. Presentation and resources attached to email. Further links –

More information about our Voluntary Arts partnership <http://museumsatnight.org.uk/partnership-opportunities/partnership-opportunity-work-with-a-voluntary-arts-group/>, and two resources:

Resource for venues on working with voluntary arts groups <http://voluntaryartsweek.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Museums-at-Night-working-with-voluntary-arts-groups.pdf>

Resource for voluntary arts groups on working with museums <http://voluntaryartsweek.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Top-Tips-working-with-cultural-venues.pdf>

If anyone doesn't already get the Museums at Night email newsletters about new partnerships and promotional opportunities, they can sign up to receive them here: <http://eepurl.com/-Urrj>

Rosie is happy to discuss any museum's event plans and give them marketing tips, give her a call...
Rosie Clarke, Campaigns Officer, Culture24. Direct line: 01273 623336 Office: 01273 623266
Follow: [@MuseumsAtNight](#)

11. Any other business

JH reported that Canterbury City Museums had received ACE funding to support the development of two community groups in each of their coastal museum towns (Whitstable and Herne Bay) so that these groups could register new CIOs and tender for the management contract to run these museums. The Whitstable group has already been awarded the contract and the Herne Bay group is expected to follow. Both museums will open in April under new community management and should be joining KMG in due course.

12. Date, time and place of next meeting

Next meeting yet to be confirmed but JH asked for members' preference on choice between a fundraising clinic, where we can have an open discussion with an expert looking at actual situations, or a straightforward best practice presentation from the same expert. Please email JH with your preference.

Members' News

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.

We anticipate favourable interest from a wide range of visitors due to the scope and breadth of this permanent display. We already have engagement with Homewood School & Sixth Form Centre and intend to advertise widely in the period running up to our Easter 2015 opening.

Fleur-de-Lis Museum, Faversham

Visitor numbers in 2014 were down a little on last year while Gallery Exhibition visitors were slightly up. The last exhibition was very popular, featuring artwork by founder member and Society artist Jack Salmon. Our accreditation application was sent off in December – thanks to Clive Foreman and John Harrison.. The last project led by Julie Ricketts (attractive displays on Faversham area Villages) has been mounted in the Museum.

We were sad to hear of the death of Faversham Society founder and Director, Arthur Percival. He will be missed, as a friend and colleague and for his wealth of local and family history knowledge. His funeral was Family only but a Memorial Service took place in the Parish Church to a packed audience on 9 December.

By a strange coincidence, Arthur had published the obituary to fellow founder member Peter Hutley-Bull the week before he died.

Chart Mills

Now closed for the season, visitor numbers were slightly up on last year, helped by several 'out of hours' group visits. We 'went out with a bang' on bonfire night, with a spectacular display of historical explosives by local re-enactment star Dave Lamberton.

Chiddingstone Castle

Chiddingstone Castle is opening the library to the public this year as we have been cleaning and cataloguing all the books in the winter. This was done with a group of 14 volunteers that were all trained by Emily Nisbet-Hawkins.

We have also included handling sessions to our learning offer. We started doing this with objects from the Ancient Egyptian collection and this has already appealed to groups of children and adults. This is a great way of making our collection more accessible to the public, engaging more and different audiences and getting some much needed extra income!

We are giving some of our displays a face lift at the moment and will have new objects on display from April, including a display on Japanese swords and a commemorative display case of the 1715 Jacobite Rebellion.

Dover Museum & Art Group

DMAG 'Code name Joined Up' goes from strength to strength. All the artists have been identified and introduced to their hosts. The drawing and stitching workshops are well attended and very much appreciated. Most of the museums have their WW1 exhibitions/displays on show. The steering group are working on the digital strategy and all the artists are blogging about their visits, events and experiences.