

Norwich area museums committee

Date: **Tuesday, 05 December 2023**
Time: **14:30**
Venue: **Council chamber City Hall, St Peters Street, Norwich, NR2 1NH**

Committee members:

Norwich City Council:

Councillors Huntley (chair), Hoechner, Kidman, Oliver, Schmierer and Wright

Norfolk County Council:

Councillors Ward (vice chair) Birmingham, Brociek-Coulton, Reilly, Rumsby, and Watkins

Co-opted non-voting members:

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

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

For further information please contact:

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Agenda

Page nos

- | | | |
|----------|--|----------------|
| 1 | Apologies

To receive apologies for absence | |
| 2 | Declarations of interest

(Please note that it is the responsibility of individual members to declare an interest prior to the item if they arrive late for the meeting) | |
| 3 | Public questions/petitions

To receive questions / petitions from the public which have been submitted in accordance with the council's constitution. | |
| 4 | Minutes

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2023. | 5 - 10 |
| 5 | Norwich Museums Report - August to October 2023

Purpose - To receive the report on the activities at the Norwich Museums for the period August to October 2023. | 11 - 42 |
| 6 | 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. | |
| | Report from the Friends of the Norwich Museums

Norwich Museums Early Years Strategy - presentation

At the end of the formal business of the committee meeting members and interest parties are invited to remain for a presentation by Jan Pitman and Emma Clarke, Norwich Learning Team, Norfolk Museums Service. | 43 - 44 |

Date of publication: **Monday, 27 November 2023**



Norwich Area Museums Committee

14:30 to 15:35

5 September 2023

Present:

City Councillors:

Huntley (chair)
Hoechner
Kidman
Oliver
Schmierer

County Councillors:

Ward (vice chair)
Birmingham
Brociek-Coulton
Watkins

Co-opted non-voting members:

Janey Bevington (substitute for Danusia Wurm (Norfolk Contemporary Art Society)) and Councillor Graham (South Norfolk District Council)

Apologies:

County Councillors Reilly and Rumsby, Councillor Booth (Broadland District Council) and Felicity Devonshire (Friends of Norwich Museums), Amanda Geitner (East Anglia Arts Fund) and Danusia Wurm (Norfolk Contemporary Art Society)

Also present:

Stuart Garner, operations manager
Jan Pitman, learning manager (Norwich)
Francesca Vanke, senior curator of Norwich Museums and keeper of fine and decorative art

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2023.

3. Norwich Museums Report – May to July 2023

The operations manager introduced the report (which is available on the website [here](#)) 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 operations manager presented sections 1 and 2 of the report. He confirmed that the Covid-19 measures, as detailed in the report, were still in place. The restaurant

would be opening in the following months which would increase the offering of refreshments to visitors. In respect of the number of ceremonies at Norwich Castle numbers for July and August 2023 were strong and the exact figures would be reported at the next committee meeting.

The learning manager (Norwich) presented section 3 of the report, Norwich Learning Team activities – highlights report. He highlighted the work that the service had done regarding Early Years learning through a partnership with Earlham Nursery. This partnership allowed the service to interact with families in a holistic manner and it was looking at ways of improving access for these visitors. The focus on improving access was a key focus of the service, and this would form part of a review of the learning service. Through the work undertaken with children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) the service had been looking at different approaches to delivering the material. Members were referred to the number of activities that had taken place for a range of learners through events and conferences.

In reference to the section 3.5 of the report, Visitor Programme Activities, the learning manager (Norwich) said that a highlight had been the activities that took place during Refugee Week 2023 in partnership with New Routes and Art at Work Community interest company (CIC). Staff from Morgan Sindall had been able to provide a demonstration of the crane used for the Keep project to the Snapdragon group. The Snapdragon group had been able to see how the crane used by Morgan Sindall worked thanks to the staff on site. Both the Snapdragon and Snaplings groups continued to receive positive feedback.

The summer programme of visitor activities at Norwich Castle had focussed on *The Last Voyage of the Gloucester: Norfolk's Royal Shipwreck: 1682* exhibition. The museum had partnered with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). The activities would help to raise awareness of the work of the RNLI across and give visitors of Norwich Castle a better understanding of water safety throughout history.

The learning manager (Norwich) referred members to section 3.6, Museum of Norwich and section 3.7, Strangers' Hall, of the report. Both museums had been working with a range of partners to deliver activities for visitors to the museums. This included The Garage, New Routes, the City of Ale and the Mancroft Advice Project's young parents group.

A member commented that it was positive to see the range of activities that were provided and the range of partners the service was working with.

In response to a member's question the learning manager (Norwich) said that he would need to complete the review of the learning programme in order to provide detailed information on schools that were not engaged with the service and to understand the barriers.

The chair commented that it was positive to see the support from the Norwich Freeman's Charity for the Art Teachers' Masterclass held at the Norwich Castle.

The learning manager (Norwich) presented section 4, Kick the Dust: Norfolk – project activity update. The report covered the initial project as funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund (NLHF) which had now been concluded and the next phase which was funded through an Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio

Organisation Uplift award for three years. While the activities of this phase of the project would be focussed in Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn and Thetford, some activities in Norwich would continue. The service was currently developing the programme further and would be working with the Norfolk Library and Information Service (NLIS) to provide activities to young people. There had only been a small amount of feedback but this had shown a positive impact on the wellbeing of the participants. As previously reported to the committee the service had worked with YMCA Leicester to submit a round 1 funding bid to the NLHF *Grants for Heritage* which had been successful. This would allow both organisations to work on developing a Round 2 bid, which would allow for project delivery to start in late 2024.

The operations manager presented section 5, Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn – project update. The project was on track for the handover of the Percival wing to the Norfolk Museums Service to be completed by October 2023. The Keep would be reopening at Easter 2024. The Changing Places toilet that had been handed back to the service in August 2022 was available for members of the public to use free of charge and was being used.

The operations manager presented section 6.1 of the report, Museum of Norwich. The museum had held the successful exhibition *Threads of Connection: A Creative Response to Our Textile Heritage* which had been produced in collaboration with Art at Work CIC. The exhibition had focussed on the Norwich textile industry and works produced to promote wellbeing and good mental health. Subsequently Art at Work had applied for NLHF funding which would allow the organisation to be based at the museum for three years. A range of activities had been held at the Museum of Norwich, including an activity based on the museum's shoe collection during the May half-term holiday and activities for Refugee Week, where the Museum of Norwich staff worked with the county council's People from Abroad Team. The Museum of Norwich had also taken part in the Norwich Lanes Fayre during which the museum opened rooms not usually used old shop and was able to offer over 400 visitors the Kett's Rebellion Virtual Reality experience. He highlighted that the Museum of Norwich had recently made a new acquisition of some coins that had been held by a then aged four Joy Burton during the Baedeker Raids in 1942. These coins were a significant artifact that told of the effect of the Baedeker Raids on Norwich.

A member asked for clarification on the historical context to the *Threads of Connections: A Creative Response to Our Textile History* exhibition. The senior curator of Norwich Museums and keeper of fine and decorative arts said that the exhibition had focussed on wellbeing and the textile heritage of the city. There was a strong heritage of the weaving and textile industry in Norwich, which was presented to members of the public in both the Museum of Norwich and Strangers' Hall.

The operations manager presented section 6.2 of the report, Strangers' Hall. The museum had held a range of activities for Refugee Week 2023, including an interview for Radio Norfolk highlighting items in the Strangers' Hall collections. The final Refugee Week event coincided the City of Ale festival. This had involved local brewers partnering with brewers from Flanders to brew new beers to celebrate the history of 'The Strangers' in Norwich. A key celebration for Strangers' Hall had been the centenary celebrations of the museum that took place in July 2023. The museum had been supported by The Norwich Freeman's Charity and Friends of Norwich Museums for the celebration. This had included redesigning the store front to update the window displays. The new displays had been commissioned by the artist to

showcase the museum's history. New interpretation panels had also been installed within the museum that included archive photos and documents from when the museum first opened in 1923.

