

## The Norwich Area Museums Committee Briefing Paper March 2015

### Visitor Numbers 2014/15 – See Appendix 1

Visitor numbers across all three sites to the end of January 2015 remain higher than for the same period as last year at 188,746, compared with 174,346 in 2013/14. This is largely due to a visitor increase at Norwich Castle of over 11%.

The *Homage to Manet* exhibition has been hugely popular, and visitor numbers for February are likely to be as good if not better than those for 2014 when we hosted the hugely popular exhibition *Roman Empire: Power and People*. For the first 3 weeks of February we attracted 21,030 visitors,

The February half-term holidays have attracted high numbers of visitors across all sites. The Museum of Norwich did particularly well with 929 visitors, an increase of 45% on 2014. Strangers' Hall attracted a record 229 visitors on the Wednesday for its *Bear* themed events, and the Castle 10,138 visitors, only 52 less visitors than in 2013/14.

The high visitor numbers at Norwich Castle has been reflected in good admission income and secondary spend in the Castle's café and shop.

Visitor numbers to end of February 2015 at the Museum of Norwich are on target for the year and are slightly higher than at the same time last year.

Visitors to Strangers' Hall are to date 3% lower than in 2013/14. The difference can be mostly attributed to lower school visits resulting from the loss of Tudors from the National Curriculum.

The Friends of the Norwich Museums have confirmed that they will provide financial support to enable Strangers' Hall to open for additional days – Thursdays and Fridays – from June to September 2015.

### School Numbers 2014/15 - See Appendix 2

Bookings are generally going well for the new academic year, however, changes to the National Curriculum are beginning to have an impact, particularly at Strangers' Hall where the core school offer is Tudors. This subject is no longer taught at Key Stage 2 Primary age, and despite adapting the session to focus on other areas of the curriculum, e.g. local history and important people such as Robert Kett, bookings have dropped. It is expected that as schools get to grips with the new curriculum and our revised offer, the number of school visits will improve.

However, more positively, the new curriculum does play to Norwich Castle's strengths where school visits were up by 26% at the end of January. The Museum of Norwich has also experienced an increase to date of 19%. Overall school visits to the Norwich Museums were 17,306 at 31/1/15 compared with 14,465 in 2014.

### OTHER LEARNING SERVICES NEWS

Norfolk Fostering Advisory Partnership Conference

Norwich Castle Museum & Arts was well represented at the Norfolk Fostering Advisory Partnership Conference, held at the John Innes Centre in Norwich on 10 December and which attracted over a hundred foster carers and professionals. Our stand in the 'marketplace' proved very popular with foster carers and as a result we're expecting an influx of new recruits to Norwich Castle's Museum Club, which runs once a month for 7-14 year olds and is free for Looked After Children.

## Mystery Shopper Access Visit

Norwich Museums' Access Group meet quarterly to advise and support and as part of Norwich Castle's attention to customer care, the group was invited to participate in a 'mystery shopper' expedition to the Castle. The visit produced several action points, many of which were easily addressed, i.e. torches for low light areas, magnifying sheets and improved signage. In addition, a walk through the galleries revealed several 'hidden' resources; for example, one of our visually impaired members really enjoyed comparing the textures of the bricks and flints in the walls of the keep and a Braille label was subsequently attached to the raised profile map outside the Egyptian Gallery so the pyramids can now be 'seen' in 3D.

## The Koons Collaborative

Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery will be hosting a world class exhibition of works by the American artist, *Jeff Koons* (9 May – 6 September 2015), as part of the prestigious ARTIST ROOMS scheme. One of the key objectives of the ARTIST ROOMS programme is to engage young audiences in contemporary art. As part of our commitment to this, and building on previous youth engagement work at the Castle, a group of young people have been chosen to work on this exhibition, devising and delivering events inspired by themes in Koons' work. The events will attract all audiences, but will be targeted particularly at developing young audiences. Since January, twelve 16 to 25- year-olds from Norwich schools and universities, have met weekly as The Koons Collaborative. They have been hard at work commissioning artists, musicians, dancers, and plenty more, to produce immersive experiences, workshops, and resources for Museums at Night (16 May) and during the Young Norfolk Arts Festival (26 June—5 July), including a free Saturday on 27 June. Norfolk Museums Service is giving the Collaborative intensive professional training in all aspects of how to put on events in a large museum including marketing, publicity, curation, design, budgeting, social media, and visitor services.

