

Norwich Museums Report: November 2022 to January 2023

1. COVID-19 & infection control update

- 1.1 A number of the COVID-secure systems and procedures implemented across Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) sites during the pandemic remain in place, with a focus on keeping staff and visitors safe through minimising the risk of transmission of COVID and other infections. Sites continue to provide hand sanitiser stations and some directional signage. The pre-booking of tickets is no longer a requirement but remains an option. Site capacity limits are largely at pre-pandemic levels.
- 1.2 COVID-19 and other infection control priorities remain:
- Ventilation – maintaining existing ventilation arrangements to maximise fresh air flow including supplementary air purifiers and CO2 monitors at relevant sites
 - Cleaning regimes – maintaining enhanced cleaning arrangements including toilets and regular touch points
 - Hand sanitisation – maintaining existing sanitiser stations and encouraging regular hand sanitisation/hand washing. Additional hand sanitiser stations are introduced where required e.g. near interactives.
- 1.3 To facilitate increased levels of use of museum spaces by visitors, staff and volunteers, CO2 monitors provided through Norfolk County Council (NCC) are operating in a number of spaces across NMS where there is more limited natural/mechanical ventilation. These CO2 detectors are monitored locally by staff using these spaces and also link into the LoRaWAN network, facilitating the use of monitoring dashboards to track live data and trends. The use of CO2 monitors has enabled a number of spaces to be brought back into use by staff and volunteers and increased capacity for schools and other visitors
- 1.4 Digital resources developed by staff during the pandemic continue to be used to support a hybrid offer e.g. enhanced digital schools resources.
- 1.5 In line with Norfolk County Council (NCC) practice at office hubs, NMS has implemented Smarter Working and Hybrid Working principles across teams.
- 1.6 Volunteering has recommenced across all NMS sites, supported by the NMS Volunteer Coordinator.

2. Norwich Museums operations

2.1 Norwich Castle opening arrangements

Due to the ongoing construction works at Norwich Castle, visitors continue to use the external entrance door E8 as the temporary entrance and exit route. The one-way system introduced as a response to COVID-19 has been deactivated.

A 'pop-up' catering offer continues to operate within the Rotunda areas of Norwich Castle along with a seating section. This interim offer will remain in place until the new catering facilities open as part of the Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England project. An enhanced retail offer has now been installed within the Rotunda, with many more lines of stock being made available for purchase.

2.2 Norwich Castle ceremonies

The number of ceremonies taking place at Norwich Castle has continued to remain strong, with 743 having been completed within the past 12 months.

Month	No of Ceremonies	Footfall
February	58	1320
March	40	862
April	99	2494
May	59	1613
June	133	3223
July	57	1980
August	57	1245
September	85	2621
October	62	1613
November	53	1162
December	22	539
January 23	18	383
Total	743	19055

3. Norwich Learning Team activity – highlights report

3.1 On-site Schools Events



The Norwich Museums Learning team continue to develop, deliver and evaluate the impact of learning programmes for priority and target audiences, including Norfolk schools and young people. Staff have carefully managed the reintroduction of in-person learning events at all three city museums. To explore the programmes in more detail and get involved, please visit the *What's On* and *Learning* pages of the Norwich Castle website: [Learning - Norfolk Museums](#)

School Visits

	Norwich Castle	Museum of Norwich	Strangers' Hall	Digital	Total
April	354	0	60	0	414
May	742	368	215	214	1539
June	849	105	243	270	1467
July	584	104	144	382	1214
August	0	0	0	0	0
September	368	27	55	24	474
October	732	45	335	20	1132
November	1295	346	326	52	2019
December	443	161	113	0	717
January	883	173	0	141	1197
Total	6250	1329	1491	1103	10173

School events continue to be popular with all available event slots at the Castle full for the spring term and booking up fast for the summer term. From 1 April 2022 to 31 January 2023 a total of 9,070 students took part in activities at the museums with a further 1,103 taking part in digital activities. We are expecting that there will be significant interest from schools to visit the *Last Voyage of the Gloucester* exhibition over the coming months.

