



Norwich area museums committee

Date: **Tuesday, 03 September 2024**
Time: **14:30**
Venue: **Mancroft room City Hall, St Peters Street, Norwich, NR2 1NH**

Committee members:

Norwich City Council:

Councillors Huntley (Chair), Caine, Kidman, Schmierer and Wright and 1 vacancy

Norfolk County Council:

Councillors Brociek-Coulton (Vice-Chair), Birmingham, Reilly, Rumsby, Ward and Watkins

Co-opted non-voting members:

Amanda Geitner (East Anglia Arts Fund) and Felicity Devonshire (Friends of the Norwich Museums), Councillor Booth (Broadland District Council), Councillor Graham (South Norfolk) and Danusia Wurm (Norfolk Contemporary Art Society)

Ex officio: Councillor Kybird (vice chair, Norfolk Joint Museums committee)

For further information please contact:

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Agenda

Page nos

- 1 Apologies**
To receive apologies for absence
- 2 Declarations of interest**
(Please note that it is the responsibility of individual members to declare an interest prior to the item if they arrive late for the meeting)
- 3 Public questions/petitions**
To receive questions / petitions from the public which have been submitted in accordance with the council's constitution.
- 4 Minutes** **3 - 10**
To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2024
- 5 Norwich Museums Report - May to July 2024** **11 - 40**
Purpose - To receive the report on the activities at the Norwich Museums for the period May to July 2024.
- 6 Reports from the Voluntary Organisations**
This is a standing item to receive reports from the non-voting members of the committee who represent the voluntary organisations that support the Norfolk Museums Service.

Date of publication: **Friday, 23 August 2024**



Norwich Area Museums Committee

14:30 to 15:50

4 June 2024

Present:

City Councillors:

Huntley (Chair, following appointment)
Caine
Kidman
Schmierer
Wright

County Councillors:

Brociek-Coulton (Vice-Chair, following appointment)
Rumsby
Ward

Co-opted non-voting Members:

Felicity Devonshire (Friends of the Norwich Museums), Danusia Wurm (Norfolk Contemporary Art Society) and Councillor Booth (Broadland District Council)

Apologies:

County Councillors Birmingham and Reilly, and Amanda Geitner (East Anglia Arts Fund), Councillor Graham (South Norfolk Council) and Councillor Kybird (ex officio member)

Also present:

Robin Hanley, Assistant Head of Museums
Stuart Garner, Operations Manager
Jan Pitman, Learning Manager (Norwich)
Francesca Vanke, Senior Curator of Norwich Museums and Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art

1. Appointment of Chair

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Huntley as Chair for the civic year 2024-25.

2. Appointment of Vice Chair

RESOLVED to appoint County Councillor Brociek-Coulton as Vice Chair for the civic year 2024-25.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Public Questions and Petitions

There were no public questions or petitions.

5. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2024.

6. Norwich Museums Report – February to April 2024

The Assistant Head of Museums introduced the report (which is available on the website [here](#)) and together with colleagues presented the relevant sections to allow for members to ask questions or comment.

The Operations Manager presented Section 1 of the report - Norwich Museums Operations. It was reported that, due to the ongoing Keep Project, the current opening arrangements were still in place; and the catering and pop-up retail store in the Rotunda were still in operation. He highlighted that the number of ceremonies held during the previous 12 months had been 718, which had generated an additional 17,734 visitors in terms of footfall.

The Learning Manager (Norwich) presented Section 2 of the report - Norwich Learning Team Activities – Highlights Report. It was reported that the service had now run the Key Stage 2 Kett's Rebellion learning session three times, and this had generated positive feedback especially on the interactive nature of the session. The Early Years and Family Saturdays was a key part of the learning team's delivery and provided opportunities to test out ideas for sessions, which could be included in the school holiday programme. Through the Early Years and Family Saturdays, the service continued to provide free family passes to those from areas of deprivation or other access needs. Around 25% of passes issued had been redeemed and the service was looking at ways the level of take-up could be improved.

Improving access to the Norwich Museums collections was a focus of the Learning Team and this included tours of the Museum of Norwich that complemented the *Norwich Works: The Industrial Photography of Walter and Rita Nurnberg* exhibition at the Castle. This provided additional local context and history of the exhibition. For the *Norwich Works* exhibition, the Learning Team had once again worked with Daniel Jillings to provide British Sign Language tours. This had been an activity that had been part of the Keep Activity Plan and was continuing to develop as an approach for exhibition at the Norwich Museums.

A number of other events and activities had taken place over the period in partnership with other organisations such as The Garage's Creative Well-being workshop, a visit from the Norwich International Youth Project to the Museum of Norwich and the ongoing Community Culture Club programme funded by the Norfolk Initiative for Coastal and Rural Health Equalities (NICHE). A presentation on the Community Culture Club would be provided to members at the end of the formal meeting.

As part of the Castle Keep Project Activity Plan, the Learning Team was working on “From Norwich with Love”, performances that would be held at The Forum on Saturday 13 July 2024 as part of the Lord Mayor’s celebrations which would be an interpretation of local history.

A member commented that it was positive to see within the report the teacher training events and that he hoped these were an annual event. The Learning Manager (Norwich) commented that the event had been happening for several years, but the event may need to be reviewed to include engaging with other providers of teacher training in Norfolk.

The Assistant Head of Museums presented Section 3 of the report - Kick the Dust: Norfolk – project activity update. Since the publication of the report, to the end of May 2024, there had been a total of 1749 interventions with 822 individuals over 1500 hours of activity. The majority of the activity was delivered in person, but some activity was conducted remotely. Since April 2024 the Kick the Dust project had been funded by the Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) Uplift Award for the period to 2027. Support for the project had also been provided through other partners such as Public Health Norfolk, to support activity that focussed on mental health. While the focus of the ACE NPO funding was areas outside of Norwich due to funding from other partners this meant that activity could continue to take place within Norwich.

The Assistant Head of Museums highlighted ~~to members~~ that over 90% of the activities had been shaped and designed by young people, which was a testament to ensuring that there was sustained engagement. The report detailed the feedback that had been received from participants and the impact the activity had had on their mental health using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale. The majority of responses agreed that the activity had had a positive impact on their mental health and well-being.

The Assistant Head of Museums confirmed that the Round 2 funding bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) in partnership with YMCA Leicester for the Your Heritage Your Future (YHYF) project had now been submitted. The bid would be considered in September 2024 and if approved the project would commence delivery in late 2024 across the East of England and East Midlands. The BHYF project would look to share experiences across the museums sector on how to work with young people and developing programmes such as the paid traineeships that NMS had provided.

The Chair commended the service for the Kick the Dust project for 2018 to 2023 which had far exceeded the initial targets set and proved valuable for young people across the county.

The Assistant Head of Museums presented Section 4 of the report - Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn – project update and reported that the service was close to being able to reopen the Percival Wing to the public. This would be another significant milestone in the project as it would allow the main entrance to the Castle to be used for visitors. The hoardings that had been erected in front of the main entrance would also be moved which would provide a cleaner view of the Castle. The glazed atrium of the entrance would also

include the shop, restaurant and education space. Once the Percival Wing was reopened the hoarding line between the Rotunda and the entrance could also be removed. The construction works within the Keep were ongoing and roof platforms had now been installed, which marked a significant step for the construction works in the Keep. Construction would likely finish in late 2024. For the British Museum Partnership Gallery, the service was working closely with the British Museum on the interpretation panels. The Assistant Head of Museums confirmed that once the Percival Wing had reopened, that a tour for members could be arranged.

A member asked the Assistant Head of Museums to detail some of the challenges that the service had had to deal with over the course of the project and whether any of the legislative changes to Fire Safety Regulations would impact visitor numbers once the Keep was fully reopened. The Assistant Head of Museums assured members that the service worked closely with a fire safety specialist on fire management, which included close collaboration with the fire brigade and so was confident that all legislative requirements were being met while maximising occupancy rates. The safety of visitors, staff and volunteers of the Castle and all museum sites was a priority for the service.

