

# Mansfield Museum and Art Gallery

## Education Policy 2001 – 2004

### **1.0 Mission Statement**

*Mansfield Museum and Art Gallery will enhance public understanding and appreciation of the historic, social and economic importance of Mansfield and the surrounding area through the careful management, interpretation, display and development of its collections and ensure maximum visitor satisfaction by providing a frequent change of exhibitions of interest and relevance to local residents.*

### **2.0 Definition of Education**

Mansfield Museum and Art Gallery believes 'education' to be a core function of its service, which enables all sections of the community to make connections with the building, its collections and exhibitions.

### **3.0 Statement on Education**

Mansfield Museum and Art Gallery aims to develop its potential, as a learning resource by working in partnership with the local community to assess need and identify desired outcomes. The Museum aims to make a positive contribution to people's lives regardless of age, need or background within the framework of its Access Policy. The Museum understands the importance of involving stakeholders, staff and volunteers at all stages in the development and implementation of this policy.

### **4.0 Current Position**

#### **4.1 Strengths**

- Free admission for all
- Open six days a week, from 10 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.
- Open at other times by special appointment
- Collections of local importance, value and interest
- Permanent displays
- Wide-ranging temporary exhibitions programme, including the work of nationally renowned artists and craftspeople.
- Study facilities available for visitors to view and research reserve collections
- Core of regular, repeat visitors
- Links with local schools
- Working partnership with the Palace Theatre
- Partnership with Interact, the region's support group for freelance educators
- Links with local special interest groups
- Full access to all areas for wheelchair users

- Education Room
- Registered Museum status
- Strategic Forward Plan in place
- Education Survey undertaken on behalf of EmmS in 1999
- A team of friendly, welcoming and helpful staff
- Children's area in Ceramics Gallery
- Worksheets for the permanent galleries
- Alphabet trail linked to National Curriculum
- New School Loan Boxes

#### 4.2 Weaknesses

- Ineffective retrieval systems due to backlog of documentation
- Insufficient funds
- Limited curatorial staff resources
- Static, out of date displays
- Inaccessible labelling and text panels
- Lack of interactive exhibits
- Limited interpretation
- No materials in other languages
- No trained education staff
- Insufficient knowledge of existing and potential markets

#### 4.3 Opportunities

- Use of volunteers and work experience students to increase number of loan boxes and redesign gallery trail sheets
- Potential to extend use of loan boxes to other groups
- 'Playtrain' children's consultancy project
- Re-development of the Whitaker Gallery to provide modern, interactive exhibition
- Grant opportunities (EmmS, Heritage Lottery Fund, Coalfields Regeneration Trust etc.)
- Increased use of the study facilities
- Potential to include exhibitions with specific educational content in the temporary exhibitions programme
- Build on initial focus group meeting with local teachers to establish needs and desired outcomes
- High profile of education within government and funding organisations
- Training programmes
- Partnership with the Palace Theatre Education and Outreach Officer

#### 4.4 Threats

- Reduced resources
- Competition from other, better equipped and interactive museums and visitor centres in the region
- Reduced opening hours/closure
- Time restraints imposed on schools by demands of the National Curriculum
- Financial constraints suffered by schools

### **5.0 Objectives**

#### 5.1 Audiences

To make education at the Museum relevant and accessible to all sections of the community regardless of age, need or background. For the purposes of this document the potential audience will be categorised as follows:

- Schools
- College and University Students
- Other formal learning groups
- Individuals ( adults and children )
- Groups ( adults and children )
- Specialists

#### 5.2 Collections

- To enable audiences to make connections with the Museum's collections and to readily access information about them.

#### 5.3 Interpretation

- To use a range of techniques to allow audiences to learn from permanent and temporary exhibitions, and education materials.

#### 5.4 Access

- To improve the accessibility of the Museum as a learning resource and to implement the Museum's Access Policy as part of this process.

#### 5.5 Education and Outreach

- To prioritise education as a core function of the museum's service by ensuring that learning opportunities for all are considered at every stage of development.

## 5.6 Consultation

- To increase understanding of the requirements of users of the service in order to develop the resources to meet these needs.

## 5.7 Marketing

- To ensure that information about the Museum's services is widely available and, where appropriate, directly targeted at groups and individuals with particular interest in learning at the Museum.

## 5.8 Partnerships

- To form appropriate partnerships with relevant bodies to facilitate the development of the service.

## 5.9 Training

- To ensure that all staff and volunteers receive adequate training to allow them to deliver the practice outlined in this policy as effectively as possible.

## **6.0 Strategies**

### 6.1 Audiences

- Schools: Use the National Curriculum to identify areas where the Museum can provide learning resources.
- College and University Students: Identify suitable projects for work experience and advertise these at relevant institutions.
- Formal Learning Groups: Identification of relevant groups to allow targeting of information and extension of current service to include these groups.
- Individuals: Consultation to assess needs and expectations and improvements to interpretation and access to information. Extension of event programmes to reach a wider audience.
- Groups: Identification of relevant groups and targeting of information.
- Specialists: Production of leaflet advertising service available and dissemination of information.

### 6.2 Collections

- Resubmission of application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for money to update, improve and extend documentation of all collections in order to facilitate retrieval of information.

- Use of volunteers to aid the documentation process and carry out small-scale research projects to gradually improve the level of information recorded about the collections.

### 6.3 Interpretation

- Introduction of simple, low maintenance interactives to enable visitors to connect with and understand the displays.
- Broadening of range of resources available to borrow for educational purposes.
- Insertion of additional educational elements in displays to increase opportunities to learn in different ways and at different levels.

### 6.4 Access

- Provision of written information about the collections using a hierarchy system to include readers of all abilities.
- Production of labels that are large, easy to read and at a height where they can be read by all.
- Introduction of sensory methods of interpretation to allow access by those with physical, learning or communication difficulties.
- Development of temporary exhibitions and special events that reflect the experiences of different sections of the local community.

### 6.5 Education and Outreach

- Ensure that educational opportunities are considered and included in all areas of the Museum's work.
- Ongoing assessment of staff roles to maximise educational potential.
- Development of the Loans Service to include specific National Curriculum study topics, Literacy and Numeracy teaching areas, and subject areas suitable for reminiscence and special interest groups.

### 6.6 Consultation

- To gather the views of children, young people, teachers and other users and non-users of the education service on current provision within the Museum.
- Consultation with specialists and researchers to ascertain their requirements.

### 6.7 Marketing

- Use of data collected in the consultation process to inform planning and development of the service.
- Production of new promotional material for specific education services.

### 6.8 Partnerships

- Identifying and nurturing relevant partners to collaborate on educational work with the Museum.
- Work with local teachers to keep up to date with changes and developments in the national curriculum and required teaching areas.

### 6.9 Training

- Ongoing analysis of training needs relating to education as part of the Staff Development Programme, for curatorial and front of house staff and for volunteers.
- Investigation of suitable training opportunities
- Encouragement of participation in relevant training activities