A member commented that the new window display was very engaging and the museum could be considered a 'hidden gem' in Norwich and the new frontage would encourage new visitors to the museum. The museum would be taking part in the Heritage Open Days and provide free entrance on certain days which would allow visitors who may not ordinarily be able to afford to visit the museum, the opportunity to do so.

The senior curator of Norwich museums and keeper of fine and decorative arts presented section 7 of the report, Norwich Curatorial update. A number of events and activities had been held based on the Gloucester exhibition. The exhibition had attracted over 60,000 visits to date. A highlight had been a Black History event which celebrated Jamaican Independence Day.

The senior curator of Norwich museums was currently working on two Turner exhibitions, one that would be in the Time and Tide Museum in Great Yarmouth and another that would open in Norwich Castle in October 2024, as part of this she had been working on loan requests. The curator of historic art had recently made a major acquisition, including a painting by van Ruisdael. This was the first van Ruisdael painting in the Norfolk Museums collections. Van Ruisdael had been influential in the development of the Norwich School of Artists.

The curator of modern and contemporary art had been working on a new project that involved a local artist to reimagine how paintings are viewed by hanging some works in Norwich Castle upside down, this project, *Five Paintings* would be at Norwich Castle between 30 September 2023 and 31 March 2024. The curator of Norfolk Regimental Museum had recently made acquisitions, one of these was a diary from a Prisoner of War in Germany and accompanying letters that had been sent to the individual's mother in Norfolk. The senior curator of archaeology continued to be occupied with the Keep project, including updating the displays in the Boudica gallery.

In response to a member's question the senior curator of Norwich museums and keeper of fine and decorative arts said that Norfolk Museums Service had a number of processes in place to safeguard against any items from the collections going missing. This included documentation on every item and regular key audits to ensure that only the appropriate people had access to the collections.

A member queried what would happen with the items from the Gloucester exhibition when it was deinstalled. The senior curator of Norwich museums said that the painting that was in the gallery would be installed in the Time and Tide museum, plans for the other objects were still being developed with involvement from The Gloucester 1682 Trust.

In response to a member's question the senior curator of Norwich museums confirmed that she would bring an update on the work of the senior curator of costume and textiles to the next committee meeting. During the period of the report the senior curator of costume and textiles had been occupied with collection stores move to allow for the remedial works to Shirehall.

The operations manager presented section 8 of the report, other developments. The work to combat the dry rot in Shirehall had started on 4 September. There had been a delay to the commencements of the works due to the complex methodology needed to install the scaffolding that would protect the building. Due to the extent of the damage due to the dry rot, a number of structural works would need to be completed, including replacement of affected timber. The service had worked closely with city council planning officers to secure the appropriate permissions to carry out the works. As the service was also looking to address the issues more extensively to prevent the situation from re-occurring, the works would likely take six months to complete. The operations manager confirmed that the external lift that had been damaged through vandalism was now fully operational as the replacement glass panel had been installed.

The Wider Impact Group had been started as part of the Keep project to help facilitate the delivery of the project. The Wider Impact Group had been particularly busy due to the handover of the Percival wing on 11 October 2023. As part of this the group had developed the plans for the new restaurant and retail shop. The report included photographs of the chosen colour palette and furniture for the restaurant. As the restaurant would be free to visit, the service had chosen a range of archive photographs of Norwich Castle that included Victorian images of its use as a prison to its development into a museum to show the history of the building. The new glazed roof would also give visitors views of the castle which had not previously been visible. The new branding for Norwich Castle that had been developed by the Wider Impact Group was being rolled out across the museum, including updating the signs for the galleries.

The operations manager presented section 9 of the report. The visitor numbers showed a strong uplift at Norwich Castle due to the Gloucester exhibition that had been particularly popular. It was likely that 2023 would see visitor numbers for Norwich Castle to return to six figures. The other museums had also seen uplifts in visitor numbers compared to previous years which could be a reflection of increased confidence of visitors following the Covid-19 lockdowns.

The operations manager gave an update on the social media performance of each of the Norwich Museums sites. The full report would be circulated to members outside of the meeting. The figures showed that the use of Instagram was continuing to see the largest growth in engagement, with Reels in particular being popular. Each site had taken place with the hashtag #MuseumWeek which increased engagement. The Museum of Norwich Instagram page was seeing a strong growth in follower numbers and engagement, and some of the most popular posts included those that gave more information about objects and archive footage. The service was monitoring Twitter following its rebrand to X and the new Meta owned social media platform Threads to understand the future of both platforms.

The members thanked the operations manager and his colleagues for the report.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) note the Norwich Museums Report May to July 2023; and

- 2) ask the senior curator of Norwich museums to provide an update on the work of the senior curator of costume and textiles to the next committee meeting.

4. Reports of the Representatives of the Voluntary Organisations

The chair introduced the report from the Friends of the Norwich Museums, which and been circulated to members and was available on the website [here](#).

Janey Bevington, Norfolk Contemporary Art Society (NCAS), addressed the committee and said that NCAS had held a successful art auction at City Hall. The society's annual general meeting had been well attended. A programme of talks for the autumn and beyond had been scheduled including artists from the Royal Academy of Arts, Cornelia Parker and Mali Morris. NCAS were closely monitoring the replacement of the Hay Hill Poirier sculptures. A permanent art gallery for NCAS and other art societies was still being sought within the city.

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

CHAIR

Norwich Area Museums Committee 5 December 2023

Norwich Museums Report: August to October 2023

1. COVID-19 & infection control update

A number of the COVID-secure systems and procedures implemented across Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) sites during the pandemic remain in place. Infection control priorities remain:

- Ventilation
- Cleaning regimes
- Hand sanitisation

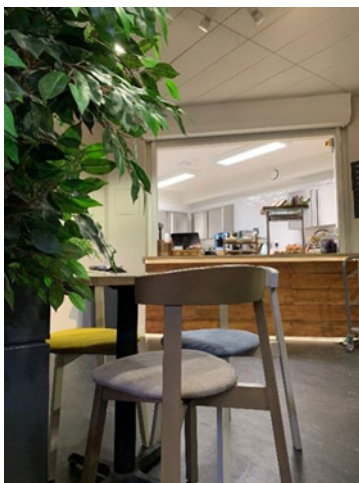
CO2 monitors provided through Norfolk County Council (NCC) continue to operate in a number of spaces across NMS where there is more limited natural/mechanical ventilation. These CO2 detectors are monitored locally by staff and also link into the LoRaWAN network, facilitating the use of monitoring dashboards to track live data and trends.

2. Norwich Museums operations

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.

The new 'pop-up' catering unit 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 project. A temporary retail offer continues to operate within the Rotunda, with increased lines of stock available for purchase.



The new 'pop-up' café operating in the Rotunda

2.2 Norwich Castle ceremonies

The number of ceremonies taking place at Norwich Castle has continued to remain strong, with 733 having been completed within the past 12 months.

Month	No of Ceremonies	Footfall
November	53	1162
December	22	539
January	18	383
February	53	1060
March	16	480
April	56	1678
May	65	1396
June	151	3468
July	73	2070
August	71	2120
September	69	2022
October	86	2253
Total	733	18,631



The Colman Gallery wedding space

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 *Learning Hub* pages of the Norwich Castle website: [Learning - Norfolk Museums](#)



Recent recruitment

Following interviews, the Norwich Learning team welcomes Maja Jackson as Learning and Engagement Officer. Maja will be working closely with colleague Rosalind Hewett to deliver our events and visitor programme. Maja has been a Learning Assistant at Norwich Museums for the past two years so comes to us with a good understanding of what needs doing.

Schools Learning

New Romans and Iceni event at Norwich Castle.

