



trilithon

Newsletter of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society

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£1

Free to
Members

Lest We Forget: the Black contribution to the World Wars in Wiltshire and Eric Walrond: a Caribbean Writer in Wiltshire

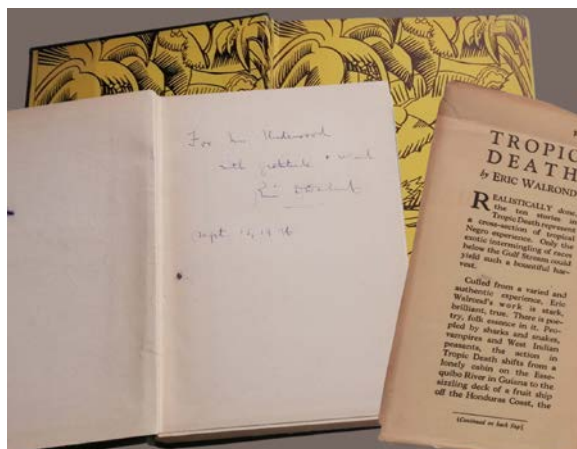
Welcome

We received the fantastic news in the summer that we have been awarded Development Phase funding by the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the Assizes for Devizes project. The next two years will see us work with our communities to develop our plans in more detail. We will then submit a second application for funding to begin work on the building and new displays. If all goes well, we may open in a new home in 2030! See page 3 for more details.

However exciting the project promises to be, we will continue to work hard to maintain and develop the Museum at the same time. This year has been especially challenging, in stark contrast to last year's amazing year, marked by the hugely successful Ravilious exhibition. The economic turbulence of the Autumn, energy crisis and cost of living squeeze, have brought us down to earth. The decline in the value of our investments, spending on grants paid in advance and a number of other factors, have hit us hard, resulting in an overall loss of £269,000 last year. Spending remains tightly controlled and we remain focussed on ensuring that we do everything we can to generate income, whilst delivering on our charitable objectives.

This edition of *Trilithon* looks forward to exciting exhibitions and celebrates some of our achievements in the last year. It is also an opportunity to thank you, our members, for your continuing support.

David Dawson



These two exhibitions open on 11 November and run through until 17 February 2024.

The *Lest We Forget* exhibition highlights unknown or forgotten stories from those who identify as Black, including Caribbean soldiers who trained on Salisbury Plain during World War I, and African-American soldiers in camps around Wiltshire in World War II.

Eric Walrond was part of the 1920s New York 'Harlem Renaissance' cultural community of Black creatives. His work vividly recalls his upbringing in British Guyana and Panama. He moved to France and then London, before arriving in Wiltshire in 1939. Poor mental health led him to self-refer to the Wiltshire County Mental Hospital in Devizes in 1952. Here he found compassionate, creative therapy and he founded the monthly *Roundway Review*, contributing stories and articles. He died in London in 1966.

Whilst searching for objects to accompany this exhibition we found a signed copy of his acclaimed book, *Tropic Death*, which included a short message to one of his supporters, Mrs Underwood. With a grant from the Friends of National Libraries we were able to purchase it for our collection. The book diversifies and adds to our collection of Eric's writing, as will a new portrait commissioned for the exhibition, funded by Art Fund.

The language and tone of the content has been checked by sensitivity checkers to ensure the exhibitions are respectful, and take a balanced approach to the difficult themes of racism that are present in both exhibitions.

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Art Fund

FNL



WILTSHIRE MUSEUM
DEVIZES

The Values of Wiltshire Museum

Ruth Kerr and Rachael Holtom

Staff, volunteers and Trustees have worked together to prepare a set of values for Wiltshire Museum. The results are below and members will be asked to note them at the AGM in November.

Values sit alongside our mission of *inspiring people to explore archaeology, history and the environment*. It's been interesting imagining how the founders of WANHS and subsequent generations of members would agree with them, albeit with different phrasing! These values apply to our current location and may change once the Assize Court project progresses.

What are values?

We all have values or principles that we live our lives by. They guide us through the decisions we make, such as jobs, friends, TV shows, political parties, charities etc.

Why do organisations have values?

They help organisations to:

- Set standards and principles.
- Clarify what an organisation believes, in turn helping to decide strategy and approach.
- Help bind a team together, we are 'working to the same hymn sheet'.
- For retail, catering etc, values can be reflected in their branding.

And, crucially for a charity, values can help attract support and funding. We often donate to charities 'after our own heart', and for our Museum and our future plans this is very important.

Sessions were led by Museum staff and Trustees experienced in this work. Thank you to Ruth Kerr (a WANHS Trustee), and Lucy Maxwell Scott (Devizes Assize Court Trustee) for their help.

The Wiltshire Museum values

We love Wiltshire.

Inclusive

We welcome everyone, building meaningful connections through a shared passion for our past, present and future.

Inspiring

We inspire curiosity and creativity through the discovery of our collections and stories.

Sharing

We are a collaborative space for encouraging well-being, enabling research and sharing knowledge

Caring

We will bring joy to future generations by celebrating life in Wiltshire today and by caring for our Nationally important collections

Trusted

We act with integrity, and we can be counted on.

Archive and Library Research

The Archive and Library is open for research by appointment.

