

Norwich area museums committee

Date: **Tuesday, 08 December 2015**
Time: **14:00**
Venue: **Colman Art Gallery, Norwich Castle**

[Venue Address]

Please note: Members of the committee are asked to meet on the steps of City Hall at 13:30 in order to walk to the castle to view signage.

For further information please contact:

Committee members:

Norwich City Council: Councillors Arthur (chair), Blunt, Maxwell, Price, Thomas (Vivien) and Wright

Norfolk County Council: Councillors Bremner, Dearnley, Morgan (vice chair), Sands (M) and Hannah (1 vacancy)

Co-opted non-voting members: Brenda Ferris (Norfolk Contemporary Art Society), Amanda Geitner (East Anglia Arts Fund) and Ceri Lamb (Friends of Norwich Museums), Councillor Buck (Broadland District Council), Councillor Hardy (South Norfolk Council)

Committee officer: Lucy Palmer
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Information for members of the public

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For information about attending or speaking at meetings, please contact the committee officer above or refer to the council's website.



If you would like this agenda in an alternative format, such as a larger or smaller font, audio or Braille, or in a different language, please contact the committee officer above.

Agenda

1 Apologies

To receive apologies for absence

2 Public questions/petitions

To receive questions / petitions from the public (notice to be given to committee officer in advance of the meeting in accordance with appendix 1 of the council's constitution)

3 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)

4 Minutes

5 - 8

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2015

5 Norwich Museums briefing for period September – October 2015

9 - 32

Purpose - To update members on the work of the Norwich Museums to October 2015

6 Suggestions for future areas of discussion

For members to suggest future areas of discussion

Date of publication: **Monday, 30 November 2015**



NORWICH AREA MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

14:00 to 15:20

15 September 2015

Present:

City Councillors:

Arthur (chair)
Blunt
Maxwell
Price
Thomas (Vi)
Wright

County Councillors:

Bremner
Dearnley

Co-opted Non-voting members:

Brenda Ferris (Norfolk Contemporary Art Society) Ceri Lamb (Friends of Norwich Museums) Amanda Guyton (East Anglia Arts Fund) and Charlotte Crawley (East Anglia Arts Fund)

Apologies:

Councillor Buck (Broadland District Council)
Councillor Hannah (Norfolk County Council)
Councillor Hardy (South Norfolk District Council)
Councillor Morgan (Norfolk County Council)
Councillor Sands (M) (Norfolk County Council)

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2015 subject to the following amendments:

- a) To note that Ceri Lamb was present at the meeting; and
- b) Under item 7 of the agenda, to include a recommendation that the chair of the Norwich area museums committee would write to the museums education service to thank them for their work.

3. Norwich museums briefing for period June to August 2015

The head of operations and learning presented the report. He said that the Jeff Koons exhibitions had brought a range of visitors to the museums from many different demographics including families, students and young children. Members were pleased that the exhibition had given national recognition to the Norfolk museums service.

He reported that the Ana Maria Pacheco exhibition complimented the ongoing work in the keep and as a result, funding was being sought to keep the alabasters permanently.

The Vikings guide to deadly dragons exhibition was anticipated to be very popular with a broad range of schools and family activities in development.

Members were encouraged to visit the Lacock cup whilst it was on loan to Norwich castle.

The head of operations and learning said that the 'medieval madness' activities and the Jeff Koons exhibition had helped to sustain the 2014 record breaking visitor figures. It had been a strong year for school visits to Norwich castle and everything was on track to meet last year's high of 20,000 children visiting. The chair said that she had written to the museums education service to thank them for their hard work and that the letter had been well received.

The operations manager (Norwich) gave an update on weddings at Stranger's Hall and Norwich castle and said that they anticipated holding around 20 weddings in these venues in 2016. There had also been a significant increase in the number of conference and banquet bookings, rising from 2 last year to 20 this year.

A detailed breakdown of visitor figures was circulated and the operations manager (Norwich) said that overall visitors to Norwich castle were up to 72,000 this year to date compared to 71,000 last year. Other Norwich museums visitor figures were on a par or above those of 2014. In response to a member's question, the head of operations and learning reassured members that the methodology for collecting visitor numbers remained the same as previous years with figures being taken directly from the ticketing system, which included recording those using museum passes.

RESOLVED to note the Norwich museums briefing for period June to August 2015.

4. Collections for rationalisation

The collections development manager presented the report. He outlined the process followed for rationalisation of items. He said that the museums service tried to keep items in the public domain wherever possible, however, if an object was in a very poor or unsafe condition, it may be destroyed.

In response to a member's question, he said that the items on page 35 of the agenda, comprising textiles of a Chinese origin, had some interest from the South Asian Decorative Arts and Crafts Collection (SADACC). Although it had not been specified whether the disposal would be gifted or payment made, the collections development manager confirmed that they would be transferred free of charge. He

would also put a condition on the transfer that SACACC must keep the items for display and not sell them on.