A new KS2 Romans and Iceni enquiry-based event is being piloted this term. Students travel back in time to 60AD – the year of Boudica’s revolt. They meet Esico, an Iceni who has been collecting tribute from his tribe to give to the Romans. On hearing the rumour of an Iceni rebellion, Esico asks students to help him decide what to do – should he go to the Romans in Camulodunum, return to his tribe, or stay put, hoping that Rome and the Iceni can live in peace? Children handle Roman objects, meet a Roman soldier and explore the Boudica and Romans gallery with a curator. They also find out about Iceni torcs before making their own and ceremoniously depositing them.

Teachers piloting the event with their students, said: *“Looking at the objects and discussing really got the children thinking and talking in the way that I want them to when discussing historical objects. A good range of resources to look at.”*

“A great day, love that it was enquiry based as this is how we organise our lessons in school.”

Early Years and Access

Quiet hour

On Sunday 20 August we held a quiet hour between 12-1pm for visitors to Norwich Castle Museum, one hour before usual opening. We welcomed eleven visitors, including three families with children with SEND. The quiet hour ran from all of whom said that they had not brought their child to the museum before this event. ‘Quiet Hour’ events are now scheduled for the first Sunday of each month.

Early Years and Family Saturdays

A programme of regular monthly Saturday event days at Norwich Castle is now underway, having been piloted in September. *Early Years Saturday* on the 2nd

Saturday of each month and *Family Saturday* on the 4th, have provided the learning team with a useful and productive opportunity to explore and test new ways of working and train and upskill staff, while providing an exciting, creative and targeted offer for our younger visitors and their families. In addition to providing opportunities for development of best practice, these days are being explored as a way to support families who may not have previously felt able to visit Norwich Castle to come and give the museum's offer a go. This is being facilitated through free entry vouchers, shared with families through local education settings that support a higher than average proportion of families in receipt of Pupil Premium funding. These vouchers have also been shared with MAP, a local charity supporting young parents as a way of building on our relationship with them established through their visits to our museums in recent months.

The events draw on different themes every month and are meant to encourage our visitors to explore our collection and galleries in a playful and creative way. Visitors can try a wide range of activities from getting hands-on with objects to investigating our collections looking for clues like detectives and unlocking their creative side with craft activities. To date, visitors have engaged with themes such as landscapes, big and small, and 'upside down' inspired by Mark Wilsher's artistic intervention 'Five Paintings'. We have also explored light and shadow, drawing on the photographs displayed at our recent temporary exhibition *Norwich Works: The Industrial Photography of Walter and Rita Nurnberg*.



Early Years Strategy

Our *Early Years Saturdays* also form a key element of Norwich Museums' Early Years Strategy. The strategy, developed and led by Emma Clarke (Learning Officer) and Jan Pitman (Learning Manager), aims to bring together the different elements of Norwich Museums' offer for children under 5 and their families into a coherent form. These have been divided into four broad categories:

- Specialist delivery
- Investment in staff
- Investment in resources

- Supported entry/outreach

The ambition is to determine how we can create and maintain a balance between these intersections to deliver an offer for children under 5 which is rigorous, exciting, accessible, and in line with Early Years best practice.

Events and Visitor Programme

Shipwrecked! in Castle Quarter

On Friday 11 August, members of the Learning Team took activities from our summer holiday programme to White Lion Square in Castle Quarter. Over the course of 2 hours, we engaged with 130 people, the majority of whom had never been to the museum before.



Family Learning

Our October half-term activity programme at Norwich Castle has been inspired by our latest temporary exhibition, *Norwich Works: The Industrial Photography of Walter and Rita Nurnberg*. Visitors were able to explore the exhibition with a self-led trail, print their own cyanotype using images from Norwich Works, investigate light and shadow effects in our sensory play area and take part in a shoe sorting activity based around Norwich's history as a hub for this industry. Also, we encouraged our visitors to participate in a sketching activity inspired by recurring themes of hands and faces in Norwich Works.



MAP Young Parents @ Norwich Castle and the Museum of Norwich

Continuing our ongoing relationship with MAP's Young Parents project, this summer we hosted a group of young families at Norwich Castle and the Museum of Norwich. The Natural History galleries were especially popular with the families. We have now given MAP free vouchers for our Early Years & Family Saturdays, to distribute to their service users. We look forward to continuing to support local young parents. Project Worker Nicole sent the following feedback: *I just wanted to send an email to say we have had such positive feedback from the museum trips so wanted to thank you both for giving our young parents this opportunity.*

BSL Tours of *The Last Voyage of the Gloucester*

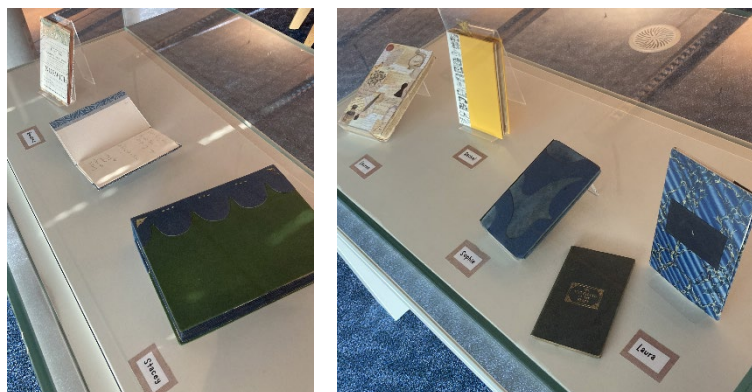
On Saturday 19 August we ran two British Sign Language (BSL) tours of the exhibition *The Last Voyage of the Gloucester*, led by a Deaf tour guide. Following the success of our Festive BSL Tours last year at Strangers' Hall, we were delighted to be introduced to Daniel Jillings, a young historian who recently participated in our Kick the Dust work experience programme. Daniel is profoundly Deaf and a full user of BSL. Daniel was mentored by Martin Glover, a Deaf architect and tour guide. Both tours sold out and the audiences were generous enough to spend time with us following each tour, in a BSL evaluation session. The resounding feedback was – more events like this please! We are planning on working with Daniel to deliver BSL tours of the current *Norwich Works* exhibition and are delighted that the exhibition has BSL labels.



Keep Activity Plan

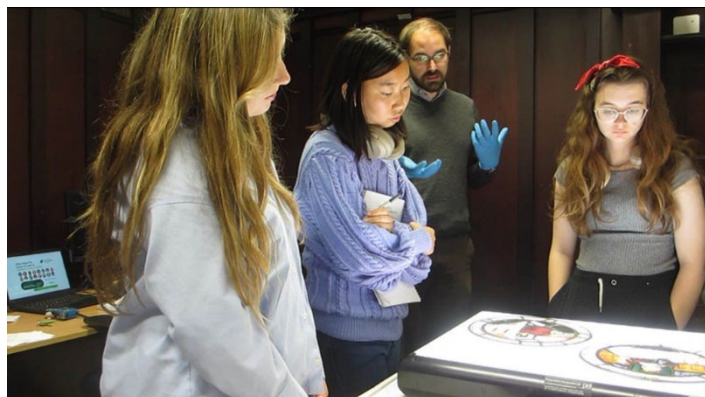
In April and May 2023, we ran a Conservation for Wellbeing course for adults, in partnership with the Millennium Library and led by conservator Victoria Stevens. The

programme was inspired by the conservation of two medieval manuscripts that are due to be displayed in Norwich Castle. Using the Japanese principle of kintsugi, each participant took a book that needed repairing and used visible mending techniques to create a new beautiful whole book. The group reunited with Victoria in August 2023, to finish their creations with some gold embossing. The finished pieces were then displayed in the Heritage Centre from August – October, before being returned to each participant. We are planning on running an online version of this programme in 2024.