E-mail: archive@wiltshiremuseum.org.uk

More information about the collections online at:
www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk/library/



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Ali Rushent continues to be busy with school groups during term time and sessions for Young Curators and Museum Explorers on Saturdays - recent themes included Roman cookery and archaeological investigations. The summer holiday activities were fully booked, with the dinosaurs and Viking sessions proving very popular.

Ali also hosted two school sleepovers, preceded by object-based activities, cellar tours, crafts and a film - not sure how much 'sleep' there was though!

Youth Panel

Amy Hammett, our community curator, has been working with a new cohort of young people, others having moved on to university or work. They have created an accessible "Roman Smells" interactive in the Roman Gallery and also planned and ran a successful family day and a silent disco for older children in the autumn of 2022. They are now working on more interactives and planning another family day.

The Street Art project

In early 2023 a project in conjunction with the Youth Justice Service (and the Emerald Team) saw Amy working with a group of young offenders, or those at risk of offending, to work on their confidence and creative skills, with the aim to divert them from criminal or anti-social behaviours. Working with street artist Nick Halahan of Olas Arts they learnt creative skills, built friendships and created a piece of art which was displayed outside the Devizes Assize Court.

Sure Start After School Club

Working with the Sure Start Centre in Devizes, we are providing, once a month, free after school club activities for 6 to 11 year olds, with younger and older siblings welcome. Funded by the Wiltshire Community Foundation we also offer free healthy meals for the families. Some of the participants had never been to the Museum before but are now keen to get involved with other family activities and visit in their spare time.

Our best wishes to Amy who is now on maternity leave.





Bringing the Assize Court back to life!

Thanks to National Lottery players, we have been awarded initial funding to develop our plans for the building.



Devizes Assize Court Trust



www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk/assizes

Wiltshire Museum has received initial support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NHLF) for the ambitious and exciting project *Assizes for Devizes: Unlocking Wiltshire's Stories*. Made possible by National Lottery players, the project aims to revitalise the derelict Devizes Assize Court into a vibrant community hub and iconic new home for Wiltshire Museum and its world class collection.

The development funding of £300,748 will help us, working closely with the Devizes Assize Court Trust, to prepare plans for the project prior to applying for a full National Lottery grant in 2025.

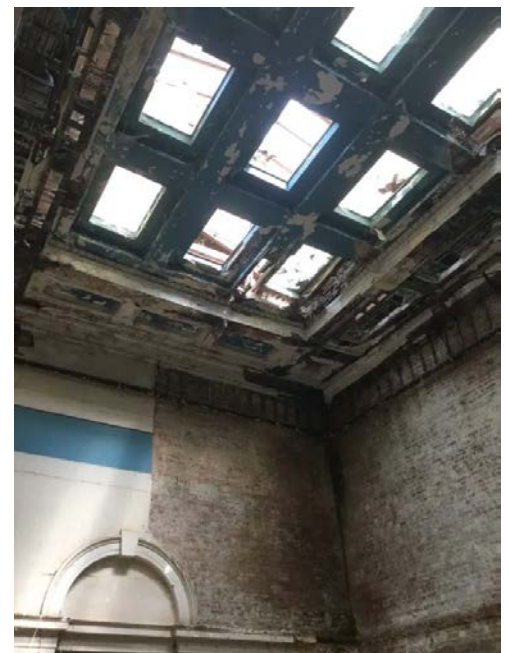
Assizes for Devizes: Unlocking Wiltshire's Stories

Why is the project needed?

We want to transform Wiltshire Museum and it's internationally important collections into a world class destination within the Stonehenge and Avebury landscape, by revitalising the much-loved derelict Devizes Assize Court as a new home for the Museum.

The Devizes Assize Court is running out of time

- The Grade II* Devizes Assize Court, built in 1835, has been derelict and decaying since the 1980s and is on Historic England's 'Heritage At Risk register'.
- Repairs overseen by the Devizes Assize Court Trust have stabilised the building to prevent further damage, but these are only temporary repairs and a permanent solution is needed.
- We plan to save this neglected building and celebrate it's long history of justice and injustice.



Timeline

2023 - 2025 (the Development Phase) - develop plans for the building, galleries and activities. The views of local people will be sought via community days and 'pop-up' exhibitions. We will be working with Purcell, our appointed architects, and adjoining owners, Wiltshire Council and Devizes Town Council.

2025 - 2026 - apply for a full National Lottery grant

2026 - 2030 (the Delivery Phase) - conserve and restore the Devizes Assize Court; provide accessible facilities including a designated learning space and a multi-use event and community space; deliver a programme of activities; develop interactive new permanent galleries to showcase the Museum's world class collections and tell Wiltshire's incredible stories; create a vibrant temporary gallery space to host exhibitions of a national standard; work with stakeholders, including Wiltshire Council and Devizes Town Council, to support the regeneration of the wider Devizes Wharf area.

Wiltshire Museum needs a new home

- The Museum has Designated collections, meaning they are identified as one of the best collections held in museums, libraries and archives across England. It is a much-loved community and learning resource, accessed by thousands of people each year.
- But, the Museum's current site is inaccessible to many and severely limits how the Museum engages audiences.
- The current site also makes it difficult to create new facilities and galleries that truly showcase our outstanding collections to inspire creativity and curiosity for generations to come.