RESOLVED to:-

- a) Recommend to the Norfolk Joint Museums Committee that the objects listed in annex 1 of the above report are deaccessioned; and
- b) Ask the collections development manager to place a condition on the transfer of items to SADACC that they must be kept for display and cannot be sold on.

(The operations manager (Norwich) and the collections development manager left the meeting)

5. Update on the keep project (verbal)

The chief curator gave a presentation to the committee on the progress of the keep project. He highlighted the historical importance of the keep and said that the aim of the project was to make it the premier tourist destination in the east of England. Twenty two focus groups were to be held by the end of September 2015 made up of different demographics, including museum visitors, local communities and non-visitors.

In response to a member's question, he said that his team anticipated an additional 100,000 visitors to Norwich castle as a result of this project; however, as these figures were not required for the first phase of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid, statistics were still being worked on. The first expression of interest bid had to be submitted to the HLF by 6 December 2015.

A member expressed concern that the implementation of the project would be a huge undertaking for staff at a time when resources were limited. The chief curator said that he had very committed staff who were dedicated to making the project a success and thanked them for their hard work so far.

RESOLVED to note the update.

(Members adjourned to Norwich castle where they were given a tour of the keep by the chief curator.)

CHAIR

ITEM 5

Norwich Area Museums Committee 8 December 2015 Norwich Museums briefing for period September – October 2015

A. Exhibitions at Norwich Castle

A1. ARTIST ROOMS: Jeff Koons (closed 6 September 2015)

This important exhibition saw Jeff Koons's influential and controversial work exhibited for the very first time in East Anglia. Norwich Castle Museum (NCM) was the only venue to show his work in the UK this year.

The exhibition also provided opportunities to extend NMS youth engagement programmes and featured the *Koons Collaborative*, a youth group that helped promote the show through events such as their prize-winning float at the Lord Mayor's Celebrations and their Koons *Couture Fashion Show*.

The show supported strong local partnerships including Norwich University of the Arts, Norfolk and Norwich Festival and the Young Norfolk Arts Festival.

For information, ARTIST ROOMS is an inspirational collection of international contemporary art acquired for the nation by National Galleries of Scotland and Tate through the generosity of Anthony d'Offay. ARTIST ROOMS On Tour is a partnership with Arts Council England and the Art Fund to make available this extraordinary collection to galleries throughout the UK.



Image credit: Jeff Koons, *Winter Bears*, 1988 ARTIST ROOMS Tate and National Galleries of Scotland. Acquired jointly through The d'Offay Donation with assistance from the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the Art Fund 2008 © Jeff Koons

A2. 'Almost too daring for an individual': John Sell Cotman's one-man exhibition, 1806-7 (until 6 March 2016)

From 1806–7, the people of Norwich had the opportunity to visit a one-man exhibition at the house of John Sell Cotman (1782–1842). Featuring some 500 artworks, Cotman's exhibition was probably the largest solo show ever to have been staged by a British artist.

This continuing display in the Colman Project Space re-imagines how a part of the exhibition might have looked. The display highlights the creative ways in which Cotman used his artwork to present himself as an ambitious and varied artist at a turning point in his early career.

A3. Sawdust and Threads (closed 27 September 2015)

This exhibition in the Timothy Gurney Gallery marked the culmination of a residency programme that took de-accessioned museum objects for its inspiration. Artist Caroline Wright made detailed drawings of each of these objects and then carefully and painstakingly taken them apart. Her meticulous and exquisite drawings were displayed alongside the museum objects in their various states of deconstruction.

The project was delivered in partnership with the Polar Museum in Cambridge and UCL Museum & Collections in London.



A4. Build Your Own: Tools for Sharing (3 October 2015 – 3 January 2016)

Build Your Own is the current headline show at Norwich Castle and represents an innovative and exciting new digital exhibition. The show has been co-produced by NMS with FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology) and the Crafts Council, working with curators Lauren Parker and Clare Cumberlidge.

The exhibition features newly commissioned works by leading artists, makers, creative technologists and collectives. Rachel Rayns of the Raspberry Pi Foundation has created an interactive robot-controlled garden in the gallery. Linda Brothwell's work examines the heritage of Norwich and experiments with applying our traditional dyes and pigments to new materials (with particular interest in how our medieval buildings were once so colourful). Will Shannon and Assemble showcase a transformative project based in the Toxteth area of Liverpool where they are helping residents to re-build their homes. Finally, a suite of 3D printers are producing prosthetics for local children as part of the e-Nable community – a global enterprise collaborating to ensure the distribution of free prosthetics worldwide.

The commissions all reflect how craft, community and technology have forever been connected – working together, sharing skills, creating tools and improving our environments. They encompass one-to-one collaboration and mass co-production and both traditional and cutting edge tools.

An extensive programme of events and demonstrations has been organised to complement this exhibition, many of which are taking place in the dedicated gallery 'Maker Space'. NMS has collaborated with Norwich University of the Arts who are using the exhibition to showcase the different ways in which their students and tutors are designing, creating and building - from real-life architecture to virtual worlds through games design and VFX. Exhibition primary sponsors HP Enterprise Services are demonstrating how their new Sprout device can revolutionise the way we create and share ideas.



