

“Museums can increase our sense of wellbeing, help us feel proud of where we have come from, and inspire, challenge and stimulate us.”

Museums Association
Museums Change Lives



**LOVE
LANCASTER**

BID

LANCASTER
BUSINESS
IMPROVEMENT
DISTRICT

Dinofesti 2023 Ginny Koppelho

Lancaster City Museums **ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT** 2023

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2023 IN FACTS & FIGURES

27,150

Web Page Visits



407,457

Facebook reach (City & Maritime Museums) +45%

Around 60% followers are local.

8% of the City Museum facebook followers are international.

Active engagement in last year (likes, comments, shares) – 46,000

Followers on facebook – 11.3k (City Council facebook 15k)



£159,600

The amount of grant aid that Lancaster City Museums raised directly or indirectly through partnership working.

£5.8m

Estimated spend by museum visitors from outside the District within the local economy in 2023 (ONS)

£47,565

Income in 2023 +8% despite reduction in opening hours from 1 October

£3,000

Legacy left to the museums from Mr Scott Hall

63,404

People visited our museums in 2023
-7% due to reduction in opening hours from 1 October

1,200

School children visited the Maritime Museum as part of Facing the Past

1,800

Visitors attended Dino Fest at the City Museum

100+

Young people participated in the Escape2Make Heritage Market Festival in partnership with the museums

WHAT OUR VISITORS ARE SAYING...

...about the City Museum

Interesting, welcoming and well worth a visit.

"I visited this museum for the first time today. We were welcomed very warmly by the lady on the desk, who advised us on what we could see and where everything was. You can choose which way round you go.

We decided to start upstairs, especially as I was very interested in the local history section. I was not disappointed. Some very interesting artifacts and information boards, ranging from Celtic and Roman times up to today... I would love to see this museum have its own cafe and toilet facilities otherwise it was very good. Worth a visit."

August 2023

...about the Cottage Museum

A pound well spent.

I love this little museum. It only takes a quarter of an hour to visit but it sets the imagination whirring, you find yourself thinking about how those who have gone before used to live. Don't miss it if you're in the area, you'll be glad you went.

August 2023

...about the King's Own Museum

Real history at the Lancaster City Museum.

"Highly recommend a visit to Lancaster City Museum - the exhibits are well laid out and I was fortunate enough to meet a knowledgeable guide who was dressed as a British soldier in the Boar war and gave a detailed history of the war and had displayed his own collection of Boar war artefacts - a truly memorable day."

August 2023

...about the Maritime Museum

Well worth visiting this little gem of a museum.

"Wonderful museum, beautifully laid out with so much history to learn or expand upon, yet done in a most interesting and informative way. Cafe serves pots of tea with tea leaves & strainer, a nice touch. Lovely staff too. I hope more people take the 10 min or less stroll from the bus depot to explore it. We'll worth visiting."

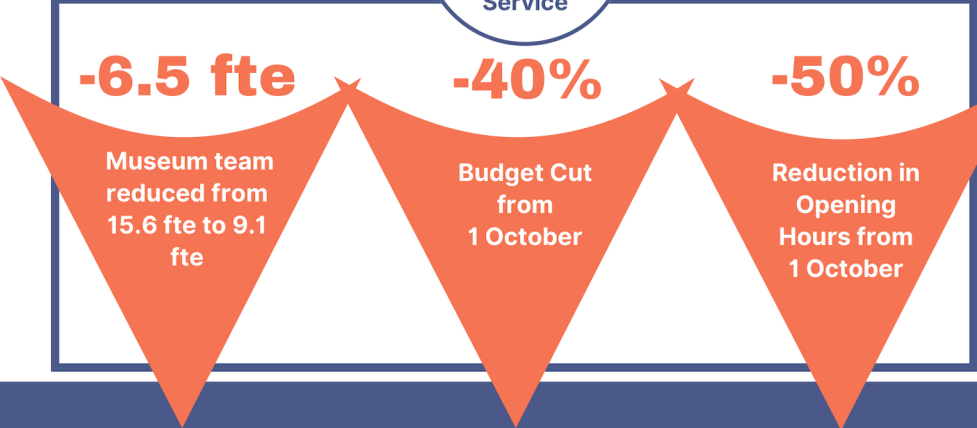
September 2023

2023 IN FACTS & FIGURES



4 ACCREDITED MUSEUMS

City Museum (est. 1923)
King's Own Royal Regiment Museum (est.1929)
Cottage Museum (est. 1978)
Maritime Museum (est. 1987)



BUDGET CUTS

Due to severe financial pressures on the Council budget, museum budgets were cut by 40% and Lancaster City Museums were placed on the DCMS 'Museums at Risk' register.

