

Norwich Area Museums Committee 8 March 2016

## **Norwich Museums briefing for period November 2015– February 2016**

### **A. Exhibitions at Norwich Castle**

#### **A1. Build Your Own: Tools for Sharing (3 October 2015 – 3 January 2016)**

The recent *Build Your Own* show at Norwich Castle Museum was an innovative and engaging digital exhibition, the first of its type hosted at the museum. The show was co-produced by NMS with FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology) and the Crafts Council, working with curators Lauren Parker and Clare Cumberlidge. The commissions all reflected how craft, community and technology are strongly connected – working together, sharing skills, creating tools and improving our environments. They encompassed one-to-one collaboration and mass co-production and both traditional and cutting edge tools

The exhibition featured newly commissioned works by leading artists, makers, creative technologists and collectives. Rachel Rayns of the Raspberry Pi Foundation created an interactive robot-controlled garden in the gallery. Linda Brothwell's work examined the heritage of Norwich and experimented with the application of traditional dyes and pigments to new materials. Will Shannon and Assemble - winners of the 2016 Turner Prize - showcased a transformative project based in the Toxteth area of Liverpool where they helped residents re-build their homes. To have a Turner Prize winner announced while their work was on show in Norwich was a significant coup and provided a great opportunity to boost visits in the final few weeks of the show's run. Radio Norfolk interviewed curator Hannah Higham about the story and it generated a lot of social media interest.

A suite of 3D printers produced prosthetics for local children as part of the e-Nable community – a global enterprise collaborating to ensure the distribution of free prosthetics worldwide. For this element of the exhibition the Castle team worked with Norwich Hackspace to identify families who could benefit from this cutting edge technology. The hands were assembled at a workshop and fitted for the children to start using. One mother contacted Norwich Hackspace following the workshop to let them know how excited her daughter is with her new hand: *"She hasn't taken the smile off her face since Saturday, and they've become inseparable. She kept it on walking around Norwich, then kept it on all the way home, playing on her handheld computer, then holding her ipod. She's also taken it to school and used it in various lessons. It's made such a difference... one word for it -Priceless!"*

An extensive programme of events and demonstrations was organised to complement this exhibition, many of which took place in the dedicated gallery

'Maker Space'. NMS collaborated with Norwich University of the Arts who used the exhibition to showcase the different ways in which their students and tutors design, create and build - from real-life architecture to virtual worlds through games design and VFX. Exhibition primary sponsors HP Enterprise Services demonstrated their new Sprout device, revolutionising the way we create and share ideas.



Rachel Rayns with Raspberry Pi Foundation, *Neurotic Machines*, 2015. Image: Brian Slater

## **A2. A Viking's Guide to Deadly Dragons (6 Feb – 30 May 2016)**

The current headline show at Norwich Castle Museum is *A Viking's Guide to Deadly Dragons*, a national touring exhibition from *Seven Stories* – the National Centre for Children's Books. The exhibition explores the creation of the stories and artwork for author and artist Cressida Cowell's hugely popular series of *How to Train Your Dragon* books. Featuring Cressida's original illustrations, the exhibition gives visitors the chance to get up close to the author's notebooks and watch filmed interviews. There are opportunities for creative play, dressing as a Viking, visiting the Hooligan village and wild dragon cave. The exhibition opened shortly after the release of Cressida's latest book, *How to Fight a Dragon's Fury*. Cressida Cowell came to Norwich Castle to support the exhibition launch.

The exhibition opened with a special preview event on the Friday night. Cressida Cowell proved tireless in her enthusiasm for the show and her interaction with young fans. In a departure from our usual Private View format, Cressida ran a workshop for thirty children, chosen via a prize draw for Museums Passholders and including some Looked After Children who are members of the Castle Museum Club. The children all had a wonderful time, taking part in Viking craft activities and getting top tips from Cressida about drawing and writing. The children and their families also had the chance to look around the exhibition and show their own work to Cressida.

