

## **Friends of the Norwich Museums (FNM)**

### **Report to Area Museums Meeting July 2017**

It is two years since I last spoke to you about FNM. Since then we have been busier than ever.

One of our main objectives, you may already know, is to provide a percentage of local funding for curators who wish to acquire artefacts for the collections in Norwich Museums, thus enabling them to apply to national funding bodies such as the HLF, the V & A Fund or the Art Fund. We only respond to requests from the curators; we do not buy things on our own initiative which may not be wanted for the collections.

During the last two years we have funded Keeper of Art, Francesca Vanke, to do research in Vienna on the artefacts in the Paston Treasure Painting for the forthcoming exhibition in 2018. (FNM funding £400).

FNM paid for the conservation of five of the artworks by Claughton Pellew, so that small, but exquisite exhibition could take place last year. (FNM funding £1,980). We also gave advice so that the works were donated to the Castle Museum, instead of being only on loan.

We have recently helped to acquire three miniature Dutch oil paintings attributed to the Dutch painter Aert Van Der Neer. FNM paid £1,687.50 towards the cost of acquisition which was 25% of the asking price.

We have made several donations to the Archaeological department for the acquisition of an Anglo-Saxon hoard (£2,000) and another Anglo-Saxon bracteate pendant. (£1,000). FNM also funded a finger ring with an incised picture of St George & the Dragon (£400) and a 13<sup>th</sup> century gold cross of Baltic design (£500).

Archaeological artefacts of lesser value, but of historical importance, were featured in our Newsletter so that FNM members could fund them if they wished. Five artefacts were funded in this way, the most recent being another bracteate, part-funded by FNM members.

With regard to Strangers' Hall, we are doing everything we are asked to do in support of that delightful museum and I would mention the part Strangers' Hall played in the wonderful *Small Stories* exhibition because we are very concerned that Strangers' Hall (and for that matter the Castle museum itself) retains its primary purpose as a museum and not just an events venue.

We helped to fund a modern glass sculpture called Dragon Boy which is currently on display in the Castle Keep. (£800).

FNM is a key supporter of the Castle Keep Project. A letter confirming FNM support for the Keep Project was submitted with the first HLF application by Norfolk Museums Service. FNM has agreed £35,000 funding over three years. We have already given £5,000. The rest of the money will either be spent on digital resources for the refurbished Keep, or it will go on displays for the new Medieval Gallery.

Last year we funded Tim Pestell, at short notice, when he wanted to acquire for the Castle collections, some books and papers being auctioned in the Morningthorpe Sale. Although Tim was unable to acquire the book he wanted, he was able, with FNM funding to bid for some Norwich prison records and one or two other things (£282 FNM funding spent, but more was offered at the time).

We won a national award for our Newsletter from BafM (The British Association of Friends of Museums).

Through the Jane Thistlethwaite Arts Travel Bursary, which FNM oversees, we have funded Danny Buck in his research into The Religious Controversy in Great Yarmouth during the English Civil War. We have also funded Sarah Cassell's research into Angel Roofs and research into the History of Kettle's Yard by Lizzie Fisher.

Our talks are going well; we have just had a very popular one on Angel Roofs in East Anglian Churches, and have a forthcoming one in July on Nelson, which will complement the Castle exhibition on Nelson which will be open then. Any profits from our talks go towards funding Museum applications.

We are very supportive of BafM and as one of the largest and oldest Friends' groups we are approached from time to time from other Friends' groups for advice and support.

Thank you.

*Ceri Lamb*