

**Norwich Area Museums Committee 16 June 2015**  
**Norwich Museums briefing for period March – May 2015**

**A. Exhibitions**

**A1. Homage to Manet (31 January – 19 April 2015)**

Following the hugely successful exhibitions *Roman Empire: Power and People* and *The Wonder of Birds*, Norwich Castle Museum (NCM) has recently staged another blockbuster in *Homage to Manet*. This major loan exhibition explored the influence of one of the most important and controversial artists of modern times, the French artist Édouard Manet (1832-1883). The exhibition welcomed 63,835 visitors from January to April 2015.



The exhibition centrepiece was Manet's striking *Portrait of Mademoiselle Claus* (1868) recently acquired by the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Showcasing approximately 60 oils, prints and drawings, including examples by Claude Monet, John Singer Sargent, Philip Wilson Steer, Walter Sickert, Gwen John, William Orpen, Vanessa Bell and others, on loan from local and national collections, such as Tate, British Museum, National Portrait Gallery and the Fitzwilliam Museum, the show aimed to break new ground in tracing Manet's legacy in Britain.

Image credit: Édouard Manet, *Portrait of Mademoiselle Claus*, 1868, oil on canvas © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford

**A2. ARTIST ROOMS: Jeff Koons (9 May - 16 September 2015)**

This important exhibition sees Jeff Koons's influential, exciting and controversial work being exhibited for the very first time in East Anglia. NCM is the only venue to show his work in the UK in 2015. The exhibition was featured in CNN's list of top 19 world events 'worth travelling for'. The Norwich Castle show contains some of Jeff Koons's best known pieces such as *Winter Bears*.



The exhibition is also providing an opportunity to extend NMS youth engagement programmes. Since January a group of 11 young people from Norwich have been working as the 'Koons Collaborative' to devise and deliver Koons-inspired events with the particular aim of engaging young people in contemporary art. The group, all aged 16-25 and drawn from Norwich schools, colleges and universities have been meeting weekly to commission artists, musicians, dancers and others to produce immersive experiences and resources inspired by themes in Koons's work. The young people enlivened the exhibition Private View with music, dance and a costumed appearance by the *Winter Bears* themselves. Their exciting public programme launched on 16 May with their Koons-inspired Museums at Night event at Norwich Castle. Further plans for the summer include a special Koons day complete with live gaming session and fashion show on Saturday 27 June at the Castle as part of the Young Norfolk Arts Festival and a Koons float at the Lord Mayor's procession on Saturday 4 July.

The show has supported strong local partnerships including Norwich University of the Arts (NUA) and Norfolk and Norwich Festival (NNF), alongside national and international partnerships with Tate and the Jeff Koons Studio in New York.



ARTIST ROOMS is an inspirational collection of international contemporary art acquired for the nation by National Galleries of Scotland and Tate through the generosity of Anthony d'Offay. ARTIST ROOMS On Tour is a partnership with Arts Council England and the Art Fund to make available this extraordinary collection to galleries throughout the UK. Anthony d'Offay himself described the exhibition at Norwich Castle as "a triumph, the best presentation of his work ever in the UK."

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

### **A3. 'Almost too daring for an individual': John Sell Cotman's one-man exhibition, 1806-7 (until 6 March 2016)**

For seven weeks during the winter of 1806–7, the citizens of Norwich had the opportunity to visit a large one-man exhibition at the house of John Sell Cotman (1782–1842). With 500 artworks, Cotman's exhibition was probably the largest solo show ever to have been staged by a British artist.

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



Image credit: John Sell Cotman, *Dock Leaves by a Stream*, c.1805-6 © Norfolk Museums Service

#### **A4. Seeing the Light (until 6 March 2016)**

This exhibition celebrates the Works on Paper Digitisation Project which has been supported by the East Anglia Art Fund and sponsored by the Norwich Town Close Estate Charity.



