

Annual Report
2022



mmf

Maidstone Museums' Foundation



MMF Youth Ambassadors and Education Trustee Guy Macdonald recreate Tudor times at a reception for Friends from Invicta Grammar School in Maidstone Museum in November 2022

MMF President Sir Robert Worcester KBE DL

MMF Board (2022)

Mark Baker (Chair)

Fran Wilson (Vice Chair)

Stephen Farrant (Treasurer)

Trevor Sturgess (Secretary)

Ivan White (Membership and Shop)

Mike Evans (Web Management and Events)

Janette Lloyd (Education)

Stepped Down June 2022

Guy Macdonald (Education) Elected June 2022

Bill Stotesbury (Design)

Marianne Webb (Legal)

Cllr Paul Harper

www.maidstonemuseumsfriends.org.uk

“Maidstone Museums’ Foundation is a supportive yet sometimes critical friend that cherishes our wonderful museums and only wants the very best for them”

Annual Report 2022

Maidstone Museums' Foundation Registered Charity No. 802547

Report from the Chair

I am pleased to report on another successful year. One example is our shop in Fremlin Walk, right in the retail heart of Maidstone. Since we first moved into this unit, our visitor numbers have steadily increased month on month, year on year. It is especially pleasing to welcome the many families with young children.

Our monthly talks, concerts and events attract good numbers of members and guests. These are a way of giving benefits to our members and taking the Museum out into the world at large. What better place to achieve this than in such an important shopping complex. The Board recognises there may have to be a move in 2023 but we are very grateful to the centre's management and owners for their support to date.

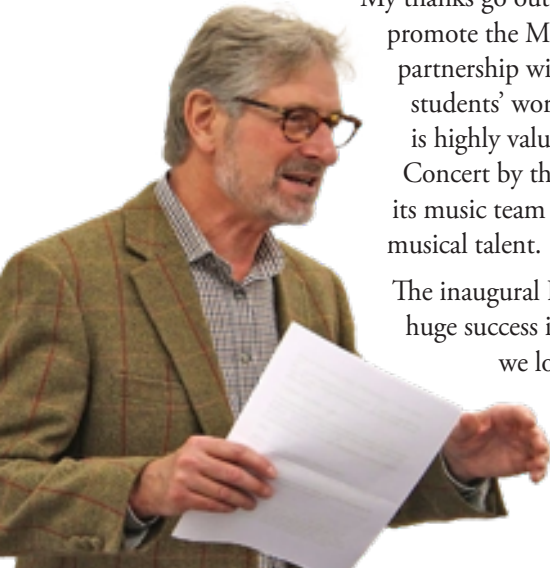
In 2022, MMF made the decision to raise funds for the Museum's exciting *Lives in Our Landscape* gallery. To reach our target of £100,000 so quickly is a testimony to trustee Mike Evans, others who made suggestions and of course the generous organisations and individuals that responded so positively. We will need to raise more funds in 2023. Our trustees play an important part in developing ideas with Museum management and Maidstone Borough Council.

Our website continues to develop and allows us to spread the word beyond our membership. We have also begun promoting the charity and Museum through social media platforms to attract even more followers.

My thanks go out to our MMF Youth Ambassadors who promote the Museum and volunteer in the shop. Our partnership with Invicta Grammar School and their students' work in promoting the scheme to other schools is highly valued. We always enjoy the annual Christmas Concert by the school's talented singers and congratulate its music team for all they do to nurture young musical talent.

The inaugural Heritage Design Challenge in 2022 proved a huge success in encouraging young entrepreneurship and we look forward to a successful repeat in 2023.

MMF was founded more than 20 years ago to promote the Museum, raise funds



for its development, and run a Friends' scheme. Our aims have remained constant and indeed today we are involved more than ever, with what I believe is growing influence, MMF is a supportive yet sometimes critical friend that cherishes our wonderful museums and only wants the very best for them.

Without the dedication and expertise of my fellow Trustees, the charity would not be in the good shape it is today. We said goodbye to Janette Lloyd, our Education Trustee who did so much to develop the Youth Ambassador scheme and Design Heritage Challenge, and welcomed Guy Macdonald, author and teacher, to take her place. I thank all trustees, both in the past and those who serve today, for their hard work.

