

The Norwich Museums

Members' briefing July 2012

Visitor Numbers

2012/13 (*See figures attached*)

Visitors to Norwich Castle in May 2012 were roughly the same as last year. The exceptional figures for the Easter school holidays, boosted by the Titian exhibition and unpleasant weather, and a successful *Museums at Night* event mean that visitor numbers to 31st May are 29% higher than last year.

Strangers' Hall is back to opening two days a week as the front of house staffing resources temporarily moved to Strangers' will now move back to the Bridewell which opens at the end of the month. However, visitor numbers whilst lower than last year have not dropped proportional to the number of days it is now open.

Norwich Castle: Visitor profile analysis by ticket category.

At the last meeting Members requested further information on the breakdown of ticket categories. The attached chart shows a monthly profile for 2010/11 and 2011/12 with some explanation and observations on patterns of attendance by ticket profile category.

School Visits

2012/13 (*see figures attached*)

School visits for April and May are slightly higher than last year for Norwich Castle, but the half term fell in June this year rather than May as in previous years. Also it is difficult to make meaningful monthly comparisons so early in the year, as schools book sessions when it is convenient for them and not always at the same time of year.

Colly Mudie, Learning Manager for the Norwich Museums as recently attended an event involving museum learning staff at Tate Britain. The experience of many museums and galleries across the county is that school visits have dropped in most areas during the last 12 months, so it is good news that the Norwich Museums, and indeed NMAS museums as a whole are maintaining school visit numbers.

Retail

Retail figures for the first two months of 2012/13 for Norwich Castle are up 36% on last year. This largely corresponds to the increased number of visitors. The V&A's Cecil Beaton Diamond Jubilee exhibition is supported by some attractive merchandise which will hopefully boost sales during July and August.

The Retail Manager regularly introduces new product lines, recent items include jewellery and Jubilee merchandise. There are also some exciting new developments on the product development front, where museum collections, e.g. Norwich textile pattern books, are being used to develop new products, in this case cushions and scarves. Our shops should be stocking them soon.

Funding

Museums Development Fund

Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service's application to The Arts Council England ACE, to be a museum development provider has been successful.

NMAS has been awarded a grant of £1.44million over 3 years to provide support, expert advice and grants to museums in the eastern region. NMAS's costs, including museum development programme staff and overheads such as office accommodation, will be fully funded, and NMAS will benefit from this arrangement by further strengthening its relationship with the Arts Council which will place it in a strong position in three year's time for the second round of bidding to the museums major grant programme.

Art Fund Collection Prize

Francesca Vanke, Keeper of Arts, has once again won the **Art Fund Collect Prize** on behalf of Norwich Castle Museums and Art Gallery. This years £75,00 prize was split between the National Museum of Scotland, the Whitworth Art Gallery, Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery, Museums Sheffield and Touchstones Rochdale.

Norwich Castle has acquired a glass sculpture by the 32-year-old Scottish artist Geoffrey Mann, ***Flight Take Off***, cost: £30,000, his first piece to be acquired by a UK museum.

The glass sculpture will be exhibited in the Timothy Gurney Gallery and in 2014 in a temporary exhibition curated by Francesca Vanke, 'The Wonder of Birds'.



Norwich Castle Temporary Exhibition

Queen Elizabeth II by Cecil Beaton: A Diamond Jubilee Celebration

Sat 7 July - Sun 30 Sept 2012



Norwich Castle is celebrating the Diamond Jubilee with a photographic exhibition by Cecil Beaton from the V&A.

The exhibition will be supported by a range of activities and events, including lunchtime talks, an event called *The Queen and I* where participants will be invited to share their personal stories and interests on all things royal, and a Saturday 50s Fest called Summer of Style, where visitors will be invited to step back in time to experience the world of the 50s.

Forthcoming Exhibitions and Events.

Saturday 20 Oct – Monday 31 Dec 2012

Cedric Morris & Christopher Wood: A forgotten Friendship.