Alongside the exhibition, a packed programme of dragon related events for all ages will inform and entertain visitors of all ages.



actor Neil Paris as Hiccup Horrendous Haddock

The exhibition launched for February half term and saw record-breaking attendances, with 2,150 paying visitors recoded on a single day and 13,055 visitors across the week. The same period also saw record-breaking levels of secondary spend in both the Norwich Castle café and shop.

The Norwich Castle team have been working closely with the NCC Libraries and Information Service to use the opportunity presented by the *Deadly Dragons* exhibition to encourage children's literacy— Cressida herself began drawing and writing stories about dragons when she was nine. The collaboration includes a specially decorated mobile library which will be parked on the Castle mound for special event days throughout the show's run. Visitors to the library van can enter a draw for the very special prize of a set of books signed by Cressida Cowell and an original framed drawing by the author.



Cressida Cowell with the Deadly Dragons mobile library van

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

From 1806–7, the people of Norwich had the opportunity to visit a one-man exhibition at the house of John Sell Cotman (1782–1842). Featuring some 500 artworks, Cotman's exhibition was probably the largest solo show ever to have been staged by a British artist. This continuing display in the Colman Project Space re-imagines how a part of the exhibition might have looked.

**A4. *Collecting in East Anglia* (Timothy Gurney Gallery from 6 October)**

The Collection of Fine and Decorative Arts at NCM has seen some outstanding acquisitions. This display explores those works of art acquired in the last five years, set within the context of the Lady Adeane Bequest, which greatly enhanced the modern collection in 1993. Recent additions include paintings by Edward Seago, Graham Sutherland and Frank Auerbach and a fine collection of twentieth-century pots. The exhibition enables NMS to convey to the public the numerous paths through which we acquire work and thank the various organisations and individuals who have so generously supported us.



Frank Auerbach, *Head of Julia III* 2002, Norfolk Museums Service, © Frank Auerbach. Formerly in the collection of Lucian Freud, Accepted in Lieu of Tax.

**A5. Ana Maria Pacheco, *Enchanted Garden* (continuing in the Castle Keep)**

Pacheco's series of eight alabaster reliefs have been on display on the balcony level of the Keep since March 2015 and continue to be enjoyed by visitors. Pacheco is a former resident of Norwich and from 1985-89 was Head of Fine Art at Norwich University of the Arts (then Norwich School of Art). During her time in Norwich she befriended Francis Cheetham, then Head of Norwich Museums and an expert on medieval alabasters. She loved the collections at the Norwich Castle and the series *Enchanted Garden* was designed and made with NMS in



mind. The imagery in the reliefs is, in Pacheco's words, 'a homage to the human imagination', but it also references the mythical beasts of her native Brazil, biblical and apocryphal tales, western mythology, poetry and our own local lore.



#### **A6. Forthcoming exhibitions**

##### ***British Art Show 8 (25 June – 4 Sept 2016)***

The British Art Show is widely recognised as the most ambitious and influential exhibition of contemporary British art. The exhibition introduces the public to a new generation of British artists, providing a vital overview of the most exciting art produced in this country over the last five years. Organised in partnership with Norwich University of the Arts, this marks the first time the British Art Show has ever been shown in the city. Norwich is one of only four UK venues for this show and is the closest venue to London.

##### ***Olive Edis: A Pioneering Woman Photographer (8 Oct 2016 – 22 Jan 2017)*** (provisional title)

This exhibition will celebrate the pioneering and important work of Olive Edis, a Norfolk photographer whose unique and arresting images, often immortalising local people, place her at the forefront of modern photography. This show will be curated by NMS staff and complements the HLF funded project at Cromer Museum that will be transform access to the work of this influential female photographer.

##### ***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.

### **A7. Significant loans**

Central to the Timothy Gurney Gallery is a stunning and newly conserved sculpture by Barbara Hepworth: *Pavan (Forms in Movement)*. This beautiful bronze has been loaned to the museum for five years from a private collector and has not been on public view for 40 years.

NMS continues to work in partnership with the British Museum including the provision of high quality loans. As the result of a partnership with the BM and Wiltshire Museum, the beautiful piece of secular medieval silver the Lacock Cup, which was on display in Norwich Castle Keep until 10 January 2016 as part of a national tour.



