

Norwich area museums committee

Date: **Tuesday, 07 June 2022**
Time: **14:00**
Venue: **Mancroft room, City Hall, St Peters Street, Norwich, NR2 1NH**

For further information please contact:

Committee members:

Committee officer: Jackie Rodger
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Norwich City Council:

Councillors Huntley, Kidman, Thomas (Vi),
Osborn, Schmierer and Wright

Norfolk County Council:¹

Councillors Brociek-Coulton, Birmingham,
Reilly, Rumsby, Ward¹ and Watkins

Democratic services
City Hall
Norwich
NR2 1NH

Co-opted non-voting members:

Amanda Geitner (East Anglia Arts Fund) and
Felicity Devonshire (Friends of the Norwich
Museums), Councillor King (Broadland
District Council) and Danusia Wurm (Norfolk
Contemporary Art Society)(and 1 vacancy)

www.norwich.gov.uk

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

¹ Chairman of Norfolk Joint Museums
committee

¹ Norfolk County Council's cabinet is considering appointments to joint committees for 2022-23 at its meeting on 6 June and therefore the membership may be subject to change

Information for members of the public

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Agenda

Page nos

1 Appointment of Chair

To appoint a chair for the current civic year

2 Appointment of Vice Chair

To appoint a vice chair for the current civic year.

3 Apologies

To receive apologies for absence

4 Public questions/petitions

To receive questions / petitions from the public which have been submitted in accordance with the council's constitution.

5 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)

6 Minutes

5 - 10

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2022

7 Norwich Museums Report - February to April 2022

11 - 40

To receive the report on the activities at the Norwich Museums for the period February to April 2022

8 Reports from Representatives of 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

9 Meeting dates

To confirm that meetings of the committee will be held on the following dates at either Norwich Castle or City Hall (to be confirmed):

Tuesday 6 September 2022 at 14:00

Tuesday 6 December 2022 at 14:00

Tuesday 7 March 2023 at 14:00

Overview of Collections Management in the Norfolk Museums Service - presentation

At the end of the formal business of the committee meeting members and interested parties are invited to remain for a presentation by Samantha Johns, Collections Development Manager, Norfolk Museums Service

Date of publication: **Thursday, 26 May 2022**



Norwich Area Museums Committee

14:00 to 15:25

1 March 2022

Present:

City Councillors:

Huntley (chair)
Grahame
Maxwell

County Councillors:

Birmingham
Reilly
Watkins
Ward

Co-opted non-voting members:

Felicity Devonshire (Friends of Norwich Museums), Amanda Geitner (East Anglia Arts Fund) and Janey Bevington (substituting for Danusia Wurm (Norfolk Contemporary Art Society))

Apologies:

City Councillors Everett, Schmierer and Wright; County Councillors Brociek-Coulton (vice chair) and Rumsby; and Councillor King (co-opted non-voting member), Councillor Kybird (ex officio member) and Danusia Wurm (Norfolk Contemporary Art Society) (co-opted non-voting members)

1. Public questions/petitions

There were no public questions or petitions.

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2021.

4. Norwich Museums Report – December to February 2021

The assistant head of museums introduced the report and proposed that he and his colleagues would present the relevant sections and pause after each section for members to ask questions or comment.

The assistant head of museums presented the first section of the report during which he commented that despite the ending of legal restrictions, many Covid-secure systems were still in place to manage a safe environment for visitors and staff. Visitors to the museums and staff were “expected and recommended” to wear face

coverings and abide by “respectful distancing” to minimise the risk of transmission. The development of digital resources during the pandemic was a tribute to the Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) teams who had learned new skills. An evaluation had been carried out and online content would continue to be provided. (A copy of the [Social Media – Headline Stats for Norwich Museums 1 December 2021 to 28 February 2022](#) is available on the city council’s website with the agenda papers for this meeting.)

The assistant head of museums commented on the arrangements for the “behind the scenes” officers to return to work on site and the current restrictions on occupancy levels. He pointed out that many volunteers, who worked indoors, also wanted to return on site. Their health and wellbeing would also need to be managed.

The operations manager reported on the section 2, Reopening the Museums. It was noted that the number of ceremonies taking place at Norwich Castle continued to be on track with around 600 ceremonies expected to take place by the end of March 2022. The high level of ceremonies was attributed to a backlog of ceremonies that had been postponed or delayed during the pandemic.

The assistant head of museums presented the section 3, Norwich Learning Team activity, on behalf of Dr Helen Lunnon, the Norwich learning manager. Dr Lunnon would be leaving the service at the end of March 2022 and had been a very effective learning manager during her three years in the post, which was reflected in the creativity and ambitions of the team. In reply to a member’s question, the assistant head of museums said that NMS recognised the importance of learning for the service. There were transitional arrangements in place, pending an appointment to cover this key role.

The committee noted that school visits continued to be fully booked for the rest of the Spring term and that this underlined the value that schools gave to visits, especially as many children had not had opportunities for outings during the pandemic. The schools offer had been maintained during the outbreak of the Omnicron variant. There was a strong demand for the Roman and Ancient Egyptian offers and activities at Strangers’ Hall, which reopened to schools after the February half term holiday. The layout of the Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell was more challenging for school visits. It was interesting to note that instead of being an alternative, the digital offer now supported on-site school visits. The Norwich learning manager had been pleased with the number of visitors attending the February half-term activities.

The assistant head of museums referred to the report and said that regretfully the *Christmas at the Castle* activities had been affected by the Omnicron variant. Norwich BID had led on The *Christmas Crowns Trail*, which celebrated the royal visit of King Henry 1 and Queen Adeliza to the city at Christmas 1121, by a trail of sparkling crowns displayed in shops, restaurants and other buildings across the city from 16 November to 5 January. Members were also advised that the Christmas Light Projections had been filmed and the animations were available to view on the Castle’s YouTube Channel.

The committee was reminded of the wider interest in Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn project outside the county. Lee Warden, Keep Project Learning and Engagement Officer had taken the *Knight Club* to Tendring Technology College.

Over 1000 students took part over the week and with 6 teachers training to be providers, the college looked set to become a provider itself. Members were asked to contact NMS if they were aware of a school or group that would be interested in a *Knight Club* session or becoming a *Knight Club* provider.

The assistant head of museums presented the section on the Kick the Dust project. This included data to the end of January 2021. Funding for the project would end in November 2022 and NMS wanted to retain the momentum of Kick the Dust and the NMS Youth Engagement Strategy. There had been a meeting with Leicester's Kick the Dust project colleagues and potentially there could be a funding bid for specific projects, engaging young people, through the National Lottery Heritage Fund. During discussion, a member referred to the evaluation where 80 per cent of young people felt there were jobs for young people like themselves, and 81 per cent said that they were more likely to become a volunteer because of their involvement in the project and asked if this had happened. The assistant head of museums said that GDPR made it difficult to track individual young people once they left the project but at the heart of the project was the progress that young people made from player to shaper to leader, as they engaged and developed their skills. Young people had made significant progress through opportunities to participate in the steering group and paid traineeships. This demonstrated that they had the skills to take forward to longer term opportunities. In reply to a members' suggestion that there would be follow-up tracking for young people at the end of the project, the assistant head of museums agreed that the available information would be collated and reported back to members.

The assistant head of museums provided an oral update on section 5 Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn project. The "WC block area" would be available to visitors from the end of May 2022 and was currently undergoing the final fit with the implementation of electricity, plumbing and internal partitions. This was a key part of the project. The improved facilities increased the capacity to accommodate large numbers of visitors. The facilities would be available for all visitors to use but there would be an adjacent dedicated entrance for school visitors. Members were advised of the construction works and that consideration was being given to the position of steelwork and where it would fit into the historic fabric of the building. Further surveys and investigation had been undertaken, as the underlying fabric of the building was not always as anticipated in this complex historic building. The project team and contractors were continuing to work closely with the city council and Historic England.

Members noted that the Museum of Norwich continued to offer a wide range of community activities. Members were advised that they could access the podcasts, produced by the 'Unlocking Our Heritage' Podcast Project volunteers, on *The Great Flood of 1912*, *Superstitions at Sea*, *Rationing during the Second World War* and *A Good Local Pub*, which were available to listen to on YouTube, via the links in the committee report.

