



Herefordshire Museum Service Support Group (HMSSG), formed in 2015, works to support Herefordshire Museum Service so that the wonderful county collections can be enjoyed by everyone.

Newsletter Summer 2024

Dear Museum Supporter,
Welcome to the summer 2024 newsletter of Herefordshire Museum Services Support Group (HMSSG).

In this edition we celebrate the wonderful news that planning permission and listed building consent for the redevelopment of Broad Street's Hereford Museum and Art Gallery was approved by the Council Planning Committee on 17 July. Thank you to all of you who have supported this project for so long in so many ways. It's fantastic that these plans will become a reality over the next few years. Now that the project is finally getting underway, Damian Etheraads and his team will be offering a variety of ways in which you can stay in touch with and contribute to the project. See below for an opportunity to apply to join the Curatorial Advisory Panel and help shape the temporary and permanent exhibits.

We are delighted to welcome new staff members who have joined recently and to keep you up to date with summer events planned in the Black and White House and other collection news.

Date for your diary. The **HMSSG AGM will be held on Monday 9 September 2pm-4pm** at the MRLC in Friar Street. The short business agenda will be followed by a talk by Damian Etheraads, Head of Art Gallery and Museum, who will outline the plans for service expansion and redevelopment of the building in Broad Street. The talk will be followed by a reception providing an opportunity to ask questions and meet some of the new members of staff. Everyone is welcome so please do join us and spread the word through your networks. Business papers will be circulated to members towards the end of August.

MUSEUM SERVICE NEWS

Planning approval for Museum and Art Gallery, Broad Street

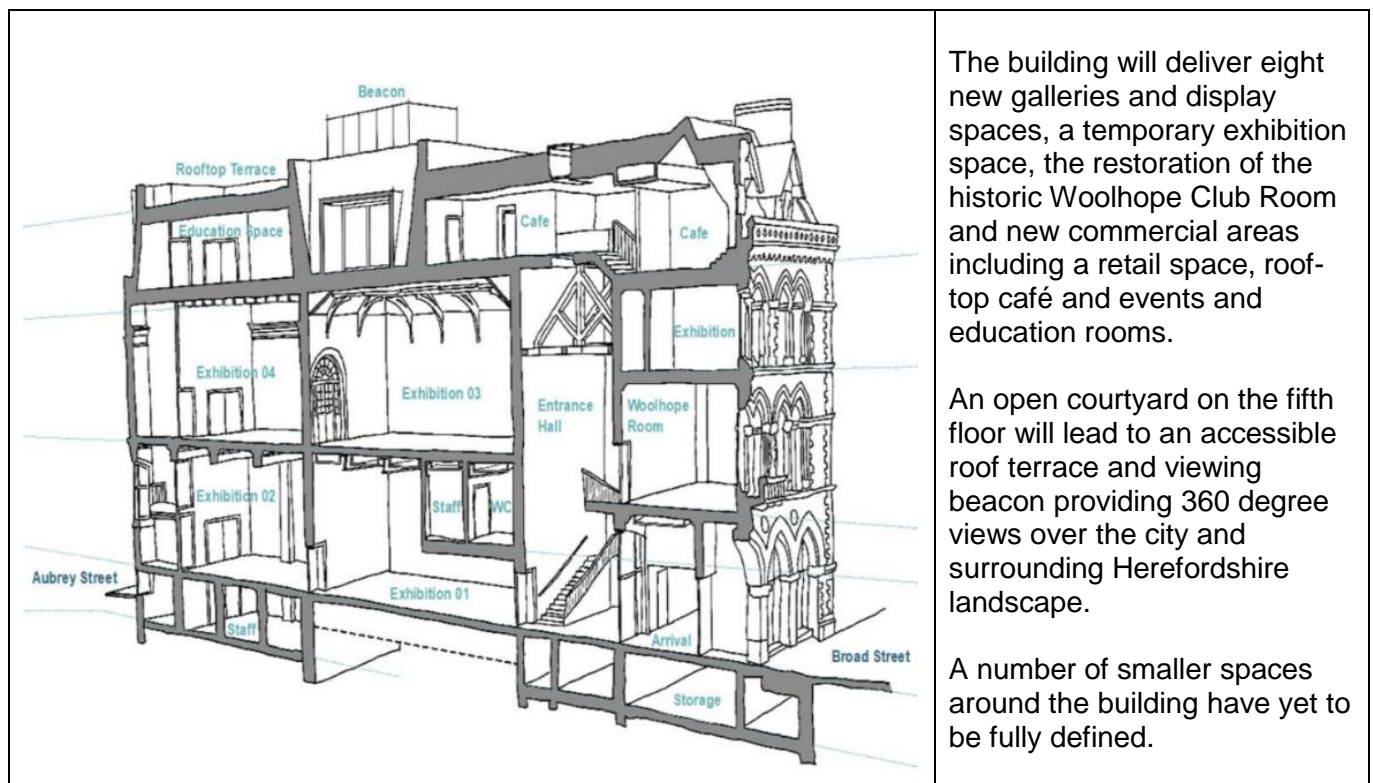
On 17 July the Planning Committee approved plans for the redevelopment of Hereford Art Gallery and Museum in Broad Street. Initial plans for this complex project were submitted in February 2023 with several revisions since then. This is to be expected given the ambition of creating a modern museum experience within a heritage building which was constructed over several phases. Our thanks go to everyone who has been involved in bringing this matter to a successful conclusion.