The consequent change to opening hours has seen the City Museum (including the King's Own Royal Regiment Museum) reduce its opening hours by -35%, the Maritime Museum by -56%, and the little Cottage Museum by -87%. Overall opening hours have been reduced by -50% across the museum service as a whole.

The team has risen to the challenge and has concentrated on making the new operating arrangements work. They are also working hard on delivering an improved retail and catering offer to increase the income that the museums raise.

Discover more about the work that we do, as we take a look back at 2023 and all that Lancaster City Council's Museum Service has achieved.



IN 2023 WE WORKED WITH OVER 50 PARTNERS. OUR KEY PROJECT PARTNERS WERE:

- Lancaster Black History Group
- Regional Heritage Centre – Lancaster University
- School of Engineering – Lancaster University
- School of Humanities - Lancaster University
- Decolonisation Network – Lancaster University
- Facing the Past
- Galloways Society for the Blind
- Lancashire County Museum Service
- Escape2Make
- KORR Museum Trustees
- Lancaster BID
- The Dukes Theatre



The Maritime Museum joined other businesses along St George's Quay as part of both Quayfest and Light Up the Quay



MUSEUM CENTENARY

2023 saw the centenary of the opening of the City Museum on 5 November 1923 and the founding of the museum collections.

The museum service celebrated this milestone by making the museum collections central to the story of the year. This was through podcasts, exhibitions and a centenary event.

PODCASTS

The '100 Years, 100 Objects : stories from the collections of Lancaster City Museums' have been very popular with around 16,500 downloads. Members of the public and staff chose and researched an object that they wanted to speak about and then joined the Collections Registrar, Rachel Roberts, to create a 15 minute podcast. The series was praised in the Museums Association's national 'Museums Journal' as being 'small vignettes that wonderfully weave tales from 100 years of collecting'.

In August, one of the podcasts led to a published article in the Royal Astronomical Society's journal 'Astronomy & Geophysics' which was co-authored by Maria Walach from Lancaster University, Mel Cookson-Carter, Museums Manager and Rachel Roberts. It featured Greenwood's Kludonometer – a unique object in the collection to measure the tides created by local man, Captain William Nelson Greenwood.

EXHIBITIONS

Five centenary exhibitions were created, starting with Animalia at the City Museum and Flotilla at the Maritime. Further exhibitions were the Hoard of Hoards at the Maritime Museum and the 100 voting objects/podcast exhibitions at the City Museum. These exhibitions were a great team effort, but credit for the quality of these exhibitions belongs largely to Museum Exhibitions Officer, Ivan Frontani.



CENTENARY EVENT

On 5 November 2023, 100 years to the day after the opening of the City Museum, around 70 people joined an event co-hosted by the City Museums and the Friends of the City Museum and were treated to live music and a spectacular cake especially created for the occasion. The event was preceded by the peal 'Lancaster Delights' being rung from the Priory.



OBJECT OF THE YEAR - THE COMMUNITY'S FAVOURITE

During our Centenary exhibition, we have asked visitors to vote for their favourite object.

It turns out (so far) to be the silver model of the iconic 1930s Super Swimming Stadium that once graced Morecambe's seafront.



LOVE LANCASTER
BID LANCASTER BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

DINO FEST

The City Museums again joined with Lancaster BID to bring a bigger and better Dino Fest to Lancaster in 2023. Thanks to funding from 'Crowdfund Lancashire' there were more dinosaurs over the two days, 10 special activity days for schools as well as a talk by international palaeontologist Dean Lomax at the Dukes and almost 1,800 visitors came to learn about real fossils from the Dino Isle Museum team at the City Museum.

Plans for the next few years include responding to public interest in local celebrity, Sir Richard Owen, inventor of the term 'dinosaur' and first Head of the Natural History Museum in London.

ESCAPE2MAKE HERITAGE MARKET FESTIVAL

Working in partnership with youth charity Escape2Make, Lancaster City Museums played a significant role in helping E2M to secure their first National Lottery Heritage Fund grant with an award of more than £75,000. This money helped engage more than 100 young people in making items inspired by the museum collections for sale at the Heritage Market.

Each series of workshops started with a session with a heritage expert that delved into the museum collections and at further workshops the young people then made items to be sold at the Heritage Market on Sunday 17th December which E2M founder, Jenny Natusch, described as 'a triumph'. 100% of the young people had a good time and 65% felt that they had definitely learned something new with 68% finding the heritage angle very interesting.