The Assistant Head of Museums said that a number of unforeseen circumstances had impacted the project. The contract for the works had been awarded in 2020 and there had been impacts on the construction industry due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The availability and cost of steel had been impacted by the War in Ukraine. The principal contractor, Morgan Sindall Construction had worked throughout the project to ensure that momentum of the project was ongoing throughout. A number of challenges were due to the age and history of the building. Throughout its history several changes had been made to Norwich Castle not all of which had been recorded. When making these discoveries the service and contractor worked closely with the City Council as landowner, the conservation officers within the planning department and Historic England to understand the impacts of changes to the building and the impact of any discoveries on the plans for the construction.

In response to a member's query, the Assistant Head of Museums confirmed that the NLHF and other partners had provided support for the additional costs associated with the project. The ticket prices for Norwich Castle were currently lower than before the start of the project and free entry to the Museum of Norwich was included within the price. The price of tickets in future would match the cost of tickets to Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse as this was comparable to the length of a visit at Norwich Castle. The Norfolk Museums pass would continue to be available for visitors. The service was very aware that ticket prices could be a barrier to access for visitors, but a balance had to be made between generating income and providing access. The service provided a number of initiatives that helped with access to the museums, such as the Heritage Open Days and targeted free or low cost admissions for particular groups.

A member asked whether as part of the Keep Project, consideration had been given to provide more seating within the spaces for those individuals who needed to rest while visiting the museum. The Assistant Head of Museums confirmed that accessibility was at the heart of the project, including enabling

access to the roof for everyone. The design for spaces would include seating and throughout the project the service had been listening to comments from visitors and adjusting its plans to reflect some of the comments received.

The Assistant Head of Museums presented Section 5 of the report - other activity across Norwich. The report detailed a range of activities at both sites, which demonstrated the work of staff to provide an engaging programme for visitors. The Museum of Norwich worked with a number of organisations and partners to host a range of events in different ways, which included activities related to the Kick the Dust project, Art at Work Partnership and English Plus. Staff at the museum had also either created their own exhibitions, such as *Muslims: Norwich* or displayed work related to the *Norwich Works* exhibition.

In 2023 Strangers' Hall had celebrated its centenary and a number of programmes and activities had finished in relation to this. A major part of this had been conservation and restoration work to the items within the collection and the building. Members were referred to the activities at both museums as part of the holiday programme.

The Chair commended the staff of both sites on the range of activities that took place at the Museum of Norwich and Strangers' Hall.

The Senior Curator of Norwich Museums presented Section 6 of the report - Norwich Curatorial update. The Curator of Historic Art was working on a range of activities including a bequest that had been received of a painting and drawings by John Sell Cottman. These works would be displayed in the Castle in due course. She was also working on a watercolour exhibition on the work of Catherine Maude Nichols. Adjacent to the work on the Catherine Maude Nichols exhibition she was conducting research on women artists from East Anglia who's work may have been underrepresented.

The Senior Curator of Norwich Museums was continuing her work on the Turner exhibition for Norwich Castle called *JMW Turner and Changing Visions of Landscape*, which would open in the Autumn and would be part of a number of exhibitions over the coming year featuring Turner. This exhibition would therefore be part of publicity programme from the Tate galleries.

The Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art had been working on the *Roger Ackling: Sunlight* exhibition which had opened recently at Norwich Castle. This exhibition had been produced in collaboration with the East Anglia Arts Fund. As it had been the 35th anniversary of the Costume and Textile Association the Senior Curator of Costume and Textiles had hosted a lecture about the association. She has been working on the accession of a shawl that had been the prototype of one gifted to Queen Victoria by local manufacturers. As the collections had been moved for the Shirehall works the Senior Curator of Costume and Textiles was working with volunteers to update the documentation and online content about the costume and textiles collection.

The Curator of the Norfolk Regimental Collection had been working with a Museum Trainee on a Far East Prisoner of War exhibition for the next year, to commemorate a number of key anniversaries ~~were happening~~ in relation to WW2. She had also been working with Fine Arts students from Norwich

University of the Arts to use the regimental collection as basis for their own works. The Senior Curator of Archaeology was largely occupied with the Keep project but continued to work on research projects.

A member commented that they were looking forward to an exhibition of women-only artists in future to highlight this group.

The Operations Manager presented Section 7 of the report - other developments. The Shirehall works were nearing completion, and it was likely that these would complete in August and September. This would enable the service to recommence tours of Shirehall.

The Operations Manager presented Section 8 of the report - visitor numbers. The updated figures had been circulated at the meeting and were available on the Council's website [here](#). He highlighted that the visitor numbers for Norwich Castle for the 2023/24 financial year had seen a substantial increase in comparison to the 2022/23 financial year. This had largely been due to the exhibitions that had taken place at the Castle. He was pleased to report that Norwich Castle had seen a return to six-figure visitor figures. The increase in visitor numbers for the other sites had also seen increases in comparison to 2022/23.

In response to a member question the Operations Manager confirmed that the increased figures in April 2023 were due to the Gloucester exhibition, which had closed in September 2023.

The Operations Manager confirmed that the service would take part in the Heritage Open Days for 2024, and it was hoped that the Percival Wing would be open by then which would allow for an increase of visitors for the Heritage Open Days.

Members were assured that the subsidence that had been discussed at the previous committee meeting had been historic subsidence and not new subsidence. Buildings continued to move and settle and this was the cause of new cracking. The historic subsidence was evident when walking through Shirehall as the floor was not level throughout the building. The structural engineers who had been working on the Shirehall Courtroom project had assured that the building was not at risk of further subsidence.

Members thanked the Assistant Head of Museums and his colleagues for the report.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) note the Norwich Museums Report February to April 2024; and
- 2) ask the Assistant Head of Museums to liaise with the Committee Officer to organise another site visit of Norwich Castle for committee members.

7. Reports of the Representatives of the Voluntary Organisations

Felicity Devonshire, Friends of the Norwich Museums, addressed the Committee. A written report had been circulated to members (which was available on the website [here](#)). She highlighted that the Friends had had their Annual General Meeting and the support they had provided to help improvements to the Museums. This included restorative work to a 18th Century painting in Strangers' Hall. The Friends would be hosting a number of events over the following months, which included a talk entitled "Historic Buildings Mythbusting". The Friends would be present at the Royal Norfolk Show to encourage new members to join.

Danusia Wurm, Norfolk Contemporary Art Society (NCAS) addressed the Committee. NCAS had had sell-out talks since the last committee meeting. This had included talks in collaboration with the Norfolk and Norwich Festival. The talks were a key aspect of NCAS' fundraising efforts to support the Contemporary Art Gallery. Through the fundraising NCAS had part-funded the purchase of work by Roger Ackling which was part of the new exhibition at the Castle. The organisation continued to fund the Small Grants Scheme and would be awarding prizes to students at the Graduate Show at Norwich University of the Arts. Some of the talks that NCAS would be hosting over the summer included one on the industrial and social heritage of Norwich and Cambridge. The programme of talks were available on the NCAS website.

RESOLVED to thank Felicity Devonshire and Danusia Wurm for their reports and record the Committee's gratitude to the voluntary organisations that support the Norwich museums.

CHAIR

Norwich Area Museums Committee 3 September 2024

Norwich Museums Report: May to July 2024

1. Norwich Museums operations

Norwich Castle opening arrangements

Following the handover of the Percival section, from 22 July visitors have been able to access the museum via the new entrance and glazed atrium. The new café and retail spaces are also now in operation. The construction site hoarding line has moved back and the protective decking at the top of the bridge has been removed.



New visitor entrance at Norwich Castle

Norwich Castle ceremonies

The number of ceremonies taking place at Norwich Castle has continued to remain strong, with 657 having been completed within the past 12 months.

Month	No of Ceremonies	Footfall
August	71	2120
September	69	2022
October	86	2253
November	33	729
December	40	825
January 24	19	296
February	27	592
March	37	809
April	47	1154
May	71	1848
June	76	1849
July	81	1993
Total	657	16,490



The Colman Gallery wedding space

2. Norwich Learning Team activity – highlights report

The Norwich Museums Learning team continue to develop, deliver and evaluate the impact of learning programmes for priority and target audiences, including Norfolk schools and young people. Staff have carefully managed the reintroduction of in-person learning events at all three city museums. To explore the programmes in more detail and get involved, please visit the *Learning Hub* pages of the Norwich Castle website: [Learning - Norfolk Museums](#)



School events

Education Room

The newly refurbished Education room is currently being fitted out with object handling collections, art and craft materials, assorted reproduction arms and armour and miscellany such as an oversized fan depicting the world and a five foot xylophone. Equipment and materials will soon be sorted and stored away in the preparation for the start of the autumn term when we will begin to use this space in earnest.

