

RUSSELL-COTES ART GALLERY & MUSEUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



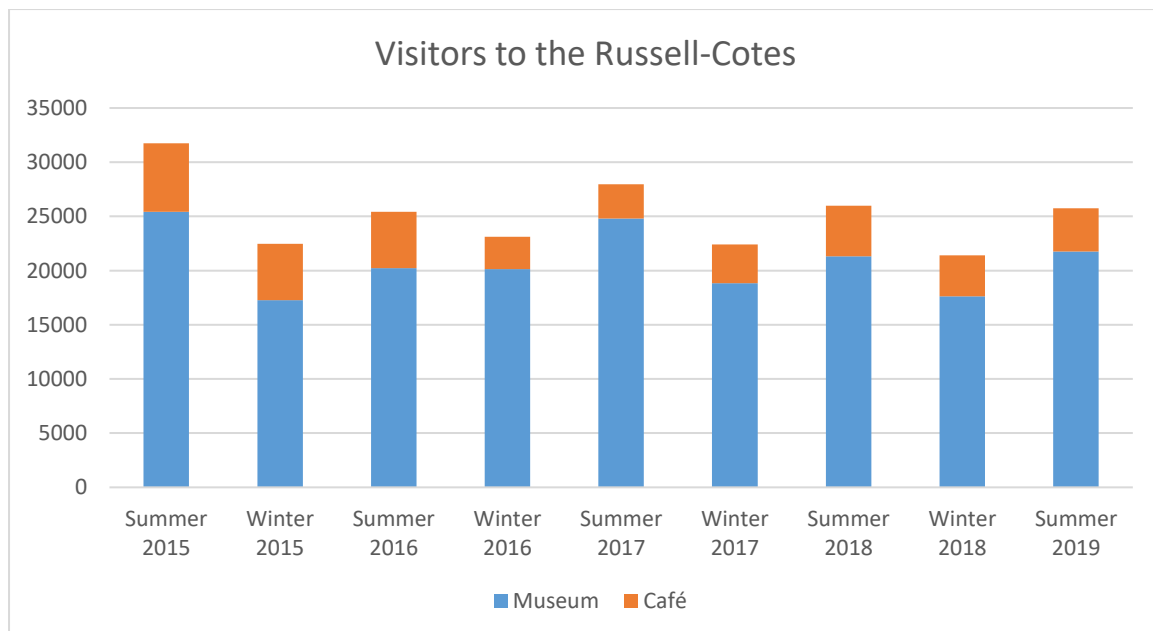
Report subject	Museum Update Report Oct 2018 – Oct 2019
Meeting date	22 January 2020
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>To provide an update on the activities of the Museum over the last year which have included its usual range of activities such as exhibitions and events.</p> <p>It has also embarked on a significant redisplay and reinterpretation project for three of the upstairs rooms, funded by DCMS/Wolfson and ACE which will have a significant impact on access and enjoyment of the Japanese and ethnographic collection.</p> <p>Work has continued on the review of the governance structure.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>That the Management Committee accept the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum 12 month review report for the period October 2018 – October 2019 and agree the actions suggested going forward in this report.</p>
Reason for recommendations	To demonstrate the fulfilment of the Committee's responsibility to provide strategic oversight of the Russell-Cotes as the delegated governance body for the Charity.

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Mark Howell, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Regeneration]
Corporate Director	Bill Cotton, Corporate Director Regeneration & Economy
Contributors	Chris Saunders, Director Destination & Culture Sarah Newman, Museum Manager
Wards	n/a
Classification	Update and Information

Report

1. Visitor Numbers and Performance

- a. Visitor figures have been fairly consistent, a little lower than in 2017/8 which may reflect, the weather and/or the popularity of the exhibition programme. They partly reflect that in summer 2017 we held a number of free days to mark the HLF funded LGBT-related Refracted exhibition and the Arts by the Sea Festival which account for nearly 2000 additional visitors, but we did not hold equivalent events in 2018.



