

Norwich Area Museums Committee 13 September 2016

## Norwich Museums briefing for period June to August 2016

### A. Exhibitions at Norwich Castle

#### A1. *British Art Show 8* (24 June – 4 Sept 2016)

*British Art Show 8*, one of the most prestigious contemporary art exhibitions in the country, is for the first time in its history currently in East Anglia. Hosted by Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery and Norwich University of the Arts and, *British Art Show 8* opened to the public on 24 June 2016, with three venues across the City of Norwich. Norwich is one of only four UK venues for this show and is the closest location to London.

Part of Hayward Touring's comprehensive exhibition programme, designed to showcase and celebrate the country's leading role in the international art scene, *The British Art Show* is a five-yearly exhibition. For its eighth incarnation 42 established and emerging contemporary artists are represented and the show features more than 100 works – many of which were commissioned or made especially for the exhibition.



Detail of *Diagrams of Love: Marriage of Eyes*, 2015  
 © Linder Sterling/Dovecot Studios Ltd. 2015  
 Courtesy the artist, Stuart Shave/Modern Art and Dovecot Studios Ltd.

Norwich is the third venue of *British Art Show 8*'s tour and curators Anna Colin and Lydia Yee, together with curators from both Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery and Norwich University of the Arts, have devised a special presentation for the City. This, together with works, which have been developed over the run of the exhibition tour to date, plus totally new additions, makes the Norwich showing unique and distinct from previous versions in Leeds and Edinburgh.

All the artists were selected based on their work and significant contribution to the British and international art scene over the past five years.

The exhibition includes works by Ryan Gander, who lives and works in Saxmundham, Suffolk, together with the atmospheric sea paintings created on Dunwich beach in Suffolk by NUA alumna Jessica Warboys. Alan Kane has contributed a range of unusual gallery seating constructed from granite gravestones.

## **A2. The History Train (Saturday 18 June)**

To celebrate the exhibition's arrival in the City, Great Yarmouth and London-based artist Alan Kane, whose work is also featured in *British Art Show 8*, devised a spectacular public event which took place on Saturday 18 June.

Entitled *The History Train*, the event married East Anglia's rich past with brand new contemporary art. A parade of ten heavy horses – including Suffolk Punch Trojan from NMS's Gressenhall Farm & Workhouse – pulled a range of decorated wagons which delivered both *British Art Show 8* art works and related material to the key venues. This inspired event was conceived to combine vivid spectacle with a practical purpose, raising fundamental questions about the nature of art and audience engagement as well as providing a memorable public occasion.

A video of the event can be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89vmUnbSk5Q>

Commenting on the inspiration behind the project, Alan Kane said: *"The horses and their tack and wagons never fail to draw a gasp from almost everyone when they are on show or working. Here we celebrate the very newest art from Britain by delivering it in one of the most traditional and spectacular ways imaginable, making an art history and transport-history collision."*

A significant part of the event were the striking and highly polished horse-brasses attached to the horses' harnesses which were specially designed by members of the public following an invitation to submit designs. Twenty six designs were sent in, ranging from a bird in profile, a compass, a fish, snowdrops and a wheelchair to a depiction of Great Yarmouth races and an RAF badge. The brasses were cast by Alan Kane in the bronze foundry at Norwich University of the Arts.



The History Train in Norwich city centre

### **A3. Colman Gallery temporary displays (until Jan/March 2017)**

A display of drawings and prints by the artist Claughton Pellew (1890-1966) is currently on show in the Colman Project Space, exploring the harmony of country life on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the artist's death.

A selection of works by the priest, artist and antiquarian Edward Thomas Daniell (1840-1842) is also currently on show in the Colman Watercolour Gallery, featuring watercolours from his travels across Europe and the Middle East.

### **A4. *Sixty years On – Highlights from Norwich Castle's Collection* (Timothy Gurney Gallery from 24 September 2017)**

This exhibition showcases the modern and contemporary art acquired over the last 60 years with the support of the Norfolk Contemporary Art Society. The show includes a range of works by artists including Prunella Clough, Graham Sutherland, Keith Vaughan and Frances Kearney.