The project will see the scanning of some 6,500 works on paper housed in the Shirehall Print Room. These comprise drawings, watercolours and engravings. The display features works which have been digitised but which have either never or rarely been displayed. Works by the artists John Finnie, James Govier, Joseph Harpignies, John Kirkpatrick, Claughton Pellew, Paulus Potter,

Hannah Smith, Joseph Woodhouse Stubbs, Martin Ware and Connie Winn are being shown in the Colman Watercolour Gallery for the first time.

#### **A5. Sawdust and Threads (until 27 September 2015)**

This exhibition in the Timothy Gurney Gallery is the culmination of a residency programme that takes de-accessioned museum objects as its material. For *Sawdust and Threads* artist Caroline Wright Caroline has made detailed drawings of each of these objects and then carefully and painstakingly taken them apart. Her meticulous and exquisite drawings are displayed alongside the museum objects in their various states of deconstruction.

The project was conceived by artist Caroline Wright and NCM in partnership with the Polar Museum in Cambridge and UCL Museum & Collections in London.



#### **A6. Build Your Own: Tools for Sharing (3 October 2015 – 3 January 2016)**

*Build Your Own* is an innovative exhibition for NCM this autumn. Co-produced by FACT (Foundation for Creative Technology), the Crafts Council and NMS, the

exhibition celebrates craft, technology and community. It will feature newly commissioned work by leading makers, creative technologists and collectives.



Image credit: 3D Printed Raptor Hand  
Image courtesy of Frankie Flood

#### **A7. Other forthcoming exhibitions**

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

This touring exhibition from Seven Stories - National Centre for Children's Books is based on Cressida Cowell's popular *How to Train Your Dragon* books.

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

The British Art Show is widely recognised as the most ambitious and influential exhibition of contemporary art British art, with artists chosen for their significant contribution over the past five years.

*Julia Margaret Cameron and Olive Edis: Two Modern Women Photographers*  
(Title TBC) (Oct 2016 – Jan 2017)



*Small Stories: At Home in a Dolls' House* (4 Mar – 21 June 2017)

This touring exhibition from the V&A Museum of Childhood showcases their stunning collection of dolls' houses.

## **B. Events**

### **B1. Lunchtime talks**

*Homage to Manet* was accompanied by a well-attended programme of lunchtime talks (attendances in **bold**):

- *Homage to Manet: An Impression of the Artist and his Legacy in Britain*  
10 February - Heather Guthrie, NMS (**200**)
- *Manet's Women: Spectacular Ambiguity* 24 February  
Dr Anna Green, UEA (**180**)
- *Manet's Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe: Painting and Provocation*  
3 March -Dr Nola Merckel, UEA (**142**)
- *John Singer Sargent's Portraits: Glamour and Style*  
17 March - Charlotte Crawley, Director, EAAF (**138**)
- *Portraits of Women: 'Every nerve and muscle was adjusted to the consciousness that she was being looked at'* 14 April- Dr Rosy Gray, NMS (**140**)

### **B2. Family activities**

Family Saturdays in March were designed to attract local family audiences at what would otherwise be a quiet time in the museum. These sessions were very successful, with over 1,000 visits each day. Events included *Manet's Women*, featuring drama performances from UEA students bringing Manet's paintings to life, costume from the museum's collections and a talk and related craft activity on the History of the Women's Institute

### **B3. 40 years of NMS**

On Saturday 21 March NCM hosted a successful event celebrating 40 years of the Joint Museums Agreement. The day promoted an NMS-wide offer to the public and generated significant coverage in the Eastern Daily Press. All NMS sites were represented, with special guest appearances by a Suffolk Punch horse and sheep from Gressenhall Farm & Workhouse, located on the Castle Mound.

### **B4. Easter holiday programme**

"Weird and Wonderful" was the theme for 2015, focussing on the rich Natural History collections. The trail was a particular highlight, issued from a trail hot desk. 94% of visitor feedback rated the programme as either good or very good.