It was also noted that there had been a positive story in the local press on the annual deep clean at Strangers' Hall. The deep clean had been carried out by a smaller team than usual because of the restrictions due to the Omnicron variant.

The senior curator of Norwich Museums and keeper of fine and decorative art presented section 7, Norwich Curatorial Update and the activities of each of the

curators, as set out in the report. The chair thanked the senior curator for the tremendous amount of work that she and her team did.

The operations manager presented section 8, Project Refresh at Norwich Castle, which was funded through the county council's capital programme to improve the environmental management of the temporary exhibition galleries. This work was due to be completed by 15 April 2022.

The operations manager presented section 9 of the report and said that visitor numbers at Norwich Castle continued to be impressive despite no major exhibitions being hosted during this period. There had been 2,500 visitors during half term week. In reply to a member's question, he explained that the high visitor numbers between July and October were due to the Crome exhibition and related learning activities, and that 10,000 visitors were attributed to the increased ceremonies which took place since May over the summer. A member asked how the figures compared with two years ago. The operations manager said that it was difficult to make a comparison because of the closure of the Keep and construction work, and the impact of Covid. The peak visitor numbers had been 222,000 due to the Nelson and Rembrandt exhibitions that year, but it was anticipated that projected figures, when the Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn project was completed, would increase by 30 per cent to around 300,000.

In reply to a member's question the operations manager said that in the long term there would be interpretation covering the history of the castle as a prison from the medieval period to the Victorian era, as an immersive experience. In the short term, there would be a display case in the rotunda, which had been the prison governor's house in the Victorian period and the centre of the prison. The dungeon tours would also incorporate the prison stories, which included tales of murder, hangings and deportation. It was noted that the Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell was also a former prison. During discussion a member commented on the harsh sentences people received for petty crimes or dissenting and asked if there was any commemoration of Robert Kett and the rebellion. It was noted that there was a plaque near the entrance to Norwich Castle commemorating Robert Kett. The senior curator said that the only artefact from that period was ironically the Mace that had been given to Augustine Steward for putting down the rebellion. The operations manager advised members that there would soon be a virtual reality based exhibition on Robert Kett at the Museum of Norwich, using interactive displays previously located at Wymondham Heritage Museum, in partnership with South Norfolk Council.

Councillor Maxwell spoke of her personal experience as a member and chair of the committee, and a former Lord Mayor and the work of the NMS and thanked the officers and other members for their support. She had enjoyed being on this committee and hoped to continue her connection with NMS in a voluntary capacity.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) thank the assistant head of museums and officers for the [report](#);
- (2) record the committee's gratitude to Dr Helen Lunnon, Norwich Learning Manager for her contribution to the service;

- (3) continue the discussion on Robert Kett and potential monuments at a future meeting;
- (4) record the committee's gratitude to Councillor Maxwell for her service on the committee as both chair and member.

5. Reports of the Representatives of the Voluntary Organisations

Felicity Devonshire presented the report on behalf of the Friends of the Norwich Museums which updated members on their activities. (A copy of the report is available on the council's website.) The Friends had been very pleased to receive a certificate to commemorate the Friends of Norwich Museums' 100 anniversary signed by Councillors Waters, Huntley and Ward, and she asked that their thanks could be recorded. The Friends were preparing for the Friends Centenary Luncheon at Houghton Hall, where it was hoped that two items, a silver Georgian soup tureen and a portrait of Robert Walpole and his hounds, which had originally been gifted from Houghton Hall would be on display. The Friends had reinstated the Talks in the Town Close Auditorium. The next one would be a talk from the local writer and biographer, Phyllida Scrivens on "The Great Thorpe Railway Disaster of 1874" on 17 March 2022 at 15:00. The Friends were also keen to recruit new members.

During discussion the senior curator said that there was another painting by Walpole that the Friends might consider to be more appropriate to display at their luncheon.

The chair acknowledged the gratitude of the Friends and said that the certificate had been designed by NMS.

Janey Bevington addressed the committee on behalf of the Norfolk Contemporary Art Society. The society continued to work closely with Dr Rosy Gray, the curator of modern and contemporary art, on The Singh Twins exhibition, and Amanda Geitner, East Anglia Art Fund and the Norwich University of the Arts (NUA). The society aimed to encourage young artists and students and provided a series of talks.

RESOLVED to thank Felicity Devonshire and Janey Bevington for their reports and record the committee's gratitude to the voluntary organisations that support the Norwich museums.

6. Schedule of Meetings

RESOLVED to agree the following schedule of meetings, subject to approval at Norwich City Council's annual council:

Tuesday 7 June 2022 at 14:00
Tuesday 6 September 2022 at 14:00
Tuesday 6 December 2022 at 14:00
Tuesday 7 March 2023 at 14:00

CHAIR

Norwich Area Museums Committee 7 June 2022

Norwich Museums Report: February to April 2022

1. COVID-19 Service update

- 1.1 Despite the ending of legal restrictions, a number of the COVID-secure systems and procedures implemented across Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) sites during the pandemic remain in place, with a focus on keeping staff and visitors safe through minimising any risk of transmission. Sites continue to provide hand sanitiser stations and directional signage. The wearing of face coverings is now optional and visitors are requested to follow “respectful distancing”. The pre-booking of tickets is no longer a requirement, but remains an option. Site capacity limits have largely reverted to pre-pandemic levels.
- 1.2 In terms of the COVID-19 procedures and systems that remain in place across NMS sites, the priorities remain:
- Ventilation – maintaining existing ventilation arrangements to maximise fresh air flow including supplementary air purifiers and CO2 monitors at relevant sites
 - Cleaning regimes – maintaining enhanced cleaning arrangements including toilets and regular touch points
 - Hand sanitisation – maintaining existing sanitiser stations and encouraging regular hand sanitisation/hand washing. Additional hand sanitiser stations have been introduced where required e.g. near interactives.
- 1.3 To facilitate increased levels of use of museum spaces by visitors, staff and volunteers, CO2 monitors provided through Norfolk County Council have been introduced into a number of rooms and spaces across NMS where there is more limited natural/mechanical ventilation. These CO2 detectors can be monitored locally by staff using these spaces and they also link into the LoRaWAN network, facilitating the use of monitoring dashboards to track live data and trends. The use of CO2 monitors has enabled a number of spaces to be brought back into use by staff and volunteers and increased capacity for schools and other visitors
- 1.4 Throughout the period of the pandemic, NMS staff developed a broad range of digital resources to support audiences, including resources for children and families. Digital engagement included a significant expansion of social media activity. A number of these digital resources are now being repurposed to support a hybrid offer e.g. enhanced schools resources.
- 1.5 In line with NCC practice at office hubs, non-frontline NMS staff have been able to return to the workplace. NMS has also implemented NCC Smarter Working principles across teams, which identify patterns of home and office-based working on a team and individual staff member level.

1.6 Volunteering has recommenced across NMS sites. Outdoor volunteering commenced earlier in the pandemic including garden volunteers at Strangers' Hall. Since Easter 2022 a phased resumption of indoor volunteering has been facilitated.

2. Reopening at Norwich Museums

2.1 Norwich Castle opening arrangements

Due to the ongoing construction works at Norwich Castle, visitors continue to use the external entrance door E8 as the temporary entrance and exit route. The one-way system introduced as a response to COVID-19 has been deactivated and visitors are also now able to access the Rotunda toilets.

A 'pop-up' catering offer continues to operate within the Rotunda areas of Norwich Castle along with a seating section. This interim offer will remain in place until the new catering facilities open as part of the Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England project. An enhanced retail offer has now been installed within the Rotunda, with many more lines of stock being made available for purchase.



Temporary catering and retail units at Norwich Castle

Hand sanitiser dispensers are placed at strategic points throughout the museum. All visitors are requested to sanitise their hands upon entry, after visiting the toilet and prior to exiting the museum. Additional hand sanitiser units have also been installed at points in the museum where there are increased risks of visitors touching door handles or push plates.