Assizes for Devizes

To find out more about the project and progress visit www.devizesassizecourt.org.uk/our-plans

Membership News

Lt Col Colvin Chamberlain

Colvin Chamberlain, Chairman of the Society between 2001 and 2004, died recently following a short illness. He had been a member of the Society since 1991 and a Trustee during the years 1994 to 2011 and he was Chairman in 2003 when the Society celebrated its 150th Anniversary. Colvin was also involved in setting up the Endowment Fund and maintained an ongoing interest in its progress. He was also a Trustee of the Sandell Trust, which supports the Society and Museum.

Everyone remembers his kindness, support and courteousness and how keen he was to get things done. He was a gentleman, made a great contribution to the Society and Museum, and we will miss his regular visits to find out what we are doing!

Subscription Rates - there will be a modest increase in subscription rates in 2024, having been held at the same rate since 2019. With rising prices we can no longer hold subscription rates at their present level and members will be advised as their renewals become due. Donations are always welcome - you can increase your membership level to Amber, Gold or Jadeite, or make a one-off donation via our website.

FREE entry to more venues! In April 2023 Swindon Museums (Lydiard House, STEAM and Swindon Museum & Art Gallery) joined the Wessex Museums partnership (Dorset Museum, The Salisbury Museum, Poole Museum and Wiltshire Museum). This means that WANHS membership gains you free entry to these venues, plus Stonehenge, when showing a valid membership card. If you do not have a current card (and we no longer send them automatically on renewal), please contact us: hello@wiltshiremuseum.org.uk.

Behind the Scenes tours - members are invited to join the Director, David Dawson, on one of his behind the scenes tours of the Museum. Contact us for details of dates and how to book.

The long term value of a legacy

Legacies and donations are invaluable in underpinning the Society and in helping us to meet the objects of the Charity and we thank everyone, past, present and future, for their contributions.

Recently we have purchased high security cases funded by legacies from Dr Pamela Gough and Dr Lorna Haycock, and fittingly the first displays highlighted the lives and careers of these extraordinary women.

Legacies can be used to purchase items for the collection, improve our website or for other non-budgeted items. However large or small, all legacies are used to benefit the Society, the Museum and our collections. Please read the leaflet enclosed with this newsletter for more information.

If you would like to consider leaving a legacy contact the Director, David Dawson, or visit www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk/legacy/

Museum Opening Times:

(more details at www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk):

Winter: November to March: Tuesday to Saturday: 10 am to 4 pm

Summer: April to October: Monday to Saturday: 10 am to 5 pm and Sunday: 11 am to 3 pm

Annual General Meeting

Sunday 12 November at Wiltshire Museum, commencing at 3pm. The Agenda has been sent to all members.

The meeting will cover the activities of the financial year to 31 March 2023, as well as more recent news, including the successful application for the Assize for Devizes project. After the meeting there will be an opportunity to visit the new exhibitions which open on 11 November.

Alfred La Vardera and Dan Miles are standing down after six years on the Board and we would like to thank them for their time and contributions. We would also like to send our thanks and best wishes to Dr Gillian Kenny who has stepped down as a Trustee following her move home to Ireland. Again, our thanks to her for her contributions

Two new Trustees are proposed to join the Board of Trustees: Nicola Harris and Simon Kerry, and the Board recommends the election of both candidates.

Annual Report and Accounts

There is a summary of the Annual Report and Accounts elsewhere in this newsletter. However, it should be noted that in the year to 31 March 2022, mainly due to the *Eric Ravilious: Downland Man* Exhibition and some very generous bequests, the Society had a fantastic year generating some £795,000 in revenue.

Not unsurprisingly this level of income could not be repeated during the year ended 31 March 2023 and although expenditure remained tightly controlled the turbulence in the financial markets resulted in losses on investments. The net effect of these factors is that the Society recorded a loss £269,000. The Trustees and management team recognise the importance of leveraging existing and generating new streams of revenue to ensure that the gap between costs and revenue is closed. The budget continues to be tightly controlled and monitored.

Communications with Members

With the cost of postage increasing on 2 October (to £1.55 for a second class large letter), we will be relying even more on electronic means of communication - emails, e-newsletter and social media - to circulate information about membership renewals, events, projects, stories from the collection and much more. This also means that we will not be producing *Trilithon* as frequently as we did pre-pandemic.

Do we have a correct email address for you?

If you do not receive our communications by email, and are happy to be included on our e-newsletter and membership lists, please contact us at:

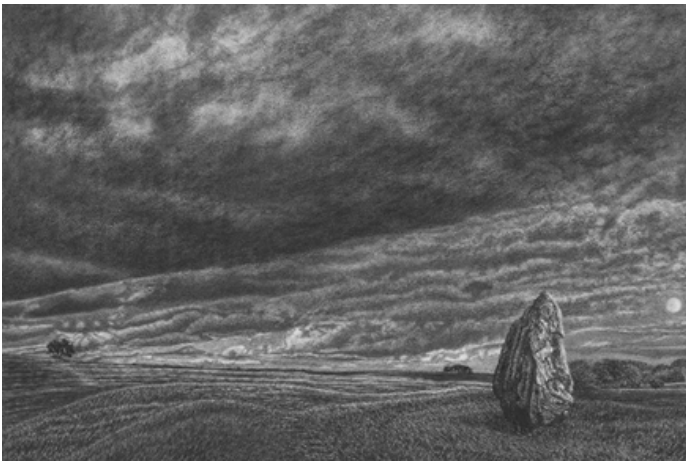
hello@wiltshiremuseum.org.uk

You can also follow us on social media (X/Twitter, Facebook and Instagram).