The redevelopment of the building is the flagship project in the town's investment plan, aiming to deliver heritage-led regeneration and a tourism boost across the Midlands. One of the vital strands of work will be to develop the operating model for the new building to minimise financial contribution from the Council through the development of new income streams. It is anticipated that in the first year visitor numbers will be around 65,000, approximately 210 per day, rising further in subsequent years. The museum team will be supported by a number of experienced consultants in developing a robust business plan, including retail Consultants, [Wild Republic](#), a European subsidiary of a large American toy maker and food and beverage consultants [Boyd-Thorpe Associates](#). Both these companies bring a wealth of experience from across the cultural sector. Their contracts have been funded from Heritage Lottery Funding.

The main changes made to the original plans are:

- The roof-top beacon has been redesigned and moved to reduce impact on key views from around the city.
- Windows in the top-floor education/events space have been simplified to a single picture window.
- The gothic-style windows on the roof-top will now be square.
- The feature window giving views over to the Cathedral has been reduced in size.
- External wall cladding has been simplified.

These adaptations simplify and improve the design without damaging the ambition or the outcomes desired from the redevelopment. The next step is for the full council to approve proceeding to procurement of a contractor. It is hoped work will start on site by early 2025 with reopening scheduled for autumn 2026.



‘Herefordshire Stories’

Under the terms of the HLF grant a four-year action plan will deliver ‘Herefordshire Stories’, developed in collaboration with partner organisations and community groups, to inform the permanent and temporary exhibits. The final year of the plan includes the delivery of exhibits in the new museum and art gallery. Interpretation at the Black and White House will also be refreshed and informed by these key stories. Public access to the collections held at the MRLC will also be improved.

Invitation to join a new Curatorial Advisory Panel

One of the next steps in developing these ‘Herefordshire Stories’ is the establishment of a Curatorial Advisory Panel. Damian has recently issued the following invitation. Anyone interested in finding out more should email HerefordMuseums@herefordshire.gov.uk with ‘Curatorial Advisory Panel’ as the subject line. Closing date for applications is Sunday, 1 September 11.59pm. The team welcome applications from individuals of all backgrounds and abilities. If you need an alternative format to apply, please contact the team in advance of the deadline on 01432 260 485.

This panel will help support the curatorial team by offering insights, recommendations, and assistance to inform decision-making processes regarding the curation and interpretation of collections within the redevelopment.

Scope:

- Advise on the development of exhibition themes and narratives.
- Recommend objects and artworks for selection, acquisition, and display.
- Contribute expertise to the interpretation of the museum's collections.

The team are seeking individuals who have:

- At least five years of professional experience in a relevant field with demonstrated expertise in research, academic work, or practical applications.
- Proven experience in the research, preservation, or presentation of relevant subject areas.
- Strong familiarity with the historical and cultural heritage of Herefordshire and its surrounding areas.
- Ability to provide strategic advice and constructive feedback.

Areas of Expertise:

They are particularly interested in experts in: Arms & Armour; Contemporary Arts; Costume and Textiles; Decorative Arts; Early Medieval Period; Fine Arts; General Local History; Geology; Iron Age and Roman Period; Late Medieval Period; Late Modern Period; Natural History; Numismatics; Photography and Social History.