The Singh Twins: Slaves of Fashion – School Events

We hosted our KS3 Transatlantic Slavery event with 33 Y8 students from Langley School. This event was modified to incorporate *The Singh Twins: Slaves of Fashion* exhibition with a trail around the displays, discovering the links to transatlantic slavery in the art works. We also delivered tours and hosted self-led groups of over 200 KS1-KS5, HE and FE students within the exhibition. This included a new KS1 event where students visited the gallery and made their own artworks using lightboxes, tracing paper, watercolour paints and wet wipes to do finger painting of repeated patterns in response to the Singh Twins' works.

KS2 Latin

We re-launched our KS2 Latin event with a visit by 62 Y4 & 5 students. The students met a Roman soldier and learnt the Latin words for his armour, weapons, tactics, orders, and commands. They also met a Roman citizen, handled real and replica

objects, and learned the Latin words for them. They also used Latin adjectives to explore the Boudica and Roman gallery before learning and performing a play of *The Three Little Pigs* in Latin.

KS5 Tudors

We hosted our first KS5 Tudors event at Strangers' Hall since the museum re-opened after the pandemic. Twenty Y12-13 students studied and analysed wills and inventories of the 16th-century owners of the hall to discover social, political, and economic changes during the period. Feedback from a teacher said: *"A positive learning experience was the students examining and drawing on their own knowledge to analyse the wills. The students enjoyed exploring the building using historical records. They thoroughly enjoyed the event – thank you."*

Home Education Group

We have continued to run monthly sessions for a group of 8 young people aged 6 – 12 with SEND at Norwich Castle. Many of the young people have a diagnosis of ADHD, as well as Autism and there are young people in the group with a diagnosis of Tourettes and Pathological Demand Disorder. Many of the young people are often very anxious when visiting new places and can exhibit challenging behaviours. Sessions ran on the 14 November and 12 December, linked to the Anglo Saxons and Vikings (November) and Medieval festive winter traditions (December). This has now become an established group, with the young people noticeably growing in confidence. Originally due to finish their monthly sessions with us at the start of March 2023, the group have said that they would like to continue visiting the Castle and learning together. They have monthly sessions booked in now for the rest of 2023. Emma Clarke (Learning Officer) will be using this as an opportunity to test out new ideas/approaches, drawing on the young people's interests to choose which areas of the collections will be explored.







Caregiver feedback on these sessions:

"Emma's positivity and constant promotion of engagement is so key."

"Play based sensory sessions perfectly suited to the children's needs."

"All four of my children are able to participate"

We ask the young people how they feel at the end of the sessions. They have fed back that they felt 'happy' 'relaxed' 'inspired' and 'excited'.

Session 4	
What did you think?	
How do you feel after your session today?	
Happy  <input type="checkbox"/>	Relaxed  <input type="checkbox"/>
Sad  <input type="checkbox"/>	Excited  <input type="checkbox"/>
Inspired  <input type="checkbox"/>	Bored  <input type="checkbox"/>

Early Years Groups

Snaplings: for children aged 0 to 2 and their adults

Our multisensory Snaplings sessions investigate a different theme inspired by our museum collections each month. Each session follows the pace of our tiny explorers, providing plenty of time and space for little ones to follow their interests and make their own discoveries.

Snapdragons: for children aged 2 to 4 and their adults

Snapdragons sessions build on the multisensory approach of Snaplings, getting us moving around the galleries to bring in further opportunities for chatting, investigation, and shared discovery. Each session sees us getting hands on as we explore the different treasures the museum has to offer.

Our monthly Snaplings and Snapdragons sessions ran on the 17 and 19 November and 17 and 21 January. The November sessions focused on sound, exploring loud and quiet sounds - including making an 'armour drumkit' - and different musical instruments in our regimental displays.

Feedback from families included:

"Baby was very happy! Class leaders very involved."

"Best baby session I have done so far. Thoroughly enjoyed. Amazing setting, really engaged session leaders – Brilliant!"

January sessions focused on 'hiding and finding', exploring hidden treasures inspired by the Snettisham horde. *"Perfectly pitched to R's level. Lots for everyone to do."*

NCC colleagues from the Millennium Children's Library and Kate Bradley- Edwards from Gressenhall Farm & Workhouse came to observe Snaplings and Snapdragons sessions in November as part of ongoing skill sharing work for our Early Years practice.