### **A8. Arts Council England National Partners Fund**

In August ACE announced a new fund to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Arts Council Collection, aiming to create a network of three regional partners to work in partnership with the Southbank Centre and Yorkshire Sculpture Park to present and curate exhibitions drawn from the Collection.

A strong application was submitted by NMS, but we were notified by the Arts Council in January that our application had not been successful. Some of the exhibition proposals developed for this application are now however being considered as part of the long-term exhibition programme at the Castle.

### **A9. Exhibitions at the Museum of Norwich**

The exhibition *Norwich and the First World War: Soldiers and Workers, Duty and Philanthropy* opened on the 24 November. The exhibition comprise two separate elements. The first tells the story of the development of the Memorial Cottages built on Mousehold Heath, designed by Cecil Upcher who served in the Royal Norfolk Regiment in the First World War. He was shot and wounded and suffered terribly from shell shock. After the war, he returned to his architectural practise in the city and designed the cottages for disabled servicemen and their families. NMS holds a collection of his letters and drawings which are on display at the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum in the Castle.

The second exhibition element is the result of a community-based project run by Norwich HEART. Volunteers with HEART researched the lives of Colman's workers during the First World War, and the response the company had to the War, and the impact it had on the lives of its employees. The 'Colman's Detectives' used NMS archives, as well as getting access to the Unilever archive collection to put the exhibition together. Originally on display at the Forum, it will be on display at the Museum of Norwich until 5 March.



Lieutenant Cecil Upcher

To complement these exhibitions, the museum is continuing to display a textile sculpture by artist Paddy Hartley, who has used vintage officers' tunics as a canvas to literally stitch the stories of wounded WW1 soldiers into the fabric. The sculpture is on loan from the National Army Museum. The stories linked to the sculpture feature men who suffered facial wounds, and were treated by pioneering surgeon Sir Harold Gillies. The Museum of Norwich partnered with Norwich University of the Arts to host a talk by Paddy Hartley on 25 November.

## **B. Events**

### **B1. Fashion and Passion at the Castle**

The Costume and Textile department linked with the Learning team to put on a Fashion and Passion day on 28 November – on the theme of underwear. Not only did some of the collection's unmentionables get a good airing, but it generated great publicity on Radio Norfolk and BBC Look East too.

Alongside main collection objects, also on show were items from the handling collection, including try-on examples of long underwear and crinolines. A renowned local corset maker gave demonstrations throughout the day and delivered a well-attended talk on hoop petticoats.

Two Norfolk textile artists showed their work in the Keep, the Norwich Embroidery Guild got the public stitching and the Forum knitters group got them knitting. The Golden Triangle W.I. showed their wonderful response to the work of Lorina Bulwer which they had all stitched in the form of a banner after attending one of our *Stitch like Lorina Bulwer* workshops at Time and Tide, and there were even four different designs of knickers for children to design and colour.

The busiest and most popular areas were again the displays from the main collection, which included men's, women's and children's knitted underwear and patterns as well as our earliest stays, corsets, bustles and bum-pads. The department's wonderful volunteers were on hand all day to interpret and promote the collection as well as doing lively business on the second hand book stall.



## **B2. Celebrating 100 years of Museum Education**

The winter of 2015/16 marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of museum education at Norwich Castle, one of the earliest museum education programmes in the country. In 1915-16, those schools unable to conform to the blackout regulations were forced to close early. The infants were sent home and the senior pupils were taken on visits to local sites including the Castle Museum. 264 lectures were given to almost 16,000 children and it was considered such a success that after the war, the Education Committee appointed a Museum Demonstrator. Every child in the senior forms of the City schools would visit the Castle Museum once a week for a year to learn about Natural Science.

On 14 November a special celebratory event was held at which we invited visitors to go back in time and discover what life was like for children during WWI with re-enactors, crafts and collections. Throughout the day, families were rounded up by the school teacher for a 1915-style lesson in the Benefactors'



Room where they learnt about the war. Curator, Kate Thaxton and Teaching Museum trainee, Joe Hoyle, gave a talk in the morning on local soldier and architect Cecil Upcher.