Staff Appointments

Appointments have been made to the revised service structure with most staff now in post and the remainder to start before the autumn.

Damian Etheraads will be supported by Kate Riddington, senior curator, and the curatorial team; Sam Schuman, senior visitor experience officer, and the visitor experience team and Lara Lourie, who heads up the education team.

The Collections and Engagement team, led by Kate Riddington will

- Lead the collections and engagement team with a focus on community involvement
- Manage collections to Accreditation standards
- Spark innovation and dialogue with local communities

Kate's team comprises **Emalee Bedoes** (Art and Exhibition Strategy), **Sally Mansell** (Costumes and Textiles), **Ben Moule** (Natural Science and Social History), **Lewis Monkley** (Social History, Conservation and Documentation), **Kathryn Miller** (Archaeology), The Collections and Information officer and Projects co-ordinator will start in the autumn.

The Visitor Experience team, led by Sam Schuman, will be responsible for

- Work to ensure that every visitor has a great experience.
- Support income-generating activities to ensure financial sustainability.
- Help to drive initiatives to boost shop sales and promote events.

Sam's team comprises **Tom Taysom**, and **David Hodges**, both long-standing members of staff, and newly-appointed **Dave Hughes** and **Natalie Price**.

Education

Lara Lourie, Learning and Education Officer, is supported by long-time education officers Carolyn Olney and Joanne Grafton.

Nick Simon's retirement

Nick Simon, Visitor Experience Officer at the Black and White House, retired at the end of June. Nick had been with the service for 17 years, was a font of knowledge, and will be greatly missed. We wish him a long and happy retirement.

THE BLACK AND WHITE HOUSE

The Black and White House is a 17th Century timber-framed building in the heart of Hereford city centre. Built in 1621, the house has been used for many purposes over the years, starting life as a butcher's home and shop and finishing its commercial life in the hands of Lloyds Bank in the late 1920s. Since 1929 it has been a fascinating museum giving an insight into daily life in Jacobean times. It is furnished in period style with an internationally important collection of English oak furniture and there are interesting pieces in every room.



OPENING HOURS

Monday	Closed
Tuesday	10:00 - 17:00
Wednesday	10:00 - 17:00
Thursday	10:00 - 17:00
Friday	10:00 - 17:00
Saturday	10:00 - 17:00
Sunday	11:00 - 16:00

The new Visitor Experience team are now in place which has enabled an extension to opening hours to six days a week. They are ably supported by volunteers who contribute to explaining the context and collections to visitors, for example by leading guided tours around the building. Tours are available on Wednesdays at 11am and 3pm and on Fridays at 3pm.

Kids Go Free

Do not forget that kids always go free at the Black & White House Museum. Under 16s and students can enjoy the museum's activities and exhibits for free year round, not only in summer. Adult entry is £3.50, which grants access to the whole house and its offerings.

Mon 26 August: Bank Holiday Monday- extra opening 11am- 4pm.

Sat 31st Aug / Sun 1st Sept: Free Weekend Entry and Retail Sale

We will be offering free entry at BWH to all visitors, alongside a sale in the shop. More details to follow on what lines will be included in the shop sale.

Purr-fect Summer Fun at the Black & White House Museum: Cat & Mouse about the House Activities for the Whole Family

Herefordshire Museum Service is delighted to announce an exciting line up of activities at the Black & White House Museum for families this summer, with the launch of ***Cat & Mouse about the House***.

From Tuesday, 30 July through to Sunday, 1 September, everyone is invited to enjoy a range of engaging activities that promise fun for all ages.

Cat & Mouse about the House Trail

Starting Tuesday 29 July, families can embark on a self-led adventure with our *Cat & Mouse about the House* activity sheet, exploring the museum's fascinating history in a unique and engaging way. This activity is free with entry and is fun for the whole family. For those who are not able to make it up the stairs we have a ground floor only version of the trail available too!

Make a Mouse Workshops

On Wednesday, 7, 21 & 28 August from 1pm to 3pm, children can unleash their creativity at our Make a Mouse workshop. Children can create their own felt mouse to take home. Adults must stay with children throughout the activity. No need to book, just turn up on the day. Donations are welcome to support the activities.

Dress up

Experience history hands-on by trying on costumes from the 1600s. Both children and adults can immerse themselves in the past and learn about daily life during the 17th century.