The Museum is our County Town's Jewel in the Crown. Perhaps we can say with some confidence that, thanks to our hundreds of supporters, Maidstone Museums' Foundation is another of its precious stones.

Mark Baker (Chair)

Finance

A year of significant financial achievement

2022 was a year of significant achievement, both in terms of fundraising, which helped pave the way for a new gallery project, and supporting activities that promote the vital educational role of the museums.

MMF continued to cover its day-to-day fundraising and operating costs, including specific minor grants to the Museum, primarily from membership subscriptions and donations.

Total income for the year amounted to just under £110,000, of which almost £98,000 was received for restricted (specific) purposes identified by donors.

The income generated for restricted purposes comprised funds which were sufficient to ensure that the *Cur8* youth education initiative could go ahead for 2022/23 (£2,500), as well as helping to fund the new *Lives in Our Landscape* gallery due to open in 2024 (just over £95,000).

Because trustees allocated £5,000 from day-to-day funds to kick-start the gallery project, MMF achieved its fundraising target of £100,000 by 31 December 2022 – an unexpected and superb achievement. The trustees are extremely grateful for donor generosity. The fund will be spent in line with the MMF's financial controls as work progresses.

Unrestricted fund (recurring day-to-day) income of just over £11,000 included much-appreciated subscriptions from new members and renewals, donations, and associated Gift Aid recoverable.

Additionally, income included just over £2,000 of donations in kind, being charitable business rates paid at source for occupation of the Friends' Shop to 31 December 2022. This sum was generously given by Fremlin Walk management and owners, for which we are extremely grateful.

Expenditure for the year totalled just under £15,000, of which core self-funded day-to-day running and administration costs were kept to just over £2,000. In addition to unavoidable expenditure incurred in fundraising, and ad-hoc grants to support the Museum, just over £4,000 was invested in educational-related projects supported by the Museum.

These comprised funding the inaugural *Heritage Design Challenge* for local schools (see page 10) and the *Cur8* project for young volunteers.

The Charity remained in a healthy financial position at year end, with unrestricted funds of just under £10,000 available to fulfil MMF's charitable objective of promotion, support, assistance and improvement of the Maidstone Museums and Art Gallery. There were also restricted funds of just over £100,000 for the new Gallery project.

A detailed review of MMF's income and expenditure is set out in the Annual Accounts, a copy of which is available on written request to the Charity's registered office. The 2022 accounts are subjected to a voluntary independent examination.

Stephen Farrant (Treasurer)

Fundraising

MMF hits £100k target for new gallery in record time

2022 was notable for MMF's success in fundraising to support the Museum. Almost £118,000 was raised to:

1. **Develop a new gallery**
2. **Support young people**
3. **Mount an exhibition.**

In 2021 the Museum announced its intention to change the way archaeology is presented by opening a new gallery – *Lives in Our Landscape*.



*Colourful fundraiser:
Mrs Elizabeth Marsden with her hand-made
quilt she generously donated as first prize in
the annual MMF raffle.*

It will offer updated research, modern presentation, improved access for people with sight, hearing and physical challenges, and enhanced engagement of the young.

The estimated cost is £600,000, of which Maidstone Borough Council is dedicating up to £390,000, with MBC using any unspent amount for related

enhancements. The locally-based William & Edith Oldham Charitable Trust is granting £100,000 and Kent Archaeological Society up to £50,000.

MMF launched a campaign to raise £100,000 from grant-giving trusts, local corporates, and Friends. The target was achieved in record time by December, thanks to the following:

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 1. Cobtree Charitable Trust | £40,000 |
| 2. A local major business | £50,000 |
| 3. Kent County Councillor, Dan Daley* | £4,000 |
| 4. Friends (including associated Gift Aid) | £1,298 |
| 5. MMF Reserves | £5,000 |

* through the late councillor's KCC delegated budget

Other funding (primarily from member subscriptions and donations)

1. Visitor cash and contactless donations sent to the Museum by MMF to assist with running costs, including exhibitions. £2,602



Fundraising Trustee Mike Evans

2. MMF funding for the *Maidstone Young Artist Awards*. £781
3. MMF funding for the *Heritage Design Challenge*. for junior and secondary pupils. £600
4. MMF funding for the *Cur8 Project* for young people. £3,600
5. MMF funding for the *Centenary of Maidstone United Football Club* exhibition in the Shop. £170

Events

We returned to a full year of varied monthly events for Friends and guests in the Friends' shop in Fremlin Walk. They took place on the first Thursday evening of every month. We also hosted an evening visit to Allington Castle, courtesy of our President.