It was a successful event, with over 670 visitors, and the addition of members of The Royal Norfolk Regiment Living History Group, who added to the atmosphere. Visitors had the chance to take the journey from recruitment, to medical, to basic training, and could also take part in a drill. Children were encouraged to write postcards to soldiers serving at the front, which were displayed in the rotunda. The children from the Saturday morning Museum Club showed a particular interest and seemed to really enjoy the mix of activities.



Young museum visitors in the 1920s

### **B3. Kids in Museums Takeover Day**

On 21 November we celebrated *Takeover Day*, a national initiative co-ordinated by *Kids in Museums* encouraging museums to be taken over for a day by children and young people, with a “tech-tastic” event. We worked with children from Peterhouse and Kessingland primary schools, as well as Open Academy Norwich to develop a range of events and activities for visitors to enjoy inspired by the *Build Your Own* exhibition. The children developed presentations on Raspberry Pi and 3D printing which they delivered for members of the public throughout the day. Other activities included:

- Running an event information desk, where they greeted visitors, answered questions, and gave out the special Minecraft museum trails
- Tannoy announcements throughout the day (very popular!)
- Demonstrations: the students from Open Academy had mentored the primary children, and worked with them to demonstrate MaKey MaKey to visitors, encouraging all ages to have a go with the technology. Dressed in white lab coats, the children did a brilliant job.

The schools involved are all part of the Diocese Academy chain, and so we received a visit from the Bishop of Norwich who was keen to see what the children were doing at the event.

Probably the most exciting element of the event however, was the challenge to build the Castle in Minecraft on the big screen in our Lecture Theatre. This was a big attraction for local families and we had many visitors who came primarily to take part in this. 77 children helped to build the Castle, complete with dungeons, a well, and bridge, whilst parents and grandparents also had the opportunity to have a go with this massively popular game. The day was a big success, with over 810 visitors, and lots of first-time visitors or lapsed visitors coming through the doors

#### **B4. The Castle Singers**

A new acapella group—*The Castle Singers*—has just been formed. We currently have approximately ten members from across our departments, and our aim is to develop a diverse repertoire, enjoy singing and give performances, particularly in the Castle Keep which provides us with some wonderful acoustics. The first performance was of Christmas songs on December 16 and 17 which sounded magical, and the second performance was at the opening of the *Vikings Guide to Deadly Dragons* exhibition when the groups sang a specially-arrangement of the theme tune to the film of the same name.

#### **B5. Deadly Dragons exhibition events**

The Norwich Castle team have been working closely with the Norfolk County Council Libraries and Information Service to use the opportunity presented by the *Vikings Guide to Deadly Dragons* exhibition to encourage children's literacy, Cressida Cowell, the author of the hugely popular *How to Train Your Dragon* books began drawing and writing stories about dragons when she was nine. The collaboration includes a specially decorated mobile library which has been parked on the Castle mound for special event days throughout the show's run. Visitors to the library van can enter a draw for the very special prize of a set of books signed by Cressida Cowell and an original framed drawing by the author. To celebrate National Libraries Day on 6<sup>th</sup> February Viking re-enactors paraded through the city on the opening day of the show, waving banners proclaiming *Love your Library on National Library Day* with the idea of getting people to follow the Vikings to the library, once they had viewed the exhibition in the Castle. At 11am a number of libraries in Norfolk read a chapter from one of Cressida's books to create the biggest story time in Norfolk.

After an amazing opening weekend, the visitor programme supporting Deadly Dragons roared into half term with a fabulous array of activities. In addition to a landscape of Dragon Crown and Hiccup Helmet making, children earned their dragon wings by completing the 'Fabulous Beast' trail and 'Dastardly Dragonese Dilemmas'. There were star events every day—from the *How to Train Your Dragon* feature film, glitter dragon tattoos, Chinese Dragon dance workshops, original drama as actor Neil Paris became Hiccup Horrendous Haddock, and

'Dragonflies' with the RSPB, 'The Natural History of Dragons' with David Waterhouse, artist Kate Munro is making our very own community art 'Puffington' dragon. We were pleased to once more be partnering with Family Learning.