2.2 Norwich Castle ceremonies arrangements

The number of ceremonies undertaken by the NCC Registrars' Service at Norwich Castle has continued to remain strong:

Month	No of Ceremonies	Footfall
May	55	578
June	48	600

July	55	1365
August	56	1901
September	127	1663
October	83	2062
November	49	1426
December	30	668
January	28	475
February	58	1320
March	40	862
April	99	2494
Total	728	15,414

3. 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 *What's On* and *Learning* pages of the Norwich Castle website: <https://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/norwich-castle>

3.1 On-site Schools Events

Over 50 schools and around 3,000 school students visited the three Norwich Museums during February, March and April for on-site learning events. We continue to host schools in line with COVID-19 procedures designed to keep staff, other visitors and the school groups as safe as possible. The level of engagement and involvement of the pupils has been sustained, despite the continuing restrictions on the types of activity that are possible. In addition, the reduced capacity at Norwich Castle due to ongoing construction works means that a maximum of 60 pupils plus their adult supporters can be hosted for facilitated events at the Castle each day. Nevertheless, the Castle hosted 1,935 students during this period, with *Romans and Iceni* and *Ancient Egyptians* being the two most popular events. At Strangers' Hall, which re-opened after February half-term following a deep-clean, 607 students were accommodated – the most popular event being *Life at the Time of the Great Fire of London*. The Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell saw 165 students through its doors, all for its *Made in Norwich* event.

Recent feedback from school visits includes:

"The children were very engaged and particularly enjoyed learning about the process of mummification. The introduction to the artefact session also involved the children, prompted their curiosity and helped them to focus on the artefacts. All activities were well timed and paced."

"Thank you for another excellent day. (My third year bringing a year three class to your venue). Our year three children enjoyed themselves very much and for a large majority

of them this was their first ever formal school trip. We really appreciate the excellent organisation, the passion and knowledge of history that the staff demonstrate and the attention to detail.”

“The children really responded to the creative, dramatic and active teaching approach and we will be incorporating more of this into our history teaching in school as a result.”

“A child with extremely low academic ability and very poor communication skills was visibly enthused and able to share his ideas about mummification enthusiastically with his teacher.”

“All the adults were very passionate about their workshops. The children loved building bridges. Looking at the themes instead of just one in time in history was more accessible/engaging for the children.”



School session in the Town Close Auditorium

In addition, schools are still able to come on self-guided visits, and a range of worksheets and other resources remain downloadable from the website free of charge: [Trails and resources - Norfolk Museums](#)

3.2 Schools Digital and Virtual programmes

Whilst the greatest demand has been from school groups to visit the museums in person, with the site's reduced capacity due to ongoing construction works, digital provision continues to be important for a smaller number of schools. These programmes provide the high-quality curriculum links, learning outcomes, and engagement opportunities that underpin the success of the schools' programme. They are also provided as pre- and post-visit resources to school groups visiting on-site to extend and enrich the learning event. Nearly 300 pupils participated in learning events which were delivered digitally between February and April. Recent feedback from these digital events include:

“It was a wow moment for the children. They liked talking to Jack and really believed he was from the past. It was nice that Jack could answer questions that the children had on the spot.”

3.3 Visitor Programme Activities

The Art of Courtly Love

In the depths of February, Norwich sparkled with illuminations for the *Love Light* festival, drawing people into the city to celebrate love and culture. For two nights, the entire city was transformed, despite the cancellation of scheduled events on a third night due to Storm Eunice. NMS were proud to be part of the festivities on the Saturday night. The Museum of Norwich was open after-hours to host *The Art of Courtly Love*, an event celebrating medieval romantic traditions – with a modern twist. *The Art of Courtly Love* was commissioned as part of the Activity Plan for the Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn project funded by the NLHF, opening up the medieval world to all ages. Visitors danced in a twinkly courtyard to Time Machine Disco’s specially commissioned medieval themed performance *Boogie Knights*, shared love notes on our *Tree of Love*, watched performance poetry from Daisy Henwood and Lewis Buxton as they competed for the title of ‘most romantic poet’, and were serenaded across the event by our bard. From the moment we opened the doors to the close of the event we were at capacity, and the museum was alive with energy. NMS is grateful to all the staff, artists, and participants who made this special event happen.

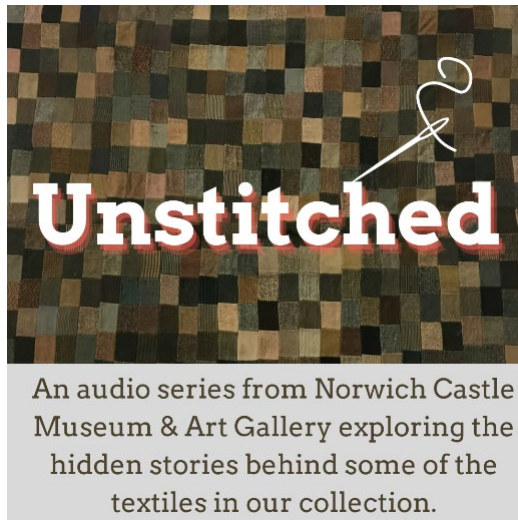


The Art of Courtly Love event at the Museum of Norwich

Unstitched Audio Series

As part of the public programme for the *Textile Treasures* exhibition at Norwich Castle, Learning team members Fiona Ashley and Rosalind Hewett worked together to create an audio series highlighting the special objects that were on display. The result of this was *Unstitched*, a brand new audio series delving into the incredible stories behind the textiles in our collection. There are six episodes in total which are free

to stream via the NMS SoundCloud. <https://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/norwich-castle/whats-on/workshops-and-courses-for-adults/unstitched>



Vision Norfolk

Vision Norfolk are Norfolk's charity for people living with sight loss and visual impairment. On Saturday 30 April we ran a handling session with participants from the charity, exploring some of the objects from Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery's extensive Costume and Textile collection. The collection is social history driven and the objects hold extraordinary stories of ordinary people. Each member of staff running the session brought in textiles from their homes that represented them, including a traditional Hungarian dress and Morris dance uniform. A lot of fun was had by all who attended, with interesting discussions around how we use textiles as a way of expressing our identity.

Norwich Tales Public Launch

From Tuesday 22 March, the public were able to enjoy three brand new stories inspired by Norwich's medieval past. For the past year, three local writers have been working with three different age groups to create stories through words, pictures and performance to bring the City's medieval heritage to life. The stories have been commissioned through the Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn project Activity Plan, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The resulting tales are by turns fascinating, fun and thought-provoking and are aimed respectively at adults, young people and pre-school children and their families and carers. [This short film about the project](#) features interviews with all three writers.

Rose Feather, picture-book maker and workshop leader, has created a new illustrated story book for Early Years audiences inspired by Norwich's medieval trades called *I See a Family*. The story was informed by lots of play from families who attended workshops led by Rose as they explored what kinds of things families might have made in the medieval past. The result is a new Medieval Family Adventure Kit available for visitors to Norwich Castle to enjoy. As well as a copy of *I See a Family*, the kit bags contain

a 'poppet' doll – a medieval character who would love visitors to show them around the galleries – plus a sensory item to help little ones and their families explore the galleries.



Poet Daisy Henwood worked with young people aged 14-18 through a series of workshops to create *The Norwich Bestiary* – a collection of poems inspired by the animals found in the museum's collections, around the city, or imagined into key moments in Norwich's past. Medieval bestiaries were books containing descriptions of real and imaginary animals. These descriptions were accompanied by fantastical illustrations and stories intended to teach moral lessons as well as entertain. Norwich's buildings and streets are full of beasts if you know where to look for them so *The Norwich Bestiary* is in the form of a [downloadable poetry trail](#) around the City which takes you on a tour of historic locations across Norwich, starting at Norwich Castle.