The hand-over of the education room will mean that our capacity for school events increases from 60 to 120 children per day. This represents an important milestone for us as we build towards full re-opening.

Recruitment

In preparation for the return to the four-session carousel for school events, we have just completed recruitment of three new casual learning assistants. They will begin to observe sessions and deliver during the autumn term, having come in for a day or two induction and familiarisation during the summer holidays.

Teacher Private Views of new art exhibitions

Teachers attended a private view of the new *SUNLIGHT* and *holding space* art exhibitions at Norwich Castle on Wednesday 22 May. Curators Amanda Geitner and Rosy Gray delivered a private tour of the *Sunlight* and *holding space* temporary exhibitions for primary and secondary teachers.

Art Teachers' Masterclass

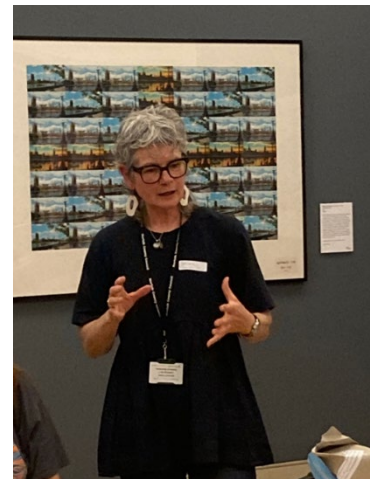
Twelve art teachers recharged their artistic batteries at the annual Art Teachers' Masterclass at Norwich Castle on Saturday 15 June. Primary and secondary art teachers enjoyed a day with professional artist Caroline Chouler-Tissier, using *holding space*, the Castle's current exhibition of contemporary and modern art, as inspiration.

Teachers said: *"It was lovely to have the time to create without planning."*

"It is always interesting to see how other practitioners develop ideas and find inspiration."

"Helped stimulate new ideas through the process of working with others."

Thanks are due to the Norwich Freeman's Charity for funding the day and to Anna Green for facilitating the event.



Events and visitor programming

May half-term

For May half term, visitors explored the Roman and Iceni collection at Norwich Castle. Families were encouraged to look at Roman and Iceni armour and fight like a legionary. There were also many opportunities to get creative while designing Iceni coins and making torcs.



June Early Years and Family Saturdays

Our Early Years and Family Saturdays, held on the second and fourth Saturday of each month respectively, continue to be an important part of the learning team's delivery. In June, the Early Years and Family Saturday events were inspired by our temporary exhibition: *Sunlight: Roger Ackling* and the broader theme of nature. For Early Years Saturday, our youngest visitors explored light and dark, shapes and found materials - recurring themes in Roger Ackling's exhibition - through fun craft activities and heuristic play.

Our Family Saturday was an opportunity for our visitors to explore different habitats and changes in the natural world. Families engaged in our bird beaks scavenger hunt and bird beak and food challenge, made different habitats on paper plates and created minimalist trees inspired by Roger Ackling's artwork. Younger visitors were able to explore different habitats such as seaside, jungle and woodland through our Early Years sensory area.



Like many other Early Years and Family

Saturdays, these events gave us the chance to explore new approaches to delivery and test some activities in preparation for our summer holiday programme.

As part of our Early Years and Family Saturday events, we continue to provide free family vouchers for school settings from areas of greater deprivation.

Summer holiday programme

June has kept staff busy as we planned and developed activities for our summer holiday programme *Explore Nature at Norwich Castle!* These activities will be themed around nature and inspired by our temporary exhibition *Sunlight: Roger Ackling* and our natural history collections. The programme will run 23rd July - 29th August (Tue, Wed, Thu, and Sat) 10am-3pm.

Museum of Norwich and Strangers' Hall

The Norwich museums are also busy getting ready for summer holiday. Every Tuesday at Museum of Norwich, visitors will be able to have a go at weaving with a variety of papers to create their own woven mat, whereas on other days they will be able to create their own beautiful bird decorations.

At Strangers' Hall, visitors will be able to move back in time and participate in a Tudor House party, whereas on Wed 31 July and 28 August, the museums will be visited by Queen Elizabeth I, who will share with the audiences the secrets of what makes her so beautiful by revealing her daily dress and beauty routine.

Learning Projects

Early Years Innovation in Museums

Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery has been selected by the Art Fund and NESTA (National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts) to be a lead partner in a two-year research and development programme to develop, test and scale a new early years' intervention in museums and encourage a wider range of families to use and visit museums more often. The intervention will support early child development and enhance parent-child interactions among priority families.

Between September 2024 and March 2026, we will work with six cohorts of early years families from areas of greater deprivation. The first cohorts will be drawn from families of early years children attending Earlham nursery. Importantly for Norfolk Museums

Service's focus upon developing our early years provision, three cohorts will be delivered by our sister museum, Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse.

DCMS Wraparound Care pilot

Norfolk Museum Service has led on an initiative by the Department of Culture Media and Sport to assess the feasibility and impact which the cultural and heritage sector could have upon the delivery of Wraparound Care. As an early adopter of Wraparound Care, Norfolk County Council was one of a number of councils approached by DCMS. Norfolk Museums Service took the lead, working with NCC's Wraparound Care leads and with colleagues from the Archive Centre and Norfolk Libraries and Information Service.



The pilot works with two settings, one in Norwich and one in Great Yarmouth. So Schools Out Easton was identified as a partner for the Norwich pilot. So Schools Out is an independent wraparound care service which operates from three primary premises in Norfolk. One of these is Easton Primary School. Kate Malyon (learning assistant) and Jan Pitman (learning manager) delivered sessions at Easton every Wednesday during the summer term 2024. The pilot in Great Yarmouth will be delivered during Autumn term 2024.

Activities were kept informal so that children could choose to engage with those activities which interested them. This is not a school setting and participation is entirely voluntary. Children ranged from Reception to Year 6 and there was a range of additional needs. We decided on broad themes for each session, such as *'buried treasure'* and *'being healthy'*. For each theme, we offered a range of opportunities for children: objects from museum collections, craft and construction activities and a weekly challenge linked to the theme, such as creating a treasure map or building a bridge for an egg to cross in safety.

Museum staff learned a lot from delivering the sessions and feedback has been very positive. We will await the results of the pilot in Great Yarmouth for a final report.

Some feedback:

"I am a great believer in reflective practice, changing and improving. Jan and Kate were obviously the same, which meant each session improved, not because the session before was not successful, but there was positive attitude that it could be even better." So Schools Out practitioner.



“They love [the sessions]! Different every week. Don't be sick on Wednesdays!”
Parent, So Schools Out Easton.

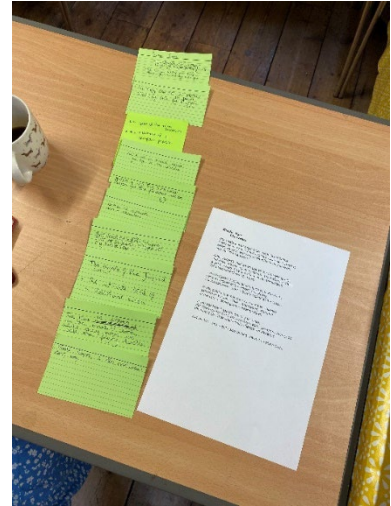
Museum of Norwich Learning

FOUND Poetry Project & Workshop

As part of our ongoing relationship with The Garage's Creative Wellbeing group for adults, we hosted a poetry workshop at the Museum of Norwich in June. The workshop was facilitated by local poet Daisy Henwood and formed part of Daisy's project *FOUND* (see more below), delivered in partnership with Norfolk Museums Service. The workshop was a chance for participants to explore the collections, get creative and share their work with each other. You can see a picture of a collaborative poem created here:

Sarah Witcomb, Community Producer sent us the following feedback: *I love that the museum is now our group's second home. We really appreciate our visits with you and that it has become a safe space for the group.*

FOUND is a poetry and art project exploring the collections and communities behind various Norfolk Museums Service sites. Over six months, Daisy Henwood will research, write, facilitate, and produce an exhibition of found poems created from Norfolk heritage spaces and collections across the county, to be housed at the Museum of Norwich's temporary exhibition space in Autumn/Winter 2024. Daisy is working with visual artist Jade Anderson to create the exhibition. Pop-up versions of the works will then be displayed at Gressenhall and Time & Tide, allowing audiences across the county to access the work.



Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Re-born Keep Activity Plan: *From Norwich with Love*



From Norwich with Love was a family-friendly performance about the history of Norwich, created as part of the National Lottery Heritage Fund-funded Activity Plan, as part of the build-up for the reopening of Norwich Castle's keep. It was performed on Millennium Plain outside the Forum on Saturday 13 July. The performance was part of the city-wide programme of events for the Lord Mayor's celebrations.

The show was written by local writer Shey Hargreaves, who previously worked on the *Norwich Tales* project. It was performed by professional actors, Kiara Hawker and Ivan Wilkinson from local company Quill & Inkling. In addition, we invited a community cast of some 65 people to join the performance. Making up our community cast were: Invidia Voices, Fine City Samba, and young people from the Guildhall School of Dance. Each group performed a 5 minute 'cameo' as part of the show.



Despite the slightly unpredictable weather on the day, both performances took place as scheduled. We had full crowds at both performances, and the feedback from audiences was excellent. The performance was filmed and will be made available on the Norwich Castle YouTube channel. A colleague in the audience compiled a series of overheard feedback:

Father to his son:

"Oh, this is good. You have been learning about this in school."

Older person:

"That's what's going on with the crane. I thought they were knocking it down. So that's something positive."

Two older people:

"I remember her [Black Anna]. That's brought back so many memories."

"I hadn't thought about that for ages. Do you remember ..." and then several minutes of shared memories of their teenager years in the pubs and nightclubs of Norwich.

Small girl (reluctant to watch as she wanted to read her library book):

"A girl with a sword. Oh, this is good." (the library book was closed and she sat with rapt attention for the rest of the show).

Dungeon tours:

The learning team have been working to develop dungeon tours in preparation for re-opening to the public towards the end of the summer. The new tours, delivered by visitor services staff, will focus upon the use of these spaces as holding cells.

For hundreds of years, access to the dungeons was down a flight of eight steps which lay open to the elements, between the Norman Keep and the Gaoler's house. Prisoners were held here for a short while before they were officially handed over to the gaoler. This means that everyone who was on-remand (as we would say today) or had been found guilty at the Norfolk Assizes and was awaiting punishment, passed through these cells. We will tell some of their stories.

Temporary exhibitions public programme

SUNLIGHT: Roger Ackling Public Programme

There are a variety of opportunities for audiences to join us and further explore *SUNLIGHT* during the exhibition run.

Time Spent in *SUNLIGHT*

On Saturday 8 June, Amanda Geitner hosted an in-gallery conversation with Dr Veronica Sekules, and on Saturday 20 July she was joined by Ben Tufnell. There will be further events in this series taking place in August and September.

The audience feedback from these events has been beautiful:

“Mind expanding, appreciated artist, sense of humour, patience, and got some insight into his philosophy of life”

“There’s an atmosphere in this exhibition. Difficult to explain in words. Tranquillity and peace.”



SUNLIGHT: The Curators’ Event

On Thursday 4 July, NMS Modern & Contemporary Art Curator Dr Rosy Gray was in-conversation with Amanda Geitner, with an audience of over seventy people. They talked about the process of curating the show together. The audience was very engaged, with lots of feedback like the following:

“The exhibition feels genuinely significant. The best I’ve seen in the castle in my 14 years attending others regularly. It was good to hear about how it came about, from this talk.”

Shared Reading and Writing Workshops with Dr Sarah Lowndes

On Saturday 27 July, Dr Sarah Lowndes facilitated a reading and creative writing group inspired by the works displayed in *SUNLIGHT: Roger Ackling*. This is part of a series, with further workshops taking place in August. Attendees get the chance to explore the exhibition with Sarah, then there’s a reading of excerpts from a carefully selected text - in this workshop it was *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway. The group then discusses the text and some gentle creative writing exercises follow.

“The event was a welcome break from the distractions and demands of the week. I appreciated the opportunity to focus on something creative for a few hours.”

“The group was welcoming. The event was interesting & thought-provoking.”

3. Kick the Dust: Norfolk – project activity update

Background

The target audience for Kick the Dust activity is young people aged 11-25, with a particular focus on young people aged 16-25 who do not normally engage with the heritage or consider it relevant to their lives. Priority participants are young people facing multiple challenges and barriers, including YMCA clients and other young people engaging with NCC and partner organisations specialist support services. Key project partners include YMCA Norfolk, Creative Collisions (Great Yarmouth) and NCC Children's Services, Norfolk's Libraries and Public Health. Kick the Dust provides a progression pathway for young people, enabling them to use heritage to develop their confidence, skills and routes into employment using the *Player, Shaper, Leader* model.

Following the successful conclusion of the National Lottery Heritage Fund funded Kick the Dust project, Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) has secured additional funding through an Arts Council England (ACE) NPO Uplift award for the period 2023-27. This enables NMS to continue to support young people in the three Levelling up for Culture places of Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn and Thetford. This additional funding will enable young people to participate in high quality cultural and heritage activities that develop their creative and digital skills and potential, as well as prepare them for the workplace.

During 2023-25 NMS is also receiving funding from Norfolk County Council (NCC) Public Health to support Kick the Dust activities countywide that focus on the mental health and wellbeing of Norfolk young people.

NMS is partnering with Norfolk Library & Information Service (NLIS) to deliver this exciting programme of activity enabling us to strengthen partnership working between museum and library staff and increase levels of cultural engagement by young people in a sustained way, employing the successful Kick the Dust approach to youth engagement that uses the three-stage progression model Player-Shaper-Leader. The programme will be aimed at those in the three priority places aged 16-25 years, with opportunities for 13–16 year olds to engage as part of the progression framework.

The key aims of the new Kick the Dust project are to:

- develop transferable work-related skills with the aim of supporting more working age young people into employment, training or further learning;
- develop digital skills linked to creative industries to address the digital skills gap in heritage and cultural sectors;
- increase young people's creative skills and for young people to gain a range of new cultural experiences;
- encourage an appreciation of the history and culture of their local communities.

Young people work alongside professionals to develop their transferable work-related and creative skills, through the co-production of activity and events, volunteering and work experience operating at a level that meets their needs. Feedback from young people shows that they value the skills they develop as part of the project with the top

five skills being cited as: problem solving, digital, communication, team working and creativity.

The following data is based on the period 1/5/23 to 31/7/24.

Number of interventions with young people:

Between 1/5/23 and 31/7/24 there have been **2,056 interventions** involving **888 individual young people** taking part in **1,804 hours** of quality activity. 98% of the activities were face to face, the other sessions being offered online with young people in the principal target areas.

This blended approach offers a wider range of opportunities for young people to engage in heritage:

- 16% of activity was at Player level (to introduce new young people to the project)
- 62% at Shaper level (longer term project with young people determining the content)
- 22% at Leader level (long term engagement – young people leading projects, acting at governance level, mentoring staff)
- 67% of all activity involves young people in leading and designing projects

Breakdown of activity taking place in each area:

- 34% (140 opportunities) in Kings Lynn, (inc Gressenhall),
- 26% (104 opportunities) in Thetford
- 20% (83 opportunities) in the East (covering Great Yarmouth, Cromer)
- 18% (71 opportunities) in Norwich
- 2% (8 opportunities) outside of area and 3 other opportunities for our online work experience programme targeted at Thetford and Kings Lynn young people.

57 volunteering opportunities have been provided, with 3 young people taking on the role of Project Assistant and 11 as a Young Ambassador. Of all delivery, **86%** involves young people being part of a long-term group, providing them with a deeper understanding of heritage and allowing them to explore their identity, develop their skills and confidence and embed themselves more in their local communities, a key aim of ACE. The young people have access to all of NMS sites and can visit with a friend or family member for free during their engagement for that year. Free passes were issued to those beginning on the programme in June 2023.