### **B6. Foster Carers Day**

Norwich Castle was pleased to put on a special day for Norfolk foster carers and their families on Saturday 23 January. Children came dressed as prince and princesses and heard about Arms and Armour, made crowns and conquered the castle with our keep trail. Beth Southard from the Library Service brought books to read and did a succession of story-telling session through the day.

The day was very well received, including from number of councillors who dropped in during the course of the day. It was run in partnership with Norfolk Foster Advisory Partnership and we hope to make it an annual feature.



### **B7. Events at the Museum of Norwich**

#### **Dementia workshop at Museum of Norwich**

We were pleased to host a workshop day aimed at improving the services we can offer to people with dementia. The session was attended by representatives from NCC Adult Education, Adult Social Services, Age UK Norfolk, dementia charities and service providers at the N&N hospital. It was a hugely positive day, and another step forward for the Museum of Norwich becoming a Dementia Friendly Museum.

Norfolk Museums Service was well recognised at this year's EDP Tourism awards, with the service receiving a highly commended for all our work with the older generation and making it through to the final three. The Golden Years award was ultimately awarded to Age UK for their outstanding work in supporting the creation of Dementia Friendly Communities, but the judges of the category commented that "the passion of the managers at Norfolk Museums Service

shone through and they have many ideas for making museums more accessible".

## **B8. Events at Strangers' Hall**

### **Christmas at Strangers Hall**

This is the highlight of the year at Strangers' Hall, and as usual the museum was decorated with traditional evergreens in the earlier period rooms and Victorian home-made decorations and cards. The preparations involve our volunteer team in two days of twining greenery around bannisters and poking cloves into oranges, and taking a few liberties with authenticity by using battery powered candles to provide the 'candlelight'. Christmas-themed tours every Wednesday highlighted customs and traditions as part of the tour. Young visitors were invited to hunt for the sort of Christmas presents former residents of the house might have enjoyed.

Our two Saturday family event days attracted record attendances and included Christmas choral music with Akabella and Auriga Capella, and the welcome return of Edmund the Edwardian Concertina player and the Dragon Hall Mummers.

As usual Father Christmas flew in to preside over his toy workshop, parking his sleigh in our coach house, and learning team staff showed museum collections on the theme of 'Winter Warmers'.



Staff preparing Strangers' Hall for the Christmas event

Strangers' Hall re-opened to the public on 17 February, with the *Marvellous Models* event offering visitors a chance to see working model railway layouts and fly model planes.

## **B9. SHARE event at Strangers' Hall**

On Friday 27 November Strangers' Hall was the base for SHARE's most recent Historic Buildings Network meeting, which focussed on the topic '*Understanding your Listed Building*'. Working in an historic house museum is a large addition to normal day-to-day museum work; staff can easily be called away from collections work to deal with a leak, a ceiling collapse or even identifying a Death Watch beetle problem. Museum tours were provided by Hannah Henderson (Curator of Community History at the Museum of Norwich) and Amy Seaman (Buildings Supervisor, Strangers' Hall); with outside speakers including Steve Brown (Senior Surveyor, NPS), Will Fletcher and Dave Eve (Inspectors of Ancient Monuments, Historic England), and Heather Jermy (Associate and Head of Historic Consultancy, Purcell Architects).

Delegates were given an improved understanding of why and how historic buildings are listed and where specialist help and advice can be sought; what a Conservation Management Plan is and how it can not only help develop historic sites but can be used as a working document and a tool for funding applications. A case study comparing Strangers' Hall Museum to the recently redeveloped Museum of Norwich explored how having a museum in one of these special listed buildings affects its day-to-day operations.

## **C. Curatorial update**

### **C1. Major Loans**

A major group of fourteen objects is currently on loan for the prestigious exhibition *The Celts*, which ran at the British Museum until 31 January 2016.



