

Report: Quarter 2 25/26

Date: 10th Sept 2025

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2. Curatorial update
3. Volunteer update
4. Social Media Statistics
5. Events
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1. Visitor Data

Museum Visitors	Year to Date	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Full Year
24/25		3942	3505	3464	3154	14065
25/26	7060	3809	3251 (July-August only)			

School Visitors	Year to Date	Summer term	Autumn term	Spring term
24/25	1902	922	483	497
25/26	824	824	460 bookings already confirmed	



1. Visitor Data

- Summer holiday family activities have been well attended. Weekly free activities supported by Cheshire East Levelling Up fund. ~50 participants a week – 50:50 return visitors and new visitors.
- Cardboard Clues has continued to bring in new visitors and high numbers. Participants have tended to stay for a long time, been intergenerational groups and spend (low level) in shop and café. Plans are being discussed for a Christmas special and another set of stories next year.



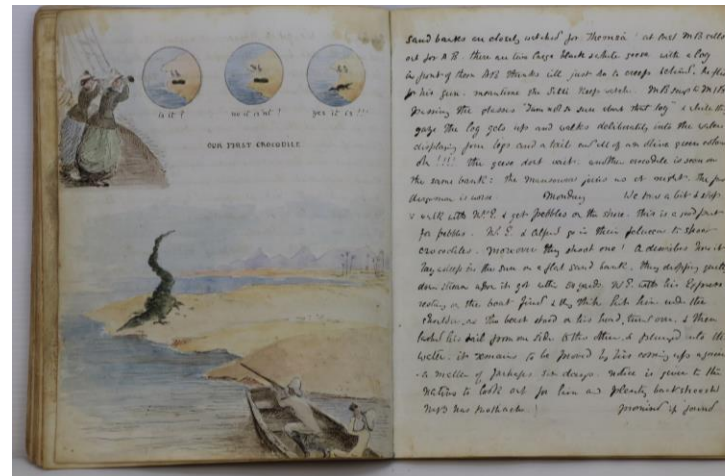
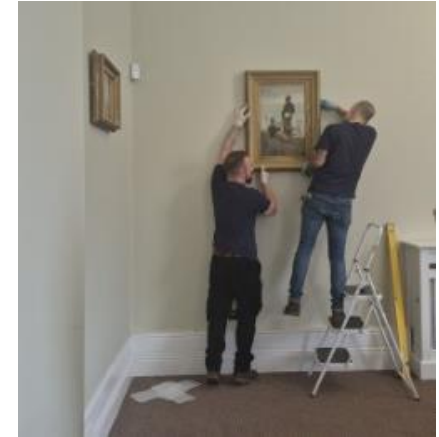
Cardboard clues:
329 bookings, ~1500 people

*'Kept the grandchildren entertained whilst also seeing the museum in a fun way'
'Fun, engaging and encourages kids to explore exhibits.'*



2.1 Silk Museum Collections update

- Awarded "Quality Assessed" rating in an assessment by Visit England. Our score increased 1% from last visit, giving us an overall score of 85% and a nomination for their "Welcome Accolade".
- New interpretation produced to improve the visitor flow of the museum.
- New exhibition of 10 specially conserved artworks from the West Park Museum collection launched in the Town Hall. The artworks are viewable by the public for the first time since before the COVID-19 pandemic, over 5 years ago.
- Visited by 3 researchers:
 - PhD researcher (Marianne Brocklehurst's Egyptian Diary and Sketch Books)
 - PhD researcher applying AI to the Godwin Pattern Book collection
 - Patchwork researcher who is writing an article on our collection for the Patchwork Society's magazine.



2.2 Paradise Mill update

Heritage Open Day 2025

Heritage Open Day 2025 will be a celebration of all the hard work that has been breathing life back into Paradise Mill over the past 12 months, with

more working looms,

more weavers designing

and more varied interpretation

than ever before.

A promotional poster for the Silk Museum's participation in Heritage Open Days 2025. The poster features the Silk Museum logo at the top left, with the text 'FREE OPEN PARADISE MILL VISITS' in large, bold, pink letters to its right. Below this, a paragraph describes the visit as a step back in time to the sole survivor of Macclesfield's industrial and creative past, highlighting the largest collection of silk Jacquard handlooms. The dates and times for the visit are listed as Saturday, 13th September, from 10.00 to 15.00. A pink box indicates the museum is open from 10.00 to 4.00. A QR code is provided for booking. The poster also mentions funding from the Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund. The background of the poster shows a photograph of the interior of the mill, with rows of handlooms. The poster is decorated with a vertical column of colorful circles on the left and a cluster of colorful circles on the right.