Rachel Rayns with Raspberry Pi Foundation, *Neurotic Machines*, 2015. Image: Brian Slater

A5. Ana Maria Pacheco, *Enchanted Garden* (continuing in the Castle Keep)

Pacheco's series of eight alabaster reliefs have been on display on the balcony level of the Keep since March and have been very well received by visitors.

Pacheco is a former resident of Norwich and from 1985-89 was Head of Fine Art at Norwich University of the Arts (then Norwich School of Art). During her time in Norwich she befriended Francis Cheetham, then Head of Norwich Museums and an expert on medieval alabasters. She loved the collections at the Norwich Castle and the series *Enchanted Garden* was designed and made with NMS in mind. It has taken years to come to fruition. The alabaster was difficult to source and the material and the scale in which she wanted to work were completely new to Pacheco (who is more widely known for her large sculptures in wood).

The imagery in the reliefs is, in Pacheco's words, 'a homage to the human imagination', but it also references the mythical beasts of her native Brazil, biblical and apocryphal tales, western mythology, poetry and our own local lore.

The reliefs have provided the perfect contemporary counterpart to the medieval alabasters on display in the Keep. For this reasons the loan of the works has been extended until Christmas. NMS is currently seeking funds to acquire the works for the permanent collection. It is hoped that by doing so, NMS can retain this unique series and continue the stimulating dialogue they have inspired between the medieval and the modern.



A6. Other forthcoming exhibitions

A Viking's Guide to Deadly Dragons (6 Feb – 30 May 2016)

This national touring exhibition from Seven Stories - National Centre for Children's Books is based on Cressida Cowell's hugely popular *How to Train Your Dragon* books. Opening soon after the release of her latest book, *How to Fight a Dragon's Fury*, Cressida Cowell will come to Norwich Castle to support the exhibition launch.

British Art Show 8 (25 June – 4 Sept 2016)

The British Art Show is widely recognised as the most ambitious and influential exhibition of contemporary British art. The exhibition introduces the public to a new generation of British artists, providing a vital overview of the most exciting art produced in this country over the last five years. Organised in partnership with Norwich University of the Arts, this marks the first time the British Art Show has ever been shown in the city.

Olive Edis: A Modern Woman Photographer (Oct 2016 – Jan 2017)

(provisional title)

This exhibition will celebrate the pioneering and important work of Olive Edis, a Norfolk photographer whose unique and arresting images, often immortalising local people, place her at the forefront of modern photography. This show will be curated by NMS staff and complements the HLF funded project at Cromer Museum that will transform access to the work of this influential female photographer

Small Stories: At Home in a Doll's House (4 Mar – 25 June 2017)

Selected as one of only two UK regional venues, NCM will host this international touring exhibition from the V&A Museum of Childhood. Showcasing a stunning collection of twelve of their best dolls' houses, this exhibition will attract families and doll's house enthusiasts from across Norfolk and beyond.

Collecting in East Anglia (Timothy Gurney Gallery from 6 October)

The Collection of Fine and Decorative Arts at NCM has seen some outstanding acquisitions. This display explores those works of art acquired in the last five years, set within the context of the Lady Adeane Bequest, which greatly enhanced the modern collection in 1993. Recent additions include paintings by Edward Seago, Graham Sutherland and Frank Auerbach and a fine collection of twentieth-century pots. The exhibition enables NMS to convey to the public the numerous paths through which we acquire work and thank the various organisations and individuals who have so generously supported us.



Frank Auerbach, *Head of Julia III* 2002, Norfolk Museums Service, © Frank Auerbach. Formerly in the collection of Lucian Freud, Accepted in Lieu of Tax.

A7. Significant loans currently on show

Central to the new Timothy Gurney Gallery display is a stunning and newly conserved sculpture by Barbara Hepworth: *Pavan (Forms in Movement)*. This beautiful bronze has been loaned to the museum for five years from a private collector and has not been on public view for 40 years.

NMS continues to work in partnership with the British Museum including the provision of high quality loans. As the result of a partnership with the BM and Wiltshire Museum, the beautiful piece of secular medieval silver the Lacock Cup, is currently on display in Norwich Castle Keep until 10 January 2016 as part of a national tour.



A8. Arts Council England National Partners Fund

In August Arts Council England announced a new fund to mark the 70th anniversary of the Arts Council Collection, aiming to create a network of three regional partners to work in partnership with the Southbank Centre and Yorkshire Sculpture Park to present and curate exhibitions drawn from the Collection. The focus of the fund is to increase the number and diversity of people experiencing the Arts Council Collection across England.

The project would support our strategic aim to work with cultural partners to elevation Norwich Castle's position in the wider cultural tourism offer, increasing visits to Norwich and contributing effectively to the visitor economy. The Castle has a growing reputation for creating high quality, ambitious exhibitions and for many of our visitors these exhibitions are their first encounter with contemporary art.