	Museum Admissions				
	2015/6	2016/7	2017/8	2018/9	2019/20
April – Sept	25,435	20,222	24,799	21,313	21,768
Oct - March	17,272	20,138	18,823	17,613	
Total	42,707	40,360	43,622	38,926	
	Café Only				
April - Sept	6,313	5,199	3,152	4,681	3,974
Oct - March	5,197	2,981	3,591	3,799	
Total	11,510	8,180	6,743	8,480	
	Total Visitors				
April – Sept	31,748	25,421	27,951	25,994	25,472
Oct - March	22,469	23,119	22,414	21,412	
Total	54,217	48,540	50,365	47,406	

- b. We have sold 525 Annual tickets and 365 Friends memberships. Friends numbers continue to increase, particularly as our events programme expands and diversifies. It is noticeable that after every special event, such as the Victorian Christmas weekend, membership is boosted. However without the capacity to set up Direct Debits, maintaining numbers is always going to be challenging.
- c. Income from admissions are on target for 2019. The café is also on target while the shop is performing better than anticipated. While events and fundraising are a bit lower than expected, hires/weddings, image licensing, commission on art sales and loans income are performing well so though the second half of the year is inevitably quieter, we currently anticipate meeting our income target of £644,500.

2. House

- a. During this period there have been 83 recorded building faults. The main issues being lead theft and water ingress. Approximately 4 were dealt with by museum staff and 4 are still outstanding. The Condition Survey (Quinquennial) is to be completed in the spring and will be used to identify further building projects.
- b. The following issues have been rectified: the vestibule roof has been repaired and made good, in keeping with the original, which has eliminated leaks. The long-term problem of water ingress into the staff corridor has been resolved with an ingenious drainage and pumping solution.
- c. The summer proved challenging when trying to provide stable relative humidity levels, necessary for the conservation of the collections. There has been considerable work undertaken on the air-handling plant in order to improve dehumidification and air-cooling particularly in Galleries 3 and 4. This has been made more urgent by the requirement to demonstrate environmental conditions to achieve GIS. Improvements have been successful (for a building such as this) and work is still on-going to provide local control so that Museum staff can respond immediately to any issues as they arise.
- d. Following the completion of the repairs to the roof after the lead theft, work was completed by conservators on damage to the main hall murals. The opportunity was also taken, while conservators were on site, to conserve some of the damage to plaster work and skirting boards in the galleries.
- e. All insurance claims relating to lead theft have been completed including the use of a non-lead substitute on the modern wing (except where it abuts the historic building).
- f. Staff successfully changed high level light bulbs on the main hall balcony with staff trained and the methodology recorded for the future.
- g. The following issues remain outstanding: damp and water ingress into staff room from the terrace above still requires a major project to restore the sculpture terrace despite some interventions and is now possibly related to recent heavy water ingress into an additional staff office on basement level currently under surveyor investigation. The sculpture gallery window sills need repainting, the rotten fire doors need repair and the main sewer back up issues are being rodded quarterly but this is not a long term solution. Staff entry door failed to update with multi locking system following lock failure in Jan 19; water ingress through main entrance door continues despite several interventions from building maintenance
- h. A week's closure before Christmas has been firmly established in the Museum calendar allowing a useful period to polish all floors and small-scale conservation and building projects.

