



# James Joyce Tower Annual Report 2025



# A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

It is my great pleasure to present the Annual Report for 2025, a year of meaningful progress and renewed energy for the James Joyce Tower.

One of the most significant achievements of the year has been the launch of our new website. This platform not only enhances accessibility for visitors worldwide, but also introduces a growing digital archive, allowing scholars, enthusiasts, and the curious alike to explore our collections in new and engaging ways.

We also made important strides in conservation. Notably, specialist work was completed on the historic waistcoat and tie in our care, ensuring their preservation for future generations.

2025 has also been a year of growth in community engagement. We were delighted to welcome an increase in visitor numbers, a clear indication of the Tower's enduring appeal. Alongside this, we have seen a strengthening of our volunteer community, with new members joining and a range of training and volunteer-focused events taking place throughout the year.

Bloomsday 2025 was a particular highlight. The festival programme was both ambitious and successful, featuring a diverse array of events that brought the spirit of Joyce vividly to life.

These accomplishments would not have been possible without the dedication of our curator, volunteers, supporters, and partners. I extend my sincere thanks to all who have contributed their time, expertise, and passion over the past year.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to building on this momentum—enhancing our offerings, deepening engagement, and continuing to preserve and share the rich legacy entrusted to our care.



DR. SÉAMUS Ó CANAINN  
CHAIRPERSON





# ABOUT THE JAMES JOYCE TOWER

## Mission

The mission of Joyce Tower Museum is to manage, operate and promote the Joyce Tower as a key cultural attraction and to contribute to Joyce's literary legacy, under license from Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council.

