

The Norwich Museums

Members' briefing May 2012

Visitor Numbers

2012/13

There is already good news on visitor numbers for this year. Norwich Castle had over 60% more visitors during the two week Easter school holiday period than last year, 13,892 compared with 8,091.

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
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)

NB More detailed analysis will be provided in the Norwich Museums Manager's AMC report

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. 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.

Norwich Castle Temporary exhibitions

Norfolk & Norwich Festival: Performance Art Event

Battle of the Eyes Presents: Planet of the Jackanapes

Commissioned by Norfolk & Norwich Festival in association with Norwich Castle and Museums at Night. Curated by Paul Gravett.

Savage Pencil (aka Edwin Pouncey) and Eyeball (aka Chris Long) are Battle of The Eyes and Norwich Castle's temporary exhibition galleries will become their studio during the festival. Visitors will be able to see the exhibition take shape at LIVE performances in the gallery on Saturday & Sunday 12th, 13th, 20th & 26th May from 1-4pm, and Saturday 19th May 5-10pm as part of Museums at Night event.

Looking forward:

Queen Elizabeth II by Cecil Beaton: A Diamond Jubilee Celebration

Sat 7 July - Sun 30 Sept 2012

Cedric Morris & Christopher Wood

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

COLMAN GALLERIES REDEVELOPMENT:

RE-PRESENTING JOHN CROME, JOHN SELL COTMAN & THE NORWICH SCHOOL

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..

Capital programme

Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum Collections

We expect to hear shortly of the outcome of a bid to HLF for £49,800 to support the interpretation of the permanent display of Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum collections on the Rotunda Balcony opening in 2013. A bid to Wolfson/DCMS for has already been successful.

Bridewell

Work on installing the displays is progressing well but there is still lots to do. The Marketing team are busy developing promotional material to distribute to local people and visitors to Norfolk. 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.

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.

Special events

Learning Activities

On Tuesday 11th April Norwich Castle hosted a presentation of some excellent and humorous film animation developed by young people during a recent 8 week Youth Offending Team YOT course at Norwich Castle.

On Thursday 19th April staff and visitors enjoyed a lunchtime concert in the Rotunda where children from the North Walsham Schools cluster - Worstead and Swanton Abbott Primary Schools - sang songs based upon the Norwich School paintings as part of the celebration of the refurbishment of the Colman Art Galleries.

On Monday 27th April the North Walsham cluster of schools once again visited Norwich Castle, this time to take part in a specially adapted Roman's event to support a National Latin project. Activities included developing and performing a short play in Latin.

Castles Conference

On Thursday 17th & Friday 18th May 2012, Norwich Castle will host a conference on Anglo-Norman castles. We are really lucky to have such a fantastic line-up of French and English speakers over the two days. Presentations will cover Norman archaeology, architecture and artefacts. Further details are now on our website (including a downloadable information sheet and booking form): <http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/>

We will be using 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.

Museums at Night

Norwich Castle will again be celebrating **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. In 2011 over 2000 visitors attended Norwich Castle during a 5 hour period enjoying torch light tours, music and performance art.

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.