- **February** – ‘The Forgotten Symbols of Kent’ by Dr James Lloyd (Archivist at the Royal College of Arms)
- **March** – ‘Kent and Maidstone – Their Story in Folk’ – a musical evening with Kent song Collective
- **April** – ‘Why Egypt Inspires the Modern Imagination’ by Fiona Deal (Author and Historian)
- **May** – ‘Changing Rooms Through the Ages’ by Pete Batty (local historian)
- **June** – AGM
and talk ‘Japanese Art of the Edo Period at Maidstone Museum’ by Sam Harris (Collections Manager at Maidstone Museum)



Inspired by Egypt: Fiona Deal

*Aylesford or Maidstone?
Paul Oldham speaks
about the ancient rivalry
between the two places that
might have seen the former
become the County Town*





On the right track: Doug Lindsay

- **July** – ‘Why Maidstone? Why not Aylesford?’
by Paul Oldham (local historian)
- **August** – Tour of Allington Castle, with Sir Robert Worcester
- **September** – Penenden Heath, by Robin Ambrose
(local author and historian)
- **October** – ‘Kent and East Sussex Railway, Past and Present’,
by Doug Lindsay (railway volunteer)
- **November** – ‘History of Honeybees’ by Margaret Ginman
- **December** – Christmas Concert, with the choir of Invicta
Grammar School

Receptions

1. Friends (July). Preview of *Pants* exhibition.
2. Corporate Friends and Prospective Supporters (October).
3. MMF Youth Ambassadors (December).



*Christmas Concert,
with the choir of
Invicta Grammar
School*



*MMF Youth Ambassadors
host a Reception for Friends in
Maidstone Museum*

Volunteering

Friends are welcome to volunteer for activities. MMF has policies in place for health and safety, and safeguarding.

Museum Gardening Club

The pelargoniums planted in the Tudor courtyard survived the winter of 2021/22. With judicious deadheading and weeding, the courtyard looked spectacular again and a fitting frontage to the Museum. Additional effort was spent in the car park area at the rear, removing old overgrown trees and shrubs. In some areas, new permanent planting was undertaken.



Gallery Supervision

MMF Board members and other Friends spent time welcoming visitors to the Museum's special exhibitions.

Shop assistants

MMF is grateful to the volunteers who help keep the Friends' Shop open on Fridays and Saturdays.

Festive volunteer: Trustee Ivan White at the Christmas Market in Maidstone Museum

Maria Simonova, winner of the £250 prize in the Senior category for her innovative work Spiritus Invictus



Youth competitions

Maidstone Young Artist Awards

MMF was first involved in 2019 but Covid stopped a repeat until 2022 when its theme was Spirit of Kent. MMF met the cost of marketing and prizes. It is aimed at two age categories: 15-25 and under-15. The Museum organises the competition, with support from two MMF trustees, MBC Arts Officer and Kent Art Society.

Lord Sackville of Knole Place headed the judging panel which included representatives from the Museum, MMF Board, and MMF Youth Ambassadors, plus Beryl Bush, a local artist who works with children. Entries were high standard, with winners and runners-up celebrated at a Museum reception attended by more than 100.



Lord Sackville with James Thomas, runner up in the Junior category for his Hare with Carrot design (£100)



Winners: left: Sir Robert Worcester, MMF President, with Sienna from Sutton Valence Prep School, winner of the Junior Category for her Japanese Shoji Lantern and Layomi from Invicta Grammar School, winner of the Senior Category for her model kit of Maidstone Museum.



Heritage Design Challenge

This partnership of the Museum, Invicta Grammar School and MMF encourages young people from schools across Kent to devise a product to sell in the Museum shop for £10 or less. As reported in the Education section (page 14), the product is inspired by a Museum object, and the Challenge stimulates design, construction, marketing and cost control. Mrs Janette Lloyd, Education Trustee until June 2022, led the Youth Ambassador team.