## Temporary exhibitions

### HOMAGE TO MANET

To 19 April 2015 Norwich Castle

An exhibition developed around the loan of an Edouard Manet (1832 – 1883) painting recently acquired by the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford called *Portrait of Mademoiselle Claus* (1868).

*Homage to Manet* is a major loan exhibition which explores the influence of one of the most important and controversial artists of modern times.

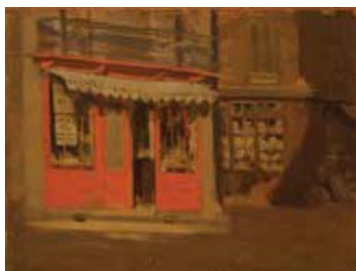


The exhibition will include a number of loans from Tate, the British Museum, The Manchester City Art Gallery, the Royal Academy and private collections including work by Claude Monet, John Singer Sargent, Walter Sickert, and Philip Wilson Steer, Gwen John, William Orpen, Vanessa Bell, Laura Knight, Alfred Munnings and others.

Sir William Orpen, *Homage to Manet*,  
1909, oil on canvas © Manchester  
City Galleries



David Wilkie Wynfield, *Édouard Manet*,  
1868, albumen print, © Royal Academy  
of Arts, London



Walter Sickert, *The Red Shop (the October Sun)* c.1888.

Marking the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Norwich 20 Group of artists and the 170<sup>th</sup> year of Norwich Art School (*now Norwich University of the Arts*), this display in the **Timothy Gurney Gallery** displays works from the Norwich Castle Collections by artists who have had a significant impact on recent British art and on Norwich in particular.

### **Norwich Castle's Rotunda Display Case** **LETTERS HOME**

To July 2015

**Letters Home** - a new temporary case display in Norwich Castle's Rotunda, reveals what life was like for Norfolk soldiers and their families during the First World War through a collection of poignant and moving personal letters.

Around 12 million letters were sent to the front lines each week and it took, on average, two days for a letter to reach the Western Front from England.

The experience of Norfolk soldiers takes centre stage in **Letters Home** until July 2015.

### **Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell**

This year from January to March 2015, we are celebrating of **200 Years of Colman's** by loaning **Norwich HEART's** exhibition of the history of the company and workers stories following its brief outing at the Forum and Fusion screen in November 2014. The exhibition complements the existing displays, and provides an opportunity to run talks and associated activities.

### **Coming next to Norwich Castle**

#### **ARTIST ROOMS: Jeff Koons**

A touring exhibition from the Artist Rooms Programme.  
9 May to 6 September.2015

Jeff Koons is widely regarded as one of the most important, influential, popular, and controversial artists of our time. Throughout his career he has pioneered new and imaginative ways of using everyday objects, has mischievously combined popular culture with art historical references, has deployed hand crafted techniques with industrial manufacturing and has tested what an artist can be within a time of ubiquitous celebrity culture.

This landmark exhibition will showcase Koons' remarkable career from 1981 – 2003 and will include his breakthrough work with vacuum cleaners and basketballs as well as his more recent explorations with inflatables cast from aluminium. The collection represents one of the best in the world and is part of ARTIST ROOMS, an astonishing collection of international contemporary art that was created through one of the largest and most imaginative gifts of art ever made to museums in Great Britain. The gift was made by Anthony D'Offay and is jointly owned and managed by Tate and National Galleries of Scotland on behalf of the nation and comprises over 1100 works.

*The exhibition is organised in partnership with the Norfolk & Norwich Festival (8 - 24 May).*

#### **Sawdust and Threads – Caroline Wright –Timothy Gurney Gallery. May 2015.**

A residency programme and exhibition that takes de-accessioned museum objects as its material.

**Edith Cavell:** Norwich Castle's Rotunda Display Case. Autumn 2015

#### **'almost too daring for an individual': John Sell Cotman's one-man exhibition 1806-07**

From 28<sup>th</sup> March in the Colman Project Space

- **Autumn 2015: Build Your Own** – a jointly commissioned exhibition with the Crafts Council and FACT Liverpool.
- **Spring 2016: How to Train Your Dragon - A Vikings Guide to Deadly Dragons.** An exhibition from the National Centre for Children's Books based on the book by Cressida Cowell.
- **Summer 2016:** Leading venue with Norwich University of the Arts for **The British Art Show**
- **Spring 2017: Small Stories Dolls' House and the History of the Home.** A V&A Museum of Childhood touring exhibition.

