

GENERAL UPDATE ON THE NORWICH MUSEUMS

Report by the Norwich Museums Manager January 2012

**This report updates Members on work in the
Norwich Museums over the last 3 months**

1. VISITOR NUMBERS

Visitor numbers across the Norwich Museums are approximately 8,000 less from April to the end of November than in the previous year. Of this just under 2,000 can be accounted for by the closure of Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum and Carrow House in September 2011 and the majority of the remaining difference of 6,000 visits is as a result of the difference between visitor numbers to Norwich Castle in August 2010/11 and 2011/12. Members will recall that last year's August visitor numbers to Norwich Castle were 28,000 compared with 18,000 in 2009/10. This represented an unprecedented increase of 55% and was difficult to explain. August had been wet and the popular temporary exhibition Beatles to Bowie and the interactive exhibition 'Mediaeval Machines' in the Castle Keep obviously had a positive impact but it was still difficult to explain such a significant visitor increase in one particular month. A reduced number of visitors in August 2011 was to be expected, but the reduction is considerably less than had been feared and still represents a 27% increase on 2009/10 which in itself had been a good year. Visitor numbers for Norwich Castle to date excluding August are marginally lower than last year but slightly higher for Strangers' Hall.

The economic situation doesn't yet appear to date to be having a significant impact on the number of people visiting museums, however reductions in retail and café income demonstrate that once in the museum, they are less willing to spend money in the shop and café.

MUSEUM VISITS		APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	Total to 30th Nov 2011 all years
Castle Museum										
	2009/10	14,559	12,278	12,142	16,394	18,085	10,915	13,729	9,390	107,492
	2010/11	15,555	12,623	13,588	17,126	28,199	12,647	16,896	11,136	127,770
	2011/12	13,502	12,790	12,731	18,423	23,434	13,878	15,624	10,896	121,278
Strangers Hall										
	2009/10	1,050	664	786	1,129	952	1,104	778	1,150	7,613
	2010/11	992	547	613	987	1,051	781	962	939	6,872
	2011/12	903	641	918	1,013	1,286	842	1,076	843	7,522

Royal Norfolk Regimental										
	2009/10	414	299	204	375	379	467	362	135	2,635
	2010/11	403	225	339	462	471	565	259	207	2,931
	2011/12	311	226	319	262	391	836	CLOSED	CLOSED	2,345
Royal Norfolk Regimental via Castle										
	2009/10	1,939	1,076	915	2,405	2,089	1,069	870	635	10,998
	2010/11	1413	1014	1,297	1,731	1,815	1,046	808	590	9,714
	2011/12	1,346	1,039	1,103	986	3,270	348	CLOSED	CLOSED	8,092
Carrow House Costume and Textile Study Centre										
	2009/10	53	44	99	156	59	247	189	167	658
	2010/11	76	117	132	137	90	166	151	53	718
	2011/12	47	75	107	100	50	120	CLOSED	CLOSED	499
TOTAL NORWICH MUSEUM VISITS										
	2009/10	17,962	14,317	14,047	20,303	21,505	13,555	15,739	11,310	128,738
	2010/11	18,363	14,409	15,837	20,306	31,536	15,039	18,925	12,872	147,287
	2011/12	16,062	14,696	15,071	20,684	28,381	15,904	16,700	11,739	139,237

Carrow House and The Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum closed to the public on 10th Sept 2011

2. BUDGET SAVINGS

Accommodation budget savings Update

Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum RNRM and Carrow House Costume and Textile Study Centre

New temporary Regimental displays on Norwich Castle's Rotunda Balcony opened to the public from 21st October. Funding bids have been prepared and submitted to Wolfson DCMS and the Heritage Lottery Fund's Our Heritage funding programme is in progress for the development and implementation of an extended and permanent display on the Rotunda Balcony in 2013.