### **A5. The Battle of the Somme and the Norfolk Regiment**

Four battalions of the Norfolk Regiment fought in this bloody battle between 1 July and 13 November 1916. Opened in July, this is the third of a series of rotunda displays commemorating the centenary of the First World War.

## **A6. Forthcoming exhibitions**

### ***Fisherman and Kings: The photography of Olive Edis (8 Oct – 22 Jan 2017)***

This exhibition will celebrate the pioneering and important work of Olive Edis, a Norfolk photographer based in Sheringham whose unique and arresting images, often immortalising local people, place her at the forefront of modern photography. This show is being curated by Alistair Murphy, the Curator at Cromer Museum who is an expert on the life and work of Olive Edis. The Norwich exhibition of her work complements the HLF funded project at Cromer Museum that will be transform access to the work of this influential female photographer. A catalogue is being produced to complement the show.



'Belcher' Johnson & autochrome self-portrait images from the NMS Oliver Edis collection

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

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



Kaleidoscope House  
Laurie Simmons, Peter Wheelwright and Bozart, USA, 2001  
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

## **A7. Exhibitions at the Museum of Norwich**

### **A celebration of the YMCA in Norwich & Norfolk (6 Sept – 15 Oct)**

This exhibition has been developed and assembled by young people from the YMCA as part of an HLF project supported by the MoN. The exhibition marks mark 160 of the YMCA organisation working in Norwich.



### **Token Traders (March-July)**

The Trade Tokens exhibition was curated by numismatist Adrian Marsden and explored the tokens were issued by traders in the city in the seventeenth century at a time of an acute shortage of small change. The exhibition was the focus for a number of events and activities including children's competitions and specialist talks.





Visitors enjoy the trade tokens display



Trade token for Jeremiah Hovell

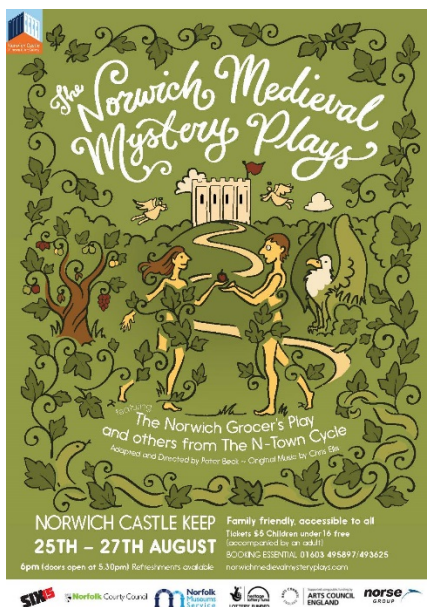
## B. Events

### B1. *Medieval Madness* at Norwich Castle

The *Medieval Madness* family events programme ran at the Castle throughout the school summer holidays and will also form part of the evaluation for the Keep project Activity Plan. Activities included crafts, arms & armour demonstrations, Shakespeare's Soapbox, Medieval fighting and stonemasonry demonstrations. There was also a programme of guided tours of the Keep fighting galleries.

### B2. Norwich Medieval Mystery Plays

On three evenings 25-27 August Norwich Castle hosted the Norwich Medieval Mystery Plays, adapted and directed by Peter Beck. The performance featured the Norwich Grocer's Play and N-Town Cycle, using original music by Chris Ellis. The Keep provided an atmospheric setting for the three performances, all of which were sold out.



### **B3. BAS8 Takeover days**

To celebrate the arrival of BAS8 in Norwich, members of the Young Norfolk Arts team joined forces with students from Norwich University of the Arts and the Sainsbury Centre Young Associates group to produce two special takeover events. The event at Norwich Castle on Saturday 9 July was a considerable success, attracting many visitors for a free evening of BAS8 related entertainment. NUA hosted its own takeover event on Saturday 6 August.