#### **Exhibition proposals under discussion**

- Rembrandt in Autumn 2016
- Building a touring exhibition around the Paston Treasure painting in 2018 in collaboration with Yale University, USA.

## **Events**

### **REPORTING BACK**

Strangers' Hall was once again a popular choice for families wishing to visit Father Christmas with 141 children visiting his toy workshop and taking part in themed craft activities.

Norwich Castle hosted its 2<sup>nd</sup> RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch Weekend in January, attracting over 1,500 visitors to take part in wild-life themed activities and the chance to find out more about wildlife in their local area.

The Museum of Norwich teamed up with Booja-Booja, local chocolate makers for *Love and Chocolate*, this year's Valentine's Eve event attracting 60 visitors.

Strangers' Hall focused on *Bears* for its February half-term activities. These included expert advice from Betty of Betty's Doll Hospital and Bear Clinic in Norfolk and demonstrations of bear repair and renovation.

The Tuesday lunchtime talks for Manet have been hugely oversubscribed necessitating putting on two talks.

### **LOOKING FORWARD**

The Summer 2015 **What's On** will be available before Easter. There is a large and varied programme of events and activities across the three Norwich Museums to meet the interests of all visitors over the next 6 months, including natural history themed activities at Norwich Castle and textile focused events at the Museum of Norwich over the Easter holidays and the free event *Museums at Night* on 16<sup>th</sup> May at Norwich Castle. Both Strangers' Hall and the Museum of Norwich will be taking part in the Norwich Lanes Fayre in early July.

Please pick up a What's On or see the website [www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk) for details.

## **Access to Collections**

### **Stores Audit Volunteer Team for Norwich Social History Collections**

Part of the recent accreditation returns process enabled us to create in depth documentation plans for Strangers' Hall and the Museum of Norwich. These identified that a complete audit of all the collections would support enhanced collections management and collections care. Auditing the Social History Collections will not be a quick task as there are around 76,000 objects. To put this into perspective, the Norwich Costume & Textile collections are close to being completely audited by the team of volunteers - a mammoth task which has taken close to 5 years. In order to undertake this project we have recruited a team of eight volunteers initially to work on the Social History Collections at the Museum of Norwich. The team have had comprehensive object packing, handling and marking training from the conservation department together with documentation training on MODEs.



## Costume Refresh

Historic clothing was not designed to be worn 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for years at a time; it was designed for occasional wear with long periods of rest in between. Prolonged display, even if it is on a properly padded mannequin with the correct underpinnings and support, will put stress on the construction of the dress and on the fabric. For this reason, items of costume are preferably only displayed for a maximum of 2-3 years before being taken off display and 'rested' by being packed away in the stores. The two dresses recently changed in a mini refresh at the Museum of Norwich were from the Caley's case in the *Shopping and Trading Gallery*, and the Norwich silk wedding dress from the 'Shawl case' in the *Norwich at Work* gallery. The shawls from this case have also been changed.



These 'in progress' images show the replacement Norwich Silk wedding dress (1873) on the right and some of the underpinnings made by the conservator for support underneath the dress on the left

## Other News

### 2014 EDP VisitNorfolk Tourism Awards Winner

Norwich Castle won the [Business Impact](#) category of the 2014 EDP VisitNorfolk Tourism Awards for the "hugely successful" Roman Empire: Power and People exhibition. The Awards, celebrating their 10th year this year, recognise excellence in an industry which is vital to the county's economy, contributing £2.8 billion a year and employing around 50,000 people.

### Art Happens: NMS launches first crowdfunding campaign

NMS's first crowdfunding campaign was launched on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December and runs until the end of March. The campaign is to re-gild the frame of the 17<sup>th</sup> century painting, *The Paston Treasure*.