Costume and Textiles

The costume and textile library, resources and handling collections are now housed in Norwich Castle Study Centre. The handling collections are still in constant use by groups and researchers and are often on loan to museum learning teams around the county. Roller racking and other storage equipment is being installed in the Shirehall to accommodate the costume and textile collections when they are relocated in March 2012.



New Study Room

There is a new shared study room available to all the curatorial departments for the use of public activities. The room is used by individual researchers, group sessions, study centre events, training and collections work.

New Entrance

From January 2012, the main entrance to Norwich Castle Study Centre for staff, contractors and the public moved to the old Regimental Museum entrance. A new reception area, as well as new graphic panels and signs were installed during November and December.

Salary budget savings

Phase 1 of the Norwich Museums Organisational Review - Front of House and Learning Services - was implemented on 21st November 2011. Staff have been undergoing training to equip them to deliver their new roles.

Phase 2 of the Norwich Museums Organisation Review involves curation, display and collections management functions. A business case has been submitted for approval to NCC's Design Authority. Natural wastage through retirement and staff moving on to new posts together with the non-renewal of a fixed term contract will mean that budget savings for Phase 2 can be achieved through rethinking roles and responsibilities and line management structures and will not necessitate redundancies..

2. RECENT AND CURRENT EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS

Family Matters:

The Family in British Art

15 October 2011 – 8th January 2012



This major touring exhibition, part of the Heritage Lottery Fund project The Great British Art Debate, was curated by Norwich Castle and looks at how artists have depicted families and family life from the sixteenth century to the present day. The exhibition includes works from Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery and work on loan from The Tate and other organisations and has proved very popular with visitors.

Henry Walton, *Sir Robert and Lady Buxton and their daughter Anne*, c 1786.

Collection Highlights

A semi-permanent display of works from our 20th and 21st century art collections can be seen in the Timothy Gurney Gallery at Norwich Castle. Work by Andy Warhol sits alongside a line drawing by Paul Klee whilst a painting by emerging artist, Lee



Marshall is located next to the Surrealist René Magritte. The display has been created to show the range of styles, techniques and media represented in our collections.

FNM 90 at Norwich Castle

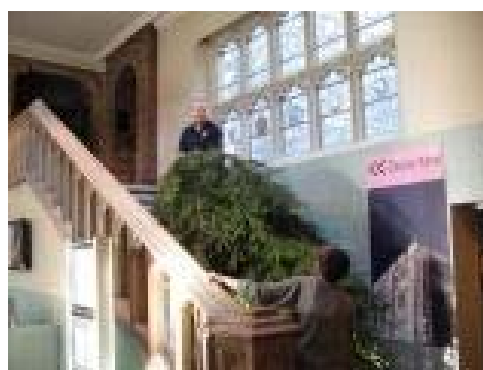
On Saturday 5th November, NMAS staff and members of the Friends of Norwich Museums worked together to present a day of family activities and talks in the Castle to mark the 90th birthday of the Friends. The day was a great success, and was even featured on Anglia TV news – a great publicity boost for the Friends.

Norwich Castle: feeling blue!

On 14th November, Norwich Castle was lit up in blue to mark World Diabetes Day and school children around the county were invited to colour in a picture of the castle for a competition designed to raise awareness of Diabetes and the importance of a healthy diet.

Christmas Celebrations

There was a new festive addition to the Castle Keep, a 16” Christmas Tree! Taverham Garden Centre very kindly agreed to donate the tree but sadly not the muscle, so much fun was had carrying it in and up the stairs. I to our Christmas event on December 10 which incl The CNS Student’s Jazz Band, and visiting families for it.



Norwich Museums’ Christmas activities were once again focused predominantly at Strangers’ Hall, and included Father Christmas in his toy workshop together with museum and Christmas craft activities.

