

Lowestoft Museum, Broad House, Oulton Broad

Report to Annual Meeting of LTC, May 26th 2022

The Museum opened for the first time since October 2019 on 1st July 2021, and after a short period of limited days, resumed daily opening in time for the school holidays.

In early August the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, Lady Euston, visited to open a VJ exhibition (postponed from 2020), which told the story of the experiences of Suffolk soldiers. In addition, a plaque was unveiled to commemorate the visit of Her Majesty the Queen in August 1985, to open the Museum itself.

There were a great number of visitors during the summer, and as part of the Heritage Open Days in September, a display of Old Lowestoft photographs and memorabilia from the Second World War attracted a great deal of interest.

During the winter the new Turner/Education Room was completed and made accessible to the rest of the Museum by the re-opening of a previously blocked archway. Enthusiastic volunteers spent many hours decorating this new space. The Alarm system was upgraded, and we are grateful for the contribution made to this work by Lowestoft Town Council.

During the Autumn an application to the MEND Fund was prepared. This grant of money was available to Museums for urgent repairs of their buildings, so the bid was submitted in conjunction with Oulton Broad Parish Council, the owner of Broad House.

In March 2022 it was announced that our application had been successful, with a sum of almost a quarter of a million pounds awarded for repairs to the building and remedial work in the cellar, which had been a problem for many years. Again, we are grateful to Lowestoft Town Council for their contribution to the 'match funding' that the grant requires.

The 2022 season began in April, with a loan exhibition from The British Museum of Bronze Age axe heads and other related items, discovered in 1926 in the garden of Somerleyton Rectory and never before displayed in public. Also on display for the first time are a pair of extremely rare Lowestoft Porcelain standing Pug Dogs, made c.1770 and purchased entirely with grants given by the Victoria and Albert Museum, The Beecroft Foundation and the Gwen Baker Trust.

This year the Museum will be commemorating 50 years since its foundation, initially at the Prairie in the Town Centre until its transfer to Nicholas Everitt Park 37 years ago. We will also be showing items and documents from the Collection relating to the Coronation in 1953 for the 70th Jubilee Celebrations.

The Museum re-opened on April 9th 2022 at the start of the Easter holidays and attracted a goodly number of visitors, 545 altogether in the first week including 196 children. Visits have tailed off since then and are lower than the last comparable period in 2019 but with the new displays, Turner Room and anniversary celebrations, we are looking forward to a really good season.