Next Summer Norwich Castle and Norwich University of the Arts will be jointly hosting the British Art Show. This prestigious show is likely to attract thousands

of new cultural visitors to Norwich from London and the South East. The Arts Council Collection National Partner Fund offers us a unique opportunity to position Norwich Castle as a destination for outstanding contemporary art in the East of England, to build upon the interest in the British Art Show and to develop a long term audience base of repeat visitors who have an interest in contemporary art.

This programme would enable transformational step change in the curatorial ambition and capacity to deliver exhibitions of the highest quality in order to increase the number and diversity of audiences that can experience and engage with the Arts Council Collection. An extensive public engagement programme would be developed to increase learning, engagement and participation opportunities, particularly for young people.

Application was initially by submitting an initial expression of interest and Norfolk Museums Service was then invited to submit a full application. We have applied for the maximum grant available; £600,000 covering the three year period 2016-19. We will be notified if we have been successful in being selected as one of the three National Partners by the end of January.

A9. Exhibitions at the Museum of Norwich

Local Artist Matt Reeve's *Dragon Hunter* exhibition came to an end in September. For the month of October we celebrated the work and friendship of the four Norwich Women's Institute groups, with a small community exhibition linked to the National WI Centenary. The group members were all invited to a special evening opening and museum tour.



Members of Norwich WI groups

Our latest exhibition *Norwich and the First World War: Soldiers and Workers, Duty and Philanthropy* opened on the 24 November. There are two exhibitions. The first tells the story of the development of the Memorial Cottages built on

Mousehold Heath. The cottages were designed by Cecil Upcher who served in the Royal Norfolk Regiment in the First World War. He was shot and wounded and suffered terribly from shell shock. After the war, he returned to his architectural practise in the city and designed the cottages for disabled servicemen and their families. NMS holds a collection of his letters and drawings which are on display at the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum in the Castle. The exhibition running alongside this is the result of a community-based project run by Norwich HEART. Volunteers with HEART researched the lives of Colman's workers during the First World War, and the response the company had to the War, and the impact it had on the lives of its employees. The 'Colman's Detectives' used NMS archives, as well as getting access to the Unilever archive collection to put the exhibition together. Originally on display at the Forum, it will be at the Museum of Norwich until 5 March.



Lieutenant Cecil Upcher

As part of the First World War exhibition, we were delighted to secure a loan of a textile sculpture from the National Army Museum. The sculpture is by International artist Paddy Hartley, who has used vintage officers' tunics as a canvas to literally stitch the stories of wounded WW1 soldiers into the fabric. The stories are of those who suffered facial wounds, and were treated by pioneering surgeon Sir Harold Gillies. The Museum of Norwich partnered with Norwich University of the Arts to host a talk by Paddy Hartley on 25 November.



'Norman Wallace' by Paddy Hartley

B. Events

B1. Spooky City at the Castle 2015

This year's theme for Halloween events at half term was *Witches, Bats and Cats*, with a variety of family activities. As usual, staff pulled out all the stops to get grisly and gruesome for the Spooky Dungeon Tours, with six sell-out tours running each day. We worked with an architect from Parsons Whittley who devised a Castle Trail, as part of the Festival of Architecture Norwich and Norfolk (FANN). The trail, loosely based on Minecraft, took visitors around the galleries to collect different sheets with flat building blocks; they then finished up at the Keep to construct their castle.

Also running all week were illustrated talks dispelling some of the myths surrounding witches. The talks used collections from Decorative Arts, Costume and Textiles, Strangers' Hall and Norfolk Record Office, including a spell, and a first edition copy of *The Witch's Head* by Rider Haggard.

Bats proved to be popular; Dr David Waterhouse showed specimens from the Natural History Collections, supported by Norwich Bat Group, and the RSPB. Visitors could then make their own bat mobile, or even make a bat which could 'fly' on a zip wire from the Keep balcony.

The biggest hit of the week was undoubtedly dancers from City College Norwich who prowled around the galleries, delighting our younger visitors before performing the Jellicle Ball from the musical *Cats* in the Lecture Theatre. Despite the Castle not being the start point for Spooky City Halloween parade this year, the figures were up by 21% on 2014, with 7,229 people enjoying the Spooky City Programme.



City College dancers recreating *Cats*

B2. 'Made in Norfolk' Craft Fair

Norwich Castle hosted a craft fair on Saturday 17 October which proved to be a success with both visitors and vendors. The event, which was organised by Patricia Day from the Learning Team and County Retail Manager Maria Wong, reflected the handicraft and skills elements of the current *Build Your Own* exhibition and was planned as a showcase for quality local crafts people. The fair proved to be a draw for the public who enjoyed browsing the Rotunda which was filled with over 20 tables offering a wide range of goods for sale. Entry to 'Made in Norfolk' was free but vendors paid per table to exhibit so the event generated significant income for the Castle from both the vendors and by increased spend in the shop and café. There was something on sale for everybody including textiles, ceramics, photography and even sparkly tiaras. The vendors reported good levels of sales.

