

NORWICH AREA MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

7th March 2011

Item No. 5

GENERAL UPDATE ON THE NORWICH MUSEUMS

Report by the Norwich Museums Manager

**This report updates the Committee on work in the
Norwich Museums over the last 3 months**

1. VISITOR NUMBERS AND ADMISSIONS INCOME

1.1 **Museum & Study Centre Visits** *See Appendix A for details*

Visitor numbers to the Norwich Museums for 2010/11 to date exceed 2009/10 figures by 13.5%. This is as a result of a 17.4% increase in visitors to Norwich Castle. Although a large proportion of this increase was during the month of August when we welcomed 28,000 visitors to the Castle compared with 18,000 in 2009/10, visitor numbers have been consistently higher month on month other than during the 3 weeks of snow in December.

We are planning to carry out further evaluation to identify exactly what is attracting so many visitors to Norwich Castle in order to help sustain this level of visitor numbers.

1.2 **School Visits** *See Appendix B for details*

School visits for the Norwich Museums as a whole for 2010/11 to date have increased 8% compared with the same period. This follows a 12% increase in 2009/10 on the previous year.

The Norwich Learning Team continues to work closely with schools and deliver a wide range of high quality sessions to primary and secondary pupils.

2. IMPLICATIONS OF PUBLIC SECTOR BUDGET CUTS

NMAS, along with the rest of the County Council, has been looking at how it can reduce its costs and make budget savings each year. The approach has been to look at ways in which we can earn more income, work more efficiently and find different ways of doing things.

NMAS's Budget saving proposals were included in Norfolk County Council's '*Big Conversation*' public consultation exercise. Budget Savings recommendations prepared by the Cabinet Group were confirmed at full council on 14th February 2011.

2.1 Norwich Museums

Accommodation budget savings

It is planned to vacate Carrow House and relocate the Costume and Textile collections to the Shirehall complex. In order to achieve this the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum (RNRM) displays will be relocated to Norwich Castle's Rotunda Balcony and the Shirehall and current RNRM accommodation will be reorganised and reconfigured..

- The RNRM collections will benefit from a much higher public profile in Norwich Castle and the current enquiry service will continue to be delivered from the Shirehall complex.
- Norwich Museums reserve and study collections and study services will be located in one building enabling us to deliver an improved and integrated service.

Planning the reorganisation of the Shirehall and RNRM accommodation to house the Costume and Textile collections and to make more effective use of the space is progressing successfully. Whilst there are many details to be finalised there is now an outline plan and schedule on which Shirehall and RNRM staff have been consulted. Staff directly involved in the reorganisation are now busy working on refining the details and identifying storage facilities and support required to facilitate the move. More efficient storage arrangements mean that all the collections can be accommodated. However, we are taking the opportunity to reduce duplication in our handling collections, that is, material that is not part of the core collection but has been acquired to support hand-on learning activities.

Shirehall and RNRM Re-organisation Draft Timetable

Between now and September 2011:

- Reorganisation of Shirehall accommodation, to include moving collections, libraries and offices.

10th September 2011

- This is the Heritage Open Days weekend and the RNRM and Carrow House Costume and Textile Study Centre will be offering free entry and special events/tours prior to a temporary pause in operations whilst the RNRM entrance and desk is reconfigured.

October 2011

- RNRM entrance will re-open as the new Shirehall Reception. The reception area display cases will continue to showcase Regimental collections.
- RNRM enquiries and study services to resume operations.
- Installation of temporary display of RNRM collections on Rotunda Balcony
- Relocation of the Costume and Textile library, resources and handling collections to the Shirehall.

November & December 2011

- Launch Costume and Textile collections enquiries and study service at the Shirehall.
- Dismantle main RNRM displays and pack up collections.
- Install new storage equipment.

January-March 2012

- Relocate Costume and Textile Collections to Shirehall/RNRM 2013
- Launch new permanent displays of Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum collection on Rotunda Balcony, Norwich Castle.