MMF President Sir Robert Worcester presented the prizes at a ceremony in the Museum in May. The top 10 entries were exhibited at the Museum during June before moving to the Friends' Shop, Fremlin Walk, in August.

Our thanks to Mrs Janette Lloyd (*pictured*), former MMF Education Trustee, for her leadership of the scheme and helping to make it such a success. It is hoped the Challenge will run again in 2023, alternating in future years with the Maidstone Young Artist Awards, thereby offering an annual youth competition.

Mike Evans (Fundraising, Web, Events)

Membership

Normal service is resumed

With Covid restrictions finally relaxed, administration of the membership has returned to normal. We have a large family membership, mainly thanks to our valued links with Invicta Grammar School. Unfortunately, we saw a slight drop in renewals and a lower-than-usual take-up of new members. Overall, there was an encouraging increase in general membership.

Membership in numbers at December 31 2022

Corporate – 8

Life – 42

10-year individual – 12

25-year individual – 7

Single – 34

Joint – 27

Family – 83

Ivan White (Membership Secretary)

Friends' shop

Fremlin Walk, Maidstone

The shop was open 10am-3pm almost every Friday and Saturday throughout 2022, thanks to our small number of volunteers. We are also very grateful to Fremlin Walk management and owners for complimentary use of this well-located space.

During the year, more than 4,700 people visited the shop, a really encouraging number. We encourage them to visit the nearby Museum, giving them directions and a simple map.

Vera the Velociraptor is our main attraction, beloved by children who also flock to see our lifesize model of a dinosaur egg. They all love our Elmer the Elephant, kindly loaned to us by Elaine Craven, former MMF vice-chair and founder of Earl Street Employment Consultants.

Many young people love having a go at brass rubbing and donations for this attraction have amounted to more than £80. Adult visitors enjoy peering back in time at the black and white photographs of old Maidstone kindly loaned by the Museum. They also enjoy browsing through a selection of books from the archives of Ronald White Photographic, sometimes ordering copies.



Cllr Derek Mortimer, the Mayor of Maidstone, opens the Centenary Exhibition 'United in Football' celebrating 100 years of Maidstone United Football Club, on November 5, 2022.



Exhibition curator John Bunyard explains all to Mayor of Maidstone, Cllr Derek Mortimer.

Sales from the varied Geoffrey Hall collection and other items has raised over £700.

The shop was a popular stopping point for young people taking part in the town centre Easter Dinosaur Egg and Scarecrow hunts.

When the Heritage Design Challenge Exhibition at the Museum closed, it was transferred to the rear of the shop. In October, it was replaced by the centenary exhibition of Maidstone United Football Club. This exhibition was put together by John Bunyard from a private collection owned by Ben McGovern.

The Mayor of Maidstone Cllr Derek Mortimer kindly opened the shop by scoring a goal outside the shop's main door, watched by a large crowd outside. Football fans from Maidstone and across the county have visited the exhibition, many signing a visitor's book. The exhibition has been advertised in the club's matchday programmes.

The shop is also the venue for monthly MMF board meetings and our series of talks and events every first Thursday of the month. This programme has attracted good audience numbers and raised more than £700.

Ivan White (Shop Manager)



Trustee and shop manager Ivan White comes face-to-face with a wandering dinosaur outside the shop in Fremlin Walk.



Maidstone Borough Councillor Claudine Russell, Lead Member for Leisure and Arts, with MMF Youth Ambassadors Izzy, left, and Iza at a reception for corporate supporters in the Museum Friends' Shop.

Education and schools

The birth of Ricky the Rock

As she slipped off into the golden sunset of a well-earned retirement, outgoing Education Trustee Janette Lloyd uttered these parting words: “Fire off a summer challenge before the summer holidays.”

This resulted in a design competition to create an MMF mascot to liven up MMF letterheads and posters and future challenges.