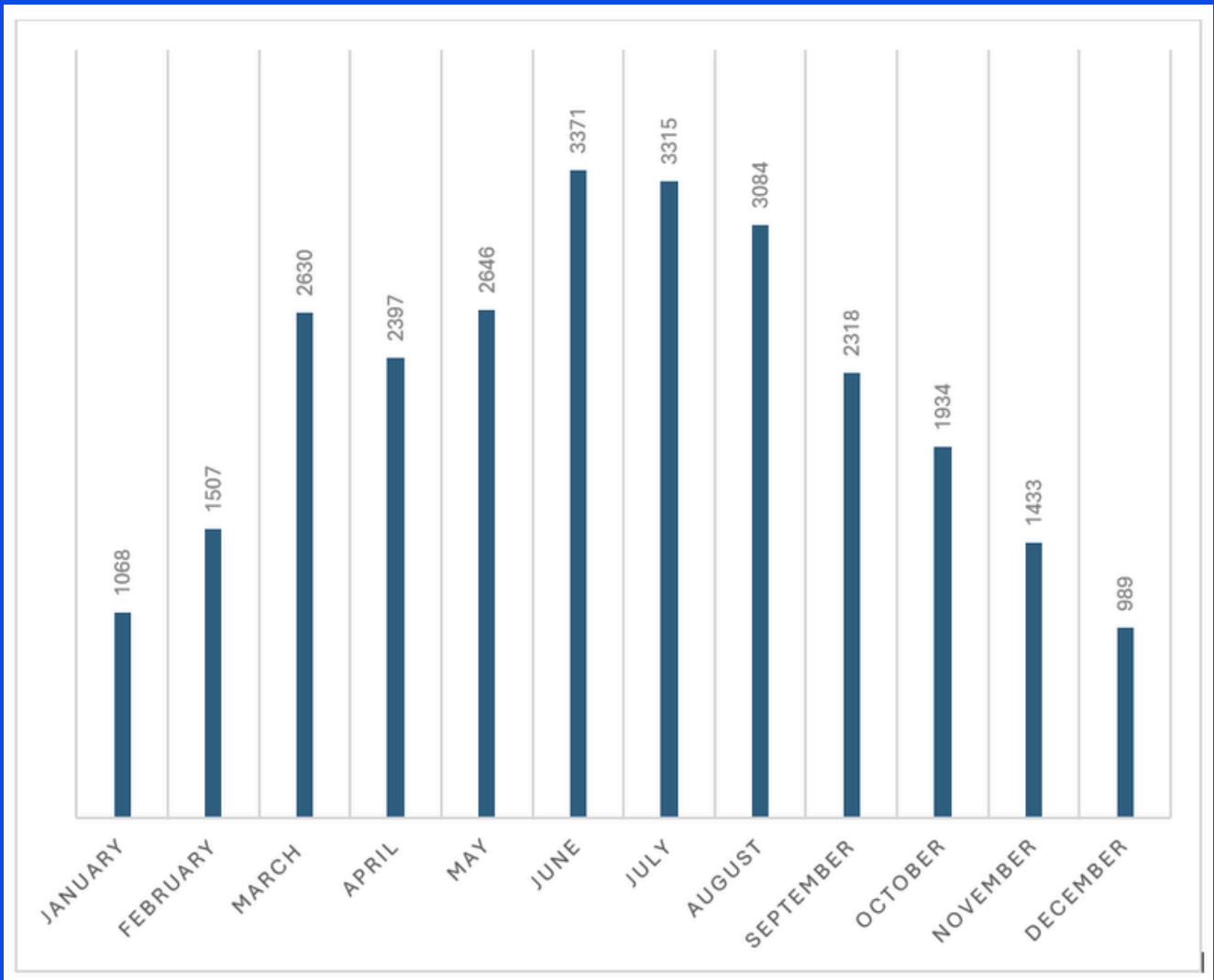
## Vision

Inspired by the setting of the opening episode of *Ulysses*, our vision is to be a world-class site of literary pilgrimage championing the work of James Joyce, caring for our unique collection, and providing a high-quality visitor experience with the support of local volunteers.

## Values

The following are the core values central to how the Joyce Tower Museum achieves its mission:

- Lifelong Learning - Curating a collection that enriches the study of Joyce's work
- Social Inclusiveness - Building community through our strong volunteer network
- Light touch - Respecting the architectural significance of the building and minimising our environmental impact
- Prioritising Safety - Providing a safe and secure environment for visitors, staff and volunteers
- Collaboration - Working closely with our key stakeholders
- Transparency - Being open and accountable through good governance



# VISITOR NUMBERS

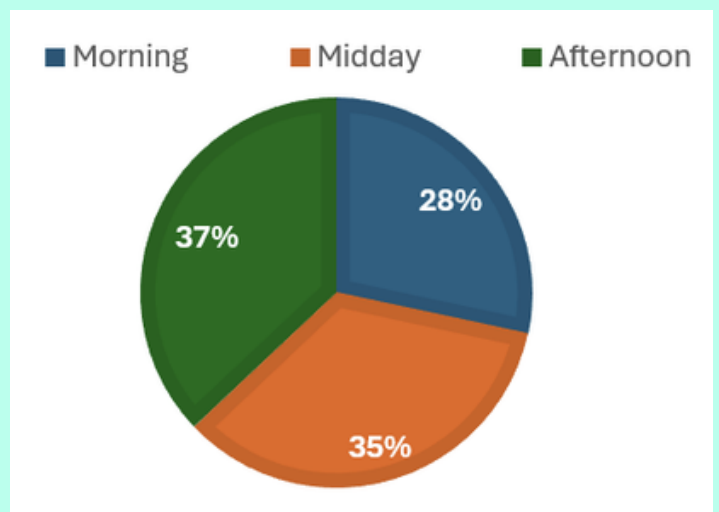
Total number of visitors for 2025 - 26692.

This represents an increase of 3134 or 13% on the 2024 figures

Annual figures for 2023 - 25729

Annual figures for 2024 - 23558

Annual figures for 2025 - 26692



# VOLUNTEERS

The warm welcome and informative tours offered by our volunteers are key to the success of the visitor experience at the Tower. In 2025 we had over 125 regular volunteers and six Day Coordinators. Seven new volunteers were recruited and Barbara O'Shea took over as Sunday Coordinator. A quarterly meeting with volunteer coordinators was convened. The Volunteer Handbook was updated to give volunteers an insight into our organisation, along with an overview of procedures and practical advice to support their volunteering role. Training sessions were provided for new volunteers, and 20+ volunteers attended the Ulysses reading group.