B3. The Big Draw 2015: Build Your Own World

The *Big Draw* is the biggest international drawing festival, with patrons including Andrew Marr, Quentin Blake and Norman Foster. It is a campaign for drawing for people of all ages and backgrounds, and an annual event at Norwich Castle. The theme 'Build Your Own World' drew on aspects of the current *Build Your Own: Tools for Sharing* exhibition. It encouraged community team work to create a world where anything is possible, all through drawing and offering fresh ideas to an imaginary planet. Visitors shared and admired ideas and created a fantastical planet of drawings, as well as learning a few facts about our own planet along the way.



Big Draw

B4. Volunteering with the Learning Team

Volunteers work with the Learning Team in many different roles, they enhance staff skills and capacity and are greatly valued. Here is a piece written by one volunteer:

“My name is Catriona Bide, I am currently in my final year at UEA studying History, and next year I hope to go on to study for a Master’s degree in American History. I am also very interested in local history which is why, when I’m not working on my degree, I volunteer at Strangers’ Hall, working on marketing and publicity for the museum and the events that take place there. I wanted to work in the museum service so that I could better understand what goes on behind the scenes. For me this has been a really interesting experience seeing just how much hard work and time goes into creating an experience for visitors that is both informative and enjoyable.

My work at Strangers’ largely involves contacting organisations and websites with details of upcoming events so that they can be advertised online to a wider audience. I have also been working with Anna to try and develop a marketing plan to make more people aware of all that Strangers’ has to offer. I have found working in Strangers’ to be thoroughly enjoyable. In my time volunteering so far I have learned a lot about just how important marketing is for museums such as Strangers’ and how a simple posting on a website can go a long way to raising the profile of such a place. Most of all I enjoy hearing back from Anna or Cathy about how popular events have been and knowing that I played even a very small part in that.”

B5. October half-term Natural History events

The event *Bat Facts and Bat Crafts* on 27 October enabled visitors to meet the RSPB’s ‘Giving Nature a Home’ team, and learn about bats from our Curator of Natural History Dr David Waterhouse. On 31 October visitors could meet bat experts from Norwich Bat Group and find out how they track and monitor the local bat population.

B6. Norfolk Walking Festival

On 25 October Dr Tim Pestell (Senior Curator of Archaeology) and Dr David Waterhouse (Curator of Natural History) led a walk entitled 'Norfolk's Deep History Coast – Eccles to Happisburgh', as part of *Norfolk Walking Festival 2015*. Taking in nearly a million years of archaeology in just a few miles; the walk started with the fascinating and intriguing story of the village of Eccles-on-sea, now almost totally consumed by the sea. The walkers then proceeded on a journey encompassing two different human species to nearly a million years ago, finding out more about the oldest human footprints outside of Africa, one of the earliest handaxes ever found in Britain and the story of the ancient River Thames in Norfolk.

B7. Events at the Museum of Norwich

The summer holiday dragon-themed events programme ended on a high in September with the sale of our knitted dragons for Break. Over 30 dragons were knitted by our 'knit and knatter' group who came into the museum once a week during July and August. The dragons made a fab window display and were finally sold off in September raising a grand total of £381.44 for Break.



At the end of August MoN put on a special event aimed at tapping into the popular vintage scene in the city – 'Get the Vintage Look'. The event was a sell-out, and guests enjoyed workshops on vintage hair and make-up with stylists Love-Moi make up and Flamingo Amy. They were also shown costume from the Costume and Textiles department in a handling session, and the day was rounded off with a vintage tea party. We had good social media coverage of the event, and a page spread in the EDP. This success of this event led to a VIP behind-the-scenes tour booking by Norwich Vintage Ladies Club, who were given access to some of our reserved shoe collections, and an introductory talk to the museum.



September's Heritage Open Days was a considerable success for MoN and saw an increase in visitors from 2014, up to over 1300. Undercroft tours were fully booked and on Saturday 12 September visitors were treated to a demonstration of flint knapping and one of our highlight collection items, the Jacquard loom was up and running.



Jason Gibbons, flint knapper and loom demonstrations

October half term events at the MoN provided an antidote to the scary, and were based on the experiences of an Edwardian childhood. Using the backdrop of our displays about life in Norwich at the turn of the 20th Century, visitors were shown toys and games from the Edwardian period, along with a selection of children's under garments from the time. Families were also invited to be inspired by our underwear collection, to design their own pants, in an activity we called 'The Big Drawers'. Our activities were supported during half term by staff from Family

Learning, the Millennium Library and Norfolk Record Office who all delivered sessions across the week.



Museum trainee Kate Cooper delivering a costume handling session

B8. Events at Strangers' Hall

Visitor numbers have been encouraging at Strangers' Hall, with our two extra days (Thursday and Friday), generously funded by the Friends of Norwich Museums, proving popular. Regular tours on the house and garden theme provided by members of the Learning team received excellent feed-back. Family visitors were attracted by our new Merchant Trail, devised by Bethan Holdridge. Museum staff and school visitors bade a sad farewell to our resident 'Thomas Sotherton', aka John Sotherton, museum educator who has headed up the Tudor Schools event at Strangers for the last seven years.