Don't miss out on this unforgettable summer experience at the Black & White House Museum. Share your visit on social media using #CatAndMouse and #BlackAndWhiteHouseMuseum, and be sure to tag @blackandwhitehousehereford and @HerefordMuseums in your posts. See you there!

Note: All activities are suitable for ages 4-10. Adults must remain with their children throughout.

Introduction to Dave Hughes

We asked **Dave Hughes**, newly-appointed Visitor Experience Officer, to tell us a little bit about himself and his early impressions of his new role.

'Hello! My name is Dave and I hope to give you a brief insight into the personal journey which has brought me to my new role. It's one which has been diverse and enriching, shaped by experiences in sports and leisure, teaching English in China, and retail management. As I sit here now approaching my 40th birthday I feel I'm in the perfect place at a very exciting time with all the fantastic developments coming up within the Museum Service.

Allow me to expand a little as my journey has not been the most conventional career path. While still a college student I was employed by Herefordshire Council as a Leisure Centre Attendant and later Duty Officer at Lady Hawkins' Community Leisure Centre, Kington. After several years in the leisure industry I decided I wanted a new challenge and started on a path training to teach English as a Foreign Language. This new qualification enabled me to spend a year teaching English in the city of Chengdu in Sichuan province, China. Immersing myself in a new culture taught me adaptability and open-mindedness while navigating language barriers honed my communication skills. Alas though, my Mandarin remains rather suspect!

After returning home to Herefordshire in 2015 I took a job as Assistant Manager at Clubsport, a local independent sports retailer in town. I stayed for nine years eventually becoming Manager before making the move to the Museum Service in June. Reflecting back on my working life, both here and abroad, the one constant I have enjoyed within my various jobs has been working with people. My varied experiences have cultivated a deep sense of compassion and a commitment to helping others, shaping me into a more adaptable, understanding, and empathetic individual.

So that brings me to my current role as Visitor Experience Officer. I'm based predominantly in The Black and White House surrounded by over 400 years of rich social and cultural history. I can't wait to immerse myself in the history of the building and its objects and, in turn, help impart some of that knowledge to our wonderful visitors. As a staff member new to the heritage sector I feel privileged to work among the fantastic and experienced team and feel that the future of Herefordshire's county museums is in the best possible hands. I'd love to meet you so please do drop in and say hello when you are passing the Black and White House.'

Focus on Pests!

Among the many tasks which volunteers help with is the ongoing effort needed to minimise moth damage, particularly to textiles. Regular dusting in corners and cracks around the house and shaking out the hangings and bed clothes has proved to be effective as has cleaning and freezing the hangings and dressing-up clothes on a regular basis. Spring and summer are the prime mating/flight seasons for a lot of pests so keeping an eye out for tiny moths with a very 'fairy-like' flight, little patterned beetles or the stereotypical 'woolly bear' larvae which look like very furry, tiny caterpillars, is an important task, as is listening out for the classic 'ticking' sound as male Deathwatch beetles drum their thorax on the roof of their tunnels to attract a mate. These efforts have brought dramatic results with counts of individual adults or larvae in the traps around the museum reduced to single figures in total, down from 25 individuals found in just one trap in 2021.

External Repairs

Spitlath, a specialist firm maintaining old vernacular buildings, have now started work to repair the fabric of the museum. This work began last summer but could not be completed due to the inclement weather.

Skilled craftsmen will be repairing some of the plaster and lathe panels on the outside of the building and doing some wood repairs as well.

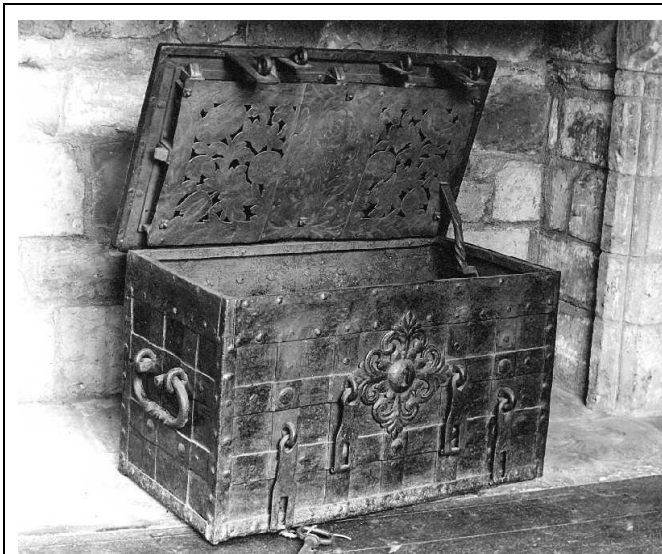
The House will stay open throughout the repair work. Although this is inconvenient, the work is vital to maintain the fabric of the building and the safety of staff and visitors.