To say thank you to volunteers, three events were organised in 2025. The February birthday table quiz had approx. 30 in attendance, the June volunteer party, organised by Declan and Lua McIlraith, and supported by JTM, had approximately 60 volunteers in attendance and the Christmas party at Sandycove Stores and Yard was attended by about 70 volunteers.



# COMMUNICATIONS



Museum audiences increasingly turn to digital resources as their first point of contact and there is now a strong expectation that collections be digitally accessible.

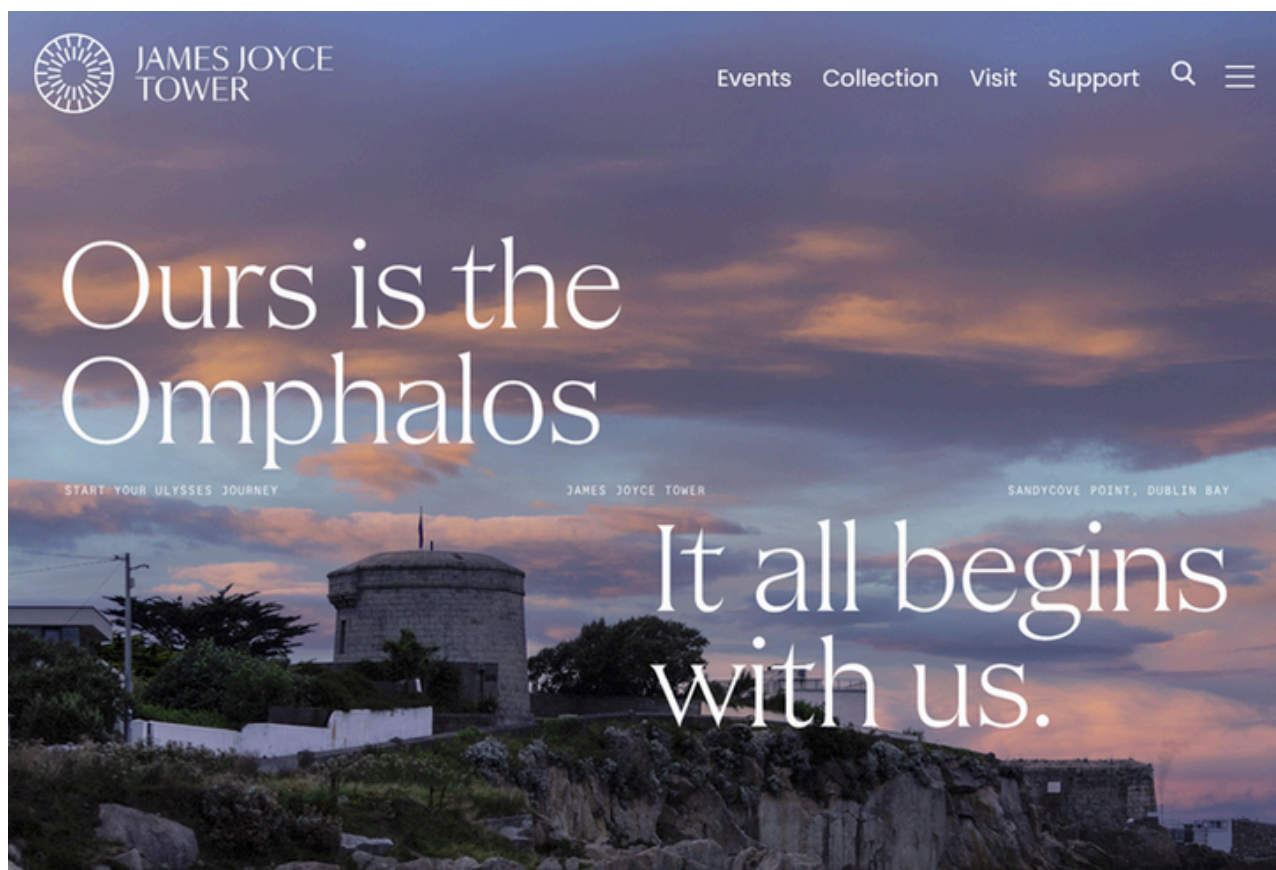
With this in mind we applied for and were awarded funding from the Heritage Council under the Stewardship scheme to build a new website and archive. The result was a comprehensive, scholarly, and visually engaging online resource.