Salary budget savings

A Norwich Museums Organisational Review Working Group has been set up to review organisational structures and job designs. The Group has been busy gathering information in order to inform and guide future plans and staff have been invited to contribute ideas and comments on the following six draft outline proposals:

1. To review the function of the Visitors Services Team to better reflect business needs and opening hours, and to review job design in order to improve flexibility of the Visitor Services Assistant role.
2. To review the way in which we deliver public events in order to provide a reduced but high quality, targeted public events programme.
3. To review the way in which we deliver to school groups making better use of in-house skills and experience.
4. To review the delivery of Front of House duties across the Norwich Museums Front of House teams in order to rectify any overlaps and oversights, and to ensure an integrated, and flexible service and a high quality of customer care.
5. To review the way we deliver the Front of House, operations and curatorial functions at the branch museums (Strangers' and Bridewell), with a view to increasing the integration of functions across the two sites.
6. To review the Norwich Museums curatorial, collections management and support functions, taking into account forthcoming changes to service delivery, to include: reduced temporary exhibition programme; future development plans; reorganisation of Shirehall to accommodate all Norwich Museums enquiries and study services, relocation of Carrow, relocation of RNRM displays to Norwich Castle, changes to Renaissance in the Regions funding.

It is expected changes will be implemented from Autumn 2011 onwards following a formal consultation process.

Reduction in energy usage

- Installation of LED tracking lighting (*funded through NCC's Energy Reduction fund*)
- Norwich Castle Flood lighting : reduced time period

Income generation

Opportunities for generating additional income are being investigated and implications for staffing resources will be taken into account in the organisational review, these include:

- Increasing Room Hire activity
- Increasing Shop and Café sales

2. RECENT AND CURRENT EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS

2.1 The Art of Faith

Saturday 2 October 2010 – Sunday 23 January 2011

The Art of Faith exhibition, an examination of the long history of religious diversity in Norfolk, bringing together rare and beautiful religious objects from the Bronze Age to the present day, has been very successful and has attracted new audiences..

2.2 ***A Skvader: Selected works from the Norwich Castle art collection, artists working with Kaavous-Bhoyroo Editions and OUTPOST artist membership***

Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery: 11 December 2010 – 5 June 2011 Celebrating the centenary of the Contemporary Art Society

A Skvader is a collaborative exhibition initiated by the Contemporary Art Society. It combines objects and paintings from various periods of art history, all of which have a particular relation to Norwich. Contemporary art from artist-run gallery OUTPOST and arts agency Kaavous-Bhoyroo is displayed alongside rarely seen paintings from Norwich Castle's permanent collection. The exhibition reflects the displays within Norwich Castle, where diverse categories of objects are often combined for visual pleasure and wonder, as in a cabinet of curiosities. To do this the exhibition invokes the skvader, a fantastical hybrid – halfhare and half-woodgrouse - which was fabricated by a Swedish taxidermist in the early twentieth century and has since become part of Swedish folklore.

Paintings from Norwich Castle have been chosen which by various means reimagine nature. Artists have always invented as much as they have depicted, by accentuating a point of view or a detail, or confounding perceptions like conjurers. Contemporary artists, living in a culture of visual plethora, can treat art as a hybrid category. Here they display artworks as if they were artefacts, shifting the function of everyday objects, or combining familiar and invented forms. Contemporary art works have been selected which reflect the robust health of the Norwich art scene, by artists Coco Crampton, Rob Filby, and Simon Liddiment, who have all worked with Kaavous-Bhoyroo. Simon Davenport, Matthew Noel-Tod, and Zoe Williams have been commissioned by OUTPOST to make consecutive solo presentations of new work on a specially designed platform, placed amongst the various display cases and plinths of the exhibition.

The exhibition has been curated by artist and former chair of OUTPOST Lawrence Leaman, and Raven Row director and art collector Alex Sainsbury, who were invited to make their selection by OUTPOST and Kaavous-Bhoyroo. To accompany the exhibition, Norwich based writer Krzysztof Fijalkowski has been commissioned by Kaavous-Bhoyroo to produce a text exploring the idea of collecting. A series of talks during the exhibition will coincide with the launch of each OUTPOST artist commission.