NMS is a major lender to this BM exhibition which will next be on show at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh from 11 March to 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. British Museum Partnership Event**

A British Museum Partnership Event took place at Norwich Castle on 19 November as part of *Museum of the Citizen*, a national conversation about the role of the British Museum beyond Bloomsbury. Norwich Castle is one of only five museums taking part in this series of events examining the social, political, financial and educational value of museums working in partnership around the country. The themes of the Norwich event were Norfolk's internationally important tourism offer, including the developing *Deep History Coast* partnership, and the growing links between the museum sector and the creative industries in



the East of England. There were over 50 attendees at the event including councillors, staff and academics and feedback has been very positive.

The variety of speakers reflected these themes and included Julia Farley, Nick Ashton and Chris Michaels from the British Museum and John Davies, Tim Pestell and David Waterhouse from the NMS. The conversation started with David Waterhouse and Nick Ashton talking about Deep History Coast and Ancient Human Occupation of Britain. Celts: Art and identity is the British Museum's major new exhibition and this case study was presented by Julia Farley and Tim Pestell, giving an insight into who the 'Celts' were and how their art and notion of identity are entwined. Chris Michaels talked about Mobile, Social and Big data: Digital and Museums in 2015, with live tweeting from the auditorium throughout the event. John Davies then spoke about the Norwich Castle Keep Redevelopment.



### **C3. Curatorial initiatives at Strangers' Hall**

The winter closure allows for essential maintenance work to take place in the museum, including contractors repainting a ceiling and making repairs to the roof. The annual deep clean also took place in January, with a top to bottom clean of the whole museum organised by Bethan Holdridge with David Harvey and Juliane Ovenden also acting as team leaders and providing training and supervision for the large team of volunteers who assist with the task. From six to eight volunteers helped us out every day for fifteen days, as each room was cleared of furniture and vacuumed from ceiling to floorboards, with all the textiles removed, inspected, packed, frozen and then cleaned to minimise problems with pests, before replacing every object exactly in its place. We were also delighted to have the assistance of a small group of volunteers from Aviva. Both the Lord Mayors Coach and the Brougham received a thorough clean.

### **C4. Curatorial work at the Museum of Norwich**

The MoN stores audit volunteers returned to work in January. They have so far helped audit over 1,500 items, improving MODES records for all of those collections. A UEA Museology placement student is also working with Hannah

Henderson to select 50 items from the collection for a Google Cultural Institute online platform and exhibition.

In December Teaching Museum trainee Kate Cooper developed a Facebook Advent calendar, posting an image a day, either from the MoN archives or from Picture Norfolk. This initiative attracted thousands of views over the month-long campaign; the most popular being a view of King Street in the snow which attracted over 70 likes and was viewed by 3,370 people and an image of St Stephen's church in Norwich which was viewed by 6,705 people.

### **C5. NCC Conservators sharing knowledge across the region**

In December, NMS conservators worked with conservation colleagues at the Norfolk Record Office to organise and host a meeting of the East Anglian Conservator's Forum. This is a group that meets at least once a year to share knowledge and skills across many diverse disciplines.

The subject of this meeting, was the use of hydration methods and materials in the treatment of 2D and 3D objects. The Record Office conservators have been working with a local company who develop and produce, amongst other products, high-tech materials which are breathable and waterproof for e.g. the clothing market. Variations of these materials have proven extremely useful in trial tests at the Record Office in the treatment of paper and parchment. Objects and textiles conservators at the meeting, were able to see the potential of using these materials in their own specialisms.

Demonstrations and discussions were led by NCC conservators and talks given round the subject of hydration, including one describing analysis of fish glue, were both fascinating and illuminating. The day proved to be a celebration of conservators working with researchers, industry, and each other, to further our knowledge and methodologies in the preservation of heritage collections.

## **D. Formal Learning**

### **D1. Schools and Formal Learning**

Schools numbers at Norwich Museums have been good this period, although there has been a slight dip in numbers compared to last year when we had a particularly good period. Secondary schools are finding it difficult to make visits, although we have had more enquiries which is positive. We are working with English contacts at the minute to explore how we might support this area of the secondary curriculum.