The final event of the Huguenot summer was a lecture by historian Dr Alastair Duke of the University of Southampton 'Stories of Refugees in Elizabethan

Norwich' explored the history of the Stranger Community through a series of remarkable letters from the late 16th century, one of which was almost certainly penned at Strangers' Hall.

During Heritage Open Days in September, Strangers Hall welcomed some 800 visitors, with costumed 'former residents' on hand to meet them, fruit punch in the garden and the chance to do a brass rubbing in the medieval Undercroft.



The Strangers' Hall Musical Sunday series has continued with the welcome return of close harmony group *Akabella* in September. October saw a flash mob by the award-winning Norwich Community Choir and November's performance by Chris Alderson on the classical guitar illustrated the diversity of wonderful local talent on offer.

October's half-term family event explored the Halloween theme by means of the National Big Draw initiative with artist Rachel Daniels offering a drawing/ shadow puppet workshop on the theme of 'Draw a Spooky House'.

C. Curatorial update

C1. Major Loans

A major group of fourteen objects is currently on loan to the British Museum for their prestigious exhibition *The Celts* (runs to 31 January 2016).



NMS is a major lender to the exhibition which will then travel to National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh from 11 March to 25 September 2016. The items are some of the most precious from our Iron Age, Roman-British and Early Medieval collections including

a stunning drinking horn-terminal in the form of a bovine head with flaring nostrils, which shows incredible design and attention to detail. The mount was found by a metal detectorist in Needham, South Norfolk and is one of several archaeological treasures acquired through the HLF's *Collecting Cultures* scheme.

C2. Natural History curatorial update

The successful exhibition 'Humans in Ancient Britain' at Time & Tide Museum, Great Yarmouth, was de-installed in early October and the fossils brought back to Norwich for conservation and cataloguing.

Working with Johanna O'Donoghue (Curator of Great Yarmouth Museums) Curator of Natural History Dr David Waterhouse and Natural History Research Associate Dr Tony Irwin chose a selection of awe-inspiring butterflies, moths, beetles and dragonflies to adorn the cases in the next exhibition at Time & Tide Museum entitled 'Beastly Machines' (17th Oct 2015-21st Feb 2016). One theme within the exhibition is 'myths and legends', and the natural history collection at Norwich Castle Study Centre was used to good effect in exploring the origin of several myths, including: a unicorn (zebra skull and narwhal horn); the phoenix (a flamingo); cyclops (an elephant skull) and a vampire bat.

Using Norwich Castle's internationally important geology collection, Dr David Waterhouse and Oliver Bone (Curator of the Lynn Museum and Thetford Ancient House Museum) chose flint fossils including 90 million year old sea sponges, shrimp claws, sea urchins and reptile teeth for the next temporary exhibition at Thetford Ancient House Museum entitled 'Flint Rocks' (21st Nov 2015-29th Oct 2016).

Dr John Davies (Chief Curator) and Dr David Waterhouse facilitated filming sessions with *GeoCast TV* for a Visit Norfolk online advertising campaign linked with Norfolk's 'Deep History Coast' tourism project.

NMS's first 3D printout was accessioned into the Norwich collections: NWHCM : 2015.58. 3D printout of footprint N^o. 30. Probably *Homo antecessor*.

Happisburgh, Norfolk. The original footprints discovered on Happisburgh foreshore in June 2013 are at least 850,000 years old. Printout by Lol Baker of Liverpool John Moores University's 'Fab Lab'. Original data by Dr Isabelle De Groote (Liverpool John Moores University).

Dr David Waterhouse wrote a short piece about the West Runton Mammoth for Norfolk Wildlife Trust's 90th anniversary volume entitled 'Wild and Wonderful Norfolk' available to by 30th Nov 2015.

Dr Juha Saarinen for the Natural History Museum London, visited Norwich Castle Study Centre to take detailed measurements of the West Runton Mammoth molar teeth for his research on dietary analysis through tooth wear.

Local fossil hunter Jonathan Stewart started work on preparing a partial skull of an extinct rhinoceros he found on West Runton beach earlier in the year. Mr Stewart donated the fossil Norwich Castle Museum's geology collections, and has now joined the team as a volunteer in order to reveal the fossil from the sediment in which it was preserved in.

Dr David Waterhouse gave a lunch-time talk at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts (8th Oct) linked with their current exhibition 'Magnificent Obsessions' entitled 'The Science Behind the Art: care and research of natural history collections'.

Dr David Waterhouse Dr Andy Hutcheson and (Countryside Manager, Norfolk Trails) and Pete Waters (Brand Manager, Visit Norfolk) met with Tom McCabe (Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services) at Happisburgh beach to brief him on the Deep History Coast tourism package and explain more

about the amazing discoveries at Happisburgh which NMS has been part of through the 'Ancient Human Occupation of Britain' project.

