

**RUGBY ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM  
ACCESS POLICY**

**2002 - 2007**

### **Access Policy: An Introduction**

This Access Policy was written by Wendy Parry and Nikki Grange, following an advisory visit from Emma Hawthorne from the West Midlands Regional Museums Council. It was developed by Kate Pontin a consultant and amended to take into consideration staff comments.

The policy aims to provide a strategic framework, which will allow the service to focus on its key aims and objectives. It will also be used to seek external funding.

Also nearly complete is a five-year forward plan for the whole service including a Marketing Strategy and updating the Temporary Exhibition Policy. The Access Policy takes into account, and links with forward plans for the whole service.

### **Vision**

Rugby Art Gallery and Museum have, since the spring of 2000, offered educational services (or “life-long learning” programmes) to a number of audience groups, and in particular school groups. We now wish to develop educational services for these groups, future users and others not yet catered for. This will require developing relationships with our users and non-users, and the improvement of appropriate skills and funding (eg through external funding). More staff time (through out the museum) will also be needed to develop the service.

The Forward Plan in this policy clearly outlines each of the individual tasks planned for the short-term development of our life-long learning services. The chief aim is to further understand our audiences and their needs. Our vision is for them to contribute towards the development of the museum and to feel an increased sense of ownership. Our desire is to establish sustainable services, which provide long-term support for a range of users, rather than project based initiatives, which are difficult to continue.

Access not only includes the “intellectual” access to our collections and services but also physical access. Our forwards plans will include further audit of access for various user groups and the development of appropriate services. Physical access for the disabled has been considered with a lift, toilet facilities etc. We however wish in the future to consider the needs of other groups.

Initially development work will focus on one or two priority audiences, which will be highlighted by the audience research. At present visitors to RAGM come from a number of different backgrounds and age groups. However we need to develop a more detailed visitor profile and develop new services for groups significant by their absence.

In the longer term RAGM wants to develop more dedicated time for education work, either through additional staffing, using current staff such as those in front of house, or consultants. We also want to look into the idea of employing consultants on a system such as at Warwickshire Museums Service, or indeed buying into such a service.

## 1.0 Access Mission Statement

*To inspire, excite, challenge and encourage both residents and visitors alike to a greater understanding of, and enthusiasm for, the history and culture of the Borough of Rugby, 20<sup>th</sup> Century and contemporary British art, and contemporary visual art and craft.*

### Aims

Rugby Art Gallery and Museum (RAGM) is committed to providing a service that is welcoming, stimulating and challenging. It holds at its core a belief that learning in its widest sense underpins all its activities. Following this RAGM aims to:

1. Enable visitors to enjoy and understand the history of the Borough of Rugby and related subjects through the interpretation of its collections
2. Develop a service that encourages lifelong learning
3. Maintain standards and continue to improve the quality of our visitor/virtual visitor experience
4. Underpin all our activities with an educational core
5. Encourage repeat visits and seek out new audiences
6. Improve access both intellectual and physical
7. Increase audience involvement in the development of RAGM and its services and create a greater sense of ownership
8. Research visitor/non-visitor needs and interests to support the development of new services
9. To bring professionally produced high quality temporary exhibitions to Rugby
10. Continue and improve support for Rugby artists
11. Access to all – mental and physical

## 2.0 Background

Rugby Art Gallery and Museum is housed within a building owned by Rugby Borough Council, part of which is shared with and leased to Warwickshire County Council for the provision of a local library.

Opened in Spring 2000, Rugby Art Gallery and Museum is the first museum to collect and display the material remains of the Borough of Rugby and the first purpose built Art Gallery in which to house and display the Borough's 20th Century and contemporary British works of art (currently 150 works). Included within this is a temporary exhibition space.

## **2.1 Current Education Service**

At present there is no specific provision in terms of staffing. A new budget of £2000 has been allocated for educational use.

