

The Norwich Museums

Members' briefing June 2012

Visitor Numbers

New Year 2012/13

Visitors to Norwich Castle in April 2012 were 60% higher than last year. The exceptional figures for the Easter school holidays were boosted by the Titian exhibition and unpleasant weather. Norwich has just been cited as the 6th most visited City by day trippers, so perhaps that accounts for a few more.

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 as much as could be expected,

Looking back to 2011/12

- Visitor numbers for the Norwich Museums for 2011/12 held up very well against those for 2010/11.
- Visits at the Shirehall and Carrow are not surprisingly lower this year as a result of the focus on closing and relocating the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museums displays to Norwich Castle and the Costume and Textile collections into the Shirehall, and rearranging the Shirehall to accommodate these changes.
- Numbers at Strangers' are slightly higher than the previous year although the museum has been open two days a week since February half-term compared with four days per week in 2010/11.
- 2010/11 was a phenomenal year for Norwich Castle, attributable to higher visitors all year round, but also to a huge and largely unexplained number of visitors in August 2012 - 28,000 compared with 18,000 the previous year which was a good year and higher than the previous. There have been concerns that last year's figures were a one-off blip which we'd be unable to replicate in these economically challenging times, but our visitor numbers have held up and we still managed to attract 23,000 visitor in August, still 5,000 more than in 2009/10 – and the 'Titian' succeeded in attracting additional visitors in March.

	20110/11	2011/12
Norwich Castle	175,420	168,908
Strangers' Hall	9,569	9,669 (2 days from Feb 12)
Shirehall	2,436	1,899
Carrow House	1,379	379 (shut from 10/9/11)
Regimental Museum	3,937	2,345 (shut from 10/9/11)

See spreadsheet attached for full details

Members will be provided with a more detailed analysis of visitor numbers at Norwich Castle by ticket category at the next Area Museums Committee meeting, together with summaries of other qualitative evaluation which has been carried out.

School Visits

2012/13

School visits for April are slightly higher than last year for Norwich Castle and Strangers' Hall.

Looking Back 2011/12

School Visits to Norwich Castle and Strangers' Hall were marginally lower than in the previous year. Fewer schools visits both sites in December as in previous years. The Learning department are evaluating the Christmas related school events, including talking to schools in order to see how to better meet their needs and improve visitor numbers in December 2012.

	20110/11	2011/12
Norwich Castle	18,181	17,365
Strangers' Hall	1818	1524

See spreadsheet attached for full details

Retail

End of year figures for NMAS's retail operation shows that despite the challenging economic climate, our shops are performing well and making a positive contribution to museum income. The Castle's modest refurbishment including new carpet and better lighting - and a popular exhibition during the Summer months – Cecil Beaton's photographs of the Queen - will hopefully maintain this trend.

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 exhibitions

Queen Elizabeth II by Cecil Beaton: A Diamond Jubilee Celebration

Sat 7 July - Sun 30 Sept 2012



Norwich Castle will be celebrating the Diamond Jubilee and the Cultural Olympiad with a photographic exhibition from the V&A. We anticipate that this will be a very popular exhibition and will provide opportunities for all sorts of associated activities and events.

Cedric Morris & Christopher Wood and East Anglian Arts Fund **Open Art** show where local artists are invited to submit works for a selected selling show.

Sat 20 Oct – Mon 31 Dec 2012

MAGIC WORLDS – loan exhibition from the Museum of Childhood (V&A)

Sat 26 Jan – Sun 14 April 2013

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

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.

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.

Bridewell

Work on installing the displays is progressing well. The museum will re-open to the public on Tuesday 3rd July. Due to the lack of space for a large gathering, several formal launches and previews will be held over the preceding few days, to ensure that all stakeholders and everybody involved with the project has an opportunity to visit the museum prior to opening.

The public have been given the opportunity to have their photos included in the Bridewell's History Wall in the front entrance of the Museum. Go to www.bridewellhistorywall.co.uk for more information. People have been invited to upload their photos of Norwich and Norwich people, past and present onto this site, via facebook, twitter and flickr. This has generated a huge amount of interest online, and to date several thousand have been uploaded. The History Wall will also contain images from NMAS own archives, along with archive images from Picture Norfolk

Norwich Castle Study Centre refurbishment and redecoration

Over the next 6 months Norwich Castle's Study Centre in the Shirehall, including the Courtroom, will be refurbished, including roof repairs, external and internal decorations. Members will have noticed the substantial scaffolding structure around the building. This work is funded by NCC from the Buildings Maintenance Fund. Ideas are being developed for using the courtroom for living history events, tours and learning activities.

Special events

Learning Activities

Cllr Stone, NCC's portfolio holder for culture gave out prizes at a Ceremony in Norwich Castle for the London 2012 Children and Young People's Art Competition Awards on Thursday 10th May.

Castles Conference On Thursday 17th & Friday 18th May 2012, Norwich Castle hosted a successful conference on Anglo-Norman castles. There was a fantastic line-up of French and English speakers over the two days with presentations on Norman archaeology, architecture and artefacts. We used this event to officially 'launch' the Norman Connections project, a wonderful partnership linking Norman castles in England and Normandy. The project is being co-funded by the Interreg IV A France (Channel) – England programme, and the Castle Keep will benefit from a fresh interpretation and new Norman displays in 2013.

Norwich Castle celebrated **Museums at Night** on 19th May with financial support from HEART in order to provide free entry and deliver a range of activities and entertainment. Events this year included live music by local youth groups in the Rotunda, torch lit tours in the Keep and Natural History galleries and stores, storytelling in the Dungeons, Early Dance in the Keep, craft activities and artists in residence in the art galleries, and as a finale, fire eating on the Castle Green. 1650 visitors attended the event.

Norwich Castle has been working in partnership with the Hamlet Centre on a project called '**Olympic Metals – gold, silver, bronze**'. Students have worked in two groups with sessions at the museum and at the centre. All the students have explored the three metals with a geologist and looked at relevant objects in the museum collections. One group has also met members of a silver band at the Castle and created a sound recording relating to the gold, silver and bronze objects in the museum. The other group have created their own labels for an Olympics metals trail around parts of the collections and contributing to a sculpture being made in clay by two of the students. Excitingly, this sculpture combines inspiration and creative ideas from the project and has been cast in aluminium for display at the museum and later at the Hamlet Centre. The celebration of the project and a chance to see a display of the work took place in the Castle Keep on Tuesday 22nd May.

On Friday 1st June we placed coloured acetate on the flood lights to create a Red, White and Blue effect for the **Jubilee celebrations**. We've done this effectively before with one colour for various charitable organisations. Other ways we'll be celebrating the Jubilee include a case of souvenir objects in the Rotunda and various events over the half-term week.

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.museums.norfolk.gov.uk where you can also sign up to receive regular e-bulletins.