4. LEARNING DEPARTMENT

School Visits

School visit numbers from April –October 2011 are level with the same period last year. Bookings for this academic year are going very well. *(November 2011 figures not available at time of preparing report but will be tabled at meeting)*

SCHOOL VISITS		APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	Total to 30th Sept 2011 all years
Castle Museum									
	2009/10	453	932	2,416	964	8	517	1,386	6,676
	2010/11	424	1022	2,217	1,708	57	1,118	1360	7,906
	2011/12	550	1,287	1,985	2,097	37	510	1,489	7,955

Strangers Hall									
	2009/10	28	48	237	109	-	32	110	564
	2010/11	91	112	30	150	-	-	156	539
	2011/12	29	168	164	94	-	-	223	678
Royal Norfolk Regimental									
	2009/10 ACTUAL	45	29	-	-	-	-	159	233
	2010/11	0	0	-	11	-	-	90	101
	2011/12		27	89	-	-	-	CLOSED	116
TOTAL SCHOOL VISITS									
	2009/10	526	1,009	2,653	1,073	8	549	1,655	7,473
	2010/11	515	1,134	2,247	1,869	57	1,118	1,606	8,546
	2011/12	579	1,482	2,238	2,191	37	510	1,712	8,749

After School Club

This month saw the completion of a five week after school club with Lakenham Primary School focussed on the exhibition 'Family Matters' The Family in British Art. This was funded by Kettle Foods.

The project aimed to help the children investigate how pictures show feelings about self, family and homes and explore these through words, art and drama. The first session was at Norwich Castle where they looked at the exhibition 'Family Matters' and talked about the messages, moods and emotions that different portraits communicate. The children worked in groups and chose a painting which they felt matched an emotion they were given. Each group of children then had to show their picture to the others and explain why they chose it.



The rest of the sessions were back in school where they used drama and art to develop ideas around portraits and the family. Each session started with a drama warm up game. The children explored facial expression and body posture in portraits, and produced collage, drawings and wire sculptures as they developed ideas. They also thought about their home and family and looked at objects from homes in the past. They brought in objects of their own and designed and made a coat of arms.

Intergenerational After School Club, September-November 2011

Family Matters exhibition was the inspiration for an after school club with a difference: an intergenerational group mixing children and octogenarians. We worked with a new partner, AGE UK Norwich, to bring together members of an older persons' lunch club from the same area as Magdalen Gates school, where the children came from. Particularly heart-warming was the way in which the participants bonded from the very first session – indeed now the six weeks of club are over there are plans to have a lunch club at school, so old and young can continue to meet and chat. Our theme was 'hands and feet' and the medium was photography. Older participants talked about 'what these hands have done' and 'where these feet have been' whilst younger suggested what their hands might get to do, and where their feet might get to go. Younger taught older how to use digital cameras and most kept journals of the sessions, written and illustrated. Feedback has been very positive from across the spectrum. 'It's been fab!' was the response of more than one person, but more explicitly, an older member confessed that she had previously found the Castle rather a forbidding place but that she now felt 'truly welcome'. Another child said: 'I will miss coming to the Castle and seeing everyone'. The final title, HI 5, was chosen because all felt they'd achieved something really positive and wanted to celebrate it *together*.



Whose chair are you sitting in?

Launch event for the *Family Matters Exhibition*



Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery, 15th October 2011 *Whose Chair are you sitting in?* was an interactive event for the public to participate in at the Castle Museum the day the exhibition *Family Matters* opened. Visitors were invited to choose from an array of chairs in the Rotunda one which they felt said something about them. Their companion took a photograph of them in 'their' chair. Little girls frequently chose the throne, because it made them 'feel like a princess', whilst older men tended to go for the rocking chair – and demanded a tot of whisky whilst they were there... The faux leopard skin

chair was also in high demand. We had a lot of laughs, but there was a thoughtful subtext: how does the furniture we choose reflect something of our identity? What does it tell us about ourselves, our families, our home?



Youth Forum

A Youth Forum has been established as part of the Great British Art Debate project. It is hoped that by embedding the thoughts and opinions of young people into the exhibition and public programme planning processes, we will be able to tailor and develop the programme to suit their needs and interests. The intention is for Norwich Castle to become a valuable resource and support network for their professional development and learning.