Castle Education Room

As part of the Norwich Castle project, work has begun to plan for the fit out of the new education room. Initial designs have been created that aim to maximise the available space for use by schools and other learning groups with enhanced storage and improved access for learners with disabilities. A supplementary funding bid has been submitted to the Alderman Norman Foundation which, if approved, will support additional equipment for the room.

3.2 Schools Digital and Virtual programmes

Whilst the greatest demand has been from school groups to visit the museums in person, with the site's reduced capacity due to ongoing construction works, digital provision continues to be important for a smaller number of schools. These programmes provide the high-quality curriculum links, learning outcomes, and engagement opportunities that underpin the success of the schools' programme. They are also provided as pre- and post-visit resources to school groups visiting on-site to extend and enrich the learning event.

Schools are still able to come to our sites on self-guided visits, and a range of worksheets and other resources remain downloadable from the website free of charge:

[Trails and resources - Norfolk Museums](#)

3.3 Visitor Programme Activities

The Singh Twins: Slaves of Fashion public programme (November – January) *Together at the Seams*

This project was inspired by the Norwich Castle and East Gallery NUA exhibition *The Singh Twins: Slaves of Fashion*, which ran from October 2022 – January 2023.

No doesn't know I have it!

A little challenge all the bags that I have made to make I have them off of Rockin' Day & 2010

STEALTH GEEK-WEAR

Following a successful format developed for *The World We Live In*, these reading and creative writing workshops explored works in *The Singh Twins: Slaves of Fashion* exhibition. Each session began by looking at and discussing specific work in the exhibition, followed by a shared reading of a text that related to the work. The sessions concluded with creative writing exercises inspired by that week's artwork, reading and discussion.

Kashmiri Shawls with Razwan Ul-Haq

"Fascinating insight to paisley patterns, to Islam and other aspects of Singh Twins art. The talk found us in so many directions."

Sarah Lowndes was joined by NUA Senior Lecturer Odette Steele for a session exploring Indigo and Textiles in the Singh Twins exhibition, looking at three works in the exhibition, *An Alternative A -Z of Empire* (2022), *Indigo: The Colour of India* (2017) and *Idiennes: The Extended Triangle* (2017).

6

Confronting Colonialism guided tours

For the final three Saturdays of *The Singh Twins: Slaves of Fashion* exhibition, we ran guided tours exploring the colonial histories behind objects in our collections. The tours explored stories of empire, race, inequality, as well as social and economic exploitation through the lens of our decorative arts collection. All three tours were fully booked and very well-received.

"The tour was interesting and informative and the guide pitched it well. We talked about the difficulties of reconciling past items with current feelings."

"I think tour guides are such valuable people, they start a conversation that is much needed"

Library Partnership

NMS Learning Officer and Early Year specialist Emma Clarke has been building a partnership with the Millennium Children's library. This partnership has a number of strands:

- Mutual skill sharing and observations of 'Snaplings and Snapdragons' and the library's 'Bounce and Rhyme' Early Years sessions.
- Museum Pop Up events at the library

Emma has begun doing monthly 'castle pop ups' in the children's library, taking Snap the dragon (our Early Years character) along with a selection of handling objects and sensory play items once a month. The sessions have been well received, proving a valuable opportunity to chat with young families about the Keep redevelopment project and our exciting plans for the future, as well as what is on offer for under 5s at the Castle currently. Sessions included:

7 December – Medieval/Castle Keep focus

25 January – Natural History focus

These sessions are planned to continue once a month.



Norwich Castle project Activity Plan

Christmas at the Castle

Norwich Castle's Christmas programme saw festive trails exploring medieval Christmas traditions and a 'Past Presents' object handling session to surprise and delight our visitors. Some of these activities were transferred to Strangers' Hall as a result of the failure of heating systems at Norwich Castle.