We continue to deliver a blended training offer for all staff and volunteers who support youth engagement in NMS. Staff input to the training programme will be formulated as the project progresses and needs are identified. Mental Health First Aid training with the YMCA Norfolk team will be delivered in September and October as an accredited course, Mentoring and Coaching will follow in November and December 2024. Autism training will take place online on 31 October 2024. Three of the team are undergoing Arts Award training to add additional value to the programme.

Our offer to support young people around the important theme of mental health and wellbeing is on-going and will be measured through the evaluation framework using data from the young people's feedback forms as well as narrative evaluation which will be reported on in September / October 2024. Working with colleagues in Public Health NCC team we will be able to interrogate the data around impact on mental wellbeing and match this to the interviews with the young people engaged in the narrative evaluation programme. Up to 31/7/24 data shows that **36%** of the individual young people who have taken part in the new programme of activity identify as having a mental health issue showing the need for this programme, although this has dropped slightly in the last quarter from 43% as we work with a larger number of young people. Through a systematic approach to evaluation, in partnership with Norfolk Library and Information Service, the team will be able to demonstrate the impact on mental health on those taking part and the young people will be able to monitor their progress through the programme in relation to skills, confidence and mental health.

NMS and NCC continue to work together through the 'Making Creative Futures' group, chaired by the Kick the Dust Project Coordinator, where members from across Children's Services and Norfolk Public Health identify ways to engage the hardest to reach and most vulnerable children and young people. The group continues to play a key part in the delivery of activity as part of the DfE funded Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) project through the Big Norfolk Fun programme ([Big Norfolk Holiday Fun - Active Norfolk](#)) and through our own contributions through our Kick the Dust offer. The focus is on mental health and wellbeing and has representation from the NCC Public Health team who bring a different perspective to the meetings. This group acts as the vehicle to share best practice, ideas and resources and its membership continues to grow.

Target audiences: (some young people fall into more than one category) as of 31/7/24

- FE/HE – 37%
- YMCA clients – 12%
- Secondary schools – 28%
- Young people with mental health issues – 36%
- SEND – 4%
- Outside of mainstream education – 25%
- NEET – 31%
- Looked after children and adopted living those at home - 1%
- Care Leavers – 1%
- Young Carers – 3%
- New arrivals and refugees – 5%
- Pregnant young mums and teenage parents – 1%
- Other groups – 17%

In terms of how young people find out about Kick the Dust, the Kick the Dust website is being used effectively with 38% of young people finding out about the project through the updated web pages ([Kick the Dust - Norfolk Museums](#)); 18% through a family

member, 19% coming via one of our partner organisations and 16% having already taken part in a previous Kick the Dust project.

Impacts on mental health and well being

The new young people’s feedback form includes the 78 positively worded items from the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale for assessing a populations’ mental well-being. The Young Ambassadors developed the new framework alongside Public Health NCC, and this allows us to measure impact in this key area. In addition, we are implementing a narrative evaluation model working with a smaller number of young people who are part of a long-term project group which will be reported on at the end of September/ October 2024 to provide a richer story to accompany the raw data.

From the Young People feedback forms, following their involvement in Kick the Dust, **41%** strongly agreed that this had had a positive impact on their mental health and wellbeing with a further **44%** agreeing that their involvement in Kick the Dust has helped them have more positive mental health. An additional question has been added to identify young people with neurodivergent tendencies and is showing that since March **52%** of young people engaged in Kick the Dust identify as neurodivergent which is significant when designing new activity in terms of additional barriers these young people may face.

Of the 48 responses to 31/7/24, the following data chart highlights how young people were feeling before taking part in Kick the Dust:

Part 1 Wellbeing statements	% 48 responses				
	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	all of the time
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	0	17	33	29	19
I've been feeling useful	0	6	33	48	10
I've been feeling relaxed	0	19	33	29	17
I've been dealing with problems well	0	6	38	48	6
I've been thinking clearly	0	8	29	46	13
I've been feeling close to other people	0	13	21	46	19
I've been able to make up my own mind about things	0	8	19	44	27

The following data chart highlights how 33 young people were feeling following their engagement in Kick the Dust between March and June 2024 (**NB: Part 2 is only completed once a young person has finished a group/ activity and has had a 121 session with the Project Worker**)

Part 2 Wellbeing statements

% 33 responses

	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	all of the time
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	3	6	34	44	13
I've been feeling useful	0	0	24	45	30
I've been feeling relaxed	3	13	34	34	16
I've been dealing with problems well	0	9	21	45	24
I've been thinking clearly	3	3	27	39	27
I've been feeling close to other people	0	9	15	45	30
I've been able to make up my own mind about things	0	3	18	39	39

From the additional questions asked of the young people taking part, the programme is meeting their needs and helping them see themselves in a museum or heritage setting, with 94% stating the programme went above their expectations and 100% stating they felt welcomed and respected by staff and volunteers.

- 100% of all young people strongly agreed that the museum was a safe space for young people like themselves who were struggling;
- 100% strongly agreed they were given a voice that was listened to;
- 84% strongly agreed that they understood heritage better than they had done before taking part
- 78% strongly agreed that following their engagement heritage was more relevant and 78% strongly agreed that heritage represented young people like themselves;
- 85% stated they now had a greater understanding of museums and the job roles available with 84% strongly agreeing that they could see themselves working in the sector;
- 91% strongly agreed that the skills they had acquired would be useful to them in the future with a further 38% agreeing;
- 72% strongly agreed they felt more connected to their local community than previously;
- 50% agreed that their involvement had helped them to explore and feel more connected to their own identity and heritage.

Summary

The NLHF funded Kick the Dust project ended in March 2023 with evidence clearly demonstrating the impact on young people and staff engaging in activity. The programme is now in its second year of the ACE funded project.

Kick the Dust is a three-stage journey, with young people developing transferable work-related skills including digital skills and gaining experiences that they would struggle to find elsewhere, to support them in securing employment. Whilst young people cite being involved in curation and creating exhibitions as the main areas they have enjoyed, it is through these activities that they hone their skills and understanding of the workplace, which will help them secure employment longer term.

Our aim as we move forward is to support more working age young people to progress into employment, training, or further learning and long-term volunteering. The partnerships that have been developed through Kick the Dust provide a strong base on which to build, bringing new young people into museum and library spaces.

Success comes in many guises and this month another of our former YMCA young people has progressed onto an Access Course at Norwich College with a view to applying for university in 2025, others have secured employment with one former YMCA young person now working in the Norwich Visitor Services team whilst studying both citing the Kick the Dust programme giving them the confidence to take these steps. Former participants and Young Ambassadors have since progressed into employment or onto further and higher education, having gained the confidence to move towards their goals. Another Young Ambassador secured a bursary to run her own project through Norfolk and Norwich Festival Bridge and has been working with groups in Norwich and the Library on a creative writing project linked to heritage and is starting a new project in Kings Lynn through funding from English Heritage entitled *'Rise Up! Hidden Histories of the Castles'*.

Quotes from our Young Ambassadors regarding their engagement in Kick the Dust and their involvement in the 'Done and Dusted' celebration event, show the impact that the programme has had on them.

