

Report to the Norwich Area Museums Committee – 6th March 2018

This is my first report to the Norwich Area Museums Committee. I am very pleased to be the new representative of the Friends of the Norwich Museums attending the Norwich Area Museums Committee Meetings.

As you know there have been some changes on the FNM Council in recent months, with the resignation of John Knight, who represented the FNM at the Area Museums Committee for some years. Also Ceri Lamb, Secretary of the FNM has stood down after 8 years in the post.

Our AGM takes place in the TCA at the Castle Museum on Monday 14th May, when the new members of the FNM Council will be introduced to the Membership and they will be officially ratified. These members are – Beulah Dutton – Secretary
Janet Duncan – Treasurer
Ashley Bliss - Membership Secretary

As the Committee is aware, the main function of a Friends organisation is to support the curators at the Museum. We assist them when they wish to purchase objects, art works and artifacts to add to their collections, by providing an initial amount of money, which means that they can go on to apply to larger bodies, e.g. the HLF and the Arts Council for further support. This we continue to do and have been pleased to help, particularly the Archaeology Department with some important Anglo Saxon pieces, e.g. a gold bracteate, gold coins and a gold brooch with garnets.

Four of our favourite items in recent years have been the glass roundels which had been dispersed after a medieval house in Norwich was demolished and the Museum was able to bring together this important group of medieval secular glass pieces, entitled 'Labours of the Seasons'. Examples of all these can be seen on our website.

The FNM is also keen to help in other ways i.e. for conservation and displays, particularly for objects which are due to be displayed in exhibitions. An example of this are the Three Dutch Miniature Landscape Paintings attributed to Aert van der Neer. They were also the subject of our most recent illustrated talk in the TCA on 22nd February by Timothy Benoy of the de Brecy Trust and Georgia Bottinelli, NMS Curator of Historic Art.

The FNM Talks are a monthly event and are always popular in the Friends' calendar, to which guests are also invited. Our next talk is on 29th March at 2.30p.m. to be given by Mr. Clive Slater, Research Associate, NMS. 'Searching for Birds Names in Honour of John Henry Gurney'. The nineteenth century banker, philanthropist and ornithologist has had seven magnificent birds named in his honour and is one of the founding fathers of the Norwich Museum. More information about the FNM Talks can be found on our website.

The FNM Council continually promotes the organisation to raise the profile of the Friends in order to gain more members and thereby help the Museum as much as we can. We are committed to supporting the Castle Keep development and we are

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very excited at the prospect of it becoming again the Royal Palace that it was between the 11th Century and the mid 14th century.

In 2021 the Friends of the Norwich Museums will be 100 years old! When we reached our 90th birthday, Richard Fair of the Forum in Norwich, put together a cd depicting 90 objects that the Friends had given over the years, and he has kindly agreed to create another cd showing 100 objects for our centenary. This 90 objects cd is very useful when promoting the Friends and we have found it invaluable when giving talks to Societies and groups. We look forward to the new one.

I will be able to tell the Committee more about what we are planning for 2021 over the next 2 years, and will continue to keep you updated about our plans, activities and events.

Felicity Devonshire
Representative, Friends of the Norwich Museums.

23.02.2018