Poetry workshop at the Museum of Norwich

Writer and performer, Shey Hargreaves, created her Norwich Tale in the form of a drama performance for adult audiences. *Bedmaking* is a moving exploration of care-

giving in the medieval period which connects to and reflects on the experience of providing care during the pandemic. Inspired by the history of care at Lazar House – a medieval hospital for sufferers of leprosy in Norwich – Shey’s drama is a conversation between two lay sisters who are making up a bed for a new patient. To create her drama, Shey drew on the research of Professor Carole Rawcliffe at UEA. She also led workshops with current NHS staff as they explored their experience of being health-workers during the pandemic and with staff and clients at The Assist Trust, currently based at Lazar House, which supports adults with a range of learning needs. Shey’s drama is [available to watch](#) on the Norwich Castle YouTube channel.

We hope The Norwich Tales will be enjoyed by audiences for many years to come, and they will be inspired to discover more about the medieval world which was so crucial in shaping the City we see today.

Public Guided Tours

Guided tours open to members of the public have now been reinstated at all three sites in Norwich. Visitors can now enjoy *Highlights Tours* at Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery on Saturdays in term times, *House Tours* at Strangers’ Hall on the last Wednesday of each month, and *Building History Tours* (including the Undercroft!) at Museum of Norwich on the first Saturday of each month.

Tours are included in the price of admission, but we recommend that visitors book on to a tour slot to reserve their place. They can do this via Art Tickets.

Norwich Castle: [Highlight Tour - Norfolk Museums](#)

Museum of Norwich: [Building History Tours - Norfolk Museums](#)

Strangers’ Hall: [House Tour - Norfolk Museums](#)

88% of feedback forms so far have stated that the tours are ‘excellent’ and the remaining 12% rating them ‘good’. Most visitors are reporting that coming to our museums and participating in a guided tour is having a positive impact on their wellbeing.



Visitor comments include:
What did you enjoy most about this tour?

"Our guide directed us to the unseen gems of the museum."

"The enthusiasm and detailed history of smaller objects and displays which may normally be missed."

"It was lively, engaging and injected life into the museum collections."

"Enthusiastic knowledge and fluency of the guide"

Has visiting the museum had a positive impact on your well-being? If so, how?

"We all had a really nice time, it was good to be able to get out and about and do tours like this again."

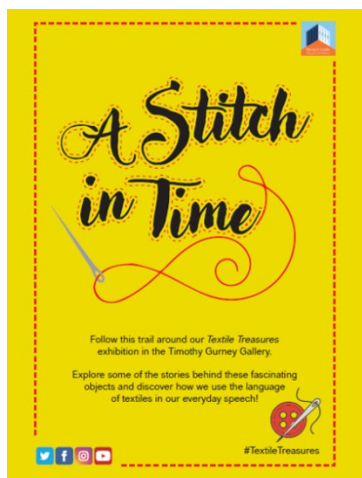
"Yes. I love history. Going through the ages in the Castle makes me feel like there is so much more to life than me!!"

"Yes! Immersive escapism"

"Yes, it has made me appreciate my community more."

"Yes, the fact that it now lets me see the origin behind Norwich in a whole new perspective"

"Very much so, a different day out – nice to get out and learn."



February Half Term at Norwich Castle

A Stitch in Time – to celebrate the final week of the *Textile Treasures* exhibition, and in collaboration with Senior Curator Ruth Battersby-Tooke, the Learning team developed a family trail which encourages exploration of the textiles on show, some of the phrases we use in everyday conversation which have their roots in textile industry and prompts for more activities families can do away from the museum after their visit. In addition, a 'textile pack' for Early Years children and accompanying adults supports enjoyment of the museum's galleries more widely, using the patterns, textures and movements of fabric to guide their visit.

Textile Treasures Webinar Series

In January and February Norwich Castle has presented a series of online events exploring the themes and objects currently on display in the *Textile Treasures* exhibition. The webinars were held 5.30-6.30pm to encourage working adults to be able to participate, and approx. 100 people attended each of the four events. The series started on Tuesday 18 January with Ruth Battersby Tooke, the exhibition's curator, introducing the themes explored in the exhibition and offering her unique insights into some of the artefacts. This was followed the next week by artist David Shenton talking about his own creative practice working with textiles and how it links with the exhibition's themes. On Tuesday 8 February Costume and Textile Association members shared the creative process behind the *Coronaquilt*, an artefact made during the height of the pandemic, and the stories of some of the makers who contributed to it. The final talk in the series heard Deborah Phipps, Conservator for Norfolk Museums Service, and Ruth

Battersby Tooke, Senior Curator of Costume & Textiles discuss how the historical textiles in the collection at Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery are cared for.

Tickets for the online talks were provided free for members of the Costume and Textile Association, Norfolk Museums Service Volunteers, Norfolk Museums Pass holders, Friends of the Norwich Museums, Museum Association, Art Fund members, and East Anglia Art Fund members, and £5 for General Admission. We are grateful to the Costume & Textile Association for their generous support of this exhibition and the associated events programme.

3.4 Kick the Dust – Norwich update

Rachel Daniel, the Norwich Kick the Dust Project Worker continues to develop and run a rich programme of activity driven by the interests and views of young people.

Saturday Art Lab

Meeting on Saturdays, either online or at the museum, Art Lab is an opportunity for young people aged 12 to 16 ([Saturday Art Lab - Norfolk Museums](#)) to work creatively in response to the museums and their collections. The current project the group are leading the direction of is a new 'welcome' sign for the temporary entrance to Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery. A Visitor Services colleague had observed that the entrance to the museum could be made much more visually welcoming and it seemed a perfect project to be led by our group of artistic young people. They are working with illustrator Rose Feather to devise a graphic work which will enhance the visitor experience and showcase their ideas and skills.

Castle Curators is another Kick the Dust Norwich group linked to the *Royal Palace Reborn* project. This group of young people was involved in the *Castle on Tour* 'pop up museum' display at St Peter Mancroft church and the Millennium Library Heritage Centre in summer 2021. A version of the exhibition has recently been installed at Lynn Museum in King's Lynn. The Castle Curators group have also met with partner colleagues from the British Museum and have now visited the British Museum accompanied by NMS staff to see medieval artefacts in their collections. The group was also the first to be welcomed to the Keep for a 'behind the scenes' hard hat tour – their visit was been captured on film and can be watched on the Castle's YouTube channel: [Meet the Castle Curators at Norwich Castle! - YouTube](#)

4. Kick the Dust: Norfolk – project activity update

The Kick the Dust: Norfolk project, funded through the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) delivered in partnership with a range of organisations including YMCA Norfolk, continued to engage with young people aged 11-25 throughout the COVID-19 lockdown periods. The project team adapted their activities to support existing groups across Norfolk, in particular YMCA groups, using digital means.

The following report highlights the work of the Kick the Dust team in terms of how it has adapted its approach to accommodate activity since the start of lockdown in March

2020 enabling us to continue to support all groups across Norfolk, including YMCA, through digital and increasingly through face-to-face engagement. The team is now delivering mostly face-to-face sessions which continues to have a positive impact on the young people. This report compares our data with that of the other 12 national NLHF Kick the Dust projects through the Renaisi evaluation data produced for the NLHF.

Current number of interventions with young people:

From the start of lockdown to the 28 April 2022 there were a total of 5,244 interventions, involving 1,967 individual young people taking part in 2,653 hours of quality digital activity. Following reopening and access to groups on site and in outdoor settings, the team has delivered 308 face-to-face sessions (38% of all delivery) with young people across the county, out of a total of 817 sessions delivered between May and March 2022. In February and March this equates to 78% of all activity now being delivered face-to-face.

Total participation numbers from project commencement in October 2018 are 11,744 interventions, involving 3,830 individual young people taking part in 5,969 hours of quality activity, against an initial target of 8,000 interventions. Of this activity 4% has been at Pre-Player level (bespoke introductory activities for YMCA clients), 26% has been at Player level, 42% at Shaper level and 28% at Leader level. More importantly, of these activities, 76% involve young people in leading and designing projects as well as acting as mentors to staff and playing a leading part in the newly formed Youth Board.

Breakdown of project activity taking place in each area since October 2018:

- 46% (1,266 opportunities) in the West (covering Kings Lynn, Thetford and Gressenhall),
- 28% (755 opportunities) in the East (covering Great Yarmouth, Cromer and Sheringham)
- 25% (647 opportunities) in Norwich,
- 271 volunteering opportunities have been provided to 131 individual young people.

