

NORWICH AREA MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

8 March 2010

Item No. 6

GENERAL UPDATE ON THE NORWICH MUSEUMS

Report by the Norwich Museums Manager

<p>This report updates the Committee on work in the Norwich Museums over the last 3 months and forthcoming activities.</p>

1. VISITOR NUMBERS AND ADMISSIONS INCOME

1.1 Museum & Study Centre Visits (see Appendix A)

- Total visitor numbers for from April 2009 to January 2010 for the Norwich Museums and Study Centres (excluding visitor to Regimental Museum via Norwich Castle) are in excess of the target 2009/10 and visitor numbers for the same period 2008/09.
- Visitors to the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum via the Tunnel from Norwich Castle are lower than last year and against target up until November 2009. The route through the Mammal Gallery provides the simplest and most direct route to the entrance to the Tunnel and following its closure at the end of the Easter school holidays when visitors had to access the Tunnel via the Arts of Living Gallery visitor numbers were noticeably lower despite increasing signage and ensuring visitors were informed of the opportunity for a free visit to the Regimental Museum at the reception desk. The Mammal Gallery, re- named the Natural History Gallery, re-opened in mid-December and visitor numbers to the RNRM via the Tunnel for December and January are much improved and will hopefully return to their previous level.

1.2 School Visits (see Appendix B)

- School visits for the Norwich Museums for the same period continue to be in excess of the target for 2009/10 and school visits for the same period 2008/09.
- The proportion of self-guided school visits to the Norwich Museums for this period is 29%. School visits which include workshops, costumed interpretation and/or object handling sessions amount to 71%. The most popular topics are Romans, Egyptians, Tudors and Toys.
- The additional costs of delivering workshops and other sessions are charged to the school (cost of freelance education workers) but no profit is made by NMAS.

- Norfolk schools do not pay admission fees to the Norwich Museums. There is no admission charge to schools that choose to undertake self-guided tours and material is available on the web site to support teachers to undertake self-guided tours.
- There is also a bursary available for schools who request help with covering travel costs.

1.3 New Opening Hours

- The Norwich Museums currently operates different opening hours across its sites together with different opening hours during term-time and school holidays and on week-days and weekends.
- In order to create more consistency across the sites as far as possible, to make it simpler to communicate opening times to the public and to apply visitor analysis findings to ensure the museums opening hours are effective Norwich Castle and the Regimental Museum will be moving to seasonal opening hours with the same closing time for each day of the week.

New Opening Hours

Norwich Castle		
Off-Peak: October to June	Mon-Sat	10am to 4.30pm
	Sun	1pm to 4.30pm
Peak : July to September	Mon-Sat	10am to 5pm
	Sun	1pm to 5pm
Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum		
Off-Peak: October to June	Tue-Sat	10am to 4.30pm
Peak: July to September	Tue-Sat	10am to 5pm
Strangers' Hall		
Year round - February half-term to 24 December	Wed-Sat	10.30am to 4pm

Current Opening Times

Norwich Castle		
Term-time	Mon-Fri	10am to 4.30pm
	Sat	10am to 5pm
	Sun	1pm to 5pm
Holidays	Mon-Sat	10am to 5.30pm
	Sun	1pm to 5pm
Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum		
Term-time	Tue-Fri	10am to 4.30pm
	Sat	10am to 5pm
Holidays	Tue-Sat	10am to 5pm
Strangers' Hall		
Year round - February half-term to 24 December	Wed-Sat	10.30am to 4.30pm

2. RECENT AND CURRENT TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS

2.1 Norwich Castle

Watercolour in Britain: Travelling with Colour

30 January 2010- 18 April 2010, Norwich Castle Exhibition Galleries



Watercolour in Britain presents a rich variety of subject matter by many of Britain's finest painters from the eighteenth century through to the present day. Part of the Heritage Lottery Fund project 'The Great British Art Debate', it features works from the partner galleries, Tate Britain, Norwich Castle, the Millennium Galleries in Sheffield and the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne. The show will go on tour to the partner galleries from June, but it's already proving popular here in Norwich, with excellent attendance for lunchtime talks as well.