### **B5. May half term programme**

The horse was celebrated for May half term. The programme included book readings from two celebrated local authors, curator talks from David Waterhouse, John Davies and Adrian Marsden. Horseman Richard Dalton from Gressenhall

supplied a life-size horse model and demonstrated tacking-up. A new trail 'Canter round the Castle' proved very popular.

### **B6. Museums at Night**

The Castle was presented as never before as it was transformed into a lively celebration of our Koons exhibition. The Keep became a grassed festival garden complete with DJ and Kitschbooth where flower garlands were made and selfies snapped. There were also parading bears, living statues, stilt walkers, face painting, giant bears to colour, a teddy trail and lots of other Koons-inspired surprises, all accompanied by live music. The event attracted 1,912 visitors (significantly up on 2014) and interestingly included 457 12-25 year olds.



Museums at Night 2015

### **B7. The Museum of Norwich events programme**

The Easter holiday theme was *From Fleece to Fabric*, exploring textiles and their importance in Norwich. There was a chance to make a mini-loom and have a go at making patterns. The May half term theme was *Mad as a Hatter*, featuring hat-shaped crafts and stories. Staff are focussing on developing tours and talks as a central element of the event programme.

### **B8. Strangers' Hall events programme**

Strangers' Hall went bear-crazy at Easter and visitors were invited to meet the bears in the museum collections. There was a care bear clinic with Betty's Doll Hospital and bear stories. May half term focussed on the Age of Innocence and children's stories – including our very own Mad Hatters Tea Party in the garden.

## **C. Curatorial update**

### **C1. Accreditation**

On 7 May, Arts Council England announced that eight NMS sites had been successful in renewing their Full Accreditation status including Norwich Castle Museum, The Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell, Strangers' Hall and the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum. There are nearly 1,800



Accredited Museums in the UK, with 25 in Norfolk alone. Accreditation requires museums to demonstrate they reach satisfactory standards in the areas of governance, the management of collections, and user experiences.

### **C2. *The Paston Treasure* Research Project and Seminar 13-14 April 2015**

The Art Department at NCM is collaborating with the Yale Center for British Art on an important project to research and assemble an exhibition exploring one of the Castle's most important paintings *The Paston Treasure*, painted in Norfolk around 1670. Scheduled for 2018, at both Norwich Castle and Yale, this exhibition will involve researching as many aspects of the picture as possible, from the identity of at present unknown artist, to the Paston family who commissioned it. The Pastons in the seventeenth century were great collectors, amassing hundreds of magnificent works of fine art, silver, jewellery and curiosities. Twelve objects are shown in the painting, of which the whereabouts of six are still known in collections around the world. The exhibition will reunite these objects for the first time since the seventeenth century.



In April, Norwich and Yale held a joint research seminar at NCM, bringing together experts to begin to identify areas for research. An impressive team of 27 people, including curators from the National Gallery, the Tate, the British Museum and the National Portrait Gallery, and academics from British and American universities spent two days discussing the painting and its contents.

### **C3. Strangers' Hall Deep Clean**

Every year sees a thorough deep clean of Strangers' Hall. This is a joint operation involving NMS staff and volunteers.



#### **C4. Lorina Bulwer sampler stars in BBC *Antiques Roadshow Detectives* programme**

Lorina Bulwer's remarkable embroideries have once again had a starring role in a BBC programme. The show was broadcast on BBC2 on 7 April. The TV producers first became interested in Lorina's work following an appearance on the Antiques Roadshow in July 2013. Lorina embroidered these empassioned letters during her time in Great Yarmouth Workhouse.