The Youth forum have been attending key Norwich Museums team meetings to ensure that planning and programming takes in the interests and needs of young people, and they lead a public activity to create a huge Norwich Family Tree, as part of the UK wide initiative *The Big Draw* and the *Family Matters Exhibition* during the October half-term holiday..

5. PROJECT UPDATES

The Bridewell Project Update

AWARD SUCCESS

Bridewell Project staff Hannah Maddox and Jenny Caynes recently attended the Norwich Society's 2011 Design Awards, where the Bridewell was honoured with the Community Award. The contributions of architects Lucas Hickman Smith and contractors Draper and Nicholls were acknowledged in recognising the sensitive adaptation of a major Norwich historic building.



The museum fit-out stage is well underway. Display structures, cases, display lighting and AV equipment are being installed and galleries decorated in preparation for the installation of 4,000 collections, plus interpretive material including graphics panels, interactives, replicas, AVs. Curators and members of the display department continue to work on text and images for graphics panels and labels, case layout design and mount designs for objects, A/V content and interactives and education resources.

All but a few of the larger collections which will be on display are now back in the building, many have been conserved or undergone conservation cleaning, and many of the wall mounted objects are in place.

Due to some delays during the building work and changes to the way in which we are managing the display element of the project we are unfortunately 17 weeks behind schedule. At the meeting of the Norwich AMC in June 2010 it was reported that the building works and display installation would take up to the end of 2011. This means that with snagging, testing of security systems etc and soft opening we would have expected to open to the public in February 2012. Due to the

pressures mentioned above we are now scheduled to open in June 2012. There will be no financial disadvantage to this delay as the building works have actually come in under budget, and the changes to the display work are budget neutral. Any potential loss of income is balanced against savings in front-of-house staff salaries while we remain closed.

Colman Galleries Update

The galleries showcasing the Norwich School painters are being revamped to include imaginative re-displays, contemporary art, new trails and activities and short films as part of the Great British Art Debate project. Redecoration of the Galleries began in November. The work is being phased in an attempt to minimise length of time the galleries are closed to the public. Both galleries will be re-open for Easter 2012. Improvements include new glass doors from the Rotunda into the galleries, redecoration, Audio Visual interpretation, new text and labels and learning resources.

Staff have also been carrying out public consultation:

‘Curator for the day’

Heritage Open Day at Norwich Castle this year included an event, ‘Be a curator for a day’, aimed at encouraging feedback about proposed changes to the Colman Galleries. A secondary aim was to inform the public about the difficult decisions that curators and other museum staff have to make when redesigning a gallery. The event was organised by Amanda Burke, Evaluation Officer and Anna Green, Learning Officer, with the help of eight volunteers (some of whom were members of Norwich Castle Youth Forum), Curators Giorgia Bottinelli and Andrew Moore and the Volunteer Coordinator Rachel Trevor. Activities included assessing different lighting levels and using viewing cards to look at the effect of wall colour on paintings. Probably the most successful activity was ‘Correct the Curator’ in which Andrew Moore bravely subjected his panel text to public scrutiny. Visitors were asked to mark the text with highlighter pens - pink for ‘*I like this bit*’, blue for ‘*I don’t understand this*’ and yellow for ‘*I don’t like this bit*’. There was space for comments and suggestions. Giorgia, who is leading on the re-hanging of the galleries said that she found it ‘an eye-opener’ and we are planning to use this technique again in the near future.

What the event did highlight was the value of ‘testing’ interpretation with the public, for example, an ‘I-Spy’ trail leaflet for very young children, whilst very popular, showed the difficulty they had in doing the trail due to the height of the pictures and consequent reflection on the glass when the pictures are viewed from low down and at an angle.