In addition there were three performances of a specially devised play *Christmas, the Castle, the King (and his wife...)* created to help visitors imagine the Christmas at the Castle of Henry I. This event received very positive feedback: *'Brilliant! Norwich Castle always have fantastic activities- educational, fun and engaging.'*

We worked with NMS SEND officer Emma Clarke as part of our performance development to ensure an integrated approach to access and it was rewarding to have this noted by audiences: *'Enjoyed the visualisation by the performers, they brought the story to life-very enjoyable. The subtle BSL was fantastic!'*



Susie Childerhouse as Queen Adeliza and Neil Paris as King Henry I

Knight Club

Norwich Castle's Knight Club has provided sessions across several counties over the past few months. Staff have been to Scout groups, schools, other castle sites and a broad range of history-based clubs. There has also been extra interest in the learning curriculum which supports Knight Club and is based on the medieval Trivium and Quadrivium, which knights would have been expected to learn – astronomy, mathematics, music, geometry, grammar, logic, and rhetoric. Bookings continue to come in from new events and previous venues alike.

Knight Club has continued to receive outstanding reviews from participants of all ages.

"My three girls absolutely LOVED knight school! Knight School is NOT just for boys! Thank you!"

"Very good (mainly because I got to whap my dad!)"

"Amazing! Excellent and fun. Leader was superb. Best activity for the holiday"

"What an absolute amazing morning. Very good value for money. Great fun and informative. Would definitely come again. Adults and kids love it."



Knight Club activities

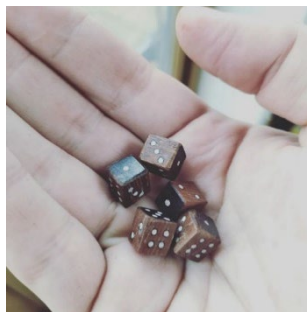
Community Hoardings

Artwork designed by schools will shortly be going up on the exterior construction site hoardings. NMS Learning, Display, and Conservation teams are also planning to create a community hoarding inside the museum's rotunda. This will be inspired by the artwork of local artist Andy Peters who has represented the diverse history of Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery with a welcoming, characterful style.



Medieval Board Games

A selection of medieval board games were researched, designed, and built by hand by learning staff using heritage woodworking, metalworking, and leatherworking skills as part of the Castle Christmas activities. These proved engaging for all ages and inspired curiosity about a range of topics such as the materials the games were made from, who played them and how we know the rules. A copy of Alfonso X's *Book of Games* was made available for visitors, many of whom were eager to make and play these games at home. Some of these games will be made available to visitors, alongside information sheets, video resources and guides about how to make and play your own medieval board game.



Partnerships

We continue to maintain a strong partnership with the British Museum through our shared collections and joint events. This year will expand on the successes of last year with more activities being taken to the British Museum to help demonstrate how Norwich Castle continues to strive to provide exceptional, accessible, and educational activities using innovative and creative approaches.

We have also been working with a range of historic medieval venues, providing activities and insight on how their timelines connect with the timeline of Norwich Castle. Lee Warden, the Norwich Castle project Activity Plan Learning and Engagement Officer, has taken outreach activities to Framlingham Castle, Hedingham Castle and Castle Rising. Through these engagements we hope to inspire the visitors with not only the history of Norwich Castle but of the wider medieval world and its stories.

4. Kick the Dust: Norfolk – project activity update

The Kick the Dust: Norfolk project, funded through the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) delivered in partnership with a range of organisations including YMCA Norfolk, continued to engage with young people aged 11-25 throughout the COVID-19 lockdown periods. The project team adapted their activities to support existing groups across Norfolk, in particular YMCA groups, using digital means.

The team is now delivering a blended approach with most sessions being delivered face-to-face but using online engagement where this has been the most effective for young people. This is the case for our online work experience programme which removes access barriers for those wishing to engage in this acclaimed programme but where travel would be a barrier.

This report compares our data with that of the other 12 national Kick the Dust projects through the Renaisi data produced for the National Lottery Heritage Fund from Oct 2020 to September 2021. This will be updated in March 2023.

Current number of interventions with young people:

From the start of lockdown to the 26 January 2023 there were a total of 7,224 interventions, involving 2,556 individual young people taking part in 3,649 hours of quality digital activity. Following reopening and access to groups on site and in outdoor settings, the team has delivered 838 face to face sessions (76% of all delivery) with young people across the county, out of a total of 1,077 sessions delivered between March 2020 and 26 January 2023. This equates to 78% of all activity now being delivered face to face. This blended approach offers a more diverse range of opportunities for young people to engage in heritage.