Kick the Dust: *Knights of the Sound Table*

Kick the Dust's *Knights of the Sound Table* project has been running since September 2023. A group of up to six young people has been gathering on a weekly basis, working to create a medieval soundscape for a new gallery that forms part of the Norwich Castle redevelopment project.



The brief is to make a 90 second soundscape inspired by objects in the forthcoming British Museum Partnership Gallery, which will then be made available to members of the public via a QR code. A 'making of' video is also being created.

The group consists of six young people from various backgrounds. One is a UEA graduate, one is an NUA graduate, two have ASD and were referred to us via a support worker and two are transgender and came to us via the YMCA. This project is using the approach of mixing people from different backgrounds and thus far it is going very well. All the young people are respectful of each other and work together to ensure that things like their different means of communication are all respected and everyone can take part. As an example, we have a 'hand-raising' system if people are finding it difficult to find a break in the conversation to make their point, or are less confident in group conversations, and everybody takes care to be aware of raised hands.

The young people first viewed the objects and asked questions of Andrew Ferrara, who is the Norwich Castle Project Curator. They then had to hire a sound artist to work with. This involved writing the 'Invitation to Pitch', preparing the interview questions, carrying out interviews, and then discussing the candidates, making their choice, and working out what to say to those who were not successful. Since then, the young people have been meeting with the sound artists that we hired, carrying out further historical research, and starting to come up with ideas about what we want to say and how we want to say it.

Attendance has been varied, as the young people have jobs and complex lives, but the group is very committed to the project. The youth worker who referred the two women with ASD said in an email recently, *'Its great that both Neve and Scarlett are getting some valuable experience with the project.'*

The project will run into December and possibly the new year. The young people have already had an idea of what they might like to do next: a history of Norwich Pride.

Summer Programme & RNLI partnership

Our summer holiday programme was inspired by our latest exhibition, *The Last Voyage of the Gloucester: Norfolk's Royal Shipwreck, 1682*. Visitors were able to find out all about the amazing story of the Gloucester, explore life at sea by navigating trails, investigate magical marine objects, create an illustrated page or book of the shipwreck story in our art and craft workshops and discover and impersonate just who would have been on board as part of our selfie station.

We partnered with the RNLI for this year's summer programme. RNLI volunteers across Norfolk hosted a range of interactive activities for families to get involved with including crew kit dress ups, water safety, history and education on saving lives at sea. Rebecca Whyte, RNLI Community Manager, North and East of England, said: *'The RNLI are very excited to be a part of this special exhibition celebrating important local heritage. Working alongside the team at Norwich Castle, the RNLI will bring lots of activities for families and young people, raising awareness around water safety, the role of RNLI across Norfolk, with special recognition of World Drowning Prevention Day on Tuesday 25 July.'*

4. Kick the Dust: Norfolk – project activity update

Background

The first Kick the Dust project delivered by Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and ran from October 2018 to March 2023.

The target audience for Kick the Dust activity is young people aged 11-25, with a particular focus on young people aged 16-25 who do not normally engage with the heritage or consider it relevant to their lives. Priority participants are young people facing multiple challenges and barriers, including YMCA clients and other young people

engaging with NCC and partner organisations specialist support services. Key project partners include YMCA Norfolk, Creative Collisions (Great Yarmouth) and NCC Children's Services, Libraries and Public Health.

Kick the Dust provides a progression pathway for young people, enabling them to use heritage to develop their confidence, skills and routes into employment using the *Player, Shaper, Leader* model.

For this original project, total participation numbers from October 2018 to March 2023 were **13,905 interventions**, involving **4,527 individual young people** taking part in **7,039 hours of quality activity**, taking us beyond the initial project target of 8000 interventions. As the project developed, more young people took the lead in projects, shifting the percentage of activity at each of the 4 levels.

- 25% of all activity was at Player level
- 40% at Shaper level
- 35% at Leader level
- 86% of all activity in March 2023 involved young people in leading and designing projects, taking on the role of Young Ambassador and playing a leading part in the Youth Board.

Breakdown of activity taking place in each area from October 2018 to March 2023:

- 47% (1,449 opportunities) in the West (covering Kings Lynn, Thetford and Gressenhall),
- 27% (825 opportunities) in the East (covering Great Yarmouth, Cromer and Sheringham)
- 26% (771 opportunities) in Norwich
- 331 volunteering opportunities have been provided to 180 individual young people.

In total 420 staff took part in training, with 151 having taken up opportunities in lockdown. In addition, 45 young volunteers took part in training. Kick the Dust has supported 7 young people on its bursary traineeship programme, the last cohort finishing in May 2022, all of whom have secured permanent employment within the heritage sector. A further 6 young people completed the pre-traineeship programme. One Kick the Dust participant progressed onto the NMS Teaching Museum traineeship programme with 3 others applying for the role and being shortlisted. Two Young Ambassadors have progressed onto teacher training programmes. Our 7 Young Ambassadors have supported Institutional Change within NMS on the strategic Youth Board and Project Board. Staff from our Front of House (FOH) and Visitor Services teams have engaged in training such as mentoring and coaching, mental health first aid and creating autism friendly spaces which played a key role in supporting the new pre-traineeship pilot programme for YMCA clients and other vulnerable groups.

Current activity

Following the successful conclusion of the National Lottery Heritage Fund funded Kick the Dust project, NMS has secured additional funding through an Arts Council England National Portfolio Funding (NPO) Uplift award for the period 2023-26. This will enable NMS to continue to support young people in the three Levelling up for Culture places of Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn and Thetford. This additional funding will enable young people to participate in high quality cultural and heritage activities that develop their creative and digital skills and potential, as well as prepare them for the workplace.

During 2023-24 NMS is also receiving funding from Norfolk County Council (NCC) Public Health to support Kick the Dust activities that focus on the mental health and wellbeing of Norfolk young people.

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

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

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

Young people will work alongside professionals to develop their transferable work-related and creative skills, through the co-production of activity and events, volunteering and work experience operating at a level that meets their needs.

The following data is based on the start of this new project covering the period 1/5/23 to 6/11/23.

Number of interventions with young people:

Between 1/5/23 and 6/11/23 there have been **962 interventions** involving **379 individual young people** taking part in **692 hours** of quality activity. **92%** of the activities were face to face, the other sessions being offered online with young people in the principal target areas.

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

- 18% of activity was at Player level (to introduce new young people to the project)

- 57% at Shaper level (longer term project with young people determining the content)
- 25% at Leader level (long term engagement – young people leading projects, acting at governance level, mentoring staff)
- 77% of all activity involved young people in leading and designing projects

Breakdown of activity taking place in each area:

- 48% (82 opportunities) in the West (covering Kings Lynn, Gressenhall),
- 16% (28 opportunities) in Thetford
- 17% (29 opportunities) in the East (covering Great Yarmouth, Cromer)
- 17% (29 opportunities) in Norwich
- A further 3 opportunities were offered to young people at alternative venues outside of Norfolk including attendance at the 'Young People and Skills' conference in London at the Houses of Parliament, City Hall in May 2023 and the training event at Ely Museum as part of the 'Your Heritage Your Future' project.
- 35 volunteering opportunities have been provided, with 3 young people taking on the role of Digital Buddy.
- Of all delivery, 84% involves young people being part of a long-term group, providing them with a deeper understanding of heritage and allowing them to explore their identity, develop their skills and confidence and embed themselves more in their local communities, a key aim of ACE.

The young people have access to all of NMS sites and can visit with a friend or family member for free during their engagement for that year. Free passes were issued to those beginning on the programme in June 2023. Data shows that passes are being used outside of the times the young people would attend a session in their home museum.