SILK MUSEUM **FREE OPEN PARADISE MILL VISITS**

Step back in time inside the sole survivor of Macclesfield's industrial and creative past, housing the largest collection of silk Jacquard handlooms in their original setting.

Saturday, 13th September
10.00, 11.00, 12.00, 14.00, 15.00

SILK MUSEUM
OPEN 10.00-4.00

Book online via the website or at the Museum.

New interpretation funded by:
Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

LOTTERY FUNDED

heritage open days

2.2 Paradise Mill update

"So many of the mills have closed now that if there was nowhere keeping these old skills alive then they will actually die out."

- Kathleen Butler

6.3 Full Council 22 09 25 Agenda Item 6.3



More Working Looms

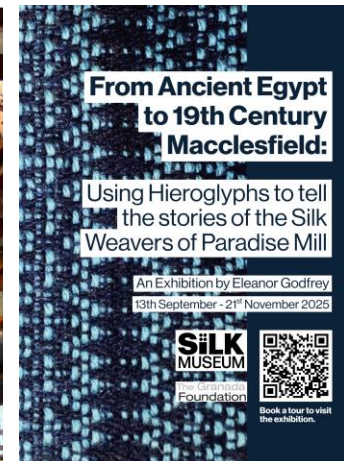
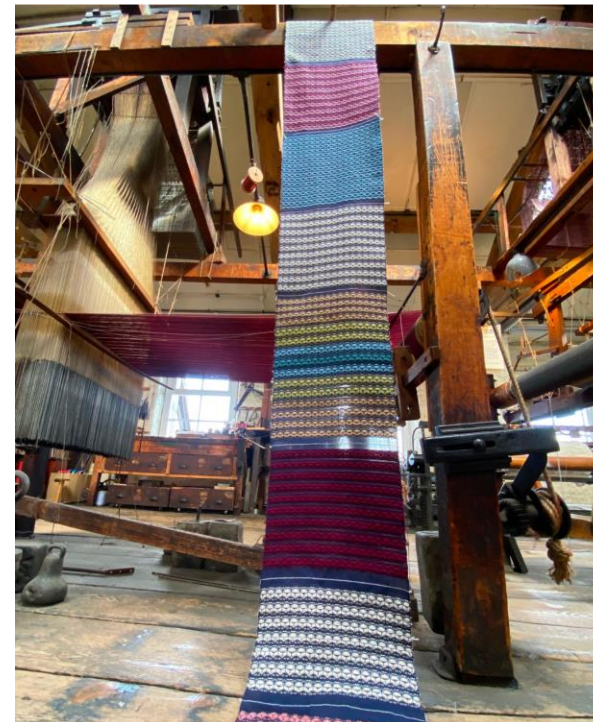
- **The number of working looms has increased from 1 to 4 in the past 12 months.** We now have one 6 shaft dobby loom, two 400 hook Jacquards and now one 600 hook Jacquard. The 600 hook is functional but would benefit from a new warp in the new future.
- After **5 ½ years of dedicated work**, both the Leslie Winnell and David Jones looms are fully restored. Started in 2019, the project was initially funded by the **Association for Industrial Archaeology** and its final stages have been funded by **the Radcliffe Trust** and **Rogers & Goffigon**.
- This July, for the **first time in 30 years**, former weaver in residence 1987-1990, **Kathleen Butler**, who now works for Rogers & Goffigon, visited Paradise Mill to see the restoration work in action.
- More functional looms means that we can host more weavers and produce more designs, adding a much needed element of dynamism and contemporary design to the historic environment.



2.2 Paradise Mill update

More Weavers Designing

- **New Weaver in Residence**, Eleanor Godfrey, has produced **5 new ancient Egypt inspired designs** on the **newly restored 6-shaft dobby loom**, which hasn't worked for around **20 years**. Eleanor ran **two fully booked workshops** with **Space4Autism** and **East Cheshire Eye Society**.
- An **exhibition of Eleanor's work** will be launched on Heritage Open Day, **the first special exhibition in the mill for at least a decade**.
- **Two new graduate weavers, Cecile Driver and Halle Sivyour**, have been recruited for placements in the mill. They will restore looms, produce a new design and enrich tours. They will start in **October**.
- Our workforce has expanded, with **three new volunteers** joining the mill team. They bring varied skills from restoration to weaving, storytelling to problem-solving.



2.2 Paradise Mill update

More Varied Interpretation

- The **first new interpretation in the mill in 40 years** will be soft launched on 13th September and formally launched in November.
- The interpretation has been designed with **underserved community groups**, such as Just Drop In, East Cheshire Eye Society and Ash Grove School, to ensure that it is **inclusive and accessible**.
- The **History Hunters** volunteer group researched former employees discovering **never before heard stories** and **interviewing former workers** and their relatives to reveal a **new more personal history of Paradise Mill**.
- Visitors can **explore the mill at their own pace** and in their own order using **QR codes** and newly installed **Wi-Fi** and TV to access **brand-new digital interpretation**.