Courtroom, Shirehall Study Centre

NMAS are exploring the opportunity to use the courtroom in the Shirehall for tours for museum visitors, schools, living history events and other activities. Tours could potentially begin in the Castle, take in the Dungeons and/or prison displays in the Castle Keep and access the Courtroom via the spiral stairs which were in the past used to access the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum from Norwich Castle. The

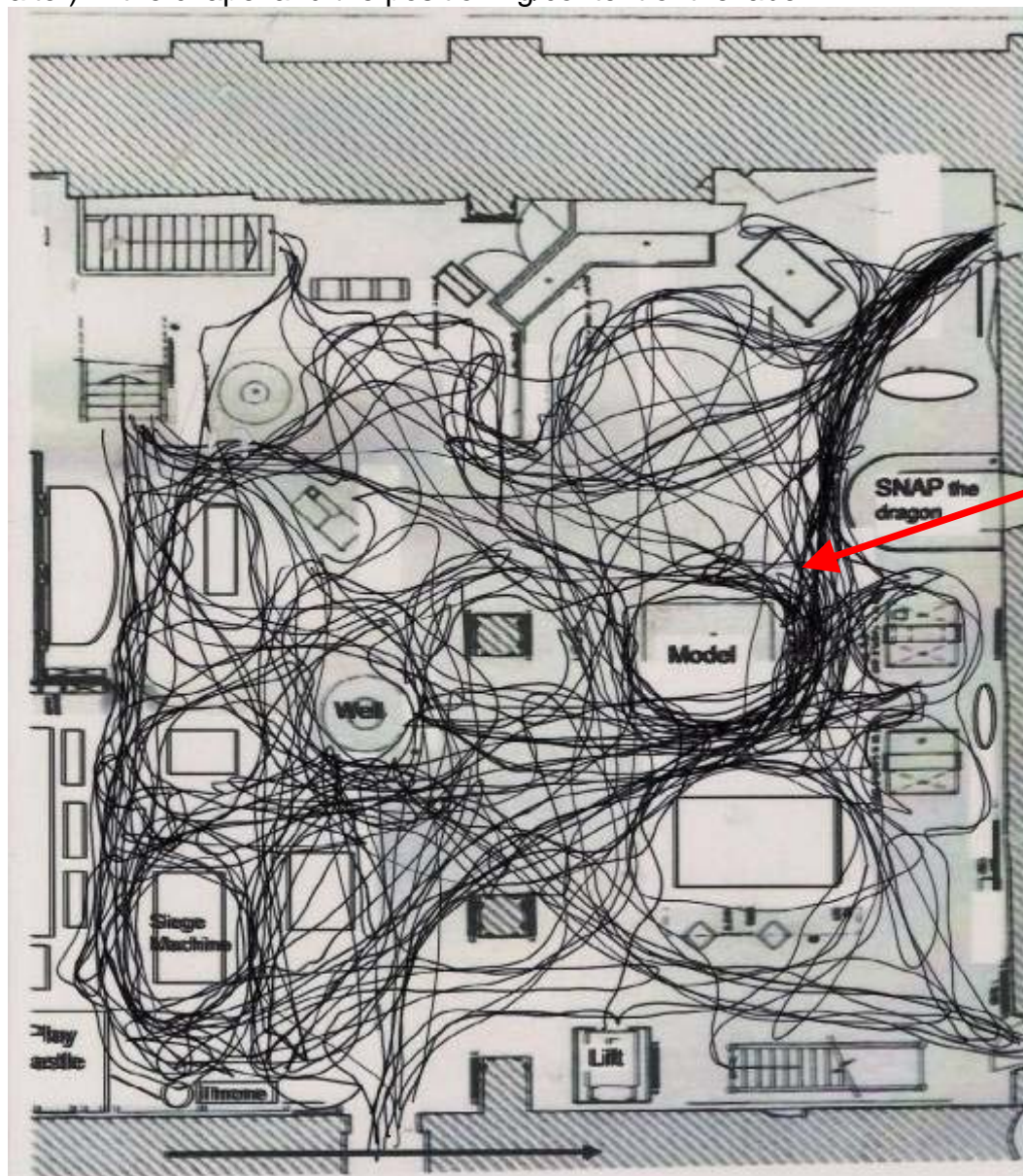
Courtroom requires repair and refurbishment for which NMAS is seeking funds from Norfolk County Council and other funding sources.