We continue to develop and deliver an online training offer for all staff and volunteers who support youth engagement in NMS. In total 299 staff have taken part in training since October 2018, with 142 having taken up opportunities in lockdown. As we have opened the opportunities to volunteers, a further 35 young volunteers have taken part in training. As our current cohort of bursary trainees come to an end in May 2022, Kick the Dust has supported a total of 7 young people on its bursary traineeship programme, with one Kick the Dust participant progressing onto the NMS Teaching Museum traineeship programme. We are recruiting for a further 4 Young Ambassadors to support Institutional Change within NMS and to join the strategic Youth Board and Project Board. Staff from our Front of House and Visitor Services teams have taken part in the Autism Awareness – ‘Removing Barriers for young people’ course and some are already using the strategies with groups coming into the museum with feedback from a

front of house supervisor at Norwich Castle feeding back *'It's been great to see customer focused enthusiasm again from the team, as a result we plan to have a small group who will regularly look at ways in which we can improve access, be more aware and more inclusive as a team.'*

Seven staff from across the KTD and front of house teams attended the Mental Health First Aid accredited course in March, run in partnership with the YMCA. The new training programme accommodates the needs of staff and includes opportunities for front of house staff to take part linked to the new outcome in the Institutional Change findings focusing on equipping staff to feel confident in working with young people facing more complex barriers to engagement as well supporting front of house and visitor services staff to have increased awareness of the opportunities to engage with young people.

NMS and NCC continue to work together through the 'Making Creative Futures' group where members from across NCC Children's Services identify ways to engage the hardest to reach and most vulnerable children and young people through a joint effort. 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 to this through our Kick the Dust offer. A current focus is on mental health and wellbeing, including supporting Creativity and Wellbeing Week 16-23 May.

Breakdown of respondents

The age ranges reflect the way the team is currently working and having access to young people through partners. We continue to work with a higher number of older young people as we work with YMCA clients and those from the University of East Anglia and Norwich University of the Arts who are aged 18-25 years of age. Whilst the number of young people aged 11-16 years is lower than the older age groups, this allows this group to progress through the programme.

The comparison with the national NLHF Renaisi data is in brackets and highlights the changes since the last Renaisi report in 2020. Across all 12 Kick the Dust projects, the largest proportion of participants were from the 17-19 category (24%), while the largest proportion in Years 2 and 3 of the project came from the 14-16 category (32%).

Approximately half of participants (49%) were aged 11-16 in Years 2 and 3, compared to 32% in this final year. The reasons cited by Renaisi for this change is that young people are engaging in deeper levels of engagement than in previous years which in turn could explain why participants are from the older age groups. Whilst this is the case for Kick the Dust: Norfolk, we are providing a range of shaper and leader opportunities for young people across all age groups participating although the older age groups tend to be engaged at Leader level.

- 7% aged 11-13 years (15%)
- 13% aged 14-16 years (17%)
- 29% aged 17-19 years (24%)
- 27% aged 20-22 years (22%)
- 24% aged 23-25 years (23%)

Data is collected around ethnicity through the Young People's Feedback form (should they choose to answer this question) and is based on the descriptions used by the NLHF: (Renaissi data is shown in brackets)

Breakdown of ethnicity:

- Asian – 3% (5%)
- Black- 1.5% (7%)
- Arab – 0.7% (1%)
- Irish traveller – 0.7% (1%)
- Mixed ethnic – 4% (5%)
- White – 90% (70%)

Those who chose to respond to the question on whether they had a physical or mental disability which can be a barrier to engagement is as follows:

- Disabled – 21% (9% in Renaissi data)
- Non-disabled – 15%
- Preferred not to answer – 64%

A large number chose not to answer this question but a further 6% of young people added that additional barriers to their engagement included transport and finances. How young people are finding out about Kick the Dust: Norfolk has changed since the beginning of the project, with 16% coming to us through social media posts and the new Kick the Dust web pages, 10% through flyers and posters, 19% through friends or a family member and 12% from having taken part in a previous Kick the Dust activity. Strong partnerships with NCC Children's Services and other cultural and youth organisations accounts for 43% of young people being signposted to Kick the Dust

Target audiences: (some young people fall into more than one category)

- FE/HE – 36%
- YMCA clients – 34%
- Secondary schools – 25%
- Young people with mental health issues – 19%
- SEND – 9%
- Outside of mainstream education – 6%
- Looked after children and adopted living those at home - 5%
- NEET – 5%
- Young Offenders and those at risk of offending – 4%
- Young Carers – 3%
- Care Leavers – 3%
- New arrivals and refugees – 2%
- Pregnant young mums and teenage parents – 1%

As part of the feedback, young people are asked how aware they are of the range of job roles available within NMS and the heritage sector and how they perceive museums in terms of being spaces for young people.

- Before taking part in a KTD programme, 77% of young people stated they had little or no knowledge of job roles in NMS or the heritage sector. After their

engagement 61% of these young people stated they now had a good understanding of the different job roles available in the sector and a further 36% felt more knowledgeable. 91% stated that the skills they had learnt would be useful to them in the future (Renaissi 92%). This shows that Kick the Dust as a programme enables young people to gain a greater understanding of the opportunities within the heritage sector and develop transferable work skills.

- Following their engagement, 88% felt that museums were a space they would use in the future.

When we compare all our data to the Renaissi findings, (which uses data from October 2020 to September 2021 across all 12 national NLHF-funded Kick the Dust projects), it shows we are in line with other Kick the Dust projects, scoring higher in 9 of the 13 areas. (The Renaissi responses can be found in the brackets).

Following their engagement:

- 80% of young people felt that there were jobs for young people like themselves to work in heritage with 13% not sure and needing to find out more. (Renaissi 67%).
- 90% of young people said they had learnt new and interesting things about heritage (Renaissi 85%); 85% of young people felt that heritage represented young people like them (Renaissi 73%)
- 81% of young people said they were more likely to become a volunteer because of their involvement in KTD (Renaissi 78%) and 81% stated they would be looking to take part in other local heritage events as a result of their engagement (Renaissi 73%).
- 96% of young people stated they felt welcomed and respected by staff (Renaissi 95%) and 84% felt a sense of achievement (Renaissi 82%).
- 90% felt heritage delivered in this way would engage other young people (Renaissi 92%) with 81% of young people stating they now had a better understanding of heritage having taken part in the programme although 19% weren't sure and needed more engagement. (Renaissi 85%)
- 64% of young people felt they had the opportunity to influence decisions. (Renaissi 64%)
- 92% stated there was something for everyone irrespective of background (Renaissi 91%) although this needs to be put into context of other demographic data for Norfolk.
- 98% of young people felt that the programme was easy and affordable to get involved in but had concerns that they may not be able to do this in the future if there was a significant cost to them with 50% of this number stating financial concerns as a barrier. (Renaissi 93%).
- 78% of young people said they had found heritage more relevant than they had before embarking on their Kick the Dust journey with 19% neither agreeing nor disagreeing (Renaissi 81%).

Summary

As the Kick the Dust project enters its final year of NLHF funding, evidence clearly demonstrates the impact on young people and staff engaging in activity. As we deliver

more face-to-face activity, this impact is increased as more staff engage in the co-delivery of activity and see the benefits to their own development. This has been seen in the delivery of current exhibitions, curation, and collections.

Kick the Dust was set up as a three-stage journey, with young people developing transferable work-related 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. We have seen young people move through the programme, gaining the confidence to take on volunteering roles within NMS, others securing their first job through the Government's Kick Start 6-month placement programme; three young people who have taken up positions within NMS Front of House teams, eight young people progressing onto the Teaching Museum and Kick the Dust bursary traineeship programme following their engagement in Kick the Dust, one young person progressing onto Teacher Training, and three young people taking on the Young Ambassador and Young People's Champion roles, one of whom has recently secured a position with Norfolk and Norwich Festival. Others have stated that their involvement has helped them make choices around subjects and options at school and college.