### **B4. Chocolate City!**

The Museum of Norwich ran a programme of chocolate-themed events during the school summer holidays exploring the story of chocolate-making in Norwich.

### **B5. City of Ale festival**

The Museum of Norwich supported the City of Ale festival in May and June. This new initiative has been led by Bethan Holdridge, Curatorial Assistant, who developed a Pop up Museum project as part of the festival.

### **B6. A Shakespearean summer**

A series of events with a Shakespeare theme were organised over the school summer holidays at Strangers' Hall. Visitors were able to discover life in Shakespeare's time including a puppy theatre with Hurdy Gurdy, writing with a quill pen, deciphering old documents and taking an "Elizabethan selfie" using a range of props. Some events were delivered in partnership with the NCC Lifelong Learning team and the Library Service.

### **B7. How the Horse Became**

On Saturday 18 June 2016, to coincide with BAS8's spectacular History Train event in Norwich, the NMS Natural History department (Curator David Waterhouse and Teaching Museum Trainee John Holdaway) held a 'How the Horse Became' handling session in the Bird Gallery at Norwich Castle Museum. Through the use of different horse-related objects, the story of horse evolution was explained to curious visitors. These included a Hippopotamus skull, a Zebra skull and Zebra leg bones, and a one million-year-old fossilised horse tooth and hoof bone! There were descriptions of how hippos and horses shared a common ancestor some 55 million years ago, and how horse's legs have evolved over many millions of years to enable them to move quickly and efficiently. Other objects on show were specimens from the Natural History collections that have the word 'horse' in their name, such as a Horseshoe Crab, Seahorses, Horse Chestnut leaves and Horseshoe Vetch. Visitors were able to discover how these organisms came to bare their 'horsey' names.

## **B8. Snapdragons**

A programme of activities tailored for 2-4 year olds ran monthly at Norwich Castle during term time. Toddlers and their carers had the opportunity to meet 'Snap' the dragon puppet and take part in a range of activities inspiring imagination and conversation through stories, trails, museum objects and hands-on crafts.

## **B9. Talking Textiles**

These monthly talks for adults took place at the Norwich Castle Study Centre in Shirehall. Each talk was illustrated with objects from the important costume and textile collection. Subjects included *Dress Fancy* exploring party wear, and *Life's a Beach* considering seaside and nautical fashion.

## **Curatorial update**

### **C1. Major Loans**

A major group of fourteen objects is currently on loan for the prestigious exhibition *The Celts*, previously at the British Museum and currently on show at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh until 25 September 2016. The items include a stunning drinking horn-terminal in the form of a bovine head with flaring nostrils, which shows incredible design and attention to detail.



### **C2. Art Department Research**

Curators Francesca Vanke and Giorgia Bottinelli are currently researching a major loan exhibition about Rembrandt scheduled for autumn 2017. The theme of this show is *Lightening the Darkness* – and, focusing chiefly on Norwich Castle's magnificent but little-known collection of over 90 of Rembrandt's etchings, will explore the artist's physical and metaphorical uses of light and shadow, used to such stunning effect in his works in both print, painting and drawing. Francesca Vanke is also working with the Yale Center for British Art on an internationally important loan show for 2018, based around the painting of *The Paston Treasure*. The exhibition will bring together as many pieces from the Pastons' extensive collections of gold and silver as can be located, together with a dazzling array of paintings, musical instruments, jewels, and other objects from the seventeenth century.





Rembrandt van Rijn  
*Self-portrait with Saskia*, c 1636  
 Etching, Norwich Castle Museum



Nautilus shell and silver-gilt cup  
 Holland, c1630  
 Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

### C3. Norwich Roll of Honour

The conservation and relocation project for the Norwich Roll of Honour is ongoing, funded by the Town Close Estates Trust, Geoffrey Watling Trust, Carters and the War Memorials Trust.