No email address or require printed communications?

We are aware that some of our members do not use e-mail, or prefer to receive printed communications. Please let us know (address on the back page of this newsletter) if this is you and we will note this on our database.

We DO NOT share our databases with anyone and a copy of our Privacy Policy can be found on our website, or from the office.



Avebury Standing Stones, set in the landscape of the World Heritage Site. A framed compressed charcoal drawing signed and dated by the artist, Rob Pountney (DZSWS:2023.1007).

Large wall hanging tapestry made to commemorate, in 1991, the 850th anniversary of the Devizes Royal Charter. The scene includes images of the Market Place, castle and white horse. The tapestry previously hung in the Town Hall and was transferred to the Museum by Devizes Town Council (DZSWS:2023.28).



Early medieval cast silver strap-end, dating to the 9th or 10th century AD. It has a moulded animal-head terminal with a snubbed snout and bulbous eyes. Other decoration could be a plant motif. Small areas of niello inlay survive within the decoration. It was found in Ogbourne St Andrew and recorded as a PAS Treasure Find. It was recently purchased by the Museum (DZSWS: 2023.26).



Additions to the collections

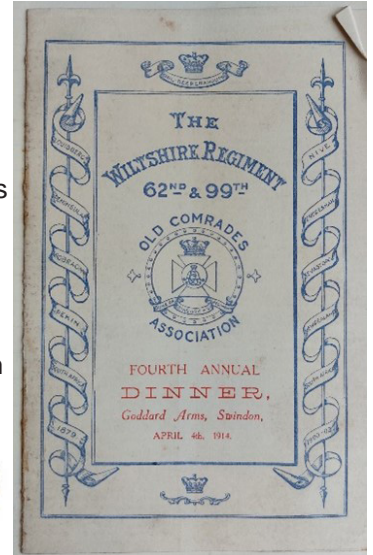
Lisa Brown, Curator and Jane Schön, Collections Officer: Archive and Library

Most weeks we acquire something new for the collections, either purchased or donated. Additions to the collections are recorded in the *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, sent annually to members and the collections can also be searched online at:

www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk/collections/. Our off-site store is now in use and we are once again receiving depositions from archaeology units.

Here we highlight a selection of recent acquisitions.

Cuttings scrapbook compiled by Herbert Sainsbury, Mayor of Devizes, 1913-1915. The scrapbook includes petitions of support from town Burgesses, telegrams from Buckingham Palace, event invitations and menus, lists of fallen soldiers and Wiltshire Regiment ephemera. Purchased by the Museum (DZSWS:MSS.4704).



17th century gold mourning ring, the surface of which is decorated with blue-black enameling and Death's head in white, which has lost its facial features. Engraved inside the hoop is a Latin inscription - *Animae Vita Mors* - 'The Life of the Spirit is Death'. The hallmark stamp gives the date 1673-4. Found near Devizes in 2021 it was purchased for display in the Story of Devizes Gallery (DZSWS:2023.8).



Collection of minute books, account books, and subscription ledger, from the Potterne and District Conservative Club, 1907-1994.

Donated by Dennis Willmott, Potterne (joined committee in 1989 as Treasurer and also held office as Secretary and Chairman) (DSZWS:MSS.4678).

Some of the recent archaeological materials from commercial fieldwork received in our off-site store - approximately 400 boxes have been shelved.

As part of the *Wealth of Knowledge Project* a system was developed that enables collections data provided by archaeological contractors to be directly imported into our collections database - eradicating hours of manual inputting!

www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk/archaeological-archives/



Can you help? Conservation of a Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Presentation Volume

This beautiful hand-written and hand-illustrated album (DZSWS:MSS.4528) dates from the early days of our Society and was donated during lockdown - having been rescued from rubbish in the 1960s/70s!

It was presented to the Rev. Alfred Charles Smith as a *memorial of his exemplary and valuable labours on behalf of the Society*. At that time he had been for nearly thirty years a most indefatigable and industrious honorary Secretary of the Society and Editor of its Magazine. The album actually records WANHS members who contributed to a present for his daughter, Jane Emilia Smith, on the occasion of her marriage to the Rev John Penrose (curate of Potterne) in Yatesbury on 22 April 1884. The presents were a "magnificent silver tray and four candlesticks" - we wonder if they've survived?



Above the presentation volume showing the front page, photographs of the Smith family and Rev Penrose and a list of subscribers.

Smith was Rector of Yatesbury and compiled the *Guide to the British and Roman Antiquities of the North Wiltshire Downs in a Hundred Square Miles around Avebury* and wrote *Pilgrimage and Attractions of the Nile*, the latter being of such interest it was reprinted in 2018. The end boards of the presentation volume are "made from wood from the Holy Land and Egypt". The volume is bound in plain black boards with a thin gold border, but inside are colourful pages of calligraphy, a watercolour of Stonehenge and black and white photographs of many of those who contributed to the wedding gifts. Research into the individuals listed is ongoing, with the aim of creating a small display in the Long Room in due course.

It is a vitally important document about our history but urgently needs rebinding and conservation cleaning to protect it for the future. This work is expected to cost under £400, although for a further £200 the album can be digitised (figures exclude VAT). If you can help or would like to see the volume before committing, do get in touch with Jane.