Ricky the Rock was born, thanks to the creative talents of Elizabeth at Maidstone’s School of Science and Technology (SST). Along with her superb drawing she told us all about Ricky: “Ricky the Rock is a young rock who loves history and going to museums. He is 15cm tall and 17cm wide, he is four years old and loves to eat ice cream (his favourite flavour is the rocky road). He likes to go to the beach with his family and he wants to be a palaeontologist when he is older.”

There were about 40 applicants in all and a whacky host of mummies, dinosaurs, frogs, aliens and skeletons galore... but we all loved Ricky. So simple and effective, and easily accessorised to suit any occasion.



Dragons' Den inspires Heritage Design Challenge

In the first half of the year, Mrs Lloyd worked with Youth Ambassadors to create the first Heritage Design Challenge.

Mrs Lloyd reports: "The competition required students to take inspiration from an artefact, gallery or special exhibition within the Museum to create a prototype product that could be sold in the Museum shop for £10 or less. The Youth Ambassador team from Invicta Grammar School visited schools to explain the benefits of running a team to promote engagement with the Museum for research, study and other education activities. They used the opportunity to promote the idea of Junior Ambassadors in Primary schools. The Challenge generated considerable interest, with more than 40 entries from 10 schools, making the selection process extremely difficult.

"Each student had to show final design artwork, costings and photographs of the finished prototype. Judges from the Museum and MMF chose 14 entries as finalists. They were invited to a Dragon's Den style event in the Museum where they pitched their idea and explained why their product would be a great addition to the merchandise sold in the Museum shop.

"The manufactured orders were delivered to the Museum shop in early July. The winning product in the Senior category was a build-yourself



Dino fun: Youth Ambassadors Hannah, left, and Izzy enjoy a seasonal get-together with Vera the Velociraptor in the Museum Friends' Shop

model of the Museum supported by an excellent presentation by Layomi, a year 10 student at Invicta Grammar School. The Junior winning product was a flat-packed Japanese lantern created by Sienna from Sutton Valence Prep School. Congratulations to the winners, runners-up and all the students who came up with good ideas. The competition, well supported by MMF, generated interest from participating schools keen to take part in future challenges and develop the benefits of the Museum to further the education of young people.”

Meanwhile, after the summer holiday, a strong team of students volunteering to be MMF ambassadors was assembled following a recruitment drive and an MMF stand at the Invicta club’s fair in September. The first meeting attracted plenty of new recruits, all eager to know what this mysterious club was, and who felt that the initials “MMF” gave their work at the school an excitingly secretive feel, like a nefarious government department working on the edge of the law to get things done.

The Youth Ambassadors organised themselves along the lines of the MMF Board of Trustees. The senior girls took on key responsibilities: report writer, photographer, social media expert, fund-raising events organiser, educational outreach... Working with them were a fantastic group of girls from Years 7 to 12, all keen to get stuck in. They have played a part in cascading the ambassador scheme out to other Maidstone schools; this has perhaps been the hardest nut to crack, but with some positive involvement from Maidstone Girls Grammar, the ball is starting to roll.

At the Year 7 Information Evening, families were told about the wonderful link that MMF provides between the museum and the school and invited to become members.



MMF Youth Ambassadors in Tudor dress welcome a young Friend to a reception in Maidstone Museum.

There were two jolly social events before Christmas. In early December, the Invicta Chamber Choir – beautifully accompanied by a warmly wrapped-up Sarah Hughes on keyboard – treated late night shoppers to a medley of carols in Fremlin Walk, before retreating into the MMF shop for mince pies. The ambassadors also hosted a welcome reception for new Invicta members, with a fascinating talk by Maidstone Museum's Director Victoria Barlow on the new Lives in Our Landscape gallery. This was followed by a treasure hunt led by the ambassadors who – dressed in period costume – provided Friends with assistance and the odd clue along the way. It was a fantastic evening – a night in the museum to remember.

The Youth Ambassador scheme clearly helps young people develop new skills and confidence through their involvement with a range of projects that support and promote the museum and MMF.

Guy Macdonald (Education)



MMF Education Trustee Guy Macdonald in thespian mode at a Friends' reception in Maidstone Museum



Artistic talent: Isobel Zheng, winner of the Maidstone Young Artist Award for those aged 14 and under, for her colourful work Magic Fruit



Registered Charity No. 802547

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