'Kick the Dust gave me hands on experience of the industry I want to work for while becoming more proficient in the skills I need to get me there.' Chloe, Young Ambassador (Chloe is now on a Level 4 Apprenticeship working in London for Channel 4)

'The most important thing that Kick the Dust did for me was increase my confidence through representing the voices of other young people, inspiring me to pursue a career in the museum sector by showing me that it's a place where I'm able to make positive institutional change.' Emily, Young Ambassador (Emily is now studying for an MA and remains an active Young Ambassador)

'Kick the Dust has played such a key part in my life and helped me secure employment when most doors were closed to me, giving me the skills and confidence to move forward. It is like being part of a family.' Jazz, Young Ambassador (Jazz has worked on another KTD project and is an active Young Ambassador, presenting at the NLHF and GEM webinar in March 2024) *'I have now been offered a place on an access course to help me realise my dream of going to university next year'*

'My experience has been highly positive. It has allowed me to connect with other young people with a similar interest in the industry. It has also provided me with varied work experience that will contribute significantly to my search for employment in the sector. I have learnt so much more about the heritage sector and the abundance of roles at play, which has led me to new interests and career goals. Engaging with people currently working in the sector has been invaluable and deepens my understanding of the importance of the work the museum services do in the local community.' Marr, Young Ambassador (Marr is studying an MA at UEA and remains an active Young Ambassador)

'I've really enjoyed being part of Kick the Dust and it's given me so many amazing opportunities that I'd never get otherwise. I loved the opportunity to go behind the scenes at museums and learn about objects and collections from experts. It felt like I was being taken really seriously as a young person and that my voice mattered. The project was really well planned and executed and there was always something new to learn. I met people who had really different skills and backgrounds to me and it was so fun to work with a new group of people. It felt like the staff really cared about me and were always trying to support me and provide me with new opportunities. Without Kick the Dust, I don't think I'd have been able to get my first job in the heritage industry and feel confident in my own knowledge and skills.' (Rosa – Young Ambassador and participant in Knights of the Sound Table)

'I have very much enjoyed my time as part of the Kick the Dust work experience program. I feel a bit more confident in social situations than I did before, and I have a much firmer idea of what jobs are available in the museum service.' (Amy – work experience)

'Being part of this organisation, have given me a boarder view of where I see myself in the future and the career I want to go into. It has given me confidence and developed me as a team player when working together. It has given a boost of independence which I keep on achieving.' (Emily – online work experience and Young Ambassador)

Responses to the Curator Camp in Thetford held in summer 2024 included statements such as *'this project made me feel happy'*, *'this project has increased my confidence'*, *'I now work better with other people'*.

New funding bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund

A successful National Lottery Heritage Fund Grants for Heritage Round 1 application was submitted to the NLHF for the Your Heritage Your Future (YHYF) project. The application was submitted by YMCA Leicester, with NMS as Lead Partner. Following the completion of the Development Phase, a Round 2 application was submitted on schedule at the end of May 2024. This complex application was put together by a joint project team of staff from YMCA Leicester and NMS. If the Round 2 bid is successful, project delivery will commence in late 2024.

4. Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn – project update

Main construction works

In August 2020 the Keep and surrounding site areas were formally handed over to the Principal Contractor, Morgan Sindall Construction following Contract Award for the main build. Internal and external secure hoardings are in place to demarcate the construction site and delineate the contractor compound on the mound. There is an additional contractor compound and deliveries access point in the Lower Castle Gardens. A tower crane has been installed on the mound. An internal hoarding line runs across the base of the Boardman stairs in the new atrium, separating the remaining construction zone in the Keep from the areas of the museum that are now open to visitors.

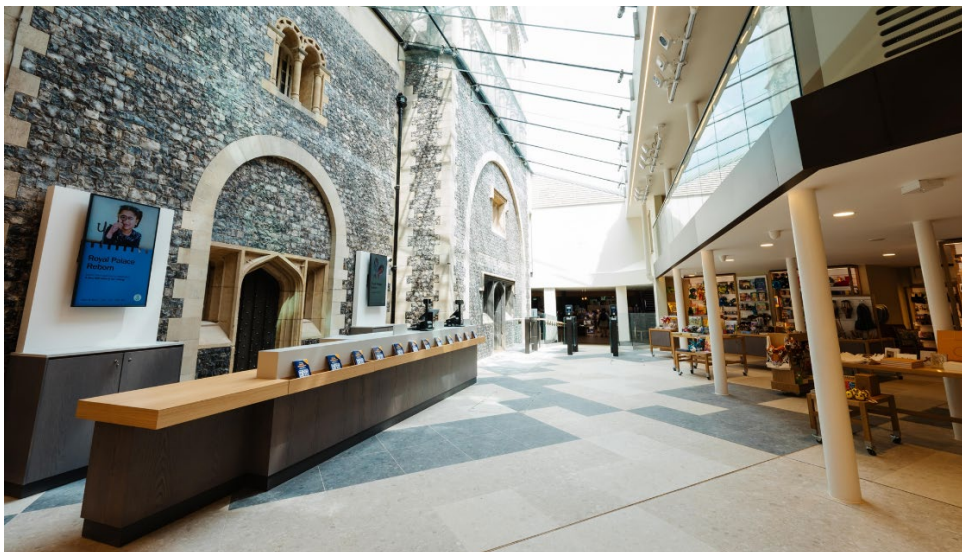


Drone image of the construction site

Sectional completion of the first phase of the project took place on 11 August 2022, with the formal handover of the new WC block area, which includes accessible toilets, baby changing facilities, a new Changing Place and a 'pop-up' catering facility. The Changing Place is now fully operational and registered <https://www.changing-places.org/find?toilet=2026> .

The installation of internal steelwork structures in the Keep has been completed, with new floor levels installed. Joinery and mechanical & electrical installation is ongoing. The final phase of steelwork installation has been completed on the Keep roof, with the new rooftop platforms installed.

The new entrance area and glazed atrium opened to visitors on 22 July 2024. This area known as the Percival Wing includes the main entrance, atrium and new shop on the ground floor; the new café restaurant on the first floor; and the new flexible learning space on the second floor. A new internal lift provides access to all levels. This area also includes café kitchen, storage and washup spaces and accessible toilets.



New entrance atrium showing glazed roof, ticketing desk, shop and café levels



The new shop, with cafe above



The new café restaurant

5. Other activity across Norwich museums

5.1 Museum of Norwich

The Museum of Norwich has had a busy few months, welcoming many first time visitors. This quarter we have been busy working on our *Muslims: Norwich* exhibition, taking forward our Colmans Project in partnership with Unilever, working on our wellbeing projects, welcoming school children, supporting local students from UEA and NUA, and planning future community-based exhibitions. And in the background, we are

continuing to build our social media presence, increasing our engagement with new audiences.

Muslims: Norwich

A photographic exhibition by Khalil Mitchell

Over the past two years, we have been working with Maria Pavledis, Community Librarian for Norfolk Library and Information Service, and photographer Khalil Mitchell.



During the pandemic, we became aware of Khalil's beautiful portraits and images of the community based at Ihsan Mosque and Islamic Centre. Since then, we have been working with him to develop a travelling exhibition which will feature some of his best images. Khalil's photographs capture the everyday lives of the current members of the community including worship, work and family life.



The exhibition launched at the museum on Sunday 9 June, when we hosted a large reception for over 100 members from the Ihsan Mosque. The audience was so large that we used a local café at the STEM centre on Castle Meadow (in partnership with the Muslim owners) for the welcome speeches and refreshments, before heading down to the museum. The day was a joyful celebration with many attendees showing great emotion and pride at seeing the images. Many said they felt recognised as a part of the local community for the first time.

Throughout the month, we welcomed lots of special guests and Mosque elders, as well as hosting a *Meet the Photographer* event on Saturday 15 June. We celebrated the end of Eid with another special event on Wednesday

19 June. On the last day, we welcomed another 40 plus members of the Muslim community. One visitor commented, *"Today healing took place light was made brighter, and hearts came alive, capacity for love and appreciation grew further."*

Overall, we welcomed around 200 Muslim visitors, as a direct consequence of the exhibition, all of whom had never visited before. The touring exhibition is now at Earlham Library and will travel around Norfolk over the coming months. The images will be preserved exhibition as an online archive as part of Picture Norfolk and with potential for touring to other venues.

Feedback has been excellent:

"This makes me so proud to be Muslim, huge thanks to Khalil and the community. Alhamdulillah."
Aa'ishah

"It is awe inspiring to find this evidence of a vibrant Muslim community in Norwich – a place where I felt isolated as an immigrant Black Muslim woman."
Muti'ah

"A most interesting exhibition which has made me reflect on what I thought I knew. Thank you. This was a wonderful idea."

"This exhibition was so good, my friend and I decided to see it again! It was just as excellent the second time around."
Aa'ishah

"A beautiful exhibition capturing the naturalness of Islam and Muslim Norwich. I look forward to the next installment."
Rachel

"Masha Allah! I love the balance between community and individuals captured here."