WINDRUSH

The Dukes Theatre led this project to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the arrival of the Windrush. They worked with Lancaster Black History Group, Preston Black History Group and the City Museums to produce an exhibition and events telling the story of the Windrush generation.

The exhibition ran for three weeks in August and was very well attended, kicking off with an excellent evening of entertainment and some delicious Caribbean food at the private view.

FACING THE PAST

Facing the Past was an arts and research programme to reflect, reveal and redress omissions in the way the City of Lancaster has commemorated its role as the fourth largest slavery port in the UK. The City Museums worked in partnership to support the project, which was led by Lancaster Priory.

One of the aims of the project was that every Year 6 child in the Lancaster District take part in an abridged Slave Trade tour around the Castle Hill/St George's Quay area. The museums worked in partnership with the project to facilitate the use of the Maritime Museum as a key start and end point on this journey. An amazing 1,200 local schoolchildren attended the tours and learned about Lancaster's involvement with the slave trade, visiting the Maritime Museum to undertake self-guided sessions of the displays on Lancaster's 18th century maritime heritage.

Working with Eleanor Levin as the Facing the Past tour guide, the City Museums will continue to provide this learning opportunity to local schools.



Children participating in Facing the Past Guided Tours



Eyob Derillo researching an Ethiopian manuscript

ABYSSINIA PROJECT

The start of the Abyssinia project finally got underway in November following the appointment of Eyob Derillo as the part-time Project Officer.

The project aims to understand more about the items in the King's Own collection relating to the 1868 British Expedition to Abyssinia and to link with the Ethiopian Community, the National Museum of Ethiopia and the regimental family to develop a new display incorporating new contexts and perspectives.

The final stage of the project will see a Restitution & Repatriation Policy developed for the King's Own Royal Regiment Museum and also Lancaster City Museums.

The project is being run as a partnership between Lancaster City Museums and the King's Own Trustees and has already attracted national press attention.

Eyob Derillo was born in Ethiopia and also works part-time at the British Library where he is a former curator of the British Library's Ethiopic and Ethiopian collection. He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to this work and his expertise will be invaluable in progressing this work.

TOUCH AND SEE PROJECT

Ivan Frontani and Carolyn Dalton from the City Museums have been working with the School of Engineering at Lancaster University and Galloway's Society for the Blind since early 2022 on this project to make artwork accessible to those with sight loss. This year great strides were made due to a £16,000 Impact Accelerator Account Award from Lancaster University that enabled the employment of two interns – one from social sciences to manage the focus groups and one from engineering to refine the process and product.

Working alongside Galloways, a stand with 3D relief lithophane for tactile use and audio headphones was developed and placed within the museum displays. This led to the project being shortlisted for two national awards – A Visionary 'Connect and Share' Award from the sight loss community and an Award for Supporting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion through Knowledge Exchange from the Professional Body of Knowledge Exchange practitioners (PraxisAuril) for universities.

In 2024 the City Museums and the School of Engineering plan to apply for further funding to extend the trial to four other museums nationally as we aim to solve the long-term issue of engaging people with sight loss with historic artwork. The team are also close to having a paper peer-reviewed and published in the Journal of the Inclusive Museum.



A visitor with sight loss uses the 'Touch and See' Lithophane

OUR INCLUSIVE MUSEUMS

Lancaster City Museums not only celebrated becoming 100 years old, but also that the museum audience was becoming more diverse.

Compared to pre-pandemic levels more museum visitors were younger with 16-34 year olds +7% to 29% of visitors.

There is greater cultural diversity with 11.3% Asian/Asian British or Black/Black British compared to 4% in 2019.

We are now visited by more people with a disability, with 16.2% of visitors having a disability compared to 10% before the pandemic.

Shortlisted for
2 national
awards for the
'Touch and See'
project.



DONATION OF THE YEAR - THE SILVER SEAL MATRIX

Over 2023 we have continued to add key items to the museum collections. We were delighted when local metal detectorist, Matthew Hepworth, kindly decided to donate this silver seal to the museum collections.

The seal was found just to the north of Lancaster and features the head of an enslaved African. Dating probably from the 18th century, it is a reminder of Lancaster's historic connections with the slave trade and slave-produced goods.



Being Human Festival

This event, run in conjunction with the Humanities department of Lancaster University in November 2023 saw 60 people come to the Maritime Museum as part of an event looking at Lancaster's historic connections with the Slave Trade.



Meet the Hoarders

This very popular immersive family event was once again held at the Maritime Museum and was the second of its kind. This year it was developed to accompany the Hoard of Hoards exhibition.