Quotes from participating young people

'Make Yarmouth & Saturday Art Club have influenced me to do more creativity and thanks to Kick the Dust for helping and supporting us. I was really shy when I started and didn't speak much. I feel quite confident and have improved a lot more by being here and learning and artists and the history of Time and Tide' (Young Carer in the East).

'I chose film production after a National Saturday Club taster session at East Norfolk Sixth Form. She is now applying for a volunteering role as a result.' (Project Worker East)

'I still thought it was worth emailing to say thank you for the photos of the museum club enjoying the trail, it's so lovely to know they gave it such positive feedback as well! It was a lovely project to be involved in and I feel I have learned a lot about creating heritage projects in more practical terms, so thank you for that. I also hope that when I have the time there are more Kick the Dust projects I can get involved in!' (Young Person on the Faith and Ritual YAF project)

'It was a wonderful opportunity to be able to be a part of the SHARE organising group, so thank you for having young people, like myself, involved at an organising capacity at this event. It was very insightful and I learnt a lot. Thank you also for being so patient and helpful with my questions!' (Lily F Young Ambassador KTD)

Following the event Lily secured a job with Norfolk & Norwich Festival in Kings Lynn – 'I have been successful in a job application (which I'm so happy about!!), to work at Kings Lynn Festival as their 'events and communications intern'

'Kick the Dust has helped me to gain real-life experience within the museum and heritage sector. I was able to curate, organise and develop my own creative project

which has since been on display in numerous venues in Norfolk. As a result of this, I have been able to kick start my career as a project coordinator within the arts and culture sector. Without the hands-on experience that Kick the Dust gave me, and the help and knowledge of the scheme's organisers, I wouldn't have had the experience or confidence to start applying for the jobs I once dreamed of.' (Young person on the online work experience programme.)

Take up continues to expand through the establishment of new partnerships with schools, colleges, Children's Services, and other cultural organisations as well as Job Centre Plus and Norfolk and Waveney MIND. The launch of the new Kick the Dust web pages on the NMS site <https://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/join-and-support/kick-the-dust> is bringing traffic and enquiries from young people who would not ordinarily come to us through our existing partnerships which will support this growth and solidify the way NMS approaches youth engagement going forward.

Planning is now in place to consider the next steps and future funding opportunities for Kick the Dust: Norfolk and for the NMS Youth Engagement strategy, including the potential to build in cross-county partnership working with another Kick the Dust project in Leicester as well as expanding our reach across the East of England building on our current successes and approach to youth engagement.

5. Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn – project update

5.1 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 entrance to the Rotunda, separating the construction zone from the areas of the museum that remain open to visitors throughout the project.



Drone image of the construction site

Recent construction works have included the completion of mechanical and electrical installations and final stages of work on the fit-out of the new WC block area, which includes accessible toilets and a new Changing Place. Preparations for the installation of main steelwork structures in the Percival Wing and Keep are ongoing and main structural works will shortly commence in the new entrance area. Further investigative surveys have been undertaken, alongside archaeological excavation where required. A verbal update on recent progress on the construction site will be given at the meeting.

5.2 Wider Impact Group

Since the start of the Norwich Castle project, a separate working group was formed to help facilitate the delivery of the project. Its core aim is to ensure that we are able to successfully operate as an accessible museum throughout the construction works and to plan and implement the new facilities as they come back online. Work has been developing well in all areas, including work on the content and visual displays for an all-new Dungeon Tour. The team have been liaising with internal and external colleagues on the implementation of a new ticketing barrier system and working on themes and layouts for the new restaurant. Design work has also been completed for the new Museum Shop.



A design visual for the new Restaurant at Norwich Castle

6. Other activity across Norwich museums

6.1 Museum of Norwich activities

This period has been a busy one for the small team at the Museum of Norwich (MoN), incorporating working on a new TV series for Channel Four, hosting a highly popular event for the *Love Light* Festival and preparing for the Norfolk and Norwich Festival, alongside all the usual school holiday fun and community engagement activities.

Love Light Event

On 18 February the Museum courtyard was thronged with visitors enjoying the event entitled *The Art of Courtly Love*. Visitors could enjoy dancing to the Time Machine Disco, poetry readings by Toast Poetry and live guitar performances. Plus, the 'Tree of Love' attracted lots of heartfelt messages in or front entrance. This event formed part of

the Norwich Castle Activity Plan and had a medieval inspired theme (see section 3.3. above). It was a good opportunity for MoN to be such a prominent event in the weekend's programming, featuring very strongly in the printed leaflet and map guide.



The central courtyard transformed for the Love Light event

Museum of Us: Museum of Norwich stars in More4 programme

Over the past few months filming has been taking place of an exciting new history programme for More4 called '*The Museum of Us*'. Presented by Sir Tony Robinson, the show explores the history of a single street in each of four locations around the UK. Calvert Street was chosen as the location for Norwich. Over the past weeks and months residents of the street have been working with MoN Curator, Hannah Henderson, Assistant Curator Bethan Holdridge, and designer Lucy Malone, to create their pop-up museum that celebrates community and brings history to our doorstep.

Filming culminated on Saturday 23 April at the Norwich Shoe Factory Social Club, St Mary's Works, with the opening of the residents' Museum of Us. The exhibition was a great success with 70 + people visiting that afternoon.

The series will air in later this year. Mary Crisp, Executive Producer, praised the enthusiasm, passion and diligence of the MoN team. The MoN's involvement in the project and the creation of the pop-up museum has been supported by a generous grant from Art Fund. This is the first time Art Fund have supported a project of this type.



Norfolk and Norwich Festival partnership

Over the past few months, MoN Curator Hannah Henderson has been working in partnership with Director Daniel Brine and Dr Helen Busby on two elements for the NNF 2022 programme. As part of the 250th celebrations, a volunteer group was tasked with creating a pop-up exhibition about the early history of the NNF, which was set up as a fundraiser for the N&N Hospital. Funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, which supported this project, has also funded free entry for all during the festival period 13-28 May. Curator Hannah Henderson has been working with Station House Opera, on the plans for the 2KM route for the mass participation art event, *Dominoes*. The MoN features on the route.

Community Projects

The last few months have been busy with several active community projects, including:

Art at Work

Curator Hannah Henderson has continued to work with Art at Work CIC, an organisation that designs and delivers arts for wellbeing sessions in the community. Their latest programme is based on Norwich Textiles and is funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund. The group were welcomed to the museum on 23 February and at Strangers' Hall on 6 March, again using the museums' textile collections and heritage as inspiration.

The quality of artwork is as ever very high and expressive. One participant has been moved by the situation in Ukraine, as well as our visit to the textile Treasures exhibition. She has crafted her very first dress, upon which she embroidered images from news broadcasts from the war-torn country.



The Art at Work group and one of their pieces

Visit by aspiring arts professionals from The Garage

Curator Hannah Henderson and Kick the Dust project worker Rachel Daniel met with a cohort of students from The Garage on 16 February, as part of a programme to hear about real life experiences of arts professionals in the city. Feedback was positive and staff hope to welcome them again.



Group from The Garage

English plus, international group

Our partnership with English Plus has remained healthy and active during the pandemic thanks to the efforts of Assistant Curator Bethan Holdridge. Their art cohort were involved with a session focusing on home and refuge as part of the filming for *Museum of Us*, for Channel Four, led by Cathy Terry. More recently, our usual group visited on 28 April 28, with the focus on the heritage of chocolate, which included a tasting session.

School Holiday activities

The Museum continues to offer a light but varied programme of activities during the school holidays:

February Half Term

This half term's activity comprised a *Last Rolo* trail, blending a romantic theme with local industrial history and a love letter craft activity. Visitor figures were good, with 456 visitors joining us over the week.

Easter school holidays

Working in partnership with Museum Club and Rachel Daniel from Kick the Dust, this year's Easter activities comprised two different spring time trails and colouring in activity. Visitor figures again were good, with 835 visitors.

Positive feedback on Trip Advisor

The Museum continues to attract positive feedback from visitors, with a few leaving reviews on Trip Advisor. The museum is currently #6 of 142 things to do in Norwich, with an average rating of 4.5 / 5.

