



MUSEUM *of* RICHMOND – BACKGROUND

Richmond, on the Surrey bank of the Thames in west London, has been a royal residence since at least 1299. It gained its present name in 1503, after King Henry VII, formerly Earl of Richmond, rebuilt the old royal palace. The town became a fashionable place of *villegiatura* for London society in the 18th century, when George II, Frederick Prince of Wales and George III lived in Richmond and Kew. Artists such as Sir Joshua Reynolds and JMW Turner lived and painted there, and writers such as Thackeray, Dickens, George Elliot and Virginia Woolf visited or lived there. By 1965, the borough incorporated not only Kew, but also Ham and Petersham with its 17th-century connections to the Cabal.

In 1986, a group of local residents achieved their aim of creating a museum to display and enhance public understanding of the rich history of the old Borough of Richmond (which included Ham, Petersham and Kew) with a mission “to collect, preserve and interpret the material evidence of Richmond's past for the public benefit, education and enjoyment.” However, the Museum's temporary exhibition and educational work cover the whole London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.

The Museum is constituted as a charitable company, limited by guarantee. It is housed on the second floor of the renovated Old Town Hall, an excellent central location, with good transport links. Entrance is free. As well as displaying the permanent collection, which contains items ranging from stone-age implements to contemporary items, the Museum has an exhibition space which is used for regularly changing temporary exhibitions. There is also a new audio-visual display of the rich local architectural history. The staff consist of the Curator and a Learning and Audience Development officer. It is accredited and submitted its Re-Accreditation application last May; it is awaiting the outcome.

The Museum is financially supported by the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames for the cost of premises and, substantially, the cost of the staff, and by regular grants from the Richmond Parish Lands Charity towards educational work. It also receives wide support from the local community and has a supportive board of volunteer trustees. Its Royal Patron is HRH Princess Alexandra, who lives nearby. Other patrons are Sir David Attenborough, Greville Dare, Julian Lord Fellowes, Bamber Gascoigne, Lady Annabel Goldsmith, Andrew Marr and Alan Lord Watson. Volunteers also do a variety of tasks including running reception, sale of goods and curatorial work.

The Museum has an active and exciting learning programme for schools and colleges and offers a range of interactive historical and cross-curricular taught sessions responding to the individual needs of particular classes. Classes also visit the Museum independently – one or two visits a week, involving around 1,400 pupils over the year. Schools can hire Discovery Boxes to use in the classroom, involving over 3,500 pupils a year.

The learning programme also provides events for adults, often tied in with the temporary exhibitions. These include gallery talks, formal lectures, film shows, walks and visits, poetry events and craft workshops, reaching about 1,000 adults a year. Outreach talks are also delivered to community groups and outreach sessions are held in local care homes.

To mark the 21st anniversary of the opening of the Museum by HM The Queen in 1988, a fund-raising campaign was started in 2009 to raise £50,000, for the specific purpose of renewing and updating the Museum. So far about £56,000 has been raised and £32,000 spent on refurbishment. The

campaign continues, with events in 2016 with Sir David Attenborough and Melvyn Bragg and others being planned for 2017.

Recent and current temporary exhibitions include "Trading in Human Lives" (local links to the slave trade), "How the Vote was Won" (how local suffragettes fought for the Vote), "Richmond Theatre Through the Stages" (the history of local theatres, on Richmond Theatre's 110th anniversary), "Between the Locks" (the lives of riverside workers between Richmond and Teddington locks), "The Chinese in Bengal" (jointly with the Meridian Society), "Happy and Glorious" (popular local celebrations of royal events), "Living and Dying in 19th Century Richmond" (some lives of those buried in the early section of Richmond Cemetery), "1914-18, Richmond at Home and War" (with a HLF grant of £34,000 for the exhibition and extended outreach work), and "The Royal Star & Garter: 100 Years of Care" till 29 April.

More information can be found at www.museumofrichmond.com, and the chairman's report and accounts are at

http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/Accounts/Ends64/0000295164_AC_20160331_E_C.pdf