Currently the services offered to the public include the following:

- Permanent and temporary exhibition galleries including floor one, which is hireable. Events are organised to accompany exhibitions including talks, workshops, and demonstrations and handling activities.
- Hands-on activities for families, (including art and archaeology), have been developed for permanent exhibitions.
- The Tripontium Collection of Roman Archaeology is a specially designed gallery, with hands-on activities. In 2001 the Tripontium Teachers' Pack was developed for use by schools. It supports the Key Stage 2 topic on Romans, which includes work in the galleries and a handling session.
- Activity sheets
- Take bookings for groups and schools for self lead sessions in the art gallery and museum
- Introductory talks by Gallery Assistants for schools and groups
- Support for teachers
- Regular holiday workshops linking to current exhibitions, free demonstrations and talks for the independent visitor.

Currently services are not charged for unless an artist's time and materials are required or extra staff are needed for workshops. In future this policy will need to be reconsidered.

## **3.0 Audiences**

Since opening, RAGM has made great strides in catering for many different audiences – adults, families, local schools, children etc.

Currently main audiences are:

- Primary schools, particularly Key-stage 2 (8-12 year olds)
- Family groups
- Ethnic Minorities eg as part of Black History Month
- Disabled users
- Adult users to organised workshops

However a number of temporary exhibitions have attracted different audiences including students and young people.

In the future we will be turning towards focusing on new key audiences, which will relate to the local profile. Research will help decide which new audiences to focus on in the short term. However, Rugby Borough Council has placed a strong emphasis on providing services for young people and so RAGM will be considering how it can be linked in to this strategy as part of its audience development.

Audience research will include:

- Using our available information such as ticket sales, general observations, booking forms, evaluation etc

- Gathering information on the local people. Other professionals such as Tourist Information and planning departments will help with the development of local profiles.
- Structured evaluation using outside agencies as required

#### **4.0 Resources**

- There are four full time key staff, and nine part time staff, working for the service. However, there is no dedicated education staff, with the Exhibition Officer doing much of the organisational work, although contract workers are used to run workshop sessions and demonstrations. Gallery Assistants are also involved in supporting school groups. They are trained to offer an initial talk to schools, workshops and providing basic information on the displays.
- There is a dedicated education budget of £2000.
- There is no dedicated lunch space, but there is a good education room for half a class to do handling sessions and workshops in.

#### **5.0 Networking**

Partnerships have been initiated and maintained with a number of organisations, *including*:

Rugby Borough Council's Recreation and Arts Department, the West Indian Association, the Rugby Association for the Blind, Hereward College, and Rugby Library. RAGM actively participates in professional networking groups such as the Warwickshire Curator Group, Group for Education in Museums and West Midlands Arts. It is planned to develop new partners including

- Warwick Art Week Group
- Developing links with new community centres with immediate priority for those attended by ethnic minorities as these have already been identified by the museum as potential new audiences.
- Youth Organisations

#### **6.0 Training**

Training is an important aspect of development for all staff and volunteers. Gallery Assistants will continue to receive training to help them support group visits. Audience research will also highlight the areas where other training is required.

#### **7.0 Marketing**

We will be working towards developing a more coherent marketing policy as part of the whole policy renewal. It will involve talking to user and non-user groups about their needs and interests. This will enable us to develop a service that suits the needs of our broadening number of users. We wish to concentrate on a number of priority groups for the coming years as highlighted by this research. Other groups will be focused on in future years.

Services will be promoted in a number of different ways including through the local press, community news, website, use of posters, developing a mailing list etc. Research will also provide information on which methods are most appropriate

Within the schools sector we will develop and maintain a computer mailing list of all the schools that have used us, and create materials to send to them on a regular basis. These materials may include invitations to exhibition openings/previews, news about workshops and INSET etc

### **8.0 Evaluation**

We currently collect a number of different types of data including visitor figures, and teacher and workshop evaluations. These are analysed monthly by the Gallery Assistants. We plan to develop a more formalised system of collecting data for evaluation. This will include an annual survey and formalised observation evaluation by front of house staff. RAGM intends to use our front of house staff more for gathering of data both from observations and informal conversations. We are interested in gathering data about who is attending and what they think. A more formal survey of users will be used once a year to collect user data on where they have come from, exhibition preferences and personal interests. Data gathered will provide information for analysis and thus evidence for changes to be made. We are keen to gather evidence of quality as well as quantity and thus aim to collect visitor's opinions, and observe users in the galleries.