Sponsor an Object

Other items in our collection requiring specialist care can be found on our website:
www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk/sponsor-an-object/

Recent Acquisition: The Diaries of William Stratton Beaven

By Mike Borro, Archive & Library volunteer

The Museum recently acquired a set of diaries written by William Stratton Beaven (1906-1984), of Worton, near Devizes. They start on 1 January 1928 when he was 21 years old, and continue unbroken (apart from a gap for the years 1945-1948) with an entry virtually every day until 1975 when he would have been 68. It's unclear whether diaries for these missing years were not produced or were not kept by the family.

Each entry is mainly concerned with briefly recording that day's activities.

It seems he lived either on a farm or a small holding because most days the work was milking cows, making butter, digging or mowing a field, tending fruit and vegetables, spreading manure etc: "*Made the butter. Picked some raspberries. Made some jam*" (21 July 1928); "*I spent all day planting potatoes*" (31 March 1931). There are also endless references to doing housework, carrying out repairs to the property and going (or not) to church. Emptying the lavatory pit also seems to have been a favourite occupation (!). Life was not all work though, there are plenty of references to reading and writing, excursions to Devizes and other local towns to visit people and also people visiting in return. Sundays seem to have been reserved for church and visiting.

There was also the occasional family holiday to Weymouth. Although the family owned a car most travel seems to have been by bicycle, which was well looked after – "*Washed my best bicycle*" (27 Feb 1929). The diaries offer a fascinating glimpse into everyday Wiltshire rural life during the mid-20th century. What stands out is how busy and mundane it can seem to us now, although there is no hint of complaint or desire for change on the part of the writer. Indeed he seems so absorbed in everyday life that outside events that we would think important barely get a mention. On the day Edward VIII abdicated the entry reads "*Did some odd jobs and housework. Mother and I commenced to make the butter. Ede went to the P.O.*" (10 Dec 1936); the start of World War 2 is dealt with in five words "*England declared war on Germany*" (3 Sep 1939); and the coronation of Elizabeth II only gets a mention because William went to a neighbour's house to watch it on television. Unfortunately we do not have the diary for the year war ended to see how that event was marked.

Entries for the final year continue in much the same vein, with daily references to jobs about the house and visiting friends and family. Interestingly there is a reference to the diaries for 1924, 1925 and 1926 being burnt which may invite us to wonder what secrets they contained. By March 1975 the entries start to become more sporadic and finally end on 29 August 1975.



William Stratton Beaven was born on 5 November 1906 to William Neate Beaven and Ethel Eliza Beaven in Woodborough, Wiltshire. His father was a farmer according to the 1911 Census. In 1929 he married Edith Mary Few whose family owned Manor Farm in Worton. They lived in Woodborough House, Worton with his mother Ethel according to the 1939 Register and William's occupation is recorded as Gardener and Cowman. He died in 1984 aged 77.

Conserving the Collections

Lisa Brown, Curator

Our collections require constant monitoring to ensure that they are preserved for future generations. Routine preventative conservation is undertaken by qualified conservators from the ICON Conservation Register. This ensures our collections are displayed and stored in the best conditions that we can achieve.



The Wilcot Hoard

With the generosity of our members and contributors we have been able to fund the conservation of an important hoard of Roman bronze vessels discovered in Wilcot, near Pewsey.

This hoard of four vessels was probably buried at the end of Roman Britain, about 1,600 years ago. The vessels were carefully nested inside each other, perhaps using heather, bracken and sedge grasses as 'bubblewrap'. Although buried at the same time the vessels are of different dates however. The largest is a bronze bowl that was made in around 350 AD meaning the hoard must have been hidden after that date. The smallest, a wine strainer, was already over 200 years old and one of the bowls over 100 years old when buried.

Before conservation they were so fragile they could not be removed from their packing! However, they have now been cleaned by conservation experts Drakon Heritage and Conservation.

The hoard was found with the aid of a metal detector by Paul Hart, who promptly reported it to the Wiltshire Finds Liaison Officer. The finder and landowner both generously agreed to donate the vessels to Wiltshire Museum.

Following the completion of the conservation and the construction of a special display mount, they will go on display in the Roman Gallery, followed by a talk in 2024 by Richard Henry, who was the Wiltshire Finds Liaison Officer when this hoard was discovered. Richard is a Roman expert and has published a full report on the hoard in *Britannia*, a national archaeological journal.

images - PAS and Drakon Heritage and Conservation.



Well house with Stonehenge on the horizon

With a donation in memory of Andy Knight (1961-2022) this 19th century oil painting of the Salisbury Plain landscape (artist unknown) was conserved by the International Fine Art Conservation Studio in Bristol.

Whilst being cleaned - and treated for paint loss and flaking - it was discovered that the image of Stonehenge is a later addition! The conservator had to clean around it or it would have disappeared.

Although the thatched building in the foreground is described as a shepherd's hut, it is in fact a well house. A newspaper report has been uncovered of a rather gruesome story about the discovery of a body - probably in this well-house - during the First World War (www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk/artworks/shepherds-hut-with-stonehenge-on-the-horizon/).

Iron Age pottery vessel

This vessel from Maud Cunnington's excavations at All Cannings Cross was originally reconstructed in the 1920s by Maud - using cement! Undertaken as a student project by Sejal Goel (Wiltshire Council Museums Service), who took apart the vessel, before cleaning, filling and reconstructing for display. The only charge was for materials (2006.1.126).