Two recent reviews include:

"Excellent Museum

Absolutely loved this museum. So many interesting exhibits of life in Norwich through the ages. Lots of interactive elements as well as filmed and recorded amounts from ordinary people. The best place we visited in Norwich."

“So by chance this shelter from the rain turned out to be a brilliant collection of artefacts and stories of Norwich’s past. So well put together. Well worth a visit even when the sun is shining.”

6.2 Strangers’ Hall update

Strangers’ Hall reopened to visitors after our annual deep clean on Wednesday 16 February with the family trail *Seeing the Lights*, challenging visitors to count and examine the changing ways in which we lit our homes past and present. To complement this, Assistant Curator Bethan Holdridge gave an interview discussing our relationship with light through history on Radio Norfolk’s *History at Home* slot. The Strangers’ Hall Easter programme featured a hunt around the museum to match bunnies and carrots.

The museum has been busy this spring with 17 school and other group visits. Our programme of monthly tours on the last Wednesday of the month has started and is planned for the year ahead with Julie Pleasants, Learning Assistant, providing the first tours. Melissa Sherwood from the Visitor Services team is providing training for members of the team to enable them to feel confident to present ‘museum highlights’ to visitors.

Filming for the Curious Spark educational production ‘*Putting on A Progress: 1578*’ took place over two days in February, with a team of actors recreating Queen Elizabeth I’s progress to Norwich in 1578, with the earlier rooms of the museum providing a magnificent and authentic backdrop. The museum and its collections will feature in the augmented reality realisations of the project that will be released later this year.



Filming for Curious Spark’s *Putting on a Progress*

The museum welcomed back its volunteer garden team in March and following a trial of a Covid-secure safe system of work, our indoor stewarding team returned to duties from late April 2022. A familiarisation morning was held to ensure stewards felt safe, enable them to participate in some initial training and have a catch up in the Garden. The

installation of an air purifier and CO2 monitors, plus the insertion of an air flow vent in a rear corridor have augmented ventilation arrangements in the museum.

Repairs to the roof above the Great Chamber and Lady Paine's bedchamber have been carried out and remedial interior painting commenced. An asbestos panel has been removed from a cellar store. A previously inaccessible blocked gulley between the museum and Strangers' Tavern has been thoroughly investigated and cleared out. This should allow the damp in the Coach House and Toy Store to begin to dry out. Collections in those areas has been impacted by mould, but a good start on cleaning objects affected within the Toy Collection has been made by David Harvey of the Conservation Department and will continue.

This spring we continue to work towards celebrating the centenary of Strangers' Hall as a City of Norwich Museum in 2023. A small research team of volunteers have started work on recording original documents which reveal the development of Strangers' Hall in its early years, from the initial work of Leonard Bolingbroke to purchase, repair and folk life collections, to its use as a venue for local events and the period of zealous promotion of Strangers' Hall as a unique way of presenting museum displays in the 1920s. We envisage these fascinating documents and images will inform the basis of interpretation in the year ahead to mark the centenary. The team will progress to explore the extraordinarily active heritage movement in 1920s Norwich and the foundation of the Bridewell Museum. As we approach a hundred years of actively collecting museum objects, it is important to give particular thought to our current collecting initiatives. What objects tell us particularly about our own times? Do we use newer versions of the objects found in homes of the 1920s today, or has developing technology changed our way of living substantially? What stories do we want to tell future generations about our own times? These questions are being considered by a Kick the Dust group of young people with a view to building a capsule collection 'At Home in 2022' to be displayed next year. A legacy from Strangers' Hall volunteer steward late Margaret James is generously supporting this project.

Work also continues to document the *Picturing the Pandemic* contemporary collection which now includes Covid safety materials used to ensure social distancing and to carry public health messaging, used on KonectBus local bus services.



Donation of Covid posters etc from Konectbus

Curatorial staff continue to work with the Norwich *English+* group. This sizable charity supports new individuals and communities in the area to learn English, form friendships and to make Norwich a home. It welcomes anyone who finds themselves isolated by lack of English language including refugees and asylum seekers. Assistant Curator Bethan Holdridge convenes a WhatsApp group established during Lockdown to maintain contact between members. Simple language is used to stimulate discussions around history and culture.



English+ workshop participants

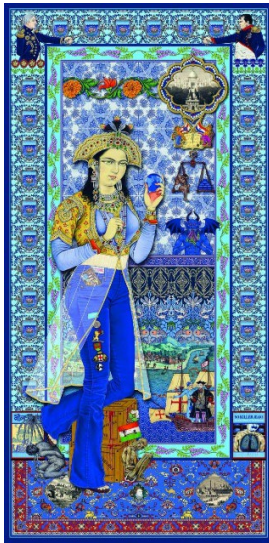
The WhatsApp group reaches a slightly different audience to the monthly Museum Club, which continues to meet. Senior Curator Cathy Terry presented an object-led session on the history of the Strangers' of Norwich to the group as part of the programme of public participation of filming of the Norwich programme of *The Museum of Us* for Uplands TV, filmed in March and April.

With environmental awareness in mind, over the coming months staff and volunteers at Strangers' Hall will be enhancing our wildlife-friendly approach to gardening, adding features such as log-piles and insect hotels to our composting and plant nursery features. As one of the small number of museums with our own garden, we are working to ensure that Strangers' Hall provides a welcoming and inclusive outside space, and summer family activities this year will include a special 'Go Wild in the Garden' day.

7. Norwich Curatorial update

Dr Rosy Gray, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art has just opened a major touring exhibition from the Arts Council Collection, *The World We Live In: Art and the Urban Environment*. This exhibition, the first to be held in the Castle since the updating of the main temporary exhibition galleries, comprises painting, sculpture, photography and film, featuring 29 works created between 1950 and 2020. Exploring themes from urban development, to migration and the relationship between inner cities and suburbia, the artists respond to a variety of places across the world.

Rosy is also working on the next Castle exhibition, opening on 1 October 2022: *Slaves of Fashion* by The Singh Twins. This highly topical show explores hidden narratives of empire, colonialism, conflict and slavery through the lens of India's historical textile trade. Featuring original digital mixed medium light-box artworks, drawings and paintings by The Twins, as well as objects from the artists' personal archive, the show explores modern day legacies and debates around ethical consumerism, racism, and the politics of trade. The Singh Twins will present selected works and objects from NMS collections in dialogue with their own; research which has been the starting point for a new commission, to be presented for the first time as part of the exhibition. The show features important recent works, as well as new pieces produced during the pandemic.



The Singh Twins, *Indigo: The Colour of India* (2017) © Courtesy the artist

Ruth Battersby-Tooke, Senior Curator of Costume and Textiles is working with Rosy on the Singh Twins exhibition, as works from her collections will be featured in the show. Otherwise, Ruth is working on other, longer-term projects, including research for *Masquerade*, an exhibition on the history and significance of fancy dress, scheduled for 2025. In addition, she is preparing for the Costume and Textiles Association AGM, and for a stores re-organisation.



Textile pattern book, Richard Shaw, 1830s, NMS (to feature in *Slaves of Fashion*)

Kate Thaxton, Curator of the Regimental Collections, has now completed the installation of her new store. She has also recently been successful in her grant application to the Army Museums Ogilby Trust for £3,000 towards new photography for the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum. This will allow her to continue to improve access to the collections via improved documentation. She is continuing to update the RNRM website, and once the photography project is complete, she will be able to add the new images to the website.

Dr Giorgia Bottinelli, Curator of Historic Art, has installed her new exhibition for the Colman Project Space. This features Henry Moore's spectacular set of lithographs and etchings of Stonehenge dating from 1973. In addition, Giorgia is working on another exhibition for this space, based around the Frederick Sandys' portraits in our collection. She is also in discussion with staff at Time and Tide Museum in Yarmouth, to re-work the Rembrandt exhibition, held at the Castle in 2017, for the Yarmouth exhibition space. Otherwise, she is working with the collections management team on reorganising art stores, and awaiting the outcome of a funding application for a new acquisition, which will be reported on in future updates.



