



NEWTOWN TEXTILE MUSEUM

Highlights of 2023

The major achievement of the year was applying for, and being given, full Accreditation. The Accreditation Panel congratulated the Museum on its strong application.

We had 1152 visitors which was 200 more than 2022 but still a bit below pre-Covid figures. (But we have done better than many small museums).

Dan Brawn joined us as a Trustee and the Trust Secretary. He is also a great handiman and has done a number of wonderful jobs for us.

We had the upgraded the reception area ready by the beginning of the season. This, and Chris Davies's hard work in identifying items to sell, meant the shop did better than 2022.

We introduced some dressing up clothes in the recreated bedroom which also served as a photo booth.

Our Exhibition told the fascinating story of Amelia Ray, a draper in Newtown in the 1870s, based on the cache of her papers found in the attic of what had been her shop. John wrote the accompanying catalogue so we have a good record of what was displayed. We are grateful to the Powysland Club for helping with the printing costs.

We finally managed to disentangle who owned which buildings in the back yard and have reclaimed the main privy in the block of three. "Reconstructing" it as a privy is one of the things we are thinking about.

We restarted having group tours and going out to give talks, having had to stop them over Covid.

An Education Pack was written, and copies were sent to schools to try to encourage them to visit the Museum.

Victoria organised a programme of workshops but sadly the take-up was not great. But Tapestry Tuesday sessions in the summer holidays were a great success.

Kay-Lee, our weaver in residence, was welcomed by visitors keen to find out more, and she also enjoyed herself. We are keen to have a weaver every year but need to find some funds to support it.

We hosted a creative writing project for High School pupils in the Museum. It was funded by the Laura Ashley Foundation and the project worker came to us, rather than us having to apply ourselves. A small booklet of nice poems was produced and there is a copy in the Museum.

At the end of the year, money became available from the Welsh Government via GEM (Group for Education in Museums), for us to apply to have a mentor to help to develop work for schools. We took this up and our mentor was very helpful. She suggested that we had an Activity Box and bought toys of the period, with the money from a small fund that came with the project. There are also 'explorer bags' for children who visit with their families which have some wonderful finger puppets among other things. No school visits were made at the end of 2023, but we have benefitted from these developments and two schools visited in March 2024.

As in all years, we have only been able to achieve these things because of our stalwart band of volunteers. Andrea has heroically taken on the role of volunteer co-ordinator and manages the rota of our hosts, among many other things. Some volunteers left and others arrived. We are particularly grateful to Jo Easton who came to help us in 2021 until the summer of 2023. She completely transformed the way we were looking after and conserving the items in the collection and left us advice

on how to take this forward. We now have a blueprint for how we can continue to look after what we have in a professional way. Other Committee members have also gone the extra mile in their roles of curator, treasurer and manager of the shop while Victoria has transformed what we are offering on the weaving side. We are able to offer a variety of tasks and keeping the Museum alive is rewarding. But it can be hard work and without this help, the Museum would not be in existence. Huge thanks to all concerned.

A selection of some of the comments received from our visitors

An excellent museum, as good as any we've been to. In fact better than some!

Thank you so much for protecting and displaying our heritage so beautifully.

Very informative. Had a nice time here and the children actually enjoyed this museum, especially the dressing up.

Utterly superb! Complete joy! Thank you.

Transported back in time and now want to try weaving.

Great displays that have been updated so even more interesting than the last time I visited!

A real insight into the past. A lot of information and practical demonstration. Wonderful.

Janet Lewis May 2024