C3. Curatorial initiatives at Strangers' Hall

Work on the Conservation of important textiles at Strangers' Hall, generously funded by the Costume and Textiles Association has continued with the return of the 18th century wing-chair. The unusual Norwich-made horse-hair sofa on display in the Victorian Dining Room has now been stabilised and its worn patches and detached braids repaired. Next in line is the 17th century sofa bed being conserved by Deborah Phipps.



Loans from the domestic life and toy have been negotiated to Gressenhall for the Workhouse Story and to Time and Tide for forthcoming displays.



The curatorial volunteers have continued accessioning the large and significant collection of toys, children's books and games recently bequeathed by Mrs Patricia Evelyn Todhunter. A small part of this veritable treasury has been on show this year and the work being undertaken now will build towards a rich display in future.

Cathy Terry, Curator at Strangers' Hall, was recently nominated for an NCC OSCA in the Innovative category for her work in enabling the rich social/ local history of Norwich to be relevant to and enjoyed by visitors to our museums. Recently this has included her involvement in displays and local partnerships with business and heritage organisations, developing collections-related merchandise and supporting venue hire possibilities such as the wedding offer at Strangers

Strangers' Hall staff have commenced research for the forthcoming NCM exhibition Small Stories: At Home in a Doll's House (4 Mar – 25 June 2017) from the V&A's Museum of Childhood. As this exhibition will attract families and doll's house enthusiasts from across Norfolk and beyond, the Strangers' Hall own doll's house collection will be put in the spot-light. Staff are working with Jan Roberts of the Doll's House Society, Taryn Dennis a UEA intern, and the conservation and documentation teams to research, evaluate and prepare the most important doll's houses for redisplay and possible inclusion in the exhibition. The collection includes several interesting early doll's houses including the well-known Norwich Baby House, as well as the war-time favourite Spitfire Cottage, currently on display at Museum of Norwich.



Norwich Baby House kitchen detail

The Museum closes on 23 December for its annual deep clean in which curatorial and conservation staff work with a large team of volunteers to tackle the large-scale collections care programme that is required by an historic house museum: ceiling to floor cleaning, conservation cleaning of small objects, vacuuming and freezing of textiles. Annual building maintenance work is also taking place involving the repairs of leaks to ceilings in several areas of the building.

D. Formal Learning

D1. Schools and Formal Learning

Schools numbers at Norwich Castle remain generally strong, however secondary schools continue to find it very difficult to make educational visits. School visits to Stranger's Hall have been affected by the changes to the History National Curriculum, with the Tudors no longer being studied at KS2.

April-October	2014	2015
Norwich Castle	8,776	8,728
Stranger's Hall	611	337
Museum of Norwich	489	539

D2. Group in Museums (GEM) Annual Conference 2015

The annual conference of Museum Educators was held at The Waterfront Museum in Swansea this year on 8-10 September with 100 delegates from all over UK and abroad. The conference theme was *Measuring the Magic*, how we can best measure the quality and impact of museum learning. Colly Mudie, Learning Manager for Norwich was chosen to lead a session on the *Excellence in Learning Framework* that has been developed at Norwich Castle. During the

workshop we looked at Visitor Programmes (Informal Learning) and how we can ensure and demonstrate quality, and improve the standard of activities including tours, talks, trails and family activities. It was a very popular session and it is evident that there is great interest in what we are doing in Norwich. Nicky Morgan from Arts Council England referred in her keynote speech to the excellent work being done in Norwich.

D3. Formal learning activities supported by the Natural History department

On 6 October Great Yarmouth College's BTEC diploma in Animal Management students made their annual trip to Norwich Castle for a British mammal identification course taken by Natural History Curator Dr David Waterhouse. On 14 October 15 delegates from Norfolk Flora Group visited for a fern workshop at Norwich Castle Study Centre. Making full use of Norwich Castle's fantastic herbarium specimens for identification and study in the field.

E. Other Developments

E1. WI-Fi

Over the past 6 months Norwich Castle had been working with Norwich City Council in successfully obtaining Listed Building Consent to install wireless internet access across large parts of the Castle. The Wi-Fi project is now complete and visitors can now obtain free internet access within The Rotunda, Norwich Union Gallery, Benefactors room and Town Close Auditorium. Having this facility is a great boost for the Castle and will certainly aid both our corporate offer and enhance the visitor experience.

E2. Conference & Banqueting

On the back of a successful promotional campaign, Norwich Museums has seen healthy increases in the number of corporate, conference and banqueting events taking place within our buildings. Since the beginning of September Norwich Castle has played host to 9 individual out of hours events. To put this into context that is as many corporate events as was hosted for the whole of 2014. The events have included Private business parties and receptions, a Battle of Britain reception and a ceremony for the Royal Dragoon Guards.

The remainder of 2015 is also looking strong with a further three bookings confirmed throughout December in the lead up to Christmas.