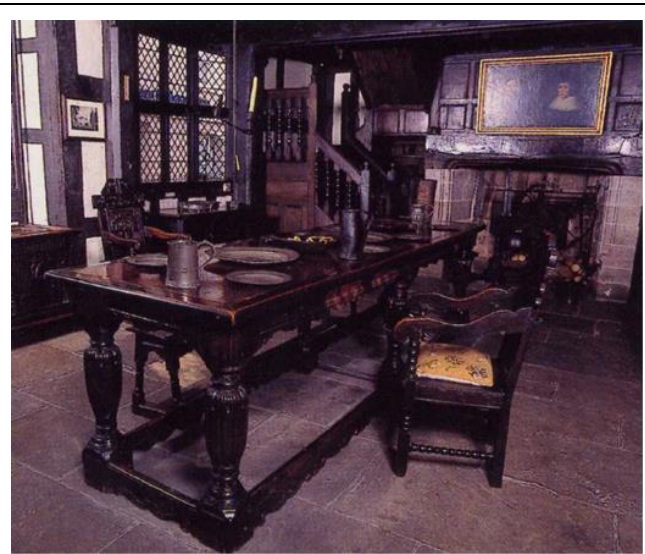
Selected treasures at the Black and White House Museum

We asked Visitor Experience Officer, Tom Taysom, to introduce us to two of his favourite items on display at the Museum.

Strongbox chest, sixteenth-century



Sixteenth-century oak strongbox



The 'Harford' table- Yew with oak and mahogany top

The strong box chest found on the ground floor is made of iron and would have been used to store valuables such as gold and silver items, documents, money or even spices. It is notable for an elaborate locking mechanism. The lock plate on the front is not functional but decorative, demonstrating wealth but also acting to help deceive any potential thieves. The true lock is in the lid and includes seven lock bolts with the real keyhole concealed behind a small iron plate. Four mounting points for padlocks on the front provide further security. The underside of the lid has a beautifully engraved panel made of tin, behind which sits the locking mechanism for the seven bolts. These boxes were never intended to be easy to transport, this particular example needing at least two very strong people to move even when empty. Together, the weight and elaborate locking mechanism make this one of the safest storage chests of the period.

The 'Harford' sixteenth-century table

This magnificent large table on the ground floor of the House is made of yew, with a mahogany and oak top. It belonged to Richard and Martha Harford as indicated by the initials 'MH' and 'RH' carved into the lower rail along with the date '1571' and may have been made to commemorate a wedding.

The table came to the museum from the Crown Inn at Bosbury, originally built as a house by Richard Harford. The mahogany inlay would have been a later edition to the table as this timber was not available until the seventeenth century; the earliest known use of the wood found in Britain dates to 1680 in Nottingham Castle. The table stands far higher than modern tables as it predates the adoption of the table fork in the seventeenth century which changed English dining habits. The piece is an impressive example of the high-end domestic goods available to those who could afford them.

THE HEREFORDSHIRE HOARD: AN UPDATE

The interpretation of the Herefordshire Hoard will be a key focus of the new museum. This collection of coins, ingots and jewellery buried in c878-9 and dating to the Viking period was found by metal detectorists near Leominster in June 2015 and went on a lengthy legal journey prior to its acquisition with funding from national, regional and local funding bodies and individuals in 2022. The acquisition campaign run by Museum Service team members and HMSSG on behalf of Herefordshire Council has brought the artefacts into the custodianship of the Team who will look after and make accessible these unusual treasures for the benefit of the public and Herefordshire and more widely.

Whilst awaiting its new home in Broad Street, the Hoard has spent the past five months on display in York where it received much publicity. The Hoard treasures made their very successful appearance alongside the standing collections, including their own hoard, at the Jorvik Centre from February until early July. To accompany the appearance as part of their Viking Festival programme, Jorvik made an excellent series of YouTube clips highlighting the story, featuring Judy Stevenson, Gareth Williams and Tim Hoverd. Do watch....