[www.joycetower.ie](http://www.joycetower.ie)

High-quality metadata, developed with Archives Ireland, greatly enhances the accessibility of our collections.

The new website raises the national and international profile of the James Joyce Tower by providing global access to our artefacts and archives.

This digital collection now serves as a core communication and engagement tool for the museum, that will be regularly updated, maintained by our webmaster, and continue to extend the reach and reputation of the James Joyce Tower.



# COLLECTION

James Joyce's heirloom waistcoat and tie are unique personal artifacts of exceptional cultural and literary significance. The waistcoat holds particular resonance within Joyce's work. In his acclaimed short story "The Dead," the character Gabriel Conroy wears a similar garment:

"His mother had worked for him as a birthday present a waistcoat of purple tabinet, with little foxes' heads upon it, lined with brown satin and having round mulberry buttons."

We were awarded funding under the Community Heritage Grant Scheme to engage a textile conservator to do crucial conservation work on James Joyce's waistcoat and tie. This conservation project has preserved these rare textiles, ensured their long-term stability and enabled continued public display and appreciation for generations to come.



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# BUILDING & FACILITIES

Martello Tower No 11 is a Protected Structure (RPS 1027) within the Sandycove Point Architectural Conservation Area and an archaeological monument on the Record of Monuments and Places (DU 023-019). In the long term, substantial work needs to be done to improve the fabric of the Tower and exhibition building in order to provide both museum standard conditions for the collection and a safe, accessible environment for visitors, staff and volunteers.

A report was commissioned from Shaffrey Architects to address two aspects in particular, water ingress and the installation of a stairway where there had been one originally. The latter would also improve health and safety standards in the building.

An approach is currently underway to secure planning permission and the necessary capital funding to enable work to begin. A document setting out the Case for Support, is being presented to politicians, both local and national, to address our most urgent priority.



# EVENTS

Our Ulysses Reading Group ran from January to June, with approx. 25 attendees.

## Lectures

Des Gunning gave the Birthday lecture on Friday 31 Jan "Far Drum (1982 and all that). Confessions of a Joycean non scholar".

The George Moore lecture had about 100 in attendance on 6 March in The Studio.

Our curator Alice Ryan attended the Trieste James Joyce Summer School in July and delivered a lecture entitled "Ours is the Omphalos".

## Bloomsday Festival

A very positive aspect of this year's festival was our partnership with DLR Lexicon.

Together we developed a theatre production of "The Cat and the Devil" which was shown to large groups of school children during the Bloomsday festival.

Our Bloomsday Lecture with Barry Sheehan was held on Level 3 in the DLR Lexicon on 12 June and six of our volunteers also took part in a "pop-up" reading at the Lexicon.

CYCLOPS, an energetic dramatisation of the episode set in Barney Kiernan's pub in Ulysses by VOLTA Theatre, ran for two nights in the Studio Theatre in DLR Lexicon.

Other new additions to the programme included "The Bloomsday Belles", a beautiful production of readings from Ulysses combined with specially commissioned music and dance pieces. The highlight of our programme was Jim Norton reading extracts from Ulysses outside the Tower on Bloomsday which had an audience of approx. 120.

Ulysses aWake was scheduled to be performed outside on Saturday 14 June. However, due to the poor weather conditions, it was performed in the Round Room. Our production of TELEMACHUS was very well received with lots of positive feedback from audiences.

Finnegans Wake Suite of Affections with Roger Doyle and co, and 18 Ballads from Ulysses with Val O'Donnell and co were also new additions to our programme that were well received.

We had 715 visitors to the Tower on Monday 16 June and 13 volunteers helped out. Another 6 volunteers took part in readings in the forecourt in the afternoon.

## Joycenights 2025.

Our curator gave her lecture "Ours is the Omphalos" on Thursday 11 September at the Old Carnegie Library with 80 in attendance.

"Earwicker's Dream" - A concert piece that unites spoken word and jazz was held on Sunday 14 September at the Studio Theatre, DLR Lexicon.