

Committee:	Date:	Item no.
Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee	27 October 2014	
Subject: City of London Heritage Gallery		Public
Report of: The Director, Culture, Heritage and Libraries Department		For Information
Summary		
This report provides an update on the opening of the City of London Heritage Gallery in September 2014.		
Recommendation		
It is recommended that the report is received.		

Main Report

Background

1. On 4 December 2013 this Committee approved a report giving Authority to Start Work on the construction of the City of London Heritage Gallery within the walls of the Guildhall Art Gallery. As noted in that report, it had previously been agreed by Members that among other strategic initiatives, renewed emphasis should be placed on the City's role in looking after London's and the nation's heritage and in publicising that role. This initiative coincided particularly with the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta in 2015 and the City's existing commitment to play a central role in the national celebrations, focusing on its crucial role in ensuring that the document was agreed in the first place and in guaranteeing that its provisions were carried out; its stewardship of one of the finest surviving thirteenth century copies of the document; and the continuing legacy of civic responsibility and education. Other significant and internationally important items from the City's documentary collections would also in time be exhibited such as the 1215 charter from King John granting the City the right to elect its own mayor, the 1613 Shakespeare Deed and the WW2 bomb damage maps of London, compiled by the London County Council.

Current Position

2. Construction work was managed around other demands on the Guildhall complex, including high profile civic events such as the State Visit of the President of Ireland, and in conjunction with other works at the Art Gallery, notably the replacement of the lighting and the fabric wall coverings. The Heritage Gallery opened to the public on Friday 12 September, preceded by a formal reception for its launch on the 11th. The reception was marked by speeches by Sheriff Sir Paul Judge, the Lord Chief Justice Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd and Dame Helen Ghosh, Director-General of the National Trust.

3. The first display comprises:

Magna Carta (1297)

Cartae Antiquae. This fifteenth century volume contains transcripts of charters and statutes covering laws enacted between the reigns of Edward III (from 1327) to the accession of Henry VII (1485). It would have been an essential reference tool for City of London officials as they scrutinised statute and safeguarded the rights of the medieval City.

Prints of City of London Aldermen dating from about 1447. The City of London owns a set of portraits of all twenty-five City Aldermen who were in post in the mid fifteenth century. These heraldic portraits show the dignity and standing of the office holders and provide a unique glimpse of the men who governed the medieval City. Each Alderman is represented at full length and holds in his right hand a decorated version of his personal arms. On the left is a shield with the name of the ward he represents. The selected images are of John Derby, the Alderman for Candlewick, who was a member of the Drapers' Company and Sheriff from 1445-46 and Robert Horne, Alderman for Bridge Ward and Sheriff from 1446-47 who was a member of the Fishmongers' Company.

Poster for a Recruitment Meeting, 4 September 1914

The poster is for a major recruitment meeting held at Guildhall, the first of many to be held throughout the country following the outbreak of war. Government leaders including the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith; Lord Kitchener and Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, attended along with the Lord Mayor Sir Thomas Vansittart Bowater. He proposed a resolution, seconded by the Governor of the Bank of England, to support the national call to arms.

London County Council, Emergency Committee Minutes, 1914

The London County Council (LCC) had strategic oversight of what is now the area of the inner London Boroughs in 1914 and on the outbreak of war immediately set up an Emergency Committee to monitor the effects on families, businesses and communities. Reports in the volume tell how London was changing in the first few months of the war - unemployment

and wage cuts; rising food prices; and the rapid decline of trades such as tailoring and the manufacture of fine goods. Excessive drunkenness among many women across the capital was also reported. Towards the end of 1914 unemployment eased when factories were awarded large government war contracts and regular army allowances began to be paid.

There is also a very popular large backlit copy of the Agas map of the City and surrounding areas dating from the end of the sixteenth century as well as a touchscreen computer for members of the public to use with extra information on the items on display, clips from archive films that the City owns and more on the collections at London Metropolitan Archives.

4. A media programme was run to promote the opening of the Gallery which resulted in very good coverage including
 - A ten minute item on the BBC London Inside Out series
 - Two interviews on BBC London radio
 - A long piece on BBC Online and the national Magna Carta 800 website
 - Items in the Evening Standard, the Metro, Country Life, The Times, Time Out and Wall Street International,
 - Items in travel trade publications such as School Travel Organiser, Visit Britain and Coach Tours UK
5. The display will change broadly three times a year, with the next occasion being the end of January 2015 when the Mayoral Charter of 1215 will be the centrepiece. Magna Carta will return on display in June for the 800th anniversary celebrations and will remain there until the end of September 2015. Since opening, the Heritage Gallery has contributed to overall visitor figures to the Art Gallery of more than 6,000 over Open House weekend (20-21 September).

Conclusion

6. The City of London Heritage Gallery opened on time and to a very favourable response. It should continue to provide a focus for showcasing and promoting the City's contribution to London and the nation's history and its stewardship through London Metropolitan Archives of outstanding archival collections.

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