Total participation numbers from project commencement in October 2018 are 13,296 interventions, involving 4,278 individual young people taking part in 6,781 hours of quality activity, taking us beyond the initial target of 8,000 interventions. As more young people take the lead in projects this is shifting the percentage of activity at each of the 4 levels. As we move to the end of the current project, we are no longer delivering at Pre-

Player level showing that the YMCA young people are more confident and taking part in longer term projects as they engage on our sites.

- 25% of all activity was at Player level
- 40% at Shaper level
- 35% at Leader level.
- 83% of all activity in December/ January involved young people in leading and designing projects, taking on the role of Young Ambassador and playing a leading part in the Youth Board.

Breakdown of activity taking place in each area since October 2018:

- 47.5% (1,415 opportunities) in the West (covering Kings Lynn, Thetford and Gressenhall),
- 27.5% (813 opportunities) in the East (covering Great Yarmouth, Cromer and Sheringham)
- 25% (737 opportunities) in Norwich
- 308 volunteering opportunities have been provided to 164 individual young people.

We continue to develop and deliver an online training offer for all staff and volunteers who support youth engagement in NMS. In total 342 staff have taken part in training since October 2018, with 151 having taken up opportunities in lockdown. In addition, 45 young volunteers have taken part in training. Kick the Dust has supported 7 young people on its bursary traineeship programme, the last cohort finishing in May 22, all of whom have secured permanent employment within the heritage sector. One Kick the Dust participant progressed onto the NMS Teaching Museum traineeship programme. Our 6 Young Ambassadors support Institutional Change within NMS and are on the strategic Youth Board and Project Board. Staff from our Front of House (FOH) and Visitor Services teams continue to engage in training such as mentoring and coaching and creating autism friendly spaces which forms part of the training offer to support the new pre-traineeship pilot programme for YMCA clients and other vulnerable groups. The Supervisor at Norwich Castle stated, *'It's been great to see customer focused enthusiasm again from the team, as a result we plan to have a small group who will regularly look at ways in which we can improve access, be more aware and more inclusive as a team'*.

Our offer to support staff and volunteers around the important theme of mental health and wellbeing is on-going and the Youth Board have been working with Public Health and the Audience Agency to incorporate the framework to measure mental wellbeing into the new evaluation tool to be in place for April 2023. Data from the young people's feedback forms shows that 25% of young people up to 26 January 2023 identified as having a mental health issue.

As we have more FOH staff taking part in training to gain confidence in working with young people facing more complex barriers to engagement these Teams are offering opportunities to young people to gain further experience. The team at the Museum of Norwich and Time and Tide Museum supported 2 YMCA clients onto the pre-traineeship programme and Stories of Lynn took on a young person with complex

learning needs to support the Learning and Engagement Officer. The second cohort started in January at Norwich Castle and the Museum of Norwich and a further young person with complex needs at Stories of Lynn. Feedback from the 3 trainees has been extremely positive with comments such as:

'This traineeship has given structure to other areas of my life. I now have a routine which will help me achieve other things in my life. Having structure has had a massive positive impact on my mental health' (Trainee Norwich YMCA)

'Being in a working environment and watching staff work has made it easier for me to interact with people and school children. Having to manage my bursary payments has also helped me with finances and I am finding that easier now'. (Trainee Great Yarmouth YMCA).

NMS and NCC continue to work together through the 'Making Creative Futures' group, where members from across Children's Services identify ways to engage the hardest to reach and most vulnerable children and young people through a joint effort. The group continues to play a key part in the delivery of activity as part of the DfE funded Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) project through the Big Norfolk Fun programme ([Big Norfolk Holiday Fun - Active Norfolk](#)) and through our own contributions to this through our Kick the Dust offer. The focus is on mental health and wellbeing and now has representation from the NCC Public Health team.

Breakdown of respondents

We continue to work with a higher number of older young people as we work with YMCA clients and those from the University of East Anglia and Norwich University of the Arts who are aged 18-25 years of age (67%). Whilst the number of young people aged 11-17 (33%) years is lower than the older age groups, this allows these young people to progress through the programme.