William and Alexander Macmillan, Frederick Sandys, pastel on paper, 1886, NMS

Senior Curator of Natural History, Dr David Waterhouse and Dr John Davies (former Chief Curator for Norfolk Museums) have been working on and have recently signed a book deal for a work entitled *Exploring Norfolk's Deep History Coast*. To be published by *History Press*, the book will be a definitive guide to this area, exploring the rich archaeology, geology and palaeontology of the county, including many internationally important sites associated with NMS collections, including Happisburgh (the oldest archaeological site in northern Europe), West Runton (where the oldest and largest mammoth skeleton ever found in the UK was unearthed) and Holme-next-the-Sea (the site of 'Sea Henge').

David has also been working with Paston College and Norfolk Museums' Kick the Dust team being interviewed for a film collaboration about the Deep History Coast with sixth form students from the college:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0RZ9osuEiC4>



David being filmed by Paston College students

After a clothes moth outbreak late last year, affected cases have been thoroughly conservation cleaned and the specimens have gone through an intensive freezing and cleaning procedure. If moth monitoring levels prove favourable, the polar bear and other taxidermy will be re-installed late May in time for half-term. In addition to this ongoing pest control work, working with Norfolk Museums' Design & Technical Department, new small-scale improvements to the gallery are being worked on; including an animal height chart of animals from the gallery, a mineral display within the stair column in the centre of the gallery and working on reinstating our elephant tusk.

Due to growing interest in fossils from Norfolk (largely due to the Deep History Coast project) and increasing levels of enquiries, a need for fossil identification training amongst Cromer Museum staff was identified. David spent a day at Cromer Museum delivering this training for the visitor services, collections and curatorial staff. This enables more common fossil enquiries to be dealt with on site straightaway.

David has also recently done two interviews for BBC Radio Four: firstly talking about Norfolk's Deep History Coast for the *Open Country* programme, secondly discussing Margaret Fountaine on *Metamorphosis: how insects changed our world*. David focused on the Morpho butterflies Fountaine collected in South America:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/open-country/id323987710>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0017k7c>

Dr Tim Pestell, Senior Curator of Archaeology is still fully occupied with the Norwich Castle Keep redevelopment. However he has also been working on the forthcoming Vikings exhibition at Ancient House Museum in Thetford with NMS Curator Oliver Bone.

Tim has undertaken two talks about Viking East Anglia recently, one to Martham Local History Group, and one to the Friends of Norwich Museums for their AGM. Tim has also been assisting with the loan of objects to Sutton Hoo for their Swords of Kingdoms exhibition. He has continued to monitor Treasure finds and attend the Reviewing Committee for Export of Works of Art (RCEWA). Tim has just been successful in fund-raising £6,000 to purchase a new gold Anglo-Saxon bracteate. Tim has also continued to liaise with members of the public over possible future acquisitions, including a large coin collection. He has facilitated the C14 study of a previously undated skeleton from Reedham, revealing it to date from the 12th-13th century. Tim has also continued to work as a Co-Investigator on the Rendlesham Revealed Leverhulme-funded project.

Senior Curator of Norwich Museums and Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art, Dr Francesca Vanke continues to work on a variety of projects. Chief among these are the exhibitions and activities based around *Walton Bridges* by JMW Turner over the next three years. She has recently made a short film for the forthcoming exhibition at Lynn Museum from 25 June – 16 October 2022, *Turner and the moods of water: rivers, estuaries and the sea* and working with the curators and learning officer at Lynn to produce interactives. In addition, Francesca is working on the exhibition for Time and Tide Museum, Yarmouth, based around the topic of bridges, their meanings and importance. As Walton Bridge was a significant engineering edifice in Turner's time, it is timely that Yarmouth's new bridge is due to be finished in autumn 2023, during the run of the exhibition, and Francesca and the team at Time and Tide are aiming to make connections between bridges old and new.

Francesca has also just put together four handling collections of teapots from the recent Theobald bequest. Some of these are for the Learning Team to use for the young children in the Snapdragons and Snaplings groups. Other handling boxes of teapots will be sent to Blickling Hall over the jubilee weekend for a 'party in the park' event run jointly by Broadland Council and the National Trust. This will be a free ticketed community event for Broadland residents. Other handling teapots will be gracing a jubilee-themed window display in Jarrolds in Norwich as part of Norwich Castle's *Keeping it Regal* activity programme.



The Removal of Old Yarmouth Bridge, John Berney Crome, 1837, oil on canvas, NMS



Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee teapot, 2002, NMS handling collection

8. Other Norwich developments - Project Refresh

Project Refresh capital works have recently been completed at Norwich Castle. Funded through the Norfolk County Council capital programme, this project has made significant improvements to the environmental management systems of the important temporary exhibition galleries (Norwich Union Gallery & Bernard Matthews Gallery) at Norwich Castle. This will ensure the Castle's long-term sustainability in being able to continue to host major exhibitions featuring national and international loans.

In recent years it has become increasingly challenging to meet lender requirements with regards to maintaining stable environmental control. This is in part due to outdated air handling plant, but also because of the historic nature of the building. The project has seen the introduction of new air handling plant and chiller units, but also physical improvements to the relevant galleries in terms of how they are insulated. Construction works commenced on 8 November 2021 and were completed on schedule on 14 April 2022.

The previous air handling system incorporated a single air handling unit (AHU) that fed conditioned air into both the Norwich Union and Bernard Matthew gallery spaces. This created challenges due in part to the complex and historic nature of the building, but also because the two gallery spaces are very different microclimates that require different levels of environmental control. In practice, the one AHU could not serve both their needs independently at the same time. Hence the need for the introduction of an additional AHU, in order that both galleries can be serviced separately.



New air handling and chiller plant installed at roof level

New air handling plant has now been installed within the E6 Lightwell. This new plant will service the Bernard Mathews Gallery and give it independent control. The existing air handling unit that previously serviced both galleries, will now only service the Norwich Union Gallery. By giving independent supply we can significantly increase the environment control of both spaces. Works have also included an upgrade of the duct-work and installation of insulation within the gallery roof voids. This will ensure we can efficiently maintain the environment and recirculate a percentage of the conditioned air back into the gallery spaces.

The installation of a Bird Nest Scaffolding within the Norwich Union Gallery enabled the removal of the glass ceiling laylights. Whilst we had the opportunity to access other parts of the Temporary Exhibition Galleries, it was also decided to replace the Fermacell dry lining layer on the walls. Fermacell is a type of plaster board that has excellent strength for mounting artwork, as well as being a good insulator. Much-needed repairs were also made to the parquet flooring within the Bernard Matthews Gallery.

9. Shirehall Courtroom

In 2019 it was discovered that the timber building fabric of the Courtroom housed within the Shirehall had an infestation of dry rot. On further investigation by specialist contractors, it became apparent that the extent of the dry rot was significant and that consequently major remedial works were required. Since then, the leaking roof that caused the conditions for the dry rot to thrive has been remedied. Large sections of the Courtroom have now been stripped back to expose the timbers and allow the building to dry. Working closely with the NCC Corporate Property Team, Norse and Norwich City Council Conservation Officers, the next stage will be to appoint a specialist contractor to remove the affected timbers, replace them and implement interventions to stop future outbreaks. Works are anticipated to be completed over the next 6-12 months and will be managed by the Norse Projects Team and Norwich NMS Operations Manager.



Areas of dry rot marked up on site & affected structural timbers highlighted in the roofspace



Interior bird nest scaffolding and external elevation scaffolding to allow contractor access

10. 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	2020-21					245	238	2,454	357	756					4,050
		2021-22		2,732	5,309	8,053	12,796	7,652	8,964	6,226	4,068	4,962	8,110	6,605		75,477
		2022-23	8,129													8,129
	Museum of Norwich	2020-21														0
		2021-22		115	504	595	614	842	749	767	422	647	1,308	1,165		7,728
		2022-23	1,406													1,406
	Strangers Hall	2020-21														0
		2021-22		0	0	24	39	450	508	521	460	0	302	883		3,187
		2022-23	478													478

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