Plans are being drawn up for the Hoard's next appearances, locally and possibly further afield, with many UK museums keen to loan and borrow collections to enable wider public access. In return once the museum redevelopment is complete our team will look to bring in collections from elsewhere to enhance themed exhibitions.

We await further developments with the process of bidding to acquire the 44 coins identified as part of the Hoard, the subject of the recent court case in Durham which resulted in two men being jailed for five and a half years each. Once again the DCMS (Department for Culture Media and Sport) will need to work with the Treasure Valuation Committee to determine the value which a prospective bidder would need to raise in order to acquire the additional coins. One of the positives is the publicity from the original court case in which the two thieves were sentenced in late 2019 and jailed for at that time the longest sentences handed out for heritage theft crime. As a result there is increased awareness of the Herefordshire Hoard and the fact that the bulk of the coins remain unaccounted for among those active in the market for coins. Back channels in the market for such items are aware of the need for vigilance and it is hoped that more coins may appear. So, there is a long way to go before Herefordshire Museums Service may become the custodian of the additional coins but we will keep you updated as we know more. See link (judge rejects Viking hoard thief's appeal: www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cd188283026o).

Schools continue to engage our educators to run workshops using replicas of the Hoard artefacts. Feedback is positive and the schools involved have engaged well and gained valuable learning points. With the arrival of new Learning and Education Officer Lara Lourie, plans for new workshops are being worked on and further publicity will follow.

School sessions are aimed at the students but if anyone would like to host their own talks about the hoard, the story of its discovery and the future, please contact Denise North on dzn20@aol.com or 07860 947196. Denise was delighted to be asked recently to offer an opportunity to engage with the Hoard to a group of those living with dementia and their carers. Denise is a dementia friend and champion and was delighted to facilitate this - The Hoard's fascinating objects and history have a wide appeal.

OTHER COLLECTIONS NEWS

The oil painting *George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)* by Laura Knight (1877-1970) has returned after being on loan at Worcester City Museum and Art Gallery. If you didn't catch it Worcester put on a lovely exhibition called 'I Paint Today'. It was a celebration of the life and work of Dame Laura Knight and her love of the Worcestershire countryside. *Gypsies at Ascot* remains on loan with them as it will now feature in their autumn/winter exhibition, 'Atchin Tan – Travelling Through Art' – a visual journey through time of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, co-curated with members of the communities. It runs from the end of October until late January.

If you are out and about why not also pop into see Abergavenny Museum's Big Fish exhibition which features the Wye Coracle made by William Dew from the collection. Big Fish is on until December.

Kenchester Gallo-Roman dodecahedron

Ben Moule (curator Natural Science and Social History) has always been fascinated by the dodecahedron in the collections and wanted to share some information about this object and additional insights recently provided by Lorena Hitchens of Newcastle University. Lorena spent time in the MRLC this year investigating various items as part of her PhD research.

In 1943 the museum acquired an unidentified fragment of worked copper alloy, it remained a bit of a mystery until another discovery in 1986, also discovered near Kenchester, allowed an re-evaluation of the 1943 fragment. This object discovered in the 1980s was an almost complete Gallo-Roman dodecahedron.



Since 1739 Gallo-Roman dodecahedra have been discovered, infrequently, in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

At least 130 have been found; the recent discovery at Norton Disney brings the total number found in the UK to 33. However no dodecahedra have yet been found in Roman Hispania, south of the Alps (Italy) or around the Mediterranean.

These objects are not mentioned in Roman literature or inscriptions nor depicted in visual media such as sculpture, wall paintings or mosaics.

Despite much speculation (especially on social media) their use or purpose is still very much a mystery and, until further evidence or context is acquired, they look certain to remain so. Dodecahedra are characterised by their openwork (hollow) 12-sided form. Each face is a pentagon with equilateral sides, pierced with a different-sized hole. Sometimes, faces are decorated with markings surrounding the holes or on the faces or edges. Each vertex, or corner where three sides meet, has a semi-spherical knob, totalling 20 when completely intact. They can vary widely, from 5cm to 11cm in diameter.

Ben comments 'I enjoy the mystery of the object, and the excitement any new research or find of this kind brings, it is their anthropomorphic or zoomorphic appearance which I find compelling. Were I to be whimsical about it our example always reminds me of a rather surprised hedgehog.'