A Mascalls Gallery exhibition curated by Nathaniel Hepburn

Saturday 20 October – Sunday 9 December

Vision and Reality: Norwich Castle Open Art Show 2012

Local artists are invited to submit works for a selling show selected by John Lessore, Humphrey Ocean RA, John Wonnacott.

Saturday 26 Jan – Sunday 14 April 2013

MAGIC WORLDS – a loan exhibition from the Museum of Childhood

This exhibition from the V&A Museum of Childhood explores the realms of fairy tales and fantasy literature, the history and origins of illusion and how themes of magic have influenced many artists and writers.

Cultural Olympiad Weekend – Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 July 2012

Norwich Castle will be showcasing an exciting weekend of events devised and presented by a group of local young people. The group, aged 16-25, chose *Skin: Dissecting Beauty*, as their theme and have used the museum's collections to explore this idea. The result will be a thought-provoking mix of events including: a pop-up tattoo studio with live tattooing, a taxidermy demonstration, a look at vintage furs and life drawing classes. Visitors will also have the chance to look at a book covered with human skin from a prisoner executed in East Anglia in 1828 and to play the giant Operation game while a DJ plays in the café area. Throughout the day visitors will be invited to write their comments on the issues raised. There will also be short films made by

local Looked after Children and the Youth Offending Team on a video loop and an outdoor art installation by local artist Liz Ballard

Family activities will be delivered across the three Norwich Museums, Norwich Castle, Strangers' Hall and the Bridewell Museum throughout the summer holidays.

Gallery refurbishments

Re-imagined: The Norwich School of Artists



The galleries showcasing the Norwich School painters have been revamped to include imaginative re-displays, contemporary art, new trails and activities and short films as part of the Great British Art Debate project and were officially opened on Friday 27th April by Dr Blayney Brown, Tate.

A programme of special events including talks and a changer concert will be taking place over the summer period.

Capital programme

Bridewell

The Bridewell re-opened to the public on Tuesday 3rd July following a number of previews including a formal launch on Thursday 28th June, an exclusive pre-view to key stakeholders on Friday 29th June, an open morning for the Friends of the Norwich Museums on Saturday 20th June, and lastly an informal opening for staff, contractors and others involved in the development and delivery of the project.

The Norwich Museums Manager will update members regarding initial visitor response and numbers at the meeting.

Work will continue at the Bridewell through to the Autumn, to include the development of further supplementary resource materials and additional interactives, completion of learning resources for schools and bringing the documentation of collections up to date with new locations and new information generated as a result of research carried out for the Bridewell project.

Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum Collections

The outcome of a bid prepared to HLF for £49,800, to support the interpretation of forthcoming permanent display of Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum collections on the Rotunda Balcony opening in 2013, has been

successful. This will fund a project assistant post and the development of digital interpretive resources to support the displays.

A further bid to the **Community Covenant Grant Scheme** to develop a display case and learning materials about the 'Life of a Soldier' past and present has also been successful, providing a further £10,000 towards the development of the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum displays in Norwich Castle. This is made up of £5,000 from the MOD and £5,000 from Norfolk County Council.

With the relocation of the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum displays from the Shirehall to Norwich Castle, it has been suggested that NMAS could take the opportunity to include reference to the other armed forces and their relation to Norfolk.

As can be seen from the Armed Forces Briefing note attached, there are already a large number of museums commemorating the armed forces in Norfolk and NMAS would like to take the opportunity of the new displays in the Castle to point visitors in the direction of these other museums, which are so well worth exploring. It is proposed to include mention of these many and varied museums and collections in a graphics panel or similar means of interpretation. We are also proposing to have a dedicated leaflet rack and information panel by the Castle front entrance so that we can clearly point visitors in the right direction.

Norwich Castle Study Centre refurbishment and redecoration

The Shirehall is in the midst of being refurbished, including roof repairs, external and internal decorations. This work is funded by NCC from the Buildings Maintenance Fund.