"It felt like a privilege to do the research and hear the first-hand accounts of people's lives."

- The History Hunters



2. Update for Future Collections Projects & Exhibitions

- A new opportunity for communities to exhibit their work in our new Community Case **due to be installed September** - Just Drop In to be the first exhibitors.
- Launching new Oral History drop-ins in **October** to record visitors' memories of the silk industry. Run by the History Hunters volunteers every **Thursday 1pm – 3pm**.
- Taking the first steps to create new digital interpretation for the Silk Museum by joining the app Bloomberg Connects. Starting work in **Jan/ Feb 2026**.
- Broadening the relevance of our collections through partnership with Body Positive -project starting around **Macc Pride 2026** with creative activities, oral histories, a community mapping (a Cheshire wide project) - Culminating in a **History of Drag exhibition in 2027** in the gallery space. (Easter time start).
- Alongside Historic Royal Palaces, Worthing Museum and Whitchurch Silk Mill, the Silk Museum is hosting Stephanie Smart's paper fashion exhibition in **April 2029** in both gallery space and one piece in Paradise Mill.



SILK MUSEUM

BODY POSITIVE

3. Volunteer update

Volunteer hours (Q2 July and August only) - 788.40 (590.30 same period last year)
An **increase of 30%** on 2024. Value of **over £9,500** to the museum.

Roles being advertised currently:

- Weekend Front of House Volunteers
- Weekend Paradise Mill Volunteers
- Special Event Volunteers
- Young Trustees

Supported by Kids in Museums we are in the process of **recruiting young trustees** (18-30 year olds) to our Board of Trustees.

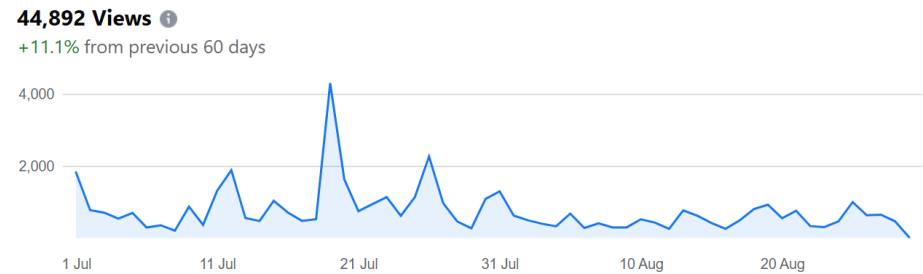


4. Social Media update

Facebook

Facebook views up over this period.

Views highest when shared on local groups, especially Macclesfield Memories



☐	 The school holidays are here... Macclesfield Memories Published • 19 Jul at 17:30	...	3,313	1,993	7
☐	 No text content Macclesfield Memories Published • 12 Jul at 09:01	...	2,415	1,277	4
☐	 The school holidays are here... Whats Going on in Macclesfield Published • 19 Jul at 14:34	...	1,951	1,426	7

Instagram

Follows up 23% on previous quarter.

 Marking Time: Translating the pattern book a... Photo • jillcrdo	Boost	...	24 July 00:01	8,560
 We had a special visitor last week! In 2024, P... Reel • silkmuseummacc	Boost	...	30 July 10:05	4,310
 We are pleased to introduce Paradise Mill's fi... Reel • silkmuseummacc	Boost	...	14 August 03:25	2,706

Engagement

“I was fascinated to see my son interact with the model looms in the museum. History is best preserved only when the next generations are passionate about their past.”





5. Events update

Date	Event	Audience	Feedback / Comments
8 th July '25	Summer Flower Box Workshop – trial event in the café as part of Foyle Grant	Adult workshop participants (6 adults)	‘Participants loved everything about their morning - the venue, cake & coffee, the actual activity and range of materials, the outcome... ‘
Thursdays /Fridays in the school holidays	Creative Thursdays / Story and Craft	Families	~40 people per session Thursdays / ~18 people per session on Fridays.
Saturday 23 rd August	1261 Festival – drop in crafts run by the Creative Bumbles	Families	~120 Creative Bumbles loved the classroom and are keen to work with us further. Potential for regular activity.
8 th / 9 th August	Teen art workshops	Teenagers	One girl was really nervous and wanted her mum to stay. She got so into stitching that she left asking for a trip to the Fent shop to buy embroidery equipment!
August	Cardboard Clues	Families / Out of town visitors	>250 groups Such a success that seeking further opportunities
August	Eleanor’s Workshops – free workshop funded by The Granada Foundation/ Arts Council England	Space 4 Autism / Cheshire East Eye Society	Space 4 Autism = 7 participants East Cheshire Eye Society = 9 participants Very positive feedback for both workshops. Both groups keen to work with us again.