"Amazing. I would not think of taking such shots like that."
Ihlaam, age 7

"Thank you for insights I have gained into religion and society."

"Khalil Mitchell is a talented and thoughtful photographer who shows the beauty and strength of an often-misunderstood community. I hope this is the start of many exhibitions sharing his skillful photography."

"Appreciate the thought that goes into showing the world that Muslims are normal people, cheerful, full of life. Thanks and I loved each and every picture, the lighting and everything. Keep up the good work."
Anam & Moquit.



Image credit: Khalil Mitchell / Nick Stone

The Colmans Story: A partnership with Unilever

We are continuing to work on our partnership project with Unilever, unlocking some of the fascinating industrial and social histories linked to The Colman family and the Carrow Works.



Curator Agata Gomolka is now in post two days a week and is working hard on uncovering lots of stories both in the museum collection and Norfolk Record Office, as well as the Unilver Archives and The History of Advertising Trust.

Working with young people

We work with students from a range of disciplines and places. As such we are always learning something new. We often support students from a variety of institutions, such as City College, UEA and Norwich University of the Arts. This is in addition to the support we offer to regularly to Kick the Dust groups, such as *Knights of the Sound Table* project and Work Experience projects.



Curator Hannah Henderson works annually with the Textile Design BA students at Norwich University of the Arts and along with Senior Curator of Costume & Textiles Ruth Battersby, was part of the judging panel for their Design Awards ceremony, alongside esteemed colleagues from local brand agencies, Dulux UK and Jarrolds. The talent in the room was exceptional and we met some fantastic budding designers. It even gave us some future exhibition ideas.



In May, we worked with a variety of students, on various exciting projects.

Firstly, we worked with postgraduate Film students at the University of East Anglia, who were re-filming a scene from the movie *Shadow of the Vampire* in our undercroft.

"Thank you very much for such a wonderful opportunity. We had a great shooting day, and the location is amazing."

We also worked with Tommy, a NUA BA Graphic Design student, who was challenged to create a new wine brand for his final year project. Tomy was inspired by heritage of the textile industry in his home town, creating a lace motif and using Jacquard dots for the lettering. He used the loom as the backdrop for his final advertising photography. We thought his design was very impressive and he has since gone on to graduate with flying colours.



We also caught up with B, who we initially met through a past project with asylum seekers in collaboration with New Routes. B is now studying Modern History at UEA, having previously been based at Koya University in Iraq.

Knights of Sound Table

We have continued to support group of young people on Thursday afternoons, led by writer Jacqueline Burgoyne, on a project for the Castle Keep redevelopment. The young people have been busy creating a artworks, zines and animations this quarter. It has been good to see how the young people's confidence has grown and how they now see the museum as a safe space.



Welcoming visitors with disabilities

Over the past few months, we have had the pleasure of meeting a few visually impaired visitors to the museum.

Firstly, we welcomed Tony Giles, blind author and world traveller and his partner Tatianna and Melissa from VS provided a wonderful touch tour of the site. Tony has a large social media following and shares his global adventures online.



In June, we welcomed Graham who was visiting with his assistance dog Star. Curator Hannah gave them a spontaneous,

bespoke touch tour. We spoke about how we could make things better for visually impaired visitors and we have been inspired to add more to our offer in the future. Graham commented,
“Thank you for your time. You’ve really brought it alive for us. It’s been brilliant.”

Other visitors have been touch too. We have recently received some feedback via Hayley from our Front of House Team,
“I wanted to pass along a lovely message from a visitor today, who is a wheelchair user; she was really blown away by how well thought out & easy to use the lifts are in the building, she was so pleased she could get around in ease & access the whole museum with her accompanying student... She was very keen I pass this compliment on to the relevant people, as she advised it's not often she goes to a building that has such fantastic accessibility.”

“We've actually had another visitor with a mobility aid in today, that again, wanted me to pass on that they were very impressed with the accessibility as well, & assured me they'll let everybody know how wonderful the museum is for this!”

Wellbeing work

We are continuing to develop and nurture our partnership with Art at Work, an arts and wellbeing organisation. The latest cohorts for the new Heritage Fund funded sessions have been in operation. We are now coming to near the end of the first year, and participants are enjoying focusing on the Tudor and Elizabethan period and exploring new creative techniques.



As ever, we are meeting lots of non-users who engage with our collections and spaces. Continued evaluation is tracking the impact on the individual’s wellbeing. The final session of the last cohort involved creating a new display for the summer season in our front window. We look forward to welcoming anew group in September.

May half term

In May half term we celebrated the 100th birthday of Heigham Park. Families had to hunt for the sunflowers around the museum and create some beautiful blooms to take home or decorate our collage. We welcomed 615 people over the week.

Growing our social media presence

Since February 2023, Hannah Henderson, Curator, has been building a presence of Instagram. Guided by Spark Arts Marketing for the first few months, she has steadily grown the content and created a strong following. To date, we now have 1,322 followers and have created 305 posts.

Over the past 3 months, we have reached 6,908 accounts, an increase of 451%.

A recent reel showing some of the wellbeing arts activities undertaken in house was played 3,381 times and reached 1,990 accounts. A reel showing the singing at the launch of the *Muslims: Norwich* exhibition, was played 1,321 times, liked by 48 people and reached 767 accounts. This demonstrates how effective social media is with engaging with audiences and traditional non visitors. It is a great way of showing what we do behind closed doors and to share our work and expertise with a global audience.

FOUND: Poetry project

We are excited to be working in partnership with local poet Daisy Henwood and artist & Community Curator Jade Anderson on a brand-new project funded by the Arts Council. *Found* is a poetry and art project exploring the collections and communities behind various Norfolk Museums Service sites.



Over the last few months, Daisy has worked with Norwich International Youth Group and young people from The Garage. Plans are in preparation for creating a display in our last gallery in time for Heritage Open Days in September.



A pop-up version of the exhibition will then be displayed at Gressenhall and Time & Tide museums, allowing audiences across the county to access the work.

5.2 Strangers' Hall

Period Rooms

During May and early June Strangers' Hall welcomed the artistic talents of the *Booksapes Collective*, a group of six artists whose work is inspired by the construction of books and the written word and museum collections. The group was invited to respond to our Victorian Rooms and came up with some interventions and unique approaches to the objects and spaces in a two-week show entitled *Miscellanea*. This approach brings fresh ideas to the period room settings and is designed to attract new audiences and repeat visitors. Highlights included 'Shell Song Elegy', by Jules Allen, inspired by Strangers' Hall having once been the home of a dancing master and currently housing a collection of historical musical instruments. The haunting music playing in the Music Room was created by transposing patterns from a shell onto a musical stave. *The Kaleidoscope* was a united effort from all six artists. Streaming in from the window of the Victorian Parlour, it reflects the Kaleidoscope craze that followed the invention of the kaleidoscope by David Brewster in 1816.

Visitor response to the exhibition was overwhelmingly positive with one writing that they were 'startled by the intervention in the oppressive Victorian era, amazing!'



Bookscares exhibition – Kaleidoscope and Bookscape installation in the Morning Room

Curatorial

New accessions accepted into the collections include an early 20th century wooden toy mail cart and bread van, and an arrangement of Berlin Woolwork flowers in original glass dome. Senior Curator Cathy Terry met Norwegian Weaver and textile historian Pia Bjornstadt to discuss 18th century Norwich pattern books. Cathy and Assistant Curator Bethan Holdridge also hosted a research visit from the Cambridge Guild of Spinners Weavers and Dyers, and Bethan also gave an evening lecture to the AGM of the Alderman Norman Charity. Strangers' Hall hosted a training session on techniques for object photography for current NMS trainees in early May.

Plans to demount, examine and conserve the 1571 Table Carpet are progressing, with new research being carried out into the early history of the carpet. New LoRoWaN environmental monitoring devices has recently been installed in period room settings and stores providing automatic monitoring to better manage the humidity levels across the museum. The most recent moth count in July has reported a welcome reduction of overall pest numbers in the building with 2024, maintaining a downward trend.

Events and Activities

May Half Term family activities were inspired by the *Kaleidoscope* installation in the Victorian Parlour. We invited visitors to turn their own worlds into a magical riot of colour using craft off-cuts from the installation to create kaleidoscopic spectacles.