RECENT COLLABORATIONS

Collaboration with Hereford Sixth Form College

In June, the Museum welcomed eight work experience students from Hereford Sixth Form College. They spent a week learning about different areas of museum work from front of house to conservation through to social media. The team enjoyed having them, although it made for a long week.

Sensational Museum

We are excited to share the news that the Museum has been selected as a museum partner for The Sensational Museum project. This ground-breaking initiative, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council in collaboration with prestigious universities and sector organisations, aims to revolutionise the museum experience by making it more inclusive and accessible to all. As one of only nine partner museums in the country, we have a unique opportunity to lead the way in creating sensory interventions and enhancing accessibility in our institution. The Sensational Museum will apply to back-of-house information on the collections database as well as a public-facing output such as changed display. The team have started working on the Sensational Museum project with the national project team and museum cohort and will share the findings and outputs in due course.



Branding collaboration with a Hereford College of Arts (HCA) final year degree student

A BA final year graphic design degree student at Hereford College of Arts, Mat Pye, did his final project on marketing the Museum. His ideas were on show throughout June's Final Exhibition on at the HCA campus on College Road.

In Celebration of Libraries – a Woolhope Club Conference 8 October 2024 in College Hall, Hereford Cathedral, 1-5pm.

Tuesday 8 October marks the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Free Library and Museum in Broad Street. The Woolhope Club have arranged a conference to celebrate this event and look forward to the future use of the building and the plans for the new City library. Speakers include Simon Pepper, 'The Free Library movement in Britain and its buildings'; John Eisel, 'Libraries in Hereford in the early nineteenth century'; Howard Tomlinson 'The building of the Free Library and Museum in Broad Street'; Damian Etheraads, 'The future of the Broad Street building'; and John Chedgzoy, 'The future of Hereford City library.

Tickets will be available from the end of August from the Cathedral shop or website

www.herefordcathedral.org/event/in-celebration-of-libraries. Advance tickets £20 (includes lunch) or £10.

Please do go along if you can.

Update on Hereford City Library

We have heard that the library will be moving from MRLC to temporary premises in Hereford Town Hall by the autumn. These premises are larger than the space available at the MRLC and will provide a temporary home for around two years until the redevelopment of the Shire Hall is complete.

ABOUT US AT HMSSG

HMSSG was formed in 2015 with the aim of supporting the Herefordshire Museum Service to continue to provide museums in Herefordshire so that the wonderful County Collections can be enjoyed by everyone. If you would like to support us please become a member. Membership is £10 individual and £15 joint; pick up a membership leaflet at one of the museum venues or email membership@herefordmuseumsupport.org.uk. We are a Registered Membership Charity and work to support and develop Herefordshire Museum Service, which comprises the County's History and Art Collections held in trust for Herefordshire's people; the Museum and Art Gallery in Broad Street; the Museum Resource and Learning Centre in Friars Street where the collections are stored; the Black and White House Museum in High Town; and the professional staff team.

Our trustees are committed to the need for HMSSG to support the Museum Service to run in an effective and efficient manner suited to the conditions of the twenty-first century. Current trustees are Jane Adams (Chair), Christy Bolderson (Treasurer), Jacqueline Addis and Denise North. All the trustees are also members of our Committee, alongside Chris Bucknell and Kate Seekings.

We are seeking more people to help with administration, newsletter, events and social media so please, if you have skills which we could utilise, get in touch and share in this rewarding task: most working can be done from home at a time to suit. If you are interested, please contact any of us at herefordshiremuseumsupport.org.uk.

Mailing list

You are receiving this because you have given us your contact details to receive Museum news. Should you wish to cease receiving communication from us, please email us a message to members@herefordshiremuseumsupport.org.uk with the word "unsubscribe" in the message title.

Just to remind you, between newsletters you can look for more recent information as well as past newsletters at our website at www.herefordshiremuseumsupport.org.uk and our two Facebook sites at "Herefordshire Museum Service" and "Hereford Museum Service Support Group-HMSSG". (Please note another Facebook site, "Hereford Museum and Art Gallery", is *not* an official site).

Produced by Kate Seekings for Herefordshire Museum Service Support Group (HMSSG), August 2024. With contributions from Jane Adams, Damian Etheraads, Dave Hughes, Ben Moule, Denise North and Tom Taysom.



Herefordshire **Museum**
Service **Support** Group