There are complementary exhibitions in other spaces at the Castle. A Blaze in My Heart: The Watercolours and Letters of John Sell Cotman recently opened in the Colman Watercolour Gallery, showing archives and paintings from NMAS collections. Drawing on Cotman, a partnership exhibition between MA Drawing students from Norwich University College of the Arts, and Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery, has opened in the small temporary space in the Cotman Gallery, and presents a contemporary perspective on the works of the Norwich School of Artists.

The Natural History Gallery



On Wednesday 16 December 2010, the new Natural History Gallery was launched at a lively event attended by the Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of Norwich, Councillor Evelyn Collishaw, and the Chairman of Norfolk County Council, Mrs Shelagh Gurney. Schoolchildren from Catton Grove Primary School, who helped us plan the gallery, were there, together with a number of our most frequently visiting Museums Pass holders. Castle Café staff showed their artistic side, producing a superb Polar Bear cake for the occasion.



The gallery opened fully to the public on Saturday 19 December 2009, and has been a huge success ever since. Visitors are spending a long time looking at the new displays, and feedback has been very positive.

Family Events

- In 2009 we trialled a series of weekend themed family focused activities during the period between Christmas and Easter. These were very successful and attracted more visitors than for the same period in previous years therefore a similar series of activities is been delivered this year supported by a leaflet called '**Family Fun at Norwich Castle**' also promoting the half-term activities. These events are once again, proving very popular, and include themes on Kett's Rebellion, costume through the ages, storytelling, Romans, archaeology, natural history and rocks (part of National Science Week). During the February half-term week Norwich Castle achieved full capacity on most days at around 1500 visitors, a significant increase on previous years.

2.2 Christmas at Strangers' Hall

- Following last year's success, Norwich Museums has focused its Christmas activities at Strangers' Hall with seasonal period musical and craft activities, special tours and Father Christmas. Visitor numbers during December were 18% higher than the previous year.

2.3 Carrow House Costume and Textile Study Centre

- Carrow House re-opened to the public during Heritage Open Weekend in early September and has already proved popular with individuals and groups for research, special interest and general interest purposes. An activities and events programme was launched in liaison with the Costume and Textile Association starting in January 2010 and is already providing to be popular with the majority of activities already fully booked.

2.4 Norwich Castle Study Centre (Shirehall)

- 27% of visitors from April 2009 to January 2010 visit the study centre as part of a group. The modest events programme at the study centre has been successfully targeting the over-55 age group with a series of very popular 'Try it on a Thursday' taster sessions. These two hour pre-booked sessions introduce different parts of the collection and provide an opportunity to study objects in detail. In addition to one-off group visits and partnerships with higher education providers such as NUCA, the study centre also has regular monthly visits from the Norwich U3A Artefact group.
- 30% of visitors to the study centre come as individuals to work with the collection. These visitors include research students, interested individuals and students from NUCA. The introductory sessions delivered to tutors at NUCA have led to a boost in the number of NUCA students accessing collections at the study centre as more students have been.

3. OTHER NEWS

3.1 Award

- Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service's **Learning Team** have won Norfolk County Council's **Outstanding Contribution Award** for the third quarter's theme '*Working Together*'.

3.2 Repackaging Handling Collections

- Handling collections are a vital resource across NMAS. The Conservation Team have been helping the Learning Team re-assess their entire handling collections for improved storage and access. Alice Forkes has been training and working with two Learning volunteers, Emma Turner and Martin Burchett, to repack the Medieval and Roman collections. Each object is now individually supported in shaped Plastazote (an inert polyethylene foam) thus improving accessibility and helping to protect and preserve them for the future. The results have received a positive response from the Learning Department and there are plans to repack the rest of the collections with the help of the volunteers using their new skills.

