

NORWICH AREA MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

16 June 2008 Item No. 10

GENERAL UPDATE ON THE NORWICH MUSEUMS

Report by the Norwich Museums Manager

**This report updates the Committee on work in the
Norwich Museums over the last 3 months
and forthcoming activities.**

1. Visitor Numbers

- 1.1 Total visitor numbers for 2007/08 for the Norwich Museums and Study Centre are higher than both last year and against target (**please see attached Appendix A**). This has been achieved through a more integrated approach to planning and delivery, a popular temporary exhibitions programme, display and presentation enhancements, a lively and reliable programme of events and activities, a more varied range of marketing techniques, improved access culminating in the delivery a high quality and inspiring visitor experience.
- 1.2 The new and much simpler non-zoned ticketing system has been received positively by all visitors. The possible impact on admissions income will be monitored closely over the course of the year.

2. NORWICH CASTLE - Current and Recent Temporary Exhibitions and Events

- 2.1 *This is Modern Art* - works from the Norwich Castle contemporary art collection opened in the Timothy Gurney exhibitions gallery on 16 June 2007 and runs through to September 2008.
- 2.2 *The Peoples Choice: 100 paintings from Norwich Castle's Collections* – was launched successfully to the public on 26 April 2008 following two special openings involving groups and individuals involved in choosing paintings for the exhibitions and trail. The show features paintings from our own collections chosen by members of the public and a large number of local groups. It's backed up by an Art Gallery Trail, in which well-known people from all walks of life have chosen favourite works on display in the permanent displays and the current Timothy Gurney Gallery exhibition, 'This is Modern Art'. While traditional favourites in the Cotman and Crome galleries have featured, a significant number of celebrities have chosen more contemporary works, including Bryan Gunn, who has selected a work by Colin Self. *The People's Choice* exhibition and the *Art Gallery Trail* together represent a new look at 100 paintings from NMAS collections.
- 2.3 The new show in the Colman Watercolour Gallery is 'Norfolk Sky and Sea: A selection of 19th and 20th century works from the Norwich Castle collection'. It opened in April and will run for a year. Curated by Norma Watt, the exhibition features fine watercolours by members of the Norwich School including works by John Sell Cotman, John Thirtle and Henry Bright.

- 2.4 Norwich Castle teamed up with the UEA to celebrate National Science Week 2008 on 8 and 9 March 2008. This year's topic was *Skin* and variety of hands on learning activities were on offer to visitors over the weekend. The event was particularly popular with families with school-aged children.
- 2.5 *Museums and Galleries Month* Norwich Castle and the Sainsbury Centre have been jointly promoting a series of Museums and Galleries Month events in May on the theme of China. Drop-in events at Norwich Castle have enabled visitors to paint a plate, make a fan, and watch a ceramics artist at work, and a joint initiative with 'Let's Talk' magazine brought in around 100 'Let's Talk' readers to a special history of tea event at the Castle.

3. NORWICH CASTLE - Forthcoming Exhibitions and Events

- 3.1 The Autumn 2008 show *Norfolk Artists* includes 3 consecutive shows celebrating the three local artists Bruer Tidman, John Kiki and Susan Gunn together with the *EAAF Open Art Show*, a selling show, in the Timothy Gurney Gallery.
- 3.2 2009 will kick off with an exhibition of Henry Moore

4. NORWICH CASTLE - Further developments

- 4.1 The *Arts of Living* Gallery Development Project is progressing well. Museums and HEART staff are working together to develop additional interpretation materials and is due to open November 2008.
- 4.2 Plasma screens have been installed in the entrance and Rotunda areas to provide visitors with information about current and forthcoming exhibitions, events and activities.
- 4.3 A Wolfson/DCMS funding application to re-display the prison displays in the Keep basement was submitted in February 2008. This represents one element of planned display improvements to Norwich Castle Keep. The improvements have been developed in a modular approach as it is unlikely that funding would be available for re-displaying the entire Keep. Instead a range of funding opportunities will be pursued as and when available to fund discrete elements of the displays. NB A Heritage Lottery Fund *Collecting Cultures* bid was submitted in November 2007 which included new medieval displays in the Keep and the Chief Curator is currently investigating the opportunities for EU funding.
- 4.4 The Bird Gallery is currently closed while we refresh the displays, and also to enable a major programme of freezing items from the Natural History and Social History Collections to take place as a pest control measure. It is due to re-open later this year.
- 4.5 *Imagine a Nation: Lottery success.* In partnership with Tate Britain, Tyne and Wear Museums, and Museums Sheffield we have been awarded £1.15m by the Heritage Lottery Fund for the *Imagine a Nation* project. The project, which will run for 4 years, will use collections to explore a vision of Britain, and what it means to be British in the 21st century, and will culminate in events and exhibitions during Summer 2012. The project aims to reach over one million people across the country, from a wide range of backgrounds, and allow them access to some major British artworks. One of the highlights of the project will be a series of major exhibitions featuring masterpieces of British art drawn from collections around the country.