2.3 Restless Times: Art in Britain 1914-1945

Sat 19th Feb - Mon 25th April 2011

This exhibition is curated by Museums Sheffield as part of the Heritage Lottery Funded partnership Project the Great British Art Debate.

Restless Times tells the story of what would become a turning point in the history of Modern British Art. From the devastating impact of war to the celebration of the rural and the embracing of new ideas and technologies, this exhibition shows both the uncertainties and possibilities of the time.

Artists on show include Paul Nash, Eric Ravilious, Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore, Percy Wyndham Lewis, Cyril Power and Evelyn Dunbar. There are also specially commissioned contemporary works exploring our own 'restless times' and a programme of special events.

2.4 Family Focus Weekends

Norwich Castle's third series of weekends offering events and activities for families launched in January and are once again proving to be a popular draw. Two weekends coincide with Norwich's Dragon Festival and are able to benefit from HEART's Dragon Festival publicity and a further weekend will link with National Science Week.

2.5 Christmas at Strangers'

Norwich Museums once again focused its Christmas activities at Strangers' Hall. A combination of musical events, themed tours, costumed characters and craft activities together with the opportunity to visit Father Christmas, attracted good numbers of visitors. Similar activities are planned for Christmas 2011 but with a new relocated Grotto.

3. FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS

3.1 Hubert Duprat: Caddis, Crystal and Company Saturday 14th May – Monday 29th August 2011 Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery

One of the major figures of his generation, Hubert Duprat, has shown nationally and internationally for over twenty years. The exhibition offers a timely focus on key works including the rarely shown work with caddis larvae. Awarded the prestigious Tate Art Shorts, the film contains an exclusive and rare interview with the artist. The exhibition is programmed in association with the Norfolk & Norwich Festival.

Emerging as an artist in the early 1980s, Duprat's output has taken many different forms. His work derives from disciplines and historical precedents that are both combined with and often opposed to issues around modernity and conceptualism. Referencing archaeology, architecture, science, craft and art history his sculptures and installations are rooted in research yet are created intuitively often with a playful undertone.

Duprat's best known but rarely shown work with caddis fly larvae will be one of the many highlights of the exhibition. In addition, the exhibition will include a selection of Duprat's enchanting sculptures that include animal heads carved from flint that reference early image making and shadow casting; a work made from coral that confuses the line between the artificial and the man made as well as sculptures made from pyrite and calcite crystal.



3.2 Museums at Night and Medieval Festival

Funding has been secured through HEART from the EU funded Shaping 24 Project for two events. A free late evening of events and activities at Norwich Castle working in partnership with the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts and the Norfolk and Norwich Festival on Saturday 14th May as part of the National initiative Museums at Night and the Norfolk and Norwich Festival 2011.

The second event is a Medieval Festival over the weekend 17th & 18th September 2011. Norwich Castle will be taking over the area of Castle Gardens on the right leading towards Norwich Castle's bridge in order to accommodate a re-enactment group from Ghent. Local re-enactors and in-house staff will deliver activities on Castle Mound and in Norwich Castle.

4. PROJECT UPDATES

4.1 The Bridewell Project

Building work at the Bridewell is almost complete and on budget. A new accessible entrance has been created on Bridewell Alley and platform lifts have been added at different points to enable level access to all visitor areas. Floor levels have been altered where possible to minimise ramps and the courtyard will be accessible to all for the first time, with new double doors from the reception area. A new stairway takes visitors down to the undercroft on special days.

The curatorial, display and conservations teams are busy working on collections, displays and interpretation and further public consultation is planned to enhance interpretation through people's stories.

The display development process is taking longer than envisaged due the time it takes to access the collections which are packed up and located off sites. In addition, many of the non-Bridewell dedicated staff working on the project, e.g. RNRM curator, Strangers' Hall curators, Carrow Curators, display and conservation teams, are now having to support activities related to budget savings, e.g. relocating Costume and Textile Collections, RNRM displays and re-organising the Shirehall accommodation. As a result the revised opening date for the Bridewell Museum is June 2012.