3. Collections

- a. A separate report titled 'Acquisitions, Loans and Disposals' is covered at number six on the agenda.
- b. The visitor book of the Royal Bath Hotel from the years 1889 – 1896, which was bought at auction in September 2018, has been conserved and placed on display in the main hall. Museum Consultant, Steve Marshall has led a group of volunteers to research and transcribe the entire book into a searchable document. Talks on the discoveries have already been given to the public and further talks are scheduled. In January 2020 a new plan will be devised for taking this project to the next stage.
- c. Reinterpretation and Redisplay
 - (i) With funding from a variety of sources work began on a major redisplay and reinterpretation project from April 2019 to be completed by December 2020. This has enabled the appointment of a dedicated Interpretation Officer, Jolif Guest for 18 months.
 - (ii) The Museum's Japanese collection is one of its finest and currently very poorly displayed and interpreted. The Mikado's Room glass screen has been removed and new cases in a Victorian style, but with GIS compliant environmental and security standards, will be commissioned along with the conservation and cleaning of the ceiling murals and an audio-visual presentation. This will allow the Museum to showcase the best of the Japanese collection with appropriate interpretation.
 - (iii) The Red Room, which has a sad array of different interpretation and displays left over from the last few decades, will be updated to tell the story of Merton and his art collecting, in the context of his bedroom with paintings, objects and family items on display whilst retaining the opportunity to enjoy the view.
 - (iv) The Yellow Room, which has been dominated by disproportionately large display cases will be displayed as Annie's bedroom with a focus on her interests and the couple's travels around the world.
 - (v) Once the redisplay is complete the interpretation throughout the house will be addressed.
 - (vi) The project involves working with BAME community groups, outreach to communities and schools and an events programme. Funding allows for conservation of objects and appointing visiting curators to support the research, notably Greg Irvine, Senior Curator, Victoria and Albert Museum and Len Pole, formerly Curator, RAMM, Exeter.

4. Exhibitions and programming

- a. The Exhibition *China: Through the Lens of John Thomson* was held in Galleries 3 and 4 from 3 November 2018 – 2 June 2019. This exhibition showcased photographs by the legendary Scottish photographer and travel writer, John Thomson (1837 – 1921) who spent four years travelling through China. His fascination with the country and sensitivity towards its people and their customs is reflected in the stunning photographs he took and he became one of the most influential photographers of his generation.
- b. The modern prints on display were blown up to more than life-size proportions from the glass plates in the collection of the Wellcome Library London. The Russell-Cotes selected about 50 photographs for display, themed around place and social status. They were accompanied by objects, from hair ornaments to opium pipes, collected by Annie and Merton Russell-Cotes on their visit to China only a decade later.
- c. The exhibition and associated events were very successful – visually stunning, popular with the public, well-merchandised and allowed the Museum to develop relationships with some China experts, local community and to research more about our collection.
- d. From 14 June 2019 – 2 February 2020, the Museum is showing *Sublime Symmetry: the Mathematics behind De Morgan's Ceramics Designs* which has been borrowed from the De Morgan Foundation and celebrates the tiles and hollowware produced by this Victorian artist. We have worked with the De Morgan Foundation before and know that their exhibitions work well in our environment. The extended run has allowed staff to devote time to other priorities and to accommodate the necessarily shorter run of the Pre-Raphaelite exhibition scheduled for spring 2020.
- e. The exhibition *Beyond the Brotherhood: The Pre-Raphaelite Legacy* on which the Russell-Cotes has worked in partnership with Southampton City Art Gallery and with funding from Weston Loan Programme with Art Fund opened in Southampton on 18 October 2019. Although the majority of the paintings come from the Russell-Cotes collection, managing the loans from national and regional museums as well as private collectors has been a step-up for us. Anne Anderson has guest curated the show, Southampton taken responsibility largely for the loan negotiations and transport, while the Russell-Cotes has delivered the catalogue in partnership with publisher Sansom and Company and worked on marketing.
- f. Achieving GIS for this exhibition has been an absolute requirement otherwise the insurance costs would have been unaffordable. This has required work on security, environmental conditions and recruiting stewards. We are delighted that ACE has awarded us GIS for this exhibition, subject to the maintenance of the required standards and conditions.
- g. The Secretary's Room has continued to be a very useful small exhibition space to display small painting or 3D exhibitions from the collection. From 23 November 2018 – 12 May 2019, we held an exhibition of material from the Chinese Collection to complement the *John Thomson* Exhibition in the main galleries. From 25 May – 18 December 2019 we showed the work of the

ever-popular Bournemouth based artist Leslie Moffatt Ward in '*Romanticizing Dorset*'.

h. The Café Gallery hosted the following exhibitions:

- (i) *Sunrise to Sunset: A collection of images by Emily Endean Photography* (30 Oct 2018 - 13 Jan 2019) Dorset landscape images.
- (ii) *Schools Mini Painting Project* (14 Jan – 10 Feb 2019) featuring 399 pieces of artwork made by children from five local primary schools; Heathlands Primary Academy, Bearwood Primary & Nursery School, St. Luke's Primary School, Ad Astra Infant School and Canford Heath Infant School. Inspired by a piece of art from the Russell-Cotes collection, children created a painting during an art workshop led by the Learning Team.
- (iii) *AUB Architecture: Pop-Up Museum* (12 Feb –31 March 2019) An exhibition by students from the AUB Architecture Course inspired by their visits to the Russell-Cotes.
- (iv) *Indian Summer* (2 April –14 July 2019) work by local artists Felicity House and Billa Edwards inspired by their visits to India.
- (v) *Prints from the Collection* (16 July – 3 November 2019) affordable prints from our collection which has sold very well.

i. Other events included a programme of talks by volunteers and visiting curators and academics to support the exhibition programme including lion dancing for Chinese New Year.

5. Education and Engagement

- a. During this period there have been 24 school visits for 676 pupils. In addition, there were 5 sessions for 43 home-educated children. Staff also held 6 sessions as outreach including a session on Japan for 75 pupils as part of the Redisplay project. For the 'Masterpieces in School', Art UK-funded project, the sculpture, '*George Bernard Shaw*' was taken to St. Edwards Secondary School for 3 workshops for a total of 60 children.
- b. Children's activities have run for a total of 32 days at each holiday period attracting a total audience of 544: Hallowe'en 2018 (80 children), Chinese New Year (11) Summer half-term (56 children) Easter (100), Summer Holiday (152 children) and Halloween 2019 (145). 71 children also visited Father Christmas.
- c. Additionally, three adult painting workshops were held, run by artists Abi Kremer and Susan Cunningham for the BEAF festival. The Hallowe'en evening events were very successful attracting 98 adults in 2018 and 150 in 2019.

- d. The Museum collaborated with the universities on a number of projects in addition to the Architecture Pop-up Exhibition: notably AUB Fine Art: *Artefactum* installation exhibition for 20 students. AUB Applied Theatre: ghost hunt experience for 10 students and BU Media Production: *Reveries* for one student's sound installation graduation project.
- e. Funding from the HLF Resilience grant has been allocated to audience development work. We have worked with a consultant to explore our visitors and through Focus Groups to identify what we can do to reach target groups particularly local non-visitors and one-off visitors.

6. Staff

- a. Kim Knight, Senior Museum Assistant, left in the summer 2019 and Eliza Bichard replaced her in September. Emma Rowland joined as a part-time Marketing Officer in October 2019 on an agency contract. Helen Ivaldi, Programmes Officer, went on maternity leave in August 2019. Jolif Guest joined in spring 2019 as Interpretation and Audience Development Officer on an 18 month contract funded by ACE.

7. Facilities

- a. The Café..The net income for the period was £112,798 and expenditure was £97,199. The Café has demonstrated a great improvement during this period from previous years, partly through growth of the business and partly through greater confidence in terms of managing menus, stock, and staff time. There is still room to grow the business.
- b. The catering team have acted on the recommendations of catering consultant Robert Reid to improve the profitability of the catering offer, by streamlining the operation to reduce staffing costs and wastage. Some garden furniture was bought for Summer 2019, more to raise the profile of the café than as a full-blown outside offer (because of the problems of servicing the outside area). This has helped raise usage of the garden during the summer and demonstrates the potential of this offer for future developments. However, there are no easy ways to introduce an outside catering offer given the configuration of the building.
- c. Shop takings have been very strong and still increasing at £103,170 for the period (generating a gross profit of about £60,000). They have been bolstered by the *Prints from the Collection* exhibition in the café gallery which generated £10,537 in sales of framed and mounted prints. The top three best sellers in the shop are postcards, guidebooks and hand-made buttons. A new category, using the Conservatory and Café Gallery for craft items by local artists such as stained glass, ceramics and jewellery has generated additional sales of £8,283.