**Medieval handling tray-
BEFORE**



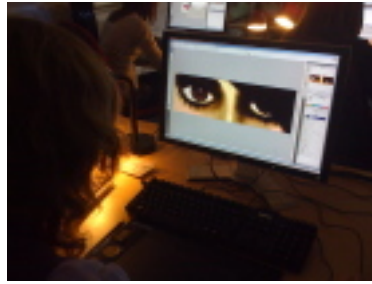
**Medieval handling tray-
AFTER**



3.3 Visual Dialogues

- Over the past few months fifteen, A-level art students from across the county have been coming together once a week to help interpret our fine art collections.
- Works by J. Crome, William Beechey, Emily Stannard and J.B.Crome, have been examined alongside more recent works by Ian Skoyles, Ivy Smith, Rosie Snell and Tracey Emin. Taking the artists' theme or medium as a starting point, students have been creating short graphic novels. To do this they have been working closely with staff and students from Norwich University College of the Arts (Games Art & Design). They have also been using new social media to discuss their ideas via their website at: <http://visualdialogues.ning.com>. A small exhibition of their work will on display at the Castle from 13 February 2010 until 25 April 2010.

- Visual Dialogues is a project initiated and managed by Tate Britain in partnership with art galleries around England.



(a Visual Dialogues student digitally manipulating her image)

3.4 Costessey Cluster at the Castle

- NMAS was recently awarded funding from the Prince's Foundation for Children & the Arts START programme to develop an arts project with a group of schools we have not previously worked with, in this case the Costessey cluster of schools, including Costessey High School. The funding enables us to offer a range of workshops and activities to the schools, both at the Castle and off site.
- Museum visits to Norwich Castle for 732 students from Costessey started at the beginning of January. Using the works on show in the Cotman gallery and the Great British Art? Exhibition as a springboard, students participated in a variety of activities which encouraged them to look more closely at the paintings on display, and to consider some of the questions about national identity posed by the Great British Art? Exhibition. As this was the first visit to the Castle for many of the students, they also had an opportunity to explore the museum with their teachers and to go on a tour of the Keep.
- The students will be visiting again in March. This time they will have the opportunity to try watercolour painting.
- We plan to use the sessions created with this funding in the future with other schools, and we are also optimistic that the links established with Costessey will be developed beyond the life of the project.

4. UPDATES

4.1 The Bridewell Redevelopment

- The Bridewell Collections have been packed up and relocated to temporary stores for the duration of the building work and display fit-out contracts.
- The building plans have been awarded planning permission and Listed Building Consent and tenders have been received from building contractors with building works expected to commence in mid-March 2010.

- Following a Tender process, Norwich based Ugly Studios have been awarded the display design contract to carry out display concept and gallery layout designs, they will start working on concept designs from March 2010 NMAS's in-house display department will be carrying out detailed design relating to mounting museum objects and object installation.
- Small groups of three or four NMAS staff, comprising curators and learning officers are responsible for carrying out research, compiling object lists and developing narratives for each individual gallery themes.
- Following notification that the project had been awarded Heritage Lottery Funding, architects and designers have been appointed to develop detailed specifications and schedules and as a result the opening date has been revised and is now Autumn 2011.

4.2 Norwich Castle's Keep Basement Prison Story

- Work is progressing on relocating and re-displaying the Prison Story from Norwich Castle's Keep main floor to the Keep basement. The current display will be removed from the Keep after Easter and the new display will open to the public for the 2010 Summer holidays.

4.3 Civic Coach

- Norwich City Council has decided to go ahead with carrying out the carbon dioxide treatment of the Civic Coach in order to treat the moth infestation following liaison with NMAS's Conservation Dept. NMAS have recommended that the Civic Coach is moved to alternative premises following treatment in order to prevent re-infestation but as yet suitable alternative accommodation has not been identified.

5. LOOKING AHEAD

8 May to 5 September 2010 - Bernard Mathews and Timothy Gurney Galleries Beatles to Bowie: The 60s Exposed

- A photographic touring exhibition from the National Portrait Gallery.

5 June to September 2010 - Norwich Union Gallery Bridget Riley: Flashback

- A selection of works from the Arts Council Collection by this popular, high profile artist.