We continue to deliver a blended training offer for all staff and volunteers who support youth engagement in NMS. Staff input to the training programme will be formulated as the project progresses and needs are identified. Training around safeguarding was delivered in-house in June, two of the new Project Workers took part of a Mentoring in Museums course in July, the team attended the Library Living Networks event on video making in July and social media training working with a specialist from Libraries for which the Young Ambassadors will be acting as Digital Buddies as part of the joint team meetings in September, October and November. Further opportunities are being planned for the Spring term to include SEND and Mental Health First Aid training. The team have accessed the 'Childhood Adversity and Creating a Trauma Informed Environment' on 31 October (as part of the new '*Your Heritage Your Future*' National Lottery Heritage Fund-funded project) which will inform future delivery.

Our offer to support our young people around the important theme of mental health and wellbeing is on-going and this will be measured through the new evaluation framework using data from the young people's feedback forms. At the end of the NLHF funded project in March 2023, 26% of young people identified as having a mental health issue. Up to 6/11/23 data shows that **44%** of the individual young people who have taken part in the new programme of activity identify as having a **mental health issue** (although

this is from a smaller number taking part), demonstrating the need for this programme. Through a systematic approach to evaluation, in partnership with Libraries, the team will be able to demonstrate impact on mental health on those taking part and the young people will be able to monitor their progress through the programme in relation to skills, confidence and mental health. Narrative evaluation will be carried out from September 2023 to further demonstrate impact.

NMS and NCC continue to work together through the 'Making Creative Futures' group, Chaired by the Kick the Dust Project Coordinator, where members from across 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 through our Kick the Dust offer. The focus is on mental health and wellbeing and now has representation from the NCC Public Health team. This group acts as the vehicle to share best practice, ideas and resources and its membership continues to grow.

Target audiences: (some young people fall into more than one category) as of 6/11/23

- FE/HE – 44%
- YMCA clients – 9%
- Secondary schools – 41%
- Young people with mental health issues – 44%
- SEND – 3%
- Outside of mainstream education – 21%
- NEET – 26%
- Looked after children and adopted living those at home - 0%
- Care Leavers – 0%
- Young Carers – 6%
- New arrivals and refugees – 6%
- Pregnant young mums and teenage parents – 1%

Impacts on mental health and wellbeing

The new young people's feedback form includes the 78 positively worded items from the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale for assessing a population's mental well-being. The Young Ambassadors worked alongside Norfolk Public Health team to devise the questionnaire, and this will be used in addition to the other measures to show impact in this key area.

From the Young People feedback forms, following their involvement in Kick the Dust, 50% strongly agreed that this had had a positive impact on their mental health and wellbeing with a further 50% agreeing.

Of the 22 responses to 6/11/23, the following data chart highlights how young people were feeling before taking part in Kick the Dust:

QUESTION – pre engagement	All of the time	Some of the time	Often	Rarely	Most of the time
I've been optimistic about the future	7%	43%	28%	21%	0%
I've been feeling useful	14%	57%	21%	7%	0%
I've been feeling relaxed	14%	57%	14%	14%	0%
I've been dealing with problems well	7%	36%	50%	7%	0%
I've been thinking clearly	14%	28%	50%	7%	0%
I've been feeling close to other people	7%	36%	36%	21%	0%
I've been able to make up my own mind about things	28%	21%	43%	7%	0%

The following data chart highlights how 8 young people were feeling following their engagement in Kick the Dust between June and October 2023:

QUESTION- post engagement	All of the time	Some of the time	Often	Rarely	Most of the time
I've been optimistic about the future	13%	50%	38%	0%	0%
I've been feeling useful	25%	38%	38%	0%	0%
I've been feeling relaxed	25%	50%	13%	0%	13%
I've been dealing with problems well	25%	25%	38%	13%	0%
I've been thinking clearly	25%	38%	38%	0%	0%
I've been feeling close to other people	13%	13%	63%	13%	0%
I've been able to make up my own mind about things	25%	13%	63%	0%	0%

From the additional questions asked of the young people taking part, it is clear that the programme is meeting their needs and helping them see themselves in a museum or heritage setting.

- 100% of all young people strongly agreed that the museum was a safe space for young people like themselves who were struggling;
- 100% strongly agreed they were given a voice that was listened to;
- 63% strongly agreed that they understood heritage better than they had done before taking part with a further 25% agreeing;
- 63% strongly agreed that following their engagement heritage was more relevant with a further 25% agreeing. The same numbers stated that they felt heritage represented young people like themselves;

- 85% stated they now had a greater understanding of museums and the job roles available with 50% strongly agreeing that they could see themselves working in the sector;
- 63% strongly agreed that the skills they had acquired would be useful to them in the future with a further 38% agreeing;
- 43% strongly agreed they felt more connected to their local community than previously with a further 57% agreeing;
- 72% agreed that their involvement had helped them to explore and feel more connected to their own identity and heritage.

Summary

The NLHF funded Kick the Dust project ended in March 2023 with evidence clearly demonstrating the impact on young people and staff engaging in activity. The programme is now moving into a new phase, with funding support from ACE and NCC. Kick the Dust is a three-stage journey, with young people developing transferable work-related skills including digital skills and gaining experiences that they would struggle to find elsewhere, to support them in securing employment. Whilst young people cite being involved in curation and creating exhibitions as the main areas they have enjoyed, it is through these activities that they hone their skills and understanding of the workplace, which will help them secure employment longer term.

Our aim as we move forward is to support more working age young people to progress into employment, training, or further learning and long-term volunteering.

The strong partnerships that have been developed through Kick the Dust provide a strong base on which to build, bringing new young people into museum and library spaces.

Success comes in many guises and this month we have had one of our YMCA young people progress into independent living and gain a place on a Level 3 Access course, with the Kick the Dust programme and pre traineeship giving her the confidence to take these steps. She has also secured a role in the NMS Visitor Services team for Norwich Castle. Another participant is now a core member of staff on the NMS Visitor Services team at Gressenhall. Another young person has progressed from being a Young Ambassador to gaining a L4 Apprenticeship with Channel 4 in London and two others have secured places on the MA in Museum Studies in Norwich. One former Kick the Dust participant has secured an internship with the United Nations.

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

'Kick the dust gave me hands on experience of the industry I want to work for while becoming more proficient in the skills I need to get me there.' Chloe, Young Ambassador

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

'A fantastic opportunity to develop my confidence, experience and skills for future employability, and learning more about different opportunities in the heritage sector, as well as the next steps I want to take and my future aims' (Emily following her engagement in Kick the Dust)

'Kick the Dust has played such a key part in my life and helped me secure employment when most doors were closed to me, giving me the skills and confidence to move forward. It is like being part of a family'. Jazz, Young Ambassador

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

'Can I thank you again for the guide to the museum which details all the sensory issues and what to expect etc. We used the booklet before her last school trip in January. I wish more places had something like that.' (Parent of an autistic child using the booklet prepared by Teenage History Club)

New funding bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund

A successful National Lottery Heritage Fund Grants for Heritage Round 1 application was submitted to the NLHF for the Your Heritage Your Future project. The application was submitted by YMCA Leicester, with NMS as Lead Partner. This complex application was put together by a joint project team of staff from YMCA Leicester and NMS, who are now working on the Development Phase of this application, ahead of a Round 2 bid submission in May 2024. If the Round 2 bid is successful, project delivery would commence in later 2024.

5. Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn – project update

5.1 Main construction works

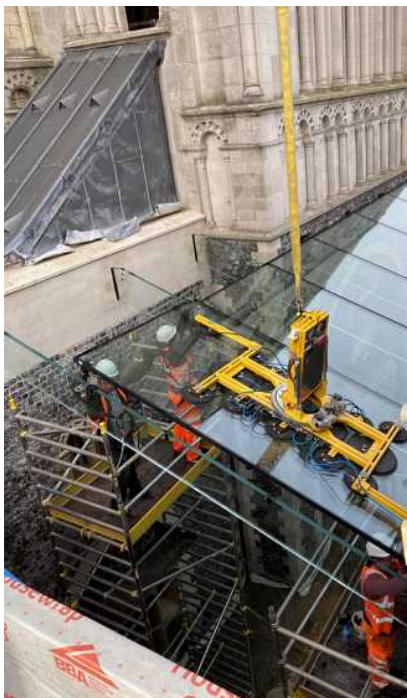
In August 2020 the Keep and surrounding site areas were formally handed over to the Principal Contractor, Morgan Sindall Construction following Contract Award for the main build. Internal and external secure hoardings are in place to demarcate the construction site and delineate the contractor compound 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

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

The installation of internal steelwork structures in the Keep has been completed, with new floor levels installed. Joinery and mechanical & electrical installation is ongoing. The final phase of steelwork installation is approaching completion on the Keep roof. Installation of structural steels has been completed in the new entrance area and adjoining Percival wing of the building. The installation of the new glazed atrium roof in the entrance area has been completed.



Installation of atrium roof glazing panels

A verbal update on recent progress will be provided at the meeting.

6. Other activity across Norwich museums

6.1 Museum of Norwich

The Museum of Norwich team has been busy delivering a broad range of activities.

Summer Holiday Programme: *Snap and Beyond – A History of Puppetry in Norwich*

To complement our temporary exhibition, funded by the Norwich Freeman's Charity, curated by the Young Curators at the Puppet Theatre, staff teamed up with the Puppet Theatre for our summer holiday programme where visitors were invited to *Get Ready with Snap*, following a trail around the museum to help Snap prepare to visit his exhibition. Visitors were then invited to create their own shadow puppets based on what they saw around the museum. Inspiration was found in everything from dragons to the walkie talkies the staff use.



National Smockers AGM

During August we welcomed a group from the National Smockers group who had their AGM in Norwich and treated themselves to a visit to the museum the following day. The group had a tour of the museum with Assistant Curator, Bethan Holdridge and were then shown Norwich shawls and pattern books before concluding with a demonstration of the Jaquard loom. The group were very knowledgeable about a range of textiles and it became a day of sharing thoughts, findings and enthusiasm. The group's Secretary, Helen Gale, sent the following after their visit:

"Thank you so much for looking after us yesterday - you made us welcome and gave a very interesting and enjoyable tour.

The loom demonstration was incredible - I think we were all amazed and impressed!

"Thank you" isn't really enough to show how much we appreciated your tour.

Thanks also to Wiz and his demonstration- the old weavers certainly had to work hard!

I shall certainly be visiting the museum again - you opened my eyes about how much I don't know about the history of Norwich!"

Deep Clean: throughout October

This year, working with Dave Harvey from the NMS Conservation Team, staff completed our first Deep Clean; an event that we hope to repeat annually. The target this year were the open displays and Caley's chocolate case; all of which had been identified during a previous walk around as needing the most attention.

Apart from an accumulation of dust and some potential woodworm in the Sole Press in the shoe gallery (now treated) no other issues were discovered. We were assisted in our work by three volunteers; two from the English+ charity and one from Women at Work; an organisation helping with women's well-being and mental health.

English+ Activities

The monthly Museum Club recommenced following its hiatus during the summer. For our first session we were kindly treated to a tour of the City Walls by Roger, one of the City Tour guides. We have lots of exciting sessions lined up for the following couple of months led by staff and also The Theatre Royal.

Learning update for Museum of Norwich

Art at Work's Mile Cross Wellbeing Project

We are supporting Art at Work's Comic Relief & Groundwork funded creative wellbeing project by offering free entry to Norwich Castle as part of their programme of sessions. The group will visit Norwich Castle eight times over the course of the next year, meeting curators and using the collections as inspiration for their crafting. In August the group came for a self-guided visit and in September they met Senior Curator and Keeper of Art Francesca Vanke who introduced participants to objects related to the question 'if I could?'



Community Culture Club secures three years of funding from UEA's NICHE research project

Heritage sites, museums and arts venues can play important roles in local communities, providing safe and welcoming places for people to come together. Community Culture Club is a creative wellbeing programme based at the Museum of Norwich. The programme is designed for older adults living with dementia, carers, people with long-term health conditions and those who are lonely or socially isolated. The first cohort of the Community Club ran from November 2021- February 2022. After a successful pilot, a second cohort ran from November 2022- February 2023.

Over the summer we successfully applied for funding from UEA's NICHE fund. The funding will support three further cohorts of Community Culture Club, with a special focus on developing a creative embedded evaluation model.

Community Culture Club aims to support people's wellbeing by:

- Decreasing feelings of loneliness
- Creating new social connections
- Delivering activities designed with joy at their core
- Treating people as sensory beings
- Using history to connect to our present-day selves

The programme is grounded in several key delivery commitments to achieve these aims: Sensory engagement around ensuring that multiple senses are engaged in each session, providing opportunities for participants to taste, touch, smell, look and listen. Each session culminates in a creative intervention and art-making. Everyone is encouraged to have a go, supported by staff. Identity changes caused by dementia may lead to changes in a person's sense of identity, so treating the person with dementia as an individual rather than defining them by the condition or focusing on negative aspects, such as lost abilities, is significant.

Community Culture Club constantly evolves based on how people respond to the activity and staff development. Learning is now influencing delivery with other vulnerable service users. The funding from NICHE allows us to develop this practice further and to develop a model that other practitioners could train in, including the embedded evaluation toolkit we are now developing. We are looking forward to this next step of the Community Culture Club journey. Here is a quote from one of our past participants:

The nurturing I have received within the group is helping me recover from my experiences of loss and to rebuild my confidence. I have a greater sense of belonging and ability to plan outings for myself now. Kindness can be contagious and so I hope that the improvement in my wellbeing might allow me to respond with compassion for others who are lonely or suffering.



Fun Kids Radio: Heritage Heroes

On Friday 18 August we hosted *Fun Kids Radio* at the Museum of Norwich as they interviewed local children and young people about their favourite landmarks in the city. The interviews will be edited into a podcast that can be enjoyed by families across the country.

Royal College of General Practitioners: Welcome to Norwich

On Wednesday 27 September the Museum of Norwich hosted a social event for GPs working in the East of England, including those who have newly arrived from abroad to complete their GP training.

The Zainab Project catered the event, serving delicious West African food. The Zainab Project provides training and opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers in Norwich.

Event attendees were particularly interested in the pharmacy collections and to have a special tour of the Undercroft with Curator Hannah Henderson.



The Garage's Creative Wellbeing Group

On Saturday 14 October, we welcomed participants from The Garage's Creative Wellbeing group. Participants have been referred to the group from local mental health services. The sessions are programmed by the participants, and after hosting them earlier in 2023, we were pleased that they wanted to come back for a further two workshops. Our theme for this workshop was chocolate. We looked through our handling collections, visited the enrobing machine, and most importantly – tasted a variety of different chocolate types. Each participant also designed and made their own chocolate box. We are looking forward to welcoming the group back in December for a Christmas themed session. The workshops are based on the model we have developed for Community Culture Club, so it is good to see other groups benefitting from the project's ethos.

6.2 Strangers' Hall

Strangers' Hall Centenary Programme

The newly installed front window displays and interior graphic panels, generously funded by the Freeman of Norwich and Friends of Norwich Museums have proved very popular with the public, as have the new information folders and QR code interpretation. The Centenary has provided the unifying theme for the programme of varied family events and activities taking place during the Summer and Autumn.

For our Summer holiday activities *Challenge 100* offered each visitor a choice of illustrated 'zines based on our *Top 100* objects, previously selected by the public during the Easter holidays. Continuing the theme of Strangers' Hall former residents, family audiences also made their own finger puppets. The highlight of the summer was a week of Free Admission days during which visitors were invited to join in preparations and meet costumed characters in a recreation of the Grand Reopening of Strangers' Hall in the year 1523. Visitors helped the early curator Frank Leney find misplaced objects, put their stamp on a giant publicity poster, tried their hand at conservation and object identification and enjoyed the new displays. The event was hugely popular with 800 visitors over the course of the event. Free openings for the Heritage Open Days Norfolk festival in September kept the museum very busy with 546 visitors.