Britton 'Celtic' Cabinet

Displayed in our Story of Devizes Gallery, the Cabinet has been cleaned and minor repairs carried out by Pieta Greaves of Drakon Conservation & Heritage, funded by Wessex Museums (Arts Council), as part of a Decolonising Collections project.

The mahogany and pine cabinet was made for George Watson-Taylor, of the Erlestoke Estate and MP for Devizes (1826-32), under the direction of, or at the suggestion of John Britton. Watson-Taylor was a Jamaican sugar plantation owner, owning over 2,000 slaves. This information - and more - will form part of new interpretation for the cabinet.

WANHS acquired the cabinet from Britton in 1853 as part of the founding collection of the Museum - see *Trilithon* no. 95 (Dec 2020) for more information about the cabinet.

Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society

Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023

(Charity No. 1080096, Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales no. 3885649)

The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society (the Society) was founded in 1853 and is registered with the Charity Commission and Companies House. The Society's objects are to

Educate the public by promoting, fostering interest in, exploration, research and publication on the archaeology, art, history and natural history of Wiltshire for the public benefit.

To achieve this the Society undertakes a range of activities

Maintains a museum, library and art gallery, open throughout the year, and mounts exhibitions to stimulate and enhance appreciation of the county of Wiltshire.

Staff are employed to manage the daily operation of the building and the nationally important collections, supported by a team of volunteers. The Museum is open throughout the year, seven days a week, apart from the Winter months when it is closed on Sundays and Mondays to enable essential work to be undertaken. Committees and working groups are formed to follow up on specific issues.

The Museum tells Wiltshire's story through eight subject galleries – from Prehistory to the Story of Devizes. The Museum hosts visits by a wide range of groups, including schools, youth organisations, local history groups, universities, archaeological societies, tour operators and even sleepovers!

The highlight of the year was the *Hardy's Wessex: Landscapes that Inspired a Writer* exhibition. Developed with our Wessex Museums partners – Salisbury, Poole and Dorset museums - each venue focused on a different aspect of the artists' work. Our theme was rural life and featured the original manuscript of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. A busy programme of events included many linked to the 1967 version of *Far from the Madding Crowd* which had been filmed in Devizes, and the uniform worn by Sergeant Troy was displayed. The exhibition was successful in attracting visitors and we are very grateful to our team of volunteer stewards who ensured we were able to display such high profile loans.

The Wessex Museums Partnership was awarded National Portfolio Organisation status by Arts Council England earlier this year. The Swindon Museums (Swindon Museum and Art Gallery, STEAM and Lydiard House Museum) joined the partnership in April 2023.

The deposition of archives from archaeological excavations are now being stored in our Archaeology Store. The income generated pays for the running costs and will contribute towards the costs of future storage.

In 2023/24 our exhibitions will include *Wessex Airscapes: Elevating Wiltshire*, a collaborative exhibition between aerial photographer Hedley Thorne and landscape painter Anna Dillon, exploring aerial landscapes and two exhibitions which will run concurrently over the winter: *Lest We Forget*, commemorating the involvement of Black People to the World Wars in Wiltshire, and *Eric Walrond: A Caribbean Writer living in Wiltshire*, exploring the life of a writer in the heart of the 1920s Harlem Renaissance.

Our members in the Archaeology Field Group are undertaking new projects with enthusiasm, and carrying out post-excavation work to tie up the loose ends of excavations undertaken in previous years.

All of this activity is made possible by the hard work of a small team of dedicated staff and volunteers. Much of what we do is unseen, but ensures we are ready to welcome visitors and that everything behind the scenes functions smoothly and effectively. We are grateful to our supporters, volunteers and Members, who make the organisation such a success.

Actively collects objects and documents, through the Collections Trust, that tell the story of Wiltshire

Acquisitions to the collection are recorded in the *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*.

Highlights of the year reflect the diversity of the collection: a post-Medieval silver gilt jewellery fitting, a fragment of a Roman sheet gold leaf ornament and a whistle from the Wiltshire County Asylum. Of particular interest is a hoard of late Roman Bronze vessels from Wilcot and we are very grateful to those who contributed to an appeal to enable them to be conserved prior to going on display.

The collections are made available to audiences locally, nationally and internationally. The loan agreement with English Heritage to display items at the Stonehenge Visitor Centre was extended and the touring exhibition *Stonehenge - Ancient Mysteries and Modern Discoveries* opened at Auckland in December 2022.

Organises lectures and events to disseminate greater knowledge and appreciation of our heritage, to both the Society's members and wider audience.

Activities at the Museum are now back at pre-pandemic levels, and we have continued with our online talks to provide for those unable to visit Devizes. We continue to work jointly with other organisations including the Wiltshire Victoria County History. Walks were jointly organised with Glyn Coy and Paul Timlett of Hidden Wiltshire, and local historians John Girvan and Isobel Geddes.

Thank you to the walk leaders and speakers for giving us their time and everyone who helps with the events.

Engages with local community groups to offer arts, culture and heritage activities for all generations.

Amy Hammett, our Community Curator (a post funded by the Wessex Museums Partnership), works to attract groups who do not currently engage with the Museum. A project with the Youth Justice Service resulted in banners created by a group of young offenders being displayed outside the Devizes Assize Court building.