5 STRANGERS' HALL

- 5.1 The launch of the Mayor's and Magnates project initially attracted high visitor numbers, although these have now reduced they are still significantly higher than the period prior to installing the new displays and interpretation.
- 5.2 Staff and volunteers are currently gearing up for a special themed *garden and early music and dance weekend* at Strangers' Hall on 14 and 15 June 2008. The museum will be open on Sunday as well as Saturday, featuring a number of events with a gardens or early music and dance theme. The Friends volunteers who maintain the garden have got it looking particularly good this year, so we are hoping for fine weather to enable visitors to see it at its best.

6 CARROW HOUSE COSTUME AND TEXTILE CENTRE

Building work continues at Carrow to create an accessible toilet, kitchen facilities and access into the Conservatory. The Study Centre will re-open to the public in Autumn 2008. A range of events and activities are being planned.

7 ROYAL NORFOLK REGIMENTAL MUSEUM

Access improvements have created the much needed link between the Museum and the Study Centre in the Shirehall and opened up opportunities for improved joint working opportunities and communications between staff. The museum is now able to offer visitors accessible toilets and level access into the education room/office, and the improvements have provided the catalyst for re-organising and redecorating the reception area and shop. The Trustees for the Museum are donating and raising funding to re-display elements of the Museum over the next 12 months.

8 BRIDEWELL MUSEUM

- 8.1 A Heritage Lottery Fund one stage application for a total project cost of £1.4m was submitted by 31 March 2008. The project will provide access into and around the building together with refurbishment and decoration, improved visitor facilities and re-displayed and interpreted collections. Phase 1 of a public consultation programme took place over Summer/Autumn 2007 funded partly through HEART's Great and Good project. (*Focus Group Report attached*)
- 8.2 The Bridewell opened for the season in the Easter holidays. Visitors over Easter were encouraged to join in with an Easter Chick Trail around the museum as well as making an Easter Egg Collage. The Curator of Community History and key members of the Interpreters Team have also developed some new events for the school holidays. Feedback about our new 'Artists at Large', 'Shoe City' and 'Marvellous Machines Trail' events has been great.

9 NORWICH LEARNING TEAM

- 9.1 Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery was the venue for two **Masterclasses** attended by the Hewett and Hellesdon High Schools in March. The classes were planned around the current exhibition 'This is Modern Art' and were led by local artist Karl Foster. These classes aim to give students greater understanding of the processes artists engage in when creating art and an opportunity to use the artist's own experiences to develop their own ideas. The students spent the day in the gallery and

workshop developing a piece of work on A4 size canvases. They used found objects and images in combination with a wide range of other materials. They used the materials very intensively and their comments indicated that they were reflecting on and understanding artistic practice. *'It helped me to consider the audience; the experience of looking is going to be uniquely personal because everyone has their views'*. The teaching staff valued the artist's perspective provided by the day and the opportunity it gave to free the students from the constraints of GCSE work towards the deeper understanding needed for A level work. The day also enhanced personal development with some usually reserved students visibly relaxing, sharing ideas and relating to others. 'The day was incredibly productive, a great success'. 'Expanded students knowledge and confidence'.

- 9.2 Following on from the success of the Crime and Punishment Day event for GCSE History students, Norwich Learning Team staff are planning a day for the alternative option for **GCSE History - Medicine Through Time**. Teachers from 5 Norfolk High Schools have joined a planning group and have suggested the theme of "Surgery through the ages". We will be working with Interpreters here and are approaching partners including the Great Hospital, NRO, UEA and N&NUH. We hope the latest transformation of TCA will be a Victorian teaching operating theatre with a costumed Norfolk Surgeon demonstrating his skill and knowledge of kidney stone and related surgical procedures (apparently a Norwich speciality). Pilot events are scheduled for November/December 2008.
- 9.3 On the 6 February 2008 we ran the second of the **Art Teachers Network** functions at Norwich Castle. Members were invited to a private gallery view of the exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite Drawings from the National Museum of Liverpool as well as drawings and paintings from our own collections, displayed alongside the Pre-Raphaelite show and in the exhibition 'This is Modern Art'. Andrew Moore and Nick Thornton talked about the works on display and the teachers also had an opportunity to go behind-the-scenes and view more works of modern art in the stores. The teachers responded enthusiastically to the experience and the event has prompted several to make schools bookings.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

a) Finance	None
b) Property	None
c) Staff	None
d) Information Technology	None

CONCLUSION

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

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NORWICH MUSEUMS SCHOOL VISITS 2007/08

			APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	TOTAL
NORWICH	Castle Museum	2005/06	668	994	973	1,426	173	495	937	1,478	459	1,004	885	1,596	11,088
		2006/07	218	706	1,168	1,546	11	671	953	1,299	432	1,264	950	2,277	11,495
		2007/08	559	1,219	1,658	1,278	-	632	1,084	1,333	309	777	1,270	1,232	11,351
	Bridewell Museum	2005/06	-	25	225	209	-	57	94	22	-	35	-	-	667
		2006/07	-	66	67	24	-	-	91	21	-	-	-	-	269
		2007/08	29	124	376	52	-	-	134	136	-	-	-	66	917
	Strangers Hall	2005/06	-	22	220	30	-	-	271	457	180	-	-	-	1,180
		2006/07	-	24	241	-	-	-	103	272	130	-	53	25	848
		2007/08	91	11	79	45	-	38	118	104	171	130	197	266	1,250
	Royal Norfolk Regimental	2005/06	39	69	108	-	-	52	-	88	-	79	-	105	540
		2006/07	-	76	75	-	-	59	55	194	-	108	-	121	688
		2007/08	45	54	29	-	-	-	69	128	-	-	38	75	438

Total school visits Norwich Museums 2007/08 : 13,956

Target school visits: 13,965

NORWICH MUSEUMS VISITOR NUMBERS 2007/08

			APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	YEAR TO DATE	TOTAL
NORWICH	Castle Museum	2005/06	12,271	11,234	10,807	16,523	23,255	9,625	14,077	8,098	5,803	10,407	13,519	9,702	145,321	145,321
		2006/07	13,958	11,350	8,669	11,675	25,072	10,323	15,065	8,224	5,737	8,271	13,099	11,838	143,281	143,281
		2007/08	12,364	15,964	11,449	16,136	22,035	9,203	13,582	9,267	5,892	7,760	13,869	12,611	150,132	150,132
	Norwich Castle Study Centre (Shirehall)	2005/06	199	192	246	267	251	318	353	284	211	235	240	239	3,035	3,035
		2006/07	237	251	285	245	266	437	325	295	135	235	240	230	3,181	3,181
		2007/08	281	292	305	279	152	434	387	391	249	308	246	260	3,584	3,584
	Carrow House	2005/06	133	248	98	132	104	621	171	184	4	28	28	141	1,892	1,892
		2006/07	130	202	133	133	160	223	194	167	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	1,342	1,342
		2007/08	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	-	-
	Bridewell Museum	2005/06	533	396	905	419	840	1,213	703	Closed	Closed	44	Closed	239	5,292	5,292
		2006/07	1,061	599	507	376	1,039	866	731	26	Closed	Closed	Closed	230	5,435	5,435
		2007/08	755	704	867	697	1,611	979	726	136	Closed	Closed	48	265	6,788	6,788
	Strangers Hall	2005/06	370	163	518	439	637	220	417	661	265	Closed	Closed	Closed	3,690	3,690
		2006/07	163	332	346	358	846	677	508	644	222	203	453	390	5,142	5,142
		2007/08	569	331	365	519	662	793	511	607	1,679	361	832	998	8,227	8,227
	Royal Norfolk Regimental	2005/06	283	389	384	285	471	246	225	238	98	88	201	161	3,069	3,069
		2006/07	317	335	302	250	479	590	384	726	106	289	204	366	4,348	4,348
		2007/08	285	305	300	322	651	516	408	250	101	Closed	285	343	3,766	3,766
	Royal Norfolk Regimental via Castle	2005/06	987	1,150	2,203	3,883	6,032	1,796	2,777	1,103	1,131	1,285	2,863	1,620	26,830	26,830
		2006/07	3,805	2,194	1,800	2,761	6,170	2,027	3,181	1,368	1,269	1,204	2,695	2,003	30,477	30,477
		2007/08	2,477	2,725	1,751	3,818	6,044	1,939	2,684	1,354	665	Closed	1,832	2,148	27,437	27,437

Total Visits Norwich Museums 2007/08: **199,924**
Target Visitors 2007/08: **179,500**