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### **D2. Teachers CPD at Norwich**

We have an annual programme of events and professional development opportunities for teachers including bespoke courses for individual schools, working with the Historical Association and other subject associations and an Art

masterclass for teachers. We also keep a teachers mailing list. For the last two years we have offered CPD on the Mystery of Prehistory which is a brand new topic on the Primary history curriculum that was causing some anxiety.

We were asked for a bespoke training session on Saturday 17 October for 20 primary school teachers from Fleggburgh and Freethorpe Primary Schools. All had great fun rifling through bags and recognising the importance of objects. The feedback forms were all very positive with the staff being particularly pleased with the fact the 'sessions were directly linked with teaching' and 'gave me lots of ideas to use with the children.'

We have since received an email from one of the teachers, 'Just wanted to let you know how inspiring I found our morning INSET at the castle. As a result I have undertaken a parent share lesson at school where we cooked some of the recipes that you provided. The oatcakes were disgusting but the children and parents loved making them. We have also built and used a Stone Age pit oven in the school grounds. It was a great inspiration for instructional writing.'

This shows how vital our INSET programme is becoming. The vast majority of schools who attend such sessions follow it up with bookings and have a much better idea, and appreciation, of what we can deliver.

## **E. Other Developments**

### **E1. WI-Fi**

The Wi-Fi project in Norwich Castle is now complete and visitors can now obtain free internet access within The Rotunda, Norwich Union Gallery, Benefactors room and Town Close Auditorium.

### **E2. Conference & Banqueting**

Norwich Museums continue to see a healthy increases in the number of corporate, conference and banqueting events taking place within our buildings, with good levels of bookings for 2016.

### **E3. Weddings**

Our wedding offer at Norwich Museums has also seen a steady rise in bookings. We now have bookings for weddings at Strangers Hall until 2017. For 2016 we have 5 confirmed weddings and a further 5 provisional bookings at Strangers' Hall. We currently have one confirmed wedding ceremony at Norwich Castle for July 2016.

### **E4. Registrars**

Norfolk Registrars' Service wedding ceremonies will be taking place in the Benefactors Room at Norwich Castle from 4 April 2016. Members of the Norwich Registrars team moved into their new office within the Shirehall in December.



The Benefactors Room set out for a Registrars Service wedding ceremony

### **E5. Norfolk Museums Development Foundation**

The Norfolk Museums Development Foundation was established as a charity in 2014 to support NMS and its partners to secure funding to support the care and development of the collections, historic buildings and public activities at all 10 sites managed by NMS. The NMDF carries out its objectives by raising funds from grant giving bodies, individual donors and corporate sponsors to support a wide variety of museum activities including exhibitions and displays, capital improvements, conservation, learning and outreach. The Trustees continue to work closely with museum staff to provide support, advice and partnership links to achieve the identified fundraising targets.

### **E6. EDP Tourism Awards 2016**

Norfolk Museums Service was well recognised at the 2016 EDP Tourism Awards, with the Ancient House Museum winning in the *Visitor Attraction with under 50,000 Visitors* category. NMS was also highly commended for our work with older people through the *Golden Years* award.



## **E7. Keep Project**

The Round 1 funding application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Keep redevelopment project *Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England* has now been submitted to the HLF. A group of HLF officers and an HLF Trustee made an application assessment visit to the Castle on 4 February, meeting a number of key partners and stakeholders, as well as the project team.

## **F. Visitor Numbers**

Norwich Museums continue to perform well in 2015-16, sustaining the excellent performance of 2014-15. Visitor numbers at Norwich Castle for February half term 2016 were record breaking, with 13,055 visitors (12,029 in 2015). The Castle also saw its highest ever single day recorded attendance at 2,150. This amazing performance was significantly boosted by the opening of the *How to Train your Dragon* exhibition and the linked holiday event programme. Half term also saw very strong levels of secondary spend in the castle café and shop, the latter featuring a strong range of dragon-themed gifts and books.

Detailed visitor figures will be circulated at the meeting.

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