Heritage Open Day activities

In a new joint venture with the Norfolk Record Office, Cathy Terry, Senior Curator and Victoria Draper, Learning Officer at NRO planned and delivered talks and workshops at both venues, focusing on the legacy of Leonard Bolingbroke and the Strangers' Hall archive.



Archive image of Strangers' Hall c.1910

As our Centenary year has drawn heavily on archive photographs from the early years, it was felt important to make a formal record of Strangers' Hall in the year 2023, to be preserved for future generations. Norwich Photographic Society members spent two days recording interiors, objects and people at work in the museum during October and November, and we await the final results.



one of the Norwich Photographic Society's images

The final events of the centenary year will be the new Christmas programme, offering for the first time an *After Dark Tour* to view the museum by 'candlelight' (LED candles). We hope family visitors will delight in the *Mouse's Christmas House* events, with mini-scenes to spot and their own mini-mouse house to take home.

Strangers' Hall Centenary Displays

The generous support of The Norwich Freeman's Charity and Friends of Norwich Museums for the *Strangers' Hall 100* centenary programme has provided a welcome investment into internal and external displays and funded a programme of imaginative activities, with free events aiming to maximise inclusion. The street front of the museum

has been newly painted and an eye-catching combination of cutout figures, iconic buildings and objects have been installed in the windows.

Our commissioned designer Hannah Broadway was invited to encapsulate Strangers' long history in an engaging and contemporary way, which she has done by creating displays which are playful and imaginative, yet based on real people and museum objects. Community groups and young people participating in the Kick the Dust project provided collage portraits of Norwich's finest.



New window displays at Strangers' Hall



Inside the museum new interpretation panels use archive photos and documents from the early days of the museum. They tell the story of the founding of Strangers' Hall by Leonard Bolingbroke, his '*munificent gift*' to the City of Norwich and the opening as a City of Norwich Museum in 1923. They throw light on Strangers' Hall's pioneering work in the vanguard of the early Folk Life museum movement in the UK and the era of significant donations including the Brereton collection.

Curatorial

Researchers have visited to view wedding and funeral cards, a 'Strangers' era' Bible and to view the rare 17th century beaded basket. The Women's Wellbeing Art group, co-ordinated by Art at Work visited for a practical session in which they looked at collections connected with folklore and superstition. Curators are working with Cassie Herschel-Shorland and English+ Norwich to devise and trial the production of visual

interpretation resources that do not rely on language skills, aimed at non-verbal and other people who do not speak English. A collaboration with *Booksapes* art group on collections inspired display is planned for June 2024.



Meeting of the Art at Work group

Strangers' Hall garden

The volunteer garden team is up to strength with eight active members who together have taken planning and maintenance and kept the garden and courtyards looking beautiful all year. This year's challenge once again has been to keep on top of the attack by box moth caterpillar, which has been mostly but not completely successful.

Schools and Groups

Strangers' Hall has had a busy Autumn with schools and group visits with eighteen groups visiting during September and October.

Building and Conservation

The wet summer and occasional very heavy downpours has inevitably impacted on the fabric of the building. The museum has experienced leaks through the roof at the top of the stairs to the Great Chamber, with an impact on some interior décor. The Morning Room has also been affected by a recent leak. Rodents were discovered inside the offices and one storage area of the museum and these have been dealt with and the areas affected sanitised. The Storage heaters in the Undercroft have been repaired and are now functioning.

Preparations are in hand to commence a major programme of conservation of which the initial stages are generously funded by the Friends of the Museum and a local charity. This will provide a fitting legacy to the Strangers' Hall Centenary year. We are hoping that this will include work on the two overmantel painting in the Georgian Dining Room and Great Chamber, a recovering of the Georgian sofa in a more authentic for period fabric, reglazing using non-reflective glass of some key paintings and most importantly, an assessment of the museum's unique Turkeywork table carpet, dating from 1571 and likely to be a product of the Norwich textiles industry at the time of the Strangers' settlement in the city.

Publicity and Media

In September the BBC News channel ran a major feature on the community collecting initiative which NMS social history curators had devised to record the experience of living through the Covid 19 pandemic and collect objects and ephemera which was specific to it. The coverage included a feature on the *Picturing the Pandemic* survey Cathy Terry carried out at Strangers' Hall.

Bethan Holdridge was interviewed by Future Radio in October on the highlights of Norwich local history and heritage.

The focus on Strangers' Hall 100 has continued to provide regular content for social media. Using the visitor survey we carried out earlier in the year, the museum is running a series *Strangers' Things* to showcase the public's favourite objects and blogs on the new collections to follow.

7. Norwich Curatorial update

Dr Francesca Vanke, Senior Curator of Norwich Museums and Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art

Francesca has recently opened *Crossings, Constructions and Connections*, the exhibition for Time and Tide Museum based around the Turner painting *Walton Bridges*. This show explores the significance of bridges, in reality and the imagination. It also details the history of bridges in Yarmouth, from the eighteenth century to the new Third Crossing. Material and film footage from the building of this bridge are included in the exhibition.



Steve Miller addressing Councillors and other stakeholders at the opening event at Time and Tide

In addition, Francesca is working on the Turner-based exhibition for Norwich Castle, which will open in October 2024. This exhibition promises to be an important landmark event, bringing together, for the first time ever, four versions of Turner's *Walton Bridges* painted at different stages of his career.



The Thames near Walton Bridges, JMW Turner, 1805, Tate

The show explores Turner's central role in the history of landscape painting, and also includes high-profile loans from the Royal Academy, Tate, the National Trust and the Dulwich Picture Gallery.

Dr Giorgia Bottinelli Curator of Historic Art, having recently put on display her exhibition in the Watercolour Gallery *Where Land and Water Meet: Norfolk's Rivers, Streams, Brooks and Broads* is now researching further one of the artists in this exhibition, Norwich-born Catherine Maude Nichols.

Nichols (1847-1923) mainly portrayed Norfolk landscapes. She was a particularly gifted printmaker, and several of her beautiful and haunting etchings of the Broads are included in the current show.



Broadland Scene, Catherine Nichols, undated, etching on paper

Giorgia is working towards a one-woman show of Nichols' work for the Watercolour Gallery next year. This is an exciting development to look forward to, since this will be the first time many of Nichols' artworks have ever been seen on public display.

Dr Rosy Gray, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art is working on the research and development of three exhibitions for the temporary exhibition galleries across 2024. To coincide with the re-opening of the Norwich Castle Keep in 2024, the Timothy

Gurney Gallery will show a new display works from the modern and contemporary art collection, focusing on the variety and breath of Norwich Castle's collection since the Gallery's inauguration in 1964. In the Colman Project Space, Rosy is working with artists Daniel & Clara on a new commissioned body of work, which takes as its starting point, the work of the Norwich School of Artists.

In the temporary exhibition galleries, Rosy is working in collaboration with Amanda Geitner on a major new exhibition exploring the work of artist Roger Ackling for summer 2024. *Roger Ackling: Sunlight* will reveal moments of innovation and change in Ackling's work through a series of chronological installations and is accompanied by an extensive catalogue.

Kate Thaxton, Curator of the Norfolk Regimental Museum has been working on a variety of projects. The RNRM 'New Views' website has been launched and Kate has hosted six NUA tutors, who have visited the collection with a view to incorporating visits and RNRM material into their courses.