20 July to 16 September 2010 - Castle Keep Medieval Machines

- From a water wheel to a siege engine, explore medieval technology with this hands-on exhibition from Science Projects, London

**Rachel Kirk, Norwich Museums Manager
24 February 2010**

To include comparisons against previous years and against target

[illegible]

MUSEUM VISITS cont.		APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	TO DATE	TOTAL
TOTAL 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	130,838	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	107,882	168,586
	2009//10 TARGET	15,953	16,926	13,922	19,657	27,877	13,075	16,820	11,324	7,779	8,788	19,058	15,321	124,230	186,500
	2009/10 ACTUAL	18,108	14,484	14,279	20,431	21,625	13,776	15,780	11,701	8,917	9,405	0	0	118,483	148,506
	Variance against target	2,155	-2,442	357	774	-6,252	701	-1,040	377	1,138	617	0	0	-5,747	-3,615

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	6,118	10,741
	2008/09	995	835	1,895	1,047	65	684	908	1,946	734	1,140	1,719	2,066	6,429	14,034
	TARGET	709	945	1,716	1,126	31	630	920	1,577	505	883	1,426	1,532	6,077	12,000
	2009/10 ACTUAL	481	932	2,416	964	8	519	1,389	1,956	1,297	1,399			11,361	11,361
	Variance against target	-228	-13	700	-162	-23	-111	469	379	792	516	0	0	632	2,319
Strangers Hall	2007/08	91	11	79	45	0	38	118	104	171	130	197	266	382	1,250
	2008/09	70	194	74	165	0	3	166	267	313	170	342	324	672	2,088
	TARGET	68	86	64	88	0	17	119	156	203	126	226	247	442	1,400
	2009/10 ACTUAL	28	48	237	109		32	110	609	403	79			1,655	1,655
	Variance against target	-40	-38	173	21	0	15	-9	453	200	-47	0	0	122	729
Royal Norfolk Regimental	2007/08	45	54	29	0	0	0	69	128	0	0	38	75	197	438
	2008/09	56	43	0	0	0	0	203	121	52	141	0	133	302	749
	TARGET	51	49	15	0	0	0	137	126	26	71	19	105	252	600
	2009/10 ACTUAL	45	29	0				159	118	24				233	375
	target	-6	-20	0	0	0	0	22	-8	-2	0	0	0	-5	-15
TOTAL SCHOOL VISITS	2007/08	605	1,180	1,756	1,323	0	655	1,178	1,541	480	813	1,460	1,438	6,697	12,429
	2008/09	1,121	1,072	1,969	1,212	65	687	1,277	2,334	1,099	1,451	2,061	2,523	7,403	16,871
	TARGET	828	1,080	1,795	1,214	31	647	1,176	1,858	734	1,080	1,671	1,885	6,772	14,000
	2009/10 ACTUAL	554	1,009	2,653	1,073	8	551	1,658	2,683	1,724	1,478	0	0	7,506	13,391
	Variance against target	-274	-71	873	-141	-23	-96	482	825	990	469	0	0	749	3,033

NB Bridewell Museum closed until late 2011

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Breakdown of ticket types for Norwich Castle full-year 2008/09

Castle		69%
Special Exhibitions		3%
Pop in for a Pound		11%
Groups & Schools		9%
Norfolk Schools		8%
TOTAL		100%

Breakdown of ticket types for Norwich Castle April-July 2009

Castle				64%
Special Exhibitions				5%
Pop in for a Pound				13%
Groups & Schools				10%
Norfolk Schools				8%
TOTAL				100%

NB

There was a particularly popular temporary exhibition 'Mary Newcomb's Odd Universe' which could account for higher proportion of Special Exhibitions and Pop in for a Pound tickets

REPEAT VISITS

We are able to estimate numbers of first time and repeat visits to Norwich Castle from The MORI Survey which asks visitors 'is this your first visit to Norwich Castle?'

	Participants	421
First visit		41%
Been Before		59%

If one analyses this further asking the question 'how many times have you visited in the last 12 months?' one can calculate the percentage of visitors made by each group. The 41% first time visitors make up 14% of annual visits. The 59% repeat visitors make up 86% of visits.

Frequency of Visits	Visitors	Visits	% Visits
Once	41%	41	14%
Twice	16%	32	11%
3 times	17%	51	18%
4 times	14%	105	36%
5-10 times	3%	30	10%

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS September 2009		Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
Strangers	2007					519
	2008					590
	2009					455
Carrow	2007					-
	2008					-
	2009					145
Regiment al	2007					596
	2008					354
	2009					487
Castle	2007					797
	2008					1,353
	2009					1,535