The Roll of Honour

The wall mounted case about 9' high and almost 11' long with folding oak panels listing the names, was installed in the Keep of Norwich Castle on 13 January 1931. Over the years the oak panels had warped, and become scuffed and dirty. It is now in the conservator's studio, from where it will be re-installed in the front entrance of City Hall ready for 11 November 2016.

#### **C4. Stranger's Hall**

Curatorial work has continued to focus on the assessment and identification of the extensive doll's house furniture as part of preparations for the *Small Stories* exhibition of doll's houses from the V&A which Norwich Castle Museum will be hosting 4 March – 25 June 2017. The 18<sup>th</sup> century doll's house Norwich Baby House is being conserved and redisplayed as part of the programme for the exhibition as a whole, to form the highlight of 'Small Stories at Strangers' element, which will also offer a display opportunity for star items from this significant collection and provide a service-wide trail for doll's houses on display across the county.

#### **D. Formal Learning**

##### **D1. GCSE History conference**

On 18 July the Norwich Learning Team ran a day conference for GCSE History teachers. The day was organised by Learning Officer Jenni Williams and builds on a number of initiatives aimed at growing the level of usage and engagement at KS3 and GCSE. Over 20 teachers attended the day from across Norfolk and beyond. This event was well attended and further sessions are planned. A number of new offers are being developed at the Castle to support the new History GCSE syllabus and the increased importance being placed on visits to heritage and cultural sites.

##### **D2. Group for Education in Museums Conference 2016**

The Learning Manager and Head of Operations & Learning attended the GEM conference in Edinburgh in August, contributing a workshop on effective advocacy for learning services.

#### **E. Other Developments**

##### **E1. Corporate activities**

Norwich Castle has seen a very busy period, hosting events ranging from civic receptions to weddings and corporate hires and events. The Castle hosted an EU Referendum debate on 6<sup>th</sup> June, aired live on Channel 4, hosted by Jon Snow and focussed on the views of the under 25 voting age group.

##### **E2. Norwich Registrars Weddings**

Since the commencement of registry office weddings at Norwich Castle on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2016, we have seen an ever increasing number of ceremonies take place. So far this financial year up to the end of July, over 250 ceremonies have

been completed within the Benefactors Room. The wedding parties for these ceremonies have culminated in additional visitor numbers at Norwich Castle of 7,661 for the first third of 2016/17.



The Benefactors Room dressed for a wedding

### **E3. Strangers' Hall weddings**

Strangers' Hall has seen a good number of ceremonies take place, with eight weddings booked in 2016. A review of wedding provision at Strangers Hall is currently underway.

### **E4. Mystery shopping and visitor feedback**

Norwich Castle Museum is participating in a regional programme of Mystery Shopping organised by SHARE Museums East. Visitor feedback is also being collated through evaluation being conducted for the Keep project and related to individual formal and informal learning activities. Social media channels and online sites are regularly monitored for visitor feedback including TripAdvisor. Staff across NMS also receive regular comments and suggestions from visitors regarding services, facilities, collections and exhibitions. One of these visitor comments will be tabled at this meeting for consideration by Members.

### **E5. Keep Project**

The Keep team received official Permission to Start from the Heritage Lottery Fund on 14th July and have now embarked upon the Development Phase of the project. Since then, activity has been focused on the appointment of a Client Team, who will initially include a Project Manager and Cost Advisor. Preparations are underway for a metric survey of the Keep interior, scheduled for the end of October. Other work continues around fundraising and delivering initial events and activities, both in the Castle and at the Cathedral. Teams have been formed to progress the Activity Plan, Interpretation Plan and Communication and Marketing Plan.

## **F. Visitor Numbers**

Detailed visitor figures up to the end of August will be circulated at the meeting.

### **Report contact:**

Dr Robin Hanley  
Head of Operations and Learning  
Norfolk Museums Service  
Shirehall,  
Market Avenue,  
Norwich NR1 3JQ.  
Tel: 01603 493663  
Email: [robin.hanley@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:robin.hanley@norfolk.gov.uk)