Particular evaluation needs have been identified:

- Evaluation of the family activities so that improvements and additions can be made.
- Marketing – assessing most appropriate methods
- Teacher' needs including potential use of loans
- Visitor research including local profile

## 9.0 FORWARD PLAN

The tables below outline the objectives for the immediate future. These relate to the aims written at the beginning of the life long learning policy. However, the completion of the earlier tasks, and in particular audience research and teacher needs may influence later tasks. It is necessary that the forward plan should be reviewed every year.

### 9.1 SHORT TERM – 2002/3

Task	Date for completion	Who doing task	Costs
Collect data to find out local profile (including age, race, education etc) eg from Tourist Information Find out audience profile for RAGM			
Complete Access Policy by thorough audiences research into users and non-users to decide priority target audience groups for immediate future.			
Target groups identified as needing encouragement to use the service. Strategies highlighted in the marketing strategy will be used			
Continue to offer KS2 Romans education Workshops and increase the numbers of schools attending			
Continue to organise a small number of activities and events/programmes for the period			
Research teachers' views of the service and in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new teachers' pack on the Rugby Art Collection</li> <li>• Needs for loans boxes</li> </ul>			
Initiate research into use of family boxes for future revision including consultation with family groups			
Develop computerised mailing list of schools who have used the service so far (including neighbouring schools)			
Continue to train staff including familiarisation with new initiatives			

Locate potential freelancers			
With additional grant aid money or other funding provide educational work with local schools around the Bridget Riley exhibition.			
Produce programme for Black History Month with library			
Prepare bid for temporary post (HLF) to develop the Social History collection and strengthen links with the Rugby community.			
Investigate Warwick Museum Service model for supplying education workshops			
Look at and start to develop appropriate loans boxes and accompanying resources. Consider associated administration, costs, charges to schools etc			
Outreach exhibitions in rural areas eg work with colleagues in the recreation and arts section to bring exhibitions and related activities to the rural areas			

## 9.2 MEDIUM TERM OBJECTIVES – 2004/6

<b>Task</b>	<b>Date for Completion</b>	<b>Who doing Task</b>	<b>Costs</b>
Revise family boxes in galleries according to comments by users			
Experiment with several adult activities (possibly with partners) to reach target audiences (as defined by previous research)			
Develop Teachers' INSET to coincide with start of summer viewing of Rugby Art Collection			
Write and produce life long learning leaflet			
Continue partnerships with library, and in particular the local studies library with the possible aim of developing joint resources			
Develop evaluation strategy including factors such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who to evaluate</li> <li>• What want to know</li> <li>• When going to evaluate including frequency and time of year</li> </ul>			

Appoint temporary post (assuming bid HLF successful) to develop the Social History collection and strengthen links with the Rugby community.			
Develop pack for Rugby Art Collection assuming bid is successful (possibly using contract workers)			

### 9.3 LONGER TERM

Task	Date for completion	Who doing	Costs
Develop further materials for re-developed Social History Gallery (subject to funding) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess teachers use of current material</li> <li>Assess other needs eg loans</li> <li>Develop new materials</li> </ul>			
Assess needs for Schools Loan boxes			
Gain funding for better interpretation and education			
Develop links with Percival Guild House with potential of developing joint courses			
Audience Development – develop new resources, events etc for a new audience group to be decided by audience research carried out each year			
Develop role of local communities to provide opinions on the museum development eg advisory group.			

