TRUE'S YARD FISHERFOLK MUSEUM REPORT

Report by Museum Curator

December 2025

1. **Temporary exhibitions and events at True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum**

1.1 **Exhibition Programme**.
Exhibition Room: The Loss of the Beautiful Star – 150th Anniversary of the Fife fishing fleet disaster. In part sponsored by the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

Old Smithy: Deck the Halls: Christmas Tree Decorations Through the Ages. This exhibition was made possible by funding from the Love Your Market Town Fund. There is a tie in Christmas Tree trail with partnerships with local businesses in the town centre. It will run until 16th January.

1.2 **True's Talks**
Our autumn programme launched on 25th September and concluded 13th November. 8 talks all by local speakers very popular with audiences 40+ each talk. The Spring series will launch in February 2026.

1.4 Pat Midgley Memorial Lecture
The 11th Pat Midgley Memorial Lecture. Memorial Space Project. The speaker was Associate Professor David Petts who delved into the world of fishing on the North Northumberland Coast.

The evening also included songs by the King's Lynn Shanty Singers in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Scottish fishing fleet Disaster off the Norfolk coast and involving King's Lynn fishermen. Proceed went to True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum and St Monans Memorial Space Project.

The lecture was held on the 150th anniversary of the Scottish Fishing Fleet Disaster and the King's Lynn Shanty Singers performed songs on the evening to raise monies for the St. Monans.

Other Museum Developments

2. **Events**
December
3rd 150th Anniversary of the Great Gale Service at St Nicholas Chapel at 10am followed by wreath laying at Hardwick Road Cemetery at 12noon. To commemorate the 1875 Great Gale and its fatal consequences.

7th December Xmas Lunch (FOTY)
10th Winter Tales and Tunes of the North End 1:45pm
10th December Carol Service at All Saints Church at 6:30pm.
11th December Christmas Quiz
18th December Merry Christmas Presence- A Victorian Children's Ghost Tour.
19th December True's Yard Volunteers Christmas Party Noon.
The Museum closes for Christmas at noon on 19th December 2025 and reopens on 6th January 2026.

3. Income Generation

3.1 Museum Fundraising

22nd May TY1000 Club recruitment event
10th August Alison Gifford Tea Party
5th September Robert Anderson Garden Party
4th November Dinner in Memory of Fisherfolk and Sailors

3.2 Friends of True's Yard

We are most fortunate to have an active and supportive Friends group. They have recently helped the Museum with funds towards the move of Activity.

4. Partnerships

4.1 St Monans

As part of the 150th Anniversary of the Great Gale fishing disaster we have strengthened our links with St Monans who opened a memorial garden on 22nd November. As part of our side of the partnership we have put on a series of events.

1) Friday 17th October and the tour of the streets of the North End in 1875. On a grey Friday evening 30 people met at TYFM and £160 forthcoming in donations.
2) Sunday 26th October: Fisherfolk Memorial Walk in Hardwick Road Cemetery. On a rainy afternoon 15 people attended and £60 raised.
3) Saturday 1st November: the NCC Chairman Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick opened the Museum's Beautiful Star Exhibition + 20 people present. It was accompanied by folk song from Stuart and all watched the short (emotional) film from St Monans.
4) The Museum's annual maritime dinner at the Duke's Head Hotel took place on 4th November for 28 guests (not principally a fundraising but £300 raised). Paul R gave a short talk on the events of 150 years ago which has reconnected King's Lynn and Fife fisherfolk communities.
5) True's Talks- the final event of the season on 13th November- Paul R on The Great Tragedy of the Scottish Fishing Fleet & King's Lynn.

4.2 Dragon Festival

True's Yard took part in the town wide Dragon Festival on 8th November. It was a well attended events with a variety of activities at the Museum and around the town. We were pleased to be able to participate with this event.

5. Learning and Outreach

5.1**. Activities**

Half Term Activity Days

Halloween Activities

Our morning and afternoon sessions were fully attended. One thing we noticed was that with the changing nature of family dynamics some children had as many as 3 adults accompanying a single child. When sat down they took up space at the tables. This led to one family requesting a refund as they couldn't get to the crafting tables. To prevent this in future we will have 1 adult accompanying a child for free but for each further adult there will be a charge.

5.2 Oral History Project- Capturing Memories

Our Oral History Committee is hard at work. With some members of the recording team ill the focus has been on cataloguing and organising the existing collection into the same format and producing an up-to-date accessible inventory for access via our new reading room computer and eventually online. A spreadsheet has been created and once the new server arrives the oral histories can be added to Modes, which has not previously been possible due to limitations on disk space.

5.3 **Social Media**

Currently the Museum's Facebook page has 2.6k followers; Instagram 502 Followers (last report 475). Our TikTok has 282 followers (last report 202 followers).

5.4 Website

Our new website created in-house is being built over the winter by Gaynor and volunteers to replace our current website. It will be hosted by Krystal Hosting on their free charity website hosting package. This will allow online ticketing to be fully integrated and future access to the library and archive catalogue.

5.5 The Tearoom

The tearoom improvements are complete and it looks much better. The pantry conversion has provided much needed storage space.
The new menu is much more accessible for those with intolerances and dietary restrictions.
There has been a marked improvement in the quality of our coffee thanks to the new coffee machine and we are selling our coffee in the shop.
We are charting over the next 6 months the difference it is making to income generation.

8. Visitor Numbers

Visitor Numbers April-October 25/26:6,904 Last year: 7,593.
This summer has seen a drop in visitors in other attractions. Cost of living, weather and unreliable public transport have been noted as potential causes.

6 Resource Implications

Grants

St Margaret's and St Nicholas Parish Trust £500 for new fire extinguishers.

Love Your Market Town £1,320

Love Norfolk £3,000 towards training and equipment to improve our volunteering offer.

7 Recommendations

That the Committee notes the report.

Originator of report:
Lindsey Bavin
Museum Curator
True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum
Tel: 01553770479
e-mail: info@truesyard.co.uk