Hosted by the Art Fund's Art Happens website – a new crowdfunding platform dedicated to supporting UK museums to raise money for new, small scale achievable and creative project. The campaign, entitled 'Wood into gold', aims to raise £14,500 in little more than three months. Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery in partnership with the Yale Centre for British Art in the United States are planning to stage a major exhibition in 2018. The exhibition will bring together as many of the Paston treasures as possible, and reunite them with *The Paston Treasure* painting for the first time in more than 350 years

At the end of January 42 individual funders and two charitable trust donations had taken us to 30% of our target

### **Commercial developments**

Norwich Castle and Strangers' Hall are now licensed to hold wedding ceremonies, and are embarking on an exciting new chapter, working with professional wedding planner, Event-House, to develop wedding packages for these unique venues.

A venue hire offer has been developed for Norwich Castle. Full details are available in a new brochure which is also available to download from the web-site.

### **Strangers' Hall new opening hours**

Following its annual spring clean, Strangers' Hall re-opened for the February school half-term with its new opening hours of Wednesday and Sunday afternoon. The core opening hours were changed in order to enable the Hall to host weddings on Saturdays and to ensure that visitors received a clear and consistent message regarding opening hours. It is too soon to evaluate the impact the new arrangement has on visitor numbers but on its first Sunday afternoon it attracted 77 visitors.

### **Norwich Museum Weddings**

Strangers' Hall has had its first wedding booking for a ceremony and reception in late August 2015. Norwich Castle and Strangers' Hall wedding packages have been promoted in wedding magazines and wedding fairs.

### **Roll of Honour – funding raising success**

We are working closely with Norwich City Council to raise funds to restore the Roll of Honour and to relocate it from the Norwich Castle Keep to the City Hall where it will be more publicly accessible. Visitors to City Hall and Norwich Castle will also be able to uncover the stories of the soldiers listed on the Norwich Roll of Honour in a digital format. We have just received confirmation that an application for £10,000 to the Town Close Estates Charity has been successful and are waiting for a response regarding an application made to the Geoffrey Watling Charity.

### **Norfolk Museums Development Foundation**

The Norfolk Museums Development Foundation is a new independent organisation that has been established to help Norfolk Museums Service to secure a diverse and sustainable funding base for the future. The foundation is a company limited by guarantee and a Registered Charity. A highly skilled and experienced Board of Trustees have been appointed and they met for their first board meeting in November 2014.

### **Arts Council Funding ACE**

Norfolk Museums Service has been successful in its bid to continue leading on developing the museum sector in the East of England. NMS is one of nine partners nationally to receive funding from Arts Council England to provide professional support, advice and guidance to museums to raise standards across the sector. NMS has been awarded £1,188,000 over the next three years for this important work.

The latest award recognises NMS' leadership role in the wider museum sector, and the service's track record of working with museums of all shapes and sizes in the past few years to improve standards. In the last year alone NMS has worked with 93% [153] of the region's Accredited museums through its innovative skills sharing scheme SHARE Museums East, delivering training and support to over 1,000 museum staff and volunteers last year.

For more information visit: <http://sharemuseumseast.org.uk/>

## **ADDITIONAL ITEM FROM STEVE MILLER, HEAD OF MUSEUMS**

### **Restructure**

Following a loss of funding from Norfolk County Council of £432,000 for the financial year 2015/16, Norfolk Museums Service has had to undertake a staffing restructure. As part of the restructure, a management reorganisation has been enacted with 6 posts being deleted (3 Area Managers and 3 Operations Manager posts) and 4 new posts have been created – Head of Operations and Learning and 3 new Operations Manager posts (Norwich, Western and Eastern). Following a thorough recruitment process, Dr Robin Hanley (currently Western Area Manager) has been appointed Head of Operations and Learning and Stuart Garner has been appointed Operations Manager, Norwich.

Rachel Kirk, Area Manager Norwich and James Steward, Area Manager Eastern, took the difficult decision to step out of the recruitment process and will be pursuing their careers beyond Norfolk Museums Service. I would like to record my sincere thanks to Rachel for her significant efforts during her time as Area Manager, including her support for me since I took up post in July 2013 and I am sure you will want to join me in wishing Rachel all the best for the future.

For more details please contact Steve Miller.

If you want to discuss any matters in this briefing please contact Rachel Kirk [rachel.kirk@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.kirk@norfolk.gov.uk) with the exception of the NMS restructure, in which case please contact Steve Miller [steve.miller@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:steve.miller@norfolk.gov.uk)  
For further information about the Norwich Museums, their services and programmes check out the website on [www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk) where you can also sign up to receive regular e-bulletins.