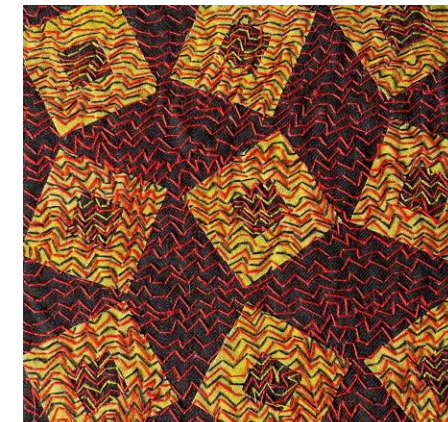
“Our hearts are so full! We had the most wonderful day at 1261 with all of you lovely people! We were completely blown away by how many of you showed up to take part in our community painting. Seriously, you are all incredible!

We had mini artists as young as 2 years old and grown up artists contributing to our big masterpiece, and the energy was just pure magic! “ – Creative Bumbles

6. Exhibitions update

6.3 Full Council 22 09 25 Agenda Item 6.3
It's been such a brilliant run at the museum, we've had a wonderful time and met some lovely people.

Dates	Exhibition title	Artists	Comments / Feedback
July / Aug	Small Spaces	Founder Jen Orpin	Artist days on 26 th July and 16th August. Over 100 visitors per event.
Sept / Oct	The Fabric of Life	Cheshire Artists Network	Yet to be installed.
July / Aug	Marking Time: Translating the Pattern Book Archive	Loose Threads collective	Looking to work further with the collections for a larger exhibition in 2026
Sept / Oct	Seasons of Dyeing	Becca Smith & others	Linking with the Tunnicliffe garden. Workshops running throughout Sept/Oct.



Q3 Headline Community Activities

Coming up:

- **New exhibitions** – Cheshire Artists Network, Growing Colour (linked to the Tunnicliffe garden)
- **Launching an outreach** offer for Education
- Launch of **consultation** linked to HLF.
- HLF consultation beginning with an internal survey and focus groups. Leading into a visitor survey and **interactive exhibition**.
- Participation in the Macclesfield **‘World Harvest Festival’** – series of workshops and art installation in the garden.
- **New school year** – return of school groups and ongoing work experience with ProjectInc.
- **Christmas** offer including activities, music and Father Christmas .



8. Finance and grants

Finance update (Q1) – 22,897.17

Time Period	Total number of transactions	Total retail spend	Average retail spend per head	Average total spend per head	Total spend through till	Average transaction value
2024/25	1577	11,868.53	3.01	5.80	22,897.17	14.56
2025/26	1453	8432.49	2.21	6.14	23,386.16	16.21
Change	-8%	-29%	-26%	+6%	+2%	+7%

Finance update (Q2 July – August 31st only)

Time Period July – Aug	Total number of transactions	Total retail spend	Average retail spend per head	Average total spend per head	Total spend through till	Average transaction value
2024/25	917	6,320.64	2.64	5.47	13,081.71	14.30
2025/26	993	6,104.59	0.86	1.85	13,082.03	13.91
Change	+8%	-3.42%	-32.57%	-33.82%	+0.01%	-2.73%



9. External Funding Pipeline

Projects underway with funding from public bodies, Trusts & Foundations

Paradise Mill

£5000 Rogers & Goffigan sponsorship for Loom Restoration

£2500 Granada Foundation for Weaver in Residence

£28000 Arts Council Unlocking Collections for new interpretation

£125,250 Headley Trust Senior Curator Paradise Mill - 3 years

£29000 Pilgrim Trust for Cartwright & Sheldon collections care & development

Silk Museum

£15000 Foyle Foundation for developing Café as a Community Hub

£5000 Museum Development North to establish Audience Baseline

£165000 Arts Council Capital Improvement Programme – Jacquard Studio

£227,223 National Lottery Heritage Fund – Resilience programme





9. External Funding Pipeline

Current Funding Applications in Process

MEND – £495000 Arts Council museum repair fund – following successful Expression of Interest, Full Application being developed to address urgent building maintenance needs and complex environmental problems that are impacting collections, staff and visitors

Funders being cultivated

Rausing Trust and Fidelity UK Foundation





10. Additional Updates



Café awarded a Food Hygiene Rating - 5