During Refugee Week Strangers' Hall hosted a visit from members of the English + community on the theme of Marmite : a look at and tasting of some of each nationalities more idiosyncratic food and beverage preferences.

The atmosphere of Tudor House Party is being recreated in our Summer family activity programme, *A Very Merrie Summer*. Visitors are invited to puzzle their way around the Hall with our fortune teller trail, play Tudor games, put on their finest Tudor headgear

on for a selfie portrait, make something sweet-smelling to keep the plague away, weave their own bracelet, and help Museum staff get the place ready by making up the beds with sheets and blankets and water the garden using a Tudor watering pot. The programme has been put together by Assistant Curator Bethan Holdridge.

On our special event days in July and August, visitors have the chance to meet 'Queen Elizabeth I' (freelance educator Rachel Duffield) who entertains them with the secrets of her beauty by revealing her daily dress and beauty routine. Live hurdy-gurdy music, dancing and general merriment to is to be had. In the garden visitors can enjoy Tudor games and create their own herbology manual based on herbs and herbal remedies of the Tudor era.

Feedback has been excellent.

The whole experience! Very immersive, fun, friendly and educational. Rachel (aka Queen Elizabeth I) was excellent. Staff were very enthusiastic.

The best museum I've been to on a holiday.

Some magic moments with so much more to see than I expected.



The Very Merrie Summer event



Social Media

The Summer activity programme has resulted in increased social media. Facebook reach up 162.6% with content interactions up 157% and follower growth in July – August is up 133%. Instagram reach is up 89.8% with content interactions up 77.8%. Over 1,500 views have been recorded so far for the first fortnight of A Very Merrie Summer posts on X (formerly Twitter).

6. Norwich Curatorial update

Dr Giorgia Bottinelli, Curator of Historic Art has been dealing with the administration and preparation for display of new acquisitions. Chief among these is a large new watercolour by the Norfolk-based artist Gerard Stamp (born 1955), who has recently made a generous gift of *The Restoration of a Royal Palace (Norwich Castle)*, 2022. The watercolour depicts the interior of the Castle Keep behind a forest of scaffolding. The artist made it from a series of photographs he took during a curator-led visit of the Keep. He then recreated and refined the scene in his studio. Depicting the much-loved historic fabric of the Castle Keep with the unseen structures necessary for its momentous restoration, the watercolour is a unique and thoughtful representation of an extraordinary moment in the Castle's history.



Gerard Stamp *The Restoration of a Royal Palace (Norwich Castle)*, 2022

Giorgia has also been writing a talk based around the work of Catherine Maude Nichols, the subject of her present exhibition in the Watercolour Gallery, due to be delivered at the Cecil Higgins Gallery in Bedford, next month. Additionally, she is researching potential future exhibitions and assisting visitors with their research.

Dr Rosy Gray, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, has overseen the delivery of the public programme for the *SUNLIGHT: Roger Ackling* exhibition. This has included an in-conversation event with exhibition co-curator, Amanda Geitner, as well as workshops led by Dr Sarah Lowndes. The workshops encourage audiences to reflect on the works in the exhibition, followed by participation in shared reading and writing activities. Rosy is also working on the development of a major exhibition on the artist Colin Self, due to open at Norwich Castle in 2025.

Dr Francesca Vanke, Senior Curator of Norwich Museums and Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art continues to work on the forthcoming Norwich Castle exhibition, *JMW Turner and Changing Visions of Landscape*. The catalogue is now complete and with the publishers, the labels are written and the main graphics designed. Among the outreach activities will be an artwork produced with a facilitator in conjunction with English +, concerning landscapes which mean something to the group.

The exhibition will be the first time for display of another important new acquisition. The lithograph by Paul Nash, *Void of War*, was recently given to us as a generous bequest.



Paul Nash, *Void of War*, 1918

Kate Thaxton Curator of the Regimental collections has been working on curating a Far East Prisoners of War Exhibition at King's Lynn Town Hall March-Sept 2025. With volunteer help she is creating a roll of all men of the Royal Norfolk Regiment who became Far East Prisoners of War which shows where in Norfolk they lived, and if they died, what was their cause and date of death. Listing around 3,000 men, it will be bound and available to browse in the exhibition. There will also be a significant audio element, drawing on interviews with ex-FEPOWs. The exhibition is the focus for the NMS Teaching Museum Trainee who is taking the lead, supported by Kate, providing excellent training for a future museum professional.

We are delighted to report that the Norwich Freemans Charity has approved a grant of £7,500 to create a flexible display space and online representation of the work produced by students based on the Regimental collection. This will enable us to build on the successful pilot project with NUA fine art students last academic year.

In July Kate made a successful bid for a photograph album containing 49 photographs of the 1/6th Cyclist Battalion, Norfolk Regiment in 1914, including officers and other ranks in cycle formation, on manoeuvres in trenches, on dunes, and in villages in North Norfolk. As well as bicycles, there are photographs of motorbikes and cars with mounted Maxim machine guns. The photographer was motor photojournalist, W.J. Brunell, who subsequently became an official war photographer. The 1/6th Battalion defended the coastline from Sandringham to Gorleston. The album was kindly purchased for the Museum by the Friends of Norwich Museums.



Image from the new photograph album, 1914

Dr Tim Pestell, Senior Curator of Archaeology continues to be fully occupied with the Norwich Castle Keep project, although he also continues to work on the Leverhulme-funded Rendlesham research project. He is also preparing a paper for a conference of the European Archaeological Association in Rome, on the subject of medieval papal bullae.

Ruth Battersby, Senior Curator of Costume and Textiles continues with collections administration and enhanced documentation while her stores are being renovated. Otherwise, Ruth is conducting research into the display history of the Bellerophon tapestry and looking into possibilities for future exhibitions and research collaborations.

7. Other developments

Courtroom

Works within the Shirehall Courtroom to treat the outbreak of dry rot are progressing well. The external roof element of the Courtroom works is now complete. The remaining works include interventions to the internal fabric of the building. This includes, replacing affected timbers, replastering walls, and redecorations. NMS staff have been working alongside Norse and Norwich City Council Planning colleagues. As part of the project, we are aiming to significantly improve the drainage systems, so that future water ingress can be avoided. Norwich City Council Conservation Officers have been in attendance on a regular basis and have now approved the proposed gutter detail, along the western side of the building.

The works also includes the requirement to make significant repairs to the roof and walls of the Costume & Textile Store within the Shirehall. These works are outside the

original project scope and now include works to external window lintels, further roof beam replacements, repairs to the roof castellations and the replacement of roof slates. The Courtroom works are due to be completed in September 2024. The Costume and Textile Store remedial works will take longer to complete. This is so that the building fabric is allowed to properly dry before remedial works take place.



The new Courtroom roof and repairs underway in the Costume & Textile store

8. Visitor numbers

			APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	YEAR TO DATE	TOTAL
N O R W I C H	Castle Museum	2022-23	8,129	6,857	9,070	8,289	9,390	8,084	8,900	7,259	2,995	7,483	7,914	14,373	32,345	98,743
		2023-24	13,471	9,922	10,889	12,590	15,391	10,647	11,597	7,256	6,079	6,031	8,576	10,031	46,672	122,480
		2024-25	8,942	9,907	7,932	11,031										37,812
	Norwich Castle Study Centre (Shirehall)	2022-23	24	59	43	56	46	29	85	46	49	82	116	121	182	756
		2023-24	106	53	126	92	101	75	63	79	178	58	150	118	377	1,199
		2024-25	119	213	130	161										623
	Museum of Norwich	2022-23	1,406	1,552	1,044	1,666	2,476	1,970	1,431	1,406	1,387	1,185	1,587	1,917	5,668	19,027
		2023-24	1,589	1,378	1,241	2,064	2,059	2,381	1,824	1,329	821	1,244	1,707	1,863	8,272	19,500
		2024-25	1,666	1,603	1,754	1,837										6,860
	Strangers Hall	2022-23	478	642	639	635	779	843	713	620	863	16	329	986	2,394	7,543
		2023-24	468	522	453	1,185	1,699	962	850	770	470	0	387	1,093	2,628	8,859
		2024-25	484	785	705	766										2,740

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