Research carried out by Dr Nick Arber has provided the building contractors with information about the original paint scheme in the Courtroom. This will also be refurbished as part of this programme, to be used for living history events, tours, learning activities and corporate hire.

Teaching Museum

An important initiative in NMAS's successful bid to Arts Council England for Major Grant Holder status is of NMAS establishing itself as a Teaching Museum.

The title refers to Teaching Hospitals, Teaching Schools and even now Teaching Theatres where an established and successful organisation works with and alongside new entrants to their profession to pass on knowledge and skills while doing the job.

There will be five entry level paid posts on one-year contracts starting in January 2013 and a further 8 in 2014.

All parties will benefit:

- The new staff will be placed in an NMAS department or site to work on a specified task. They will also be involved in a structured learning programme delivered by NMAS's skilled and experienced staff which will introduce them to the wide range of roles undertaken in a modern museum. By the end of the year they will have a broad range of skills and experience to underpin their future museum careers.
- Museum users will benefit from the extra capacity which the new posts will provide to offer an even better service particularly working with target local communities.
- NMAS will also gain from reflecting on, valuing and sharing our skills and experience with the new posts, fellow members of NMAS and the wider museums community through the SHARE scheme.

As one of Arts Council England's selected Major Partner Museums, the Teaching Museums programme demonstrates leadership within the museum sector and is attracting national interest.

Curator's Report (see attached for information)

The County Curator and Collections Manager produces an annual report summarising the activities of the Norwich Museums curatorial and collections management teams. NB some of this will already have been reported to the Area Museums Committee during the past year.

Other News

3D Video Projection on Norwich Castle, Wednesday 4 to Friday 6 July.

Part of Norwich's Olympic celebrations will include a never to be seen before in Norwich, spectacular and breathtaking, late evening 3D projection onto Norwich Castle, creating fantastic illusions making the castle itself look alive.

Olympic Torch Farewell, Thursday 5 July 6.45am.

The Olympic Torch will be lit on the battlements of Norwich Castle early in the morning, as the five Olympic colours are trailed down the walls by abseilers. Making their way down to Castle Meadow, the first Torchbearer will mark the start of Day 48 of The Olympic Torch Relay after the dramatic display at the Castle.

Limelight and loans

- May was something of a month for filming – Senior Curator of Archaeology Tim Pestell was interviewed by Mylene Klass about the Balthild matrix for *Britain's Secret Treasures*, while volunteer Dr Peter Robins was filmed talking about the Happisburgh handaxe, which he first identified, with Michael Buerk. Tim's interview with Michael Wood discussing the Anglo-Saxon migrations at Sedgeford, along with a pot from the Castle's collection, was also shown in June as part of the new BBC series *The Great British Story*.
- The archaeology department has also been busy with loans: a variety of prestige objects from the Decorative Arts and Archaeology collections are going to a new exhibition at the Goldsmiths Hall for *Gold: Power and*

Allure. Objects include the civic mace, the Harford Farm brooch, a torc from Snettisham and the Binham bracteate. We have also just loaned material to Peterborough Museum for a new Vikings display, the material being drawn from only ourselves and York, and reflecting the growing awareness of our own Viking collections.

The planters on the Bridge have been replanted – all overseen by former Friends' secretary Rosemary Salt. The Anglia in Bloom judges will be visiting the site in July.

Norwich Castle successfully hosted a high profile corporate reception for Chinese Investors, Civic Leaders and business people on 18th June and also an award ceremony for School Governors on the 25th June, and were rewarded with good publicity for both events in the EDP.

If you want to discuss any matters in this briefing please contact Rachel Kirk rachel.kirk@norfolk.gov.uk or Vanessa Trevelyan vanessa.trevelyan@norfolk.gov.uk

For further information about the Norwich Museums, their services and programmes check out the website on www.musuems.norfolk.gov.uk where you can also sign up to receive regular e-bulletins.