8. Fundraising

- a. The HLF Resilient Heritage grant of £29,400 is still being completed.

- b. The BH Lottery has generated £1,363 since its launch in February 2019 and the Pennies for Heaven Scheme £489, an increasing amount since BCP Council broadened the membership. We are exploring setting up contactless donations. With support from Dukes Auctioneers a valuation ticketed evening and open day were held with experts from the BBC Antiques Road Show. This raised £1500.
- c. Fundraising for the Redisplay project has been successful: Wolfson/DCMS for £115,000 for the materials costs for redisplaying the Mikado, Red and Yellow Rooms (lighting, flooring, cases, conservation, mounting etc). ACE Project Grants for £55,000 to cover the salary of a curator to work on the project for 18 months and to bring in external specialist support. In addition £3000 from Sasakawa Foundation towards the audio-visual presentation in the Mikado's Room.
- d. £25,000 has been received from Weston Loan Fund with Art Fund for the joint Pre-Raphaelite exhibition with Southampton City Art Gallery. The funding will support the costs of loans from national collections, additional marketing, production of a catalogue and programming.
- e. A legacy of £25,000 was received from Mrs Hart of Burton, Dorset and has been allocated to the consolidation, conservation and cleaning of the historic murals in the upstairs rooms.

9. Marketing and PR

- a. Additional resource has been put into the marketing budget in order to maximize the impact of the Pre-Raphaelite exhibition which we hope will be a major driver for visitors. With funding from Art Fund we have appointed Liz Lean Associates to provide PR support.
- b. The Russell-Cotes had some good exposure in the media over this period with an appearance on Antiques Road Trip, BBC South Today (for the Redisplay Project grant and in response to Lenny Henry's tweet about a historic poster in the Bournemouth Pavilion) and a mention on Radio 3.
- c. We still seek cost effective ways to raise our physical profile in the area. Improvements include signage on Russell-Cotes Road and pavement works on the Promenade.

10. Weddings and Venue Hire

- a. The museum made £11,900 net income for venue hire, including 4 weddings. Venue hire remains unpredictable and sporadic. We collaborated with a local wedding planning company and magazine for a promotional wedding photo shoot in summer 2019, although this has not yet produced any significant interest. Hirers during this period included Bournemouth University, Arts Council England.

- b. With funding from the NHLF for the resilience grant, all staff have been able to access useful additional training and mentoring on income generation including fund-raising strategy, shop management, maximizing income and audience development.

11. Management and Governance

- a. On 1 April 2019 Bournemouth Borough Council ceased to exist and Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council was created. The new Council now acts as sole trustee. This is enshrined in the following two UK Statutory Instruments:
 - (i) 2018 No. 648 The Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole (Structural Changes) Order 2018
 - (ii) 2018 No 2176 The Local Government (Structural Changes Transfer of Functions, Property, Rights and Liabilities Regulations 2008
- b. The creation of the new Council and work on new structures and systems has started with the formation of a Destination and Culture Directorate within Economy and Regeneration but this is yet to have any significant impact on the day-to-day operations of the Russell-Cotes.
- c. With the local elections in May and the formation of the new Council it has taken some time to appoint the three new member Councillors and to reappoint the four external appointees. However, Lorryne Blomfield has resigned from the Committee for health and professional reasons.
- d. At their meeting on 29 March 2019, the Management Committee agreed to support the move to full independence and requested further investigations into its benefits and impact to be undertaken. For the reasons above, it has taken some time to fulfil this. The update on this action is under a separate item on the agenda.

Summary of financial implications

12. N/A

Summary of legal implications

13. N/A

Summary of human resources implications

14. N/A

Summary of environmental impact

15. N/A

Summary of public health implications

16.N/A

Summary of equality implications

17.N/A

Summary of risk assessment

18.N/A

Appendices

There are no appendices to this report.