



## JOINT COMMITTEE OF BEAMISH

### THE NORTH OF ENGLAND OPEN AIR MUSEUM – 13<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2012

#### UPDATE ON MUSEUM'S BUSINESS

#### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR: RICHARD EVANS

#### 1. Performance for the period 1<sup>st</sup> February to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011 (11 months)

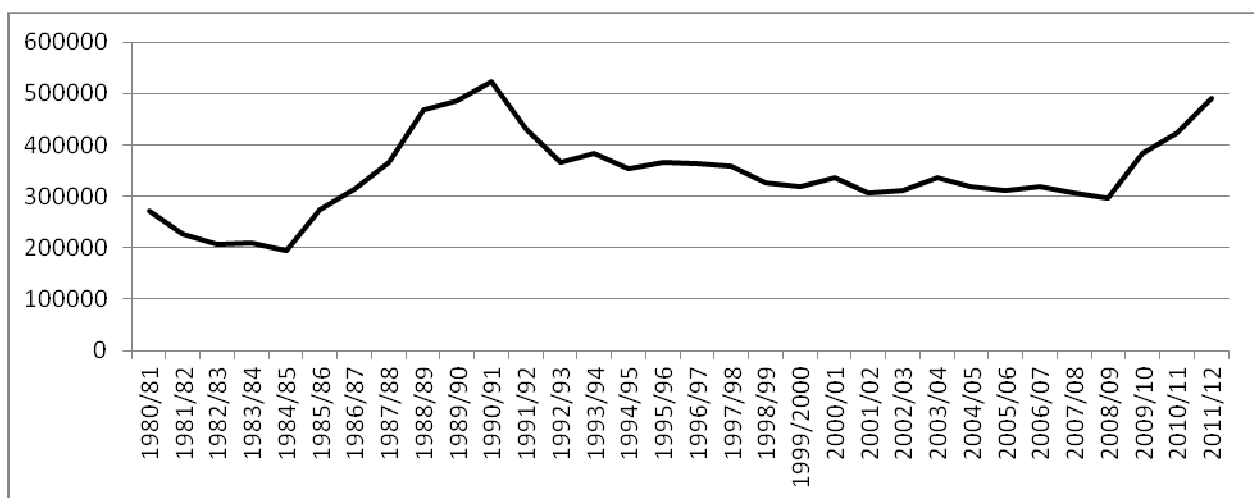
	Actual YTD 2011/12	Revised Budget YTD 2011/12	Previous Year 2010/11
Visitor numbers	485,832	445,262	413,595
Variance (%)		9%	17%
Beamish Museum Ltd income (excluding grants/donations)	£4,194,761	£4,039,089	£3,854,968
Variance (%)		4%	9%
Beamish Museum Trading Ltd income (catering/retail)	£1,641,089	£1,545,975	£1,462,264
Variance (%)		6%	12%
Total BML/BMTL income <sup>1</sup>	£5,835,850	£5,585,064	£5,317,232
Variance (%)		4%	10%

- 1.1 Beamish has enjoyed an incredibly busy festive period, with 41,034 people attending the Christmas at Beamish season in the month of December and a further 22,795 during November. Both Christmas evenings at the museum in December were sold out with 2,000 pre-bought tickets per night.
- 1.2 The autumn and winter of 2011 has been particularly successful, the busiest on record at Beamish. 158,403 visitors attended the museum in the four month period September to December 2011, attracted to a range of seasonal events. By way of comparison, prior to the development of an autumn/winter events

<sup>1</sup> All income is shown net of VAT and excludes revenue grants from HLF, and MLA/Renaissance. BML income includes all admissions, education activities, sales of guide books and income from gift aid.

programme, just 72,675 people attended the museum in the period September – December 2008.

- 1.3 The strong growth in visitor numbers experienced in the 2011/12 year is particularly marked when it is seen in context, looking right back to the early 1980s. Total visitor numbers in 2011/12 are now expected to be in the region of 490,000. This result shows an encouraging increase from 422,000 in 2010/11, 385,000 in 2009/10 and 298,000 in 2008/9.
- 1.4 Beamish is currently growing its audience at a rate not seen since its dramatic development in the 1980s. It has sustained a rate of growth in excess of 10%/annum consistently over the past three years, as the museum's Business and Operational Improvement Plan has been delivered. The graph below shows the total number of visitors to the museum mapped out over the period 1980 – 2011.



- 1.5 There are a number of interesting trends in the 2011 results that are worthy of note. There will be a short presentation at the Joint Committee meeting examining these trends and the early results from our market research/visitor survey work completed in 2011. Highlights from 2011 include:
- The number of Beamish Unlimited tickets sold has increased by 46%.
  - The number of free tickets issued to visitors under 5 years old has increased by 38%. This result reflects an increase in family visitors during 2011, which we have also recorded in our survey results for the season.
  - One of the fastest growing segments of the Beamish's audience in 2011 has been local, low-income families.
  - At least 60 - 65% of Beamish's audience continues to come to the museum from outside the North East region. The majority of these tourist visitors stay overnight in the region, mostly in serviced accommodation. More than half of these tourist visitors tell us they are coming to the North East specifically to visit Beamish.
  - The number of Beamish Unlimited return visitors has increased by 41% in 2011, reflecting the increasing use of the museum's annual ticket. There is a growing base of 'loyal' Beamish visitors who use the museum regularly.

- The number of group visitors has continued to decline in 2011, suggesting older visitors are increasingly preferring to visit independently rather than in an organised tour.
- The number of educational group visits has declined slightly by 3% in 2011. This seems to reflect a national trend experienced in other major museums. The museum's marketing plan for educational groups is being reviewed for 2011, informed by a teacher focus group held in December.

#### Approval sought

- Note the progress report above including an update on the museum's key performance indicators.

#### **Priorities for next period**

- Business and Operational Improvement plan delivery for 2012/13
- Staff and volunteer training January/February 2012
- Prioritisation of capital projects for 2012/13 (for JC approval at next meeting)
- End of Year Accounts for BML and BMTL 2011/12
- Long term development plans 2013 – 2025 (outline due March 2012)
- Biomass heating project development
- Refurbishment of visitor toilets around site
- ACE application/decision on major museums bid due 26 Jan

**RICHARD EVANS**

Director

4<sup>th</sup> January, 2012