Two small touchscreens have been re-installed in the Regimental displays on the Norwich Castle Rotunda balcony - providing both chronology and details of objects in the cases. In addition, a larger touchscreen has been installed with an interactive display that enables visitors to explore various elements of life within the Norfolk Regiment over the years. Subjects include Food, Family Life, Pay, Barracks, Uniform, Service in India, and Sport. It was written and designed by Kate, and volunteer, Sarah Salmon.

On the collections management front, together with volunteers and members of Conservation Kate has been re-packing 70 volumes of archival material, photographs, medals, and items of Regimental uniform in higher quality storage.

In addition, she is working on new teaching materials with the Learning team and is continuing with enquiries.

Ruth Battersby Tooke, Senior Curator of Costume and Textiles has been mainly focussed on clearing all museum objects from the large store in Shirehall, this is the former Courtroom that used to be the Regimental Museum and has been a costume and textiles store since 2012. The room had to be emptied of objects to ensure that ongoing work to remove and replace sections of plaster, which have been damaged by water ingress, will not put the collections at risk. Planning began in the spring and work was carried out over the summer to hand the room over to contractors in September.

In total, 13,627 objects have moved to the Norfolk Collections Centre and 3,268 have been internally relocated to alternative stores in Shirehall. Collections moved comprise all the rolled textiles ranging from patchwork quilts, to tapestries and banners, the entire shoe collection, costume collections including children's wear, sporting, occupational, civic, ceremonial and ecclesiastical costume, textiles tools and examples of techniques and the contents of plan chest drawers which include early 17th and 18th century embroideries, parasols, umbrellas and walking sticks, handkerchiefs and 19th century domestic textiles.

The work was carried out by contracted technicians, a local removal company, staff from the Collections Management and Conservation Teams, supported by Museum Trainees and the excellent volunteers working with the Costume and Textile collections department.



Before and after - first floor - boxed and hanging collections



Before and after - ground floor – rolled textiles, plan chests and shoes

Dr Tim Pestell, Senior Curator of Archaeology continues to be fully occupied with the Norwich Castle project. As detailed in previous reports, Tim still continues some of his archaeology curatorial work: answering enquiries, writing funding applications for new acquisitions, and working with finders and landowners concerning Treasure cases. He continues also to work on the Leverhulme-funded Rendlesham research project, for which he sits on the steering group for their NLHF-funded element. Tim has also continued to sit on the Reviewing Committee for the Export of Works of Art.

8. Other developments

Courtroom

Works within the Shirehall Courtroom to treat the outbreak of dry rot are progressing well. The Courtroom roof to the south and west has been stripped back, with a temporary roof now installed. Repairs to one of the internal south wall plates is complete and works to same issue on the west side is about 50% complete. Works have also been completed to the roof dragon beams.

NMS staff have been working alongside Norse and Norwich City Council Planning colleagues. As part of the project, we are aiming to significantly improve the drainage systems, so that future water ingress can be avoided. Norwich City Conservation Officers have been in attendance on a regular basis and have now approved the proposed gutter detail, along the western side of the building.

The works also includes the requirement to make significant repairs to the roof and walls of the Costume & Textile Store within the Shirehall. These works are outside the original project scope and now include works to external window lintels, further roof beam replacements, repairs to the roof castellations and the replacement of roof slates.

In terms of other works in Shirehall, the Victorian Prisoners Tunnel and another room within the building are being investigated by damp specialists, Hutton and Rostron. Once these investigations are complete, we will be able to formulate a plan whereby all damp and water ingress issues have been addressed along the western (Castle mound) side of the building.



The south-west corner of the Courtroom where most of the dry rot is prevalent

Wider Impact Group

Since the start of the Norwich Castle project a separate project group was formed to help facilitate the operational implementation of the project. Its core aim being to ensure we can successfully operate as an accessible museum throughout the

construction works and to plan for and implement the new facilities as they come back online. The Wider Impact Group is led by the Operations Manager and the areas covered include the following:

- Planning for operational changes to the museum
- Branding
- Managing the introduction of new admission and ticketing systems
- Implementation of the new catering and retail outlets
- Developing a new venue hire offer for Norwich Castle
- Introducing new signage and wayfinding
- Managing the visitor journey
- Creation of a tours including a new dungeon tour experience
- The reinstallation of galleries and facilities
- Planning for legislative Health & Safety and Premises Management considerations

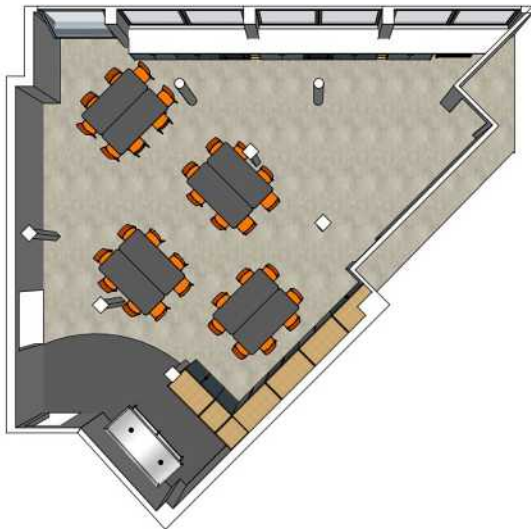
The working group will continue up to and beyond the completion of the Norwich Castle project and we will continue to update members on developments in future museum committee reports.



An illustration of the new Retail shop at Norwich Castle



Examples of the décor for the new Castle Restaurant



A plan of the new Education Activity Room at Norwich Castle

9. Visitor numbers

			APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	YE AR TO DATE	TOTAL
N O R W I C H	Castle Museum	2021-22	0	2,732	5,309	8,053	12,796	7,652	8,964	6,226	4,068	4,962	8,110	6,605	45,506	75,477
		2022-23	8,129	6,857	9,070	8,289	9,390	8,084	8,900	7,259	2,995	7,483	7,914	14,373	58,719	98,743
		2023-24	13,471	9,922	10,889	12,590	15,391	10,647	11,597						84,507	84,507
	Norwich Castle Study Centre (Shirehall)	2021-22	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	7	3	23	27	2	62
		2022-23	24	59	43	56	46	29	85	46	49	82	116	121	342	756
		2023-24	106	53	126	92	101	75	63						616	616
	Museum of Norwich	2021-22	0	115	504	595	614	842	749	767	422	647	1,308	1,165	3,419	7,728
		2022-23	1,406	1,552	1,044	1,666	2,476	1,970	1,431	1,406	1,387	1,185	1,587	1,917	11,545	19,027
		2023-24	1,589	1,378	1,241	2,064	2,059	2,381	1,824						12,536	12,536
	Strangers Hall	2021-22	0	0	0	24	39	450	508	521	460	0	302	883	1,021	3,187
		2022-23	478	642	639	635	779	843	713	620	863	16	329	986	4,729	7,543
		2023-24	468	522	453	1,185	1,699	962	850						6,139	6,139

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Norwich Area Museums Committee
Friends of the Norwich Museums Report
Tuesday 5 December, 14.30

City Hall

During the last few months, the Friends' activities have been relatively quiet. However the work of administration continues and we are pleased to report that our membership numbers are holding up well, with some more applications to join the FNM.

The Autumn Newsletter is now available and has been sent to all the Membership. I have brought today a copy for all the members of the Norwich Area Museums Committee, which we hope you enjoy.

We have all been very impressed by the refurbishment of Strangers' Hall, in its Centenary year. Many improvements have been made and the FNM are pleased that we have been able to help with the cost of some of the furnishings at the museum, including the upgrade of the display cabinets.

The Friends' Tapestry is in its last stages of completion, and we are very excited to see it in all its finished glory. We are planning a tea party for the Friends to celebrate the Tapestry, when we will invite all the stitchers and others who have been working on this project for about 4 years. This will take place in The Keep where the Tapestry will be permanently displayed, very close to the time of the Opening of The Keep in 2024, to which we are all very much looking forward.

Felicity Devonshire
Representative of FNM & Vice-Chair