E3. Weddings

Our wedding offer at Norwich Museums has also seen a steady rise in bookings. We now have bookings for weddings at Strangers Hall as far ahead as 2017. So far for 2016 we have 5 confirmed weddings and a further 6 provisional bookings. The weddings that have already taken place have been a complete success and word is now spreading of just what a wonderful location Strangers Hall is (please see photographs below). We have also now received confirmation of a wedding ceremony at Norwich Castle for July 2016.



E4. Registrars

We are well under way with our integration with the Registrar Wedding ceremony team. Registry Wedding ceremonies are on course to take place within the Benefactors Room at Norwich Castle from April 2015 and we will be welcoming some of the Registrar team into their new office within the Shirehall from December this year.



E5. Norfolk Museums Development Foundation

The Norfolk Museums Development Foundation was established as a charity in 2014 to support NMS and its partners to secure funding to support the care and development of the collections, historic buildings and public activities at all 10 sites managed by NMS. The first year of its operation was focused mainly on the appointment and induction of Trustees and the development of a fundraising strategy which will be reviewed annually in liaison with the Joint Museums Committee. The strategy and action plan sets out how the NMDF will support NMS to deliver its 5 Year Strategy for 2014-18. The fundraising priorities and resources concentrate on a number of different strands including the ongoing development of services as well as major new developments which have been identified as strategic priorities. The NMDF carries out its objectives by raising funds from grant giving bodies, individual donors and corporate sponsors to support a wide variety of museum activities including exhibitions and displays, capital improvements, conservation, learning and outreach. The Trustees are working closely with museum staff and provide support, advice and partnership links to achieve the identified fundraising targets.

E6. Volunteers at Strangers' Hall

The Strangers' Hall garden has looked particularly lovely this summer, thanks to the efforts of the hard-working Strangers garden team. Norwich was recently announced as the overall winner of the Urban Community award for Anglia in

Bloom and more recently as part of Mancroft Ward's silver award at the prestigious national Britain in Bloom.

E7. NCC budget savings 2016-17

As part of the planned NCC budget savings process for 2016-17, NMS is currently reviewing options around increased levels of lone working at appropriate sites across this service. A full site-specific risk assessment has been undertaken for each museum venue, considering aspects such as staff wellbeing, premises and collections security, fire evacuation and customer care. A detailed proposal is currently being prepared and will form the basis of a formal consultation exercise with staff.

E8. Keep Project

The Round 1 funding application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Keep redevelopment project *Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England* is currently being finalised, with a submission deadline of w/b 30 November. The application will be considered by the HLF in April 2016 with a decision expected by May. A large number of NMS staff have supported the development of this complex bid, in addition to a broad range of external specialists and consultants.

E9. Norfolk's Deep History Coast

Internationally important discoveries have been made in Norfolk which have transformed our knowledge of early human occupation and presence in this part of northern Europe. Many of these new discoveries have been facilitated by NMS staff and key discoveries are now held and presented in our museums. Many have been discovered within the last 20 years.

The presence of the geological deposit known as the 'Cromer Forest-bed Formation' holds the key to many of the discoveries. This runs from Weybourne in the north of Norfolk to Kessingland in Suffolk and is exposed at intervals around the coast. It was laid down between around 1.5 million and 500,000 years ago. Many important discoveries have been found there. These include:

- the West Runton Mammoth (c. 700,000 years old)
- the Happisburgh handaxe (c. 500,000 years old)
- the Happisburgh footprints (between 850-950,000 years old)

The concept of *Deep History Coast* has been developed through the involvement of NMS staff with the unique early prehistoric and historic discoveries being made in the county, especially around its coast. The aim is to achieve a national profile for these outstanding natural and archaeological attractions in order to generate significant tourism visits from the rest of the UK and abroad. It is an initiative to promote the county's outstanding, Designated museum collections and museums in their wider context, within the historic environment. NMS is working with a range of external partners, including those in the tourism sector as well as other NCC partners such as Norfolk Trails, in order to promote visits to Norfolk to enjoy the Norfolk coast, countryside, its museums and other related

attractions. Associated activities will be embedded in the package, which will include making use of and developing walking and cycling trails between the beautiful and atmospheric locations.

We are promoting the initial phase of *Deep History Coast* to cover the stretch of coastline roughly from the west of Cromer down to the Suffolk border. It is this area which contains the Cromer Forest Bed and the very earliest archaeology. Our subsequent plans are to extend *Deep History Coast* westwards, embracing more significant coastal archaeology and bringing us right up to the Roman period.



F. Visitor Numbers

Norwich Museums continue to perform well in 2015-16, sustaining the excellent performance of 2014-15. Visitor numbers from the period April-October 2015 remain strong, with attendances at the Castle boosted by the Jeff Koons and *Build Your Own* temporary exhibitions and the strong *Medieval Madness!* And October half term programmes of family activities.

	2015-16	2014-15	
Norwich Castle	133,375	131,475	+1,900
Museum of Norwich	9,500	9,204	+296
Strangers Hall	6,512	6,562	-50

Detailed visitor figures will be circulated at the meeting.

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