#### **C5. Recent Acquisitions**

##### Archaeology

The Archaeology department has made a number of important acquisitions in the last three months. The first of these is a hoard of Anglo-Saxon silver. Twenty-



three pennies of King Edmund of East Anglia (St Edmund, buried in Bury St Edmunds), four silver brooch fragments and two silver strap-ends found in south Norfolk had been buried probably during the Viking invasions, c.865-9AD. They were purchased for £10,150 through the Treasure Act, funding coming from the Friends of Norwich Museums, The Art Fund, the V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the Headley Trust. Another hoard, of Late Bronze Age metalwork dating to c.750BC, found at Foxburrow Farm, North Elmham, has been on loan to Norwich Castle since it was first discovered in 1970. The landowner has now generously made the loan a permanent gift. Finally, another Bronze Age weapon, a dirk, has also been donated, having been found by a

metal-detectorist in Kenninghall in 2014 and legally exported. Dirks are short stabbing weapons produced in the Middle Bronze Age (c.1275-1140BC). This complete example is now on display next to the recently acquired monumental Rudham Dirk.

##### Art

Following the death of the eminent British artist Lucian Freud in July 2011 a major group of artworks from his estate were accepted for the nation in lieu of tax. Museums and galleries across the country were invited to bid for works by Frank Auerbach and other modernist painters. Arts Council England awarded Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery two works; Frank Auerbach, *Head of Julia III*, 2002, acrylic on board, 66 x 61 cm and John Lessore, *Kossoff Painting in His Studio* c.1985, oil on canvas, 25 x 45.5 cm.







Image credits: © Frank Auerbach and © John Lessore

In January the Art Fund allocated six paintings to Norwich Castle selected by Francesca Vanke, Keeper of Art, and Giorgia Bottinelli, Curator of Historic Art, from Donald Parker's bequest to the Nation:



Edward Seago, *Norwich Station*, c.1940: an atmospheric cityscape by one of Norfolk's most beloved artists; Walter Sickert, *Santa Maria Formosa, Venice*, early 20<sup>th</sup> century: a view of Venice to complement Sickert's French landscapes already in the Castle collection; Philip Wilson Steer, *Two Girls Resting on the Grass*, probably end 19<sup>th</sup> century: the only painting by one of the most important English Impressionist artists in the collection, this work was immediately included in the *Homage to Manet* exhibition; Gaspar Pieter

Verbruggen, *Garland of Flowers*, mid-17<sup>th</sup> century: an addition to the small but important collection of 17<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch and Flemish art; after William Hogarth, *Sarah Malcolm in the condemned Cell at Newgate*, 18<sup>th</sup> century: relevant to our collection in light of the Castle's past as a prison, this painting is related to an original print by Hogarth in the collection; Chinese mirror glass painting, 18<sup>th</sup> century: a rare Chinese work of art in European Rococo style and framed in a Chippendale-style Chinoiserie frame. It will be put on permanent display in the Treasure, Trade and the Exotic gallery later this year.

### Costume & Textiles

Recent acquisitions for the Costume & Textiles department include over 600 hand woven samples and proofs from local author and guild member of the Association of Weavers', Spinner's and Dyers, and one of the founding members of the Braid Society; Anne Dixon. A donation of an example of 1890s aesthetic dress and smock have also been accepted, the dress requires more research but it is made from Silk Satin and alpaca wool panels, the linen smock dates from the early 20th century.

### Decorative Arts

The NCM decorative arts department has been the recent recipient of a most generous gift of a collection of mainly late 19<sup>th</sup> – late 20<sup>th</sup> century studio pottery. The ceramics include some significant pieces of Martinware and Doulton

stoneware, several teapots by 20<sup>th</sup> century studio potters, and works by other important contemporary potters not so far included in our collection. 20<sup>th</sup> century and contemporary ceramics are currently under-represented in the decorative arts collections.



### Natural History

3D printout of footprint N°. 30. Probably *Homo antecessor*. Happisburgh, Norfolk. Printout by Lol Baker of Liverpool John Moores University's 'Fab Lab'. Original data by Dr Isabelle De Groote (Liverpool John Moores University). With permission by the Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London.