The Bridewell project also now has its own blog :
<http://thebridewell.wordpress.com/>

Tours of the newly refurbished Bridewell will be organised following completion of the building works.

4.2 Gateway to Medieval Britain – a Norwich Castle/British Museum partnership

As one of the wealthiest and most densely populated areas of medieval England, East Anglia produced countless artistic and historical treasures, many of which are preserved at Norwich and the British Museum. The Museums want to bring these outstanding collections together through major new displays in Norwich Castle which will help recreate an unparalleled insight into life, work and faith in East Anglia in the medieval period.

Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England is a collaboration between the Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service and the British Museum which hopes to provide a better understanding of medieval life in the region, by bringing outstanding displays to the iconic Norman venue. The partnership is the first step in a very exciting new chapter in the Castle's history.

The project was launched at the British Museum on February 16 with representatives from Norwich Castle showing new design visions and ideas for major partnership displays which depict medieval life in the region. Display schemes being worked upon combine glittering object-rich displays with thoroughly researched replica furnishings and hangings.

A taster display featuring three star loans from the British Museum will open in Norwich Castle keep in March. Visitors to the museum will also have the chance to look at the initial designs for the transformation of the keep and will get a chance to comment on the proposals. Roy Clare, chief executive of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, said: "We're very pleased to be providing support to enable the development of this exciting new partnership between the British Museum and Norfolk Museums Service, which has responsibility for outstanding collections designated under the MLA's national scheme. We hope our investment will enable these institutions and their highly-significant collections to benefit from a wealth of shared expertise and curatorial knowledge to the advantage of their increasing public audiences."

Members of the public are being encouraged to have their say, and public consultation will continue during 2011.

Students from Hethersett High School have been working with us and with architecture students from the University of Sheffield to create some models of the Keep showing their ideas for what we should do.



Fundraising for the major re-display of Norwich Castle Keep will begin in earnest in 2011, with the aim of completing the project by 2015.

Initial work on the project has been funded by the Museums Libraries and Archives Council's Designation Development Fund, and by the European Regional Development Fund through a European partnership project called *Norman Connections*.

5. EXTERNAL SIGNAGE

Directional Signage Progress

Consultation with key stakeholders and graphic designers continues. It is expected that new signs will be installed by Summer 2011.

APPENDIX A

NORWICH MUSEUMS: Visitor Numbers

MUSEUM VISITS		APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	TOTAL TO DATE	ANNUAL TOTAL
Castle Museum	2007/08	12,364	15,964	11,449	16,136	22,035	9,203	13,582	9,267	5,892	7,760	13,869	12,611	123,652	150,132
	2008/09	12,434	12,164	12,003	12,933	20,502	10,905	13,366	9,048	5,871	8,323	16,319	12,128	117,549	145,996
	2009/10	14,559	12,278	12,146	16,394	18,085	10,915	13,729	9,390	7,071	8,709	19,178	14,691	123,276	157,145
	2010/11	15,555	12,623	13,588	17,126	28,199	12647	16896	11136	6098	10847			144,715	144,715
Norwich Castle Study Centre (Shirehall)	2007/08	281	292	305	279	152	434	387	391	249	308	246	260	3,078	3,584
	2008/09	278	211	205	185	155	507	349	313	128	213	255	260	2,544	3,059
	2009/10	167	177	238	161	138	240	235	266	92	148	130	208	1,862	2,200
	2010/11	171	241	191	216	135	307	264	229	74	142			1,970	1,970
Strangers Hall	2007/08	569	331	365	519	662	793	511	607	1,679	361	832	998	6,397	8,227
	2008/09	569	648	679	643	577	833	707	844	991	499	1,023	582	6,990	8,595
	2009/10	1,050	664	786	1,129	952	1,104	778	1,150	1,619	87	891	878	9,319	11,088
	2010/11	992	547	613	987	1051	781	962	939	1138	closed			8010	8010
Royal Norfolk Regimental	2007/08	285	305	300	322	651	516	408	250	101	Closed	285	343	3,138	3,766
	2008/09	382	502	292	206	370	445	596	272	143	290	329	74	3,498	3,901
	2009/10	414	299	204	375	379	467	477	362	135	69	276	401	3,181	3,858
	2010/11	403	225	339	462	471	565	398	259	207	126			3455	3455
Royal Norfolk Regimental via Castle	2007/08	2,477	2,725	1,751	3,818	6,044	1,939	2,684	1,354	665	Closed	1,832	2,148	23,457	27,437
	2008/09	929	6	178	1,599	1,179	124	221	134	10	344	1,837	474	4,724	7,035
	2009/10	1,939	1,076	915	2,405	2,089	1,069	647	870	635	400	1,636	1,028	12,045	14,709
	2010/11	1413	1014	1297	1731	1815	1046	1600	808	590	412			11726	11726
Carrow House Costume and Textile Study Centre	closed 2 years													0	0
	2009/10	53	44	99	156	59	247	216	189	167	231	210	181	1,852	1,852
	2010/11	76	117	132	137	90	166	176	151	53	0			1,098	1,098