Castle Keep

Tracking-and-timing

A team of volunteers (principally from Norwich Friends, City College Norwich and the UEA) kindly helped with a tracking-and-timing study of Norwich Castle Keep as part of plans to redevelop the area. This involved plotting visitors' paths on a plan and timing any stops over 10 seconds. Visitors were tracked over two floors and, with the keep having numerous entrances and sets of stairs, it was a challenging job to say the least.

This study identified those displays that most 'attracted' visitors and those that 'held' their attention. Key to holding attention was found to be either interaction, or the combination of both objects and good interpretation (objects without interpretation and stand-alone panels were less successful). Small differences in design were found to affect dwell time, for example, the chapel in the balcony area had higher dwell time to a similar area, the kitchen. Examining the differences between them implies that this is due to lighting, the presence of an 'object' (the altar) in the chapel and the positioning/content of the label.



66% took
this route

Plots of visitors' paths showed the importance of gateway objects in drawing visitors along certain routes in an open-plan layout. See for example how visitors coming from the Fitch Room door tend to move towards the large model keep, due to both its size, its visibility and to the way it is lit.

Fewer visitors chose to visit the keep balcony and the basement than the ground floor; this may be because of the number of possible routes from main floor, and few clues as to the 'best' one to take. A possible remedy would be to use design elements, such as lighting and gateway objects, to suggest a route to visitors around the Keep.

Among other findings were that visitors to the balcony spent more time sitting and looking around the space, implying that views within the space (into the roof and down to the floor) and outside could be better exploited.

Whilst a time-consuming exercise, this study has pointed to further uses of this type of research in smaller ways, for example, to assess the difference to dwell time after any changes or improvements to displays.

6. FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS



Norwich Castle will continue its **Family Focus** season on Saturdays between New Year and Easter, to include a '**hands on**' exhibition called '**Life**' from the exhibition company who produced 'medieval machines' a popular interactive exhibition presented in Norwich Castle Keep in Summer 2010. Family Saturday themes will include Egyptians, Romans, Anglo Saxons, Titian and a focus on the world in motion as part of National Science Week.

Titian's *Diana and Actaeon*

3 March – 15 April 2012

Titian's 16th century masterpiece will be on tour from the National Gallery, London.

Queen Elizabeth II by Cecil Beaton: A Diamond Jubilee Celebration.

Looking forward to Summer 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. The exhibition will open to the public on Saturday 7th July.



In autumn 2012 the temporary exhibition galleries will host an exhibition of the works of **Cedric Morris and Christopher Wood** together with an East Anglian Arts Fund **Open Arts** show where local artists are invited to submit works for a selected selling show.

7. CONSERVATION

The Conservation of Feathers

On the 9th and 10th of November, the Conservation Department hosted a workshop on the conservation of feathers. This two day workshop was run by Allyson Rae, previously Head of Organic Artefacts Conservation at the British Museum, now a conservator in private practise and with over 30 years of experience. Allyson shared some of her extensive experience working on a fantastic array of objects incorporating feathers such as Hawaiian cloaks and Amazonian headdresses. The workshop provided an opportunity for conservators, from both the UK and international institutions, to learn about the composition and deterioration of feathers, as well as methods and techniques that can be used to conserve and repair them.



Conservator Allyson Rae demonstrating a technique for repairing a feather.

On the second day, participants were able to apply some of these techniques to damaged feathers, including cleaning, reshaping and repairing. The workshop was a great opportunity to meet other colleagues in the conservation profession, to discuss common problems and share knowledge and experiences.



Participants, including NMAS Natural History Curator Dr David Waterhouse and Conservation Technician Alice Forkes, applying the cleaning and repair techniques learned.

Rachel Kirk, Norwich Museums Manager
December 2012