

Wessex Museums

What's happening now?

Wessex Museums is made up of the four museums which best tell the stories of Dorset and Wiltshire from prehistoric times to the present day – Dorset County Museum, Poole Museums, The Salisbury Museum and Wiltshire Museum.

Together we are a registered charity, the Wessex Museums Trust, and in April 2018, we became a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO), funded by Arts Council England to deliver 'Great Art and Culture for Everyone'.



Stronger together

By working together and supporting each other we are building the resilience and sustainability of the four partner museums and our partnership. By sharing expertise and resources we enhance the work undertaken in the museums, and create critical mass allowing us to punch above our weight in areas like programming and audience engagement.

Growing the Wessex Museums Trust

As a young charity, we are building the Wessex Museums Trust from the ground up, but with the backing of four successful and reputable museums. Our priority is to build the financial profile and resilience of the charity, diversify our income and become 'investment ready'.

This year we are working towards bringing the NPO grant funding into the Wessex Museums Trust, and fundraising for our programme through trusts and foundations, and corporate sponsorship. Our longer term ambitions include exploring the potential for expanding the partnership to include more museums.

Branding and interpretation strategies

In March, we appointed consultants to take on two important pieces of work. One contract is to develop a high level interpretation strategy, which will involve identifying the key themes/stories that unite the four partner museums, around which we can build our programming, learning and community work, marketing etc.

The other is to develop a brand identity for Wessex Museums. This will consider who we are and why we are relevant from our audience's point of view; establish our personality and tone of voice, and also produce visual materials for our brand.

Working with our Communities

The partnership has recently recruited three Community Curator roles focused on delivering projects with harder to reach groups in the specific localities of the museums, as well as developing contemporary collecting and best practice for community work across the partnership.

Our Partnership Programming

These are some of the highlights of our partnership programming over the next three years that will help share the amazing story of the region in new and exciting ways:

Henry Lamb and Augustus John



These major art exhibitions at Poole Museum and The Salisbury Museum, showcase the work of Henry Lamb and Augustus John. These giants of 20th century painting lived and worked in the Wessex region.

*Self Portrait Sketch by Henry Lamb
Pencil on paper
Private Collection*

Alchemy: Artefacts Reimagined

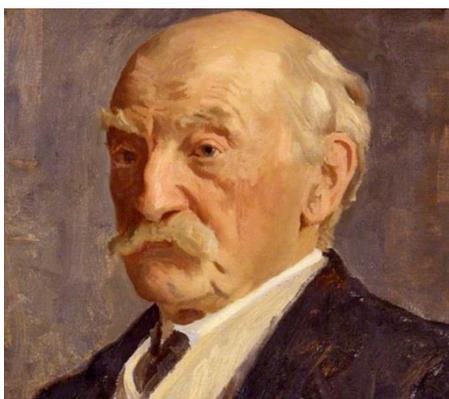
We invited contemporary artist, Ann-Marie James, to delve into our collections and find an object in each museum that inspired her.

The result is a stunning exhibition of artworks, all in white and gold, and using a range of fascinating techniques. The exhibition begins a tour of the four museums in May 2019.

Chieftain 1, inspired by Wiltshire Museum's Bush Barrow lozenge.



Thomas Hardy exhibition



Plans are underway for a ground-breaking exhibition telling the stories of Hardy and how he was inspired by the people and landscapes of Wessex.

It will take place at all four museums concurrently in 2021, each focusing on different aspects of Hardy's life and work.

Thomas Hardy, 1923 portrait