MUSEUM VISITS cont.		APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	TO DATE	TOTAL
TOTAL NORWICH MUSEUM VISITS	2007/08	15,976	19,617	14,170	21,074	29,544	12,885	17,572	11,869	8,586	8,429	17,064	16,360	159,722	193,146
	2008/09	14,592	13,531	13,357	15,566	22,783	12,814	15,239	10,611	7,143	9,669	19,763	13,518	135,305	168,586
	2009/10	18,129	14,494	14,289	20,464	21,643	13,795	15,866	12,038	9,552	9,413	22,111	17,206	149,683	189,000
														0	0
	2010/11	18,534	14,650	16,028	20,522	31,671	15,346	20,120	13,371	8,107	11,527	0	0	169,876	169,876
		Variance against 2009/10												↑ 13.5%	

APPENDIX B

SCHOOL VISITS		APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	TOTAL TO DATE	ANNUAL TOTAL
Castle Museum	2007/08	469	1,115	1,648	1,278	0	617	991	1,309	309	683	1,225	1,097	7,736	10,741
	2008/09	995	835	1,895	1,047	65	684	908	1,946	734	1,140	1,719	2,066	9,109	14,034
	2009/10	453	932	2,416	964	8	517	1,386	1,956	1,297	1,399	1,624	3,050	9,929	16,002
	2010/11	424	1022	2217	1708	57	1118	1360	2777	706				11389	11,389
Strangers Hall	2007/08	91	11	79	45	0	38	118	104	171	130	197	266	657	1,250
	2008/09	70	194	74	165	0	3	166	267	313	170	342	324	1,252	2,088
	2009/10	28	48	237	109		32	110	609	403	79	332	394	1,576	2,381
	2010/11	91	112	30	150			156	564	128				1,231	1,231
Royal Norfolk Regimental	2007/08	45	54	29	0	0	0	69	128	0	0	38	75	325	438
	2008/09	56	43	0	0	0	0	203	121	52	141	0	133	475	749
	2009/10 ACTUAL	45	29	0				159	118	24		13	166	375	554
	2010/11	0	0	0	11			90	64	45				210	210
	2007/08	605	1,180	1,756	1,323	0	655	1,178	1,541	480	813	1,460	1,438	8,718	12,429

TOTAL SCHOOL VISITS	2008/09	1,121	1,072	1,969	1,212	65	687	1,277	2,334	1,099	1,451	2,061	2,523	10,836	16,871
	2009/10	526	1,009	2,653	1,073	8	549	1,655	2,683	1,724	1,478	1,969	3,610	11,880	18,937
	2010/11	515	1,134	2,247	1,869	57	1,118	1,606	3,405	879	0	0	0	12,830	12,830
	VARIANCE AGAINST 2009/10													↑ 8%	

NB Bridewell Museum closed until late Summer 2012