In 2013 a team of scientists led by the British Museum, Natural History Museum and Queen Mary University of London discovered a series of footprints left by early humans in ancient estuary mud over 850,000 years ago at Happisburgh in Norfolk. Dr Peter Hoare (NMS Natural History Dept. Research Associate) was also part of the team on site at Happisburgh. The discovery was made on the foreshore at low tide where heavy seas had removed the beach sand to reveal the normally flat estuarine muds. The footprints seem to indicate some five individuals, one or two of them children, walking along the beach heading in a southerly direction. The most likely candidate for the human species who made the footprints is *H. antecessor* ('Pioneer Man'). Bones of this early human species have been found at the contemporary site of Atapuerca in northern Spain.

The Happisburgh footprint is the first 3D printout ever to be accessioned by NMS. It is especially important because the actual footprints no longer exist due to coastal erosion.

## **C6. Curator Report 2013-14**

The eighth Curator Report, represents the work undertaken in 2013-14. The contents show how we are increasingly working as a Norfolk-wide team, involving the specialist skills of Conservation, Design and Technical, Collections Management, as well as Curatorial staff. This new presentation focuses on case studies demonstrating the diversity and depth of the work being achieved across the county.

## **D. Formal Learning**

### **D1. School visits**

Schools numbers were very strong during 2014-5, with over 22,000 schools visits to Norwich Museums.

Norwich Castle 19,682 (17,538 in 2013-4)

Museum of Norwich 1,075 (793)

Strangers' Hall 1,534 (2395)

### **D2. National Curriculum**

Changes in the National Curriculum at primary level have played to the strengths at the Castle with Romans, Egyptians and Life in a Castle being the most popular events. Strangers' Hall has suffered as a result of the Tudors not now being studied so widely, but sessions themed around Toys continue to book well.

## **E. Other Developments**

### **E1. Weddings**

Further to the development of a wedding offer for Norwich museums, three wedding bookings have now been confirmed; two for later summer 2015 at Strangers' Hall and one for summer 2016 at the Castle. Staff have also supported a number of viewings with potential customers.

### **E2. Conference & banqueting**

NMS is actively promoting the corporate venue hire offer at Norwich Museums. A range of branded promotional materials have been produced. Corporate hire is recognised to be an area with considerable potential in terms of enhancing earned income. NCM already has ten confirmed evening bookings for summer 2015, ranging from book launches to formal dinners and receptions.

### **E3. Premises works**

Norwich Castle has recently seen significant investment from Norwich City Council in the re-roofing of the Green room. This is a large roof section that covers part of the education department. The roof has historically leaked and caused significant disruption. These works are now complete.

#### **E4. Minister for Tourism & Sport visit**

Tracey Crouch MP, Minister for Sport and Tourism paid a brief visit to Norwich Castle on Thursday 28 May. The Minister was briefed on the Keep project and also toured the museum. The Minister was welcomed by a party including the Leader of Norfolk County Council and the Deputy Leader of Norwich City Council.

#### **F. Visitor Numbers**

Norwich Museums had an excellent year in 2014/15. Norwich Castle saw a record-breaking 214,726 visits, representing a 10% increase on the previous year. The Museum of Norwich saw 14,880 visits, 2% up on the previous year. Strangers' Hall also had a good year, with total visitor numbers of 9,473. Collectively, Norwich Museums finished 2014-15 with an increase of 19,556 (9%) over the previous year.

Visitor numbers from April 2015 remain strong. For April and May the Castle is on a par with 2014-15 totals, with 39,000 visits. This level of attendance was boosted by the popular Manet and Jeff Koons exhibitions. The Museum of Norwich and Strangers' Hall have had good starts to the year, with both seeing increases on 2014-15.

Norwich Museums have also seen a very successful year with regards to temporary exhibitions. The Romans exhibition in 2014 saw very strong performance, with a record total of 65,560 visits. By comparison, the 'Homage to Manet' exhibition was also successful, with a total of 63,835 visits (Manet ran for one week less). The current exhibition 'Jeff Koons' is also proving popular with visitors.

Detailed visitor figures will be circulated at the meeting.

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