Inspiring people to explore the archaeology, history and environment of Wiltshire

This is a summary of the full Annual Report and Financial Statements, which includes the minutes of last year's AGM. They are available on our website – www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk - or from the Museum office.

Provides activities for young people to enable them to appreciate and develop their understanding of the local environment and its history (including school visits to the Museum and workshops at schools).

The Museum's Education Service continues to offer activities to schools and families across the county, both on a formal and informal basis. The Stone Age and Iron Age workshops are very popular, followed by sessions on Fossils, Toys, the Romans, Saxons and Vikings, Tudors, Egyptians and local studies.

Activities for under-16s continue to be popular, including holiday activities, the Young Curator's Club for 7 to 14 year olds, Museum Explorers for ages 5 to 7 and Curious Kids for ages 2 to 4.

Provides opportunities for volunteers, without whom the Society could not offer the scale and variety of activities.

Volunteers play a vital role in all aspects of running the Museum. They welcome visitors, look after researchers in the Archive and Library, assist with school groups and family activity days, maintenance, decorating, gardening, administration and events. Our student volunteer programme focuses on skills development through creative projects.

Promotes, encourages and undertakes research and publishes newsletters, an annual magazine, reports, periodicals, books and other literature which are relevant to its activities.

Our *Wealth of Knowledge* project is now complete. It has embedded the results of ten years of post-graduate research into our collections management system and a new website makes it easier for researchers to prepare data for our systems.

Our *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine* continues to be the journal of record for reports on archaeological discoveries in Wiltshire, alongside other relevant articles on the history of the county.

Finances, Fundraising and Investments

Funding is essential to achieve the Society's objects, and income comes from a variety of sources, including grants, donations, membership subscriptions, investments, legacies and fundraising activities.

The financial situation at 31 March 2023 is shown in the Statement of Financial Activities and Balance Sheet on pages 10 and 11 of this newsletter. Full details and notes can be found in the Annual Report and Financial Statements - available at www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk.

Income received in the year totalled £361,146 (2022 £795,535), from donations, charitable activities, trading activities, investments and legacies. This was much lower as we did not benefit from legacies or a repeat of the enormous success of the *Eric Ravilious: Downland Man* exhibition held in the winter of 2021/22.

We received income from grants, including from Devizes Town Council and Wiltshire Council, which are a very valuable as they support core expenses. Specific project grants enable the Society to extend its work in ways it would be unable to undertake without such support and we are extremely grateful for all the grants we receive. Expenditure totalled £515,682 (2022 £506,987).

The Trustees consider that, in line with the Charity Commission advice, the Society should have at least one years core costs in unrestricted reserves (i.e. designated funds plus unrestricted reserves), currently set at £300,000 to provide a measure of security; however, as the Society has become heavily dependent on its investments to provide ongoing but uncertain income for its operations, unrestricted funds have to be substantially greater. The Unrestricted Funds at 31 March 2023 were £634,510 (2022 - £852,340). The unrestricted reserves are used to support the charitable activities of the Society where there is a deficiency of net income on core activities or to take account of new opportunities. The Society holds Designated Funds (which are part of total unrestricted funds) of £409,599 (2022 - £441,027). Designated Funds can only be utilised for other purposes if the expenditure they defray either ceases to exist or is charged to core activities. The Endowment Fund currently stands at £490,007 (2022 - £524,608), the capital of which is not distributable. Rathbone Investment Managers are employed to manage the investment portfolio with the primary objective to achieve a balanced return from income and capital at the low end of a medium level of risk.

The principal risks facing the Society, include falls in the Stock Market; long-term staff or Trustee absence; inadequate staffing and dependence on a small team of full-time employees; and physical risks to the collections or buildings. All risks are regularly reviewed.

Future Plans

A new Strategic Plan was agreed in 2019 and takes into account the proposal to relocate to the Devizes Assize Court, whilst working on action plans with the Wessex Museums Partnerships to develop our exhibition programme, services and offers to members, visitors and the wider community. A 2023/24 Forward Plan has been agreed, taking into account the Devizes Assize Court Project.

The Assize Court project will continue to be an important element of our work for the next two years. In June 2023 we received support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund for our ambitious and exciting project *Assizes for Devizes: Unlocking Wiltshire's Stories*. Made possible by National Lottery players, the project aims to revitalise the derelict Devizes Assize Court into a vibrant community hub and iconic new home for Wiltshire Museum and its world class collection. There is more about this project on page 3.

Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society

The following two pages summarise the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023 and the Balance Sheet at that date. The investments showed a net loss at 31 March 2023, due to the economic turbulence of the Autumn, energy crisis and cost of living squeeze, all affecting our income during the year.

Most of the Designated funds are those we received when we took over the Wiltshire Life Society collections

and the income is used to store and maintain them. Most of the Restricted funds are funds from legacies. The income from the Endowment Fund is used to fund the operation of the Society and its Museum.

The Annual Report and Financial Statements are available at www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk or from the Museum office.

Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society

(Charity No. 1080096, Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales no. 3885649)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES - FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total Funds 2023	Total Funds 2022
	£	£	£	£	£
Income and Endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	103,317	5,108	-	108,425	385,718
Charitable activities	138,945	-	-	138,945	261,571
Other trading activities	74,220	946	-	75,166	114,341
Investments	17,160	8,048	13,402	38,610	33,905
Total	333,642	14,102	13,402	361,146	795,535
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	56,719	1,624	2,978	61,321	65,141
Charitable activities	450,649	3,712	-	454,361	441,846
Total	507,368	5,336	2,978	515,682	506,987
Net gains/(losses) on investments	(54,528)	(25,573)	(34,601)	(114,702)	68,324
Net income/(expenditure)	(228,254)	(16,807)	(24,177)	(269,238)	356,872
Transfers between funds	10,424	-	(10,424)	-	-
Net movement in funds	(217,830)	(16,807)	(34,601)	(269,238)	356,872
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward	852,340	378,832	524,608	1,755,780	1,398,908
Total funds carried forward	634,510	362,025	490,007	1,486,542	1,755,780

REPORT OF THE AUDITORS - FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

We have examined the summarised financial statements of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, set out on pages 8 to 11.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditors

The Trustees (who are directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the summarised financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view.

Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summarised financial statements with the full annual financial statements and the Trustees' Annual Report. We conducted our work in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors

Opinion

In our opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full annual financial statements and the Trustees' Annual Report of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society for the year ended 31 March 2023, on which we expressed an unqualified audit opinion in our report dated 28 September 2023.

David Owen & Co,
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors
17 Market Place, Devizes, Wiltshire
28 September 2023

Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society

(Charity No. 1080096, Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales no. 3885649)

BALANCE SHEET - AS AT 31 MARCH 2023

	2023		2022	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets				
Tangible Fixed Assets		329,539		347,224
Managed Investments				
Securities	731,781		978,823	
Cash	10,771		3,508	
		742,552		982,331
Managed Endowment Investments				
Securities	460,659		466,711	
Cash	28,898		57,447	
		489,557		524,158
Total Fixed Assets		1,561,648		1,853,713
Current Assets				
Stock	12,929		15,733	
Debtors	38,708		42,771	
Cash at Bank	131,669		96,726	
Total current Assets		183,306		155,230
Liabilities				
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	130,273		111,814	
Net Current Assets		53,033		43,416
Total assets less current liabilities		1,614,681		1,897,129
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year		128,139		141,349
		1,486,542		1,755,780
The funds of the Society				
Endowment Funds		490,007		524,608
Restricted income funds		362,025		378,832
Unrestricted funds (including Designated funds)		634,510		852,340
		1,486,542		1,755,780

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the Small Companies Regime and FRS 102 Section 1A.

The note on page 9 forms part of these financial statements.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 28 September 2023, and signed on their behalf by:

M J Nye, Chair

C R Kelly, Treasurer

Wiltshire Archaeology Field Group, Wendy Bishop

August 2023 saw a combined dig between around 40 members of the Archaeology Field Group and Cardiff University, this time at Teffont, on a major site which is ancillary to the Teffont Roman shrine complex.

A very large trench was opened [right] and a series of Roman structures were found, overlying a late Iron Age banjo enclosure. The structures varied in date and status and were all multiphase. A very large and well built grain dryer was also discovered. The most significant result was a full understanding of Building A, which turned out to be a monumentalised spring head. It had a deep pool lined with stone revetting, which former walls and roof had collapsed into. The base of the feature had waterlogged preservation. It was intensively sampled for finds, pollen, insects and environmental remains, and post-excavation work continues, with assemblages being sent out to specialists at the moment.

Image (c) Mike McQueen



Wiltshire Archaeology Field Group

To receive regular updates (WANHS members only) via e-mail contact us: hello@wiltshiremuseum.org.uk.

Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society - Please Join Us

To maintain the collections, Museum and Library the Society relies on admission charges, grants, donations and subscriptions from members.

Benefits of WANHS membership include:

- Free entry to our award-winning Museum, Archive and Library and special exhibitions
- Free welcome tour of Museum and Library
- Free entry to Stonehenge and it's Visitor Centre
- Discounted lectures, conferences and courses
- Regular newsletter with the latest news and forthcoming events
- Find out more about Wiltshire's story as you get to know fellow members and meet subject experts
- Make new friends by getting involved in the Museum and Society as a volunteer
- Get involved in archaeological fieldwork and excavation with our Wiltshire Archaeology Field Group
- Read the latest archaeological and historical research in your free copy of our annual journal
- Find out about where you live with free research access to the 50,000 books, documents, maps and images in our library and archive
- Free entry to Salisbury, Dorset, Poole and Swindon museums as part of the Wessex Museums Partnership
- Knowing that you are helping to support our vital educational work and the long-term care of our nationally important collections.

DONOR MEMBERSHIP

Would you like to give extra support to your Society and its Museum?

Two grades of donor membership are available, both comprising the regular subscription plus a donation towards the running of the Museum.

In addition to all the usual benefits of membership Donor members receive invitations to private viewings of exhibitions and other special events.

Gold Donor:

£10.88 per month or £129.00 per year

Amber Donor:

£5.88 per month or £69.00 per year.

Contact us to join WANHS or to upgrade your membership

NOT A MEMBER? IT'S EASY TO JOIN

Become a member and help us to continue preserving Wiltshire's past for the future. This newsletter is sent free to members and you will also receive a copy of our annual *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine* and much more.

Membership of WANHS starts from
£3.85 per month (£44.00 pa).

Student membership
£20.00 pa (£1.80 per month).

Join online or visit the Museum shop.

Editorial Team: David Dawson, Karen Jones

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