The comparison with the Renaisi data is in brackets and highlights the changes since the last Renaisi report in 2021. Across all 12 Kick the Dust projects, the largest proportion of participants were from the 17-19 category (24%), while the largest proportion in Years 2 and 3 of the project came from the 14-16 category (32%). Approximately half of participants (49%) were aged 11-16 in Years 2 and 3, compared to 32% in this final year. The reasons cited by Renaisi for this change is that young people are engaging in deeper levels of engagement than in previous years which in turn could explain why participants are from the older age groups. Whilst this is the case for Kick the Dust Norfolk, we are providing a range of Shaper and Leader opportunities for young people across all age groups participating although the older age groups tend to be engaged at Leader level.

- 7% aged 11-13 years (15%)
- 11% aged 14-16 years (17%)
- 30% aged 17-19 years (24%)
- 29% aged 20-22 years (22%)
- 23% aged 23-25 years (23%)

Data is collected around ethnicity through the Young People's Feedback form (should they choose to answer this question) and is based on the descriptions used by the NLHF: (Renaissi data is shown in brackets)

Breakdown of ethnicity:

- Asian – 3% (5%)
- Black - 2% (7%)
- Arab – 0.3% (1%)
- Irish traveller – 0.7% (1%)
- Mixed ethnic – 5% (5%)
- White – 89% (70%)

Those who chose to respond to the question on whether they had a physical or mental disability which can be a barrier to engagement is as follows:

- Disabled – 22% (9% in Renaissi data)
- Non-disabled – 15%
- Preferred not to answer – 63%

A large number chose not to answer this question but a further 7% of young people added that additional barriers to their engagement included transport and finances. How young people are finding out about Kick the Dust has changed since the beginning of the project with 16% coming to us through social media posts and the new Kick the Dust web pages, 10% through flyers and posters, 19% through friends or a family member and 12% from having taken part in a previous Kick the Dust activity. Strong partnerships with Children's Services and other cultural and youth organisations accounts for 43% of young people being signposted to Kick the Dust.

Target audiences: (some young people fall into more than one category) as of 26/1/2023:

- FE/HE – 33%
- YMCA clients – 35%
- Secondary schools – 22%
- Young people with mental health issues – 25%
- SEND – 11%
- Outside of mainstream education – 8%
- NEET – 9%
- Looked after children and adopted living those at home - 5%
- Young Offenders and those at risk of offending – 3%
- Care Leavers – 4%
- Young Carers – 3%
- New arrivals and refugees – 3%
- Pregnant young mums and teenage parents – 1%

As part of the feedback, young people are asked how aware they are of the range of job roles available within NMS and the heritage sector and how they perceive museums in terms of being spaces for young people:

- Before taking part in a KTD programme, 77% of young people stated they had little or no knowledge of job roles in NMS or the heritage sector. After their engagement 62% of these young people stated they now had a good understanding of the different job roles available in the sector and a further 33% felt more knowledgeable. 92% stated that the skills they had learnt would be useful to them in the future (Renaissi 92%). This shows that Kick the Dust as a programme enables young people to gain a greater understanding of the opportunities within the heritage sector and develop transferable work skills.
- Following their engagement, 90% felt that museums were a space they would use in the future with 59% stating their engagement had been 'better than they expected'.

When we compare all our data to the Renaissi findings, (which uses data from October 2020 to September 2021 across all 12 national Kick the Dust projects), it shows we are in line with other Kick the Dust projects, scoring higher in 9 of the 13 areas. (The Renaissi responses can be found in the brackets).

Following their engagement:

- 80% of young people felt that there were jobs for young people like themselves to work in heritage with 13% not sure and needing to find out more. (Renaissi 67%).
- 89% of young people said they had learnt new and interesting things about heritage (Renaissi 85%); 84% of young people felt that heritage represented young people like them (Renaissi 73%);
- 86% of young people said they were more likely to become a volunteer because of their involvement in KTD (Renaissi 78%) and 87% stated they would be looking to take part in other local heritage events as a result of their engagement (Renaissi 73%).
- 98% of young people stated they felt welcomed and respected by staff (Renaissi 95%) and 96% felt a sense of achievement (Renaissi 82%).
- 94% felt heritage delivered in this way would engage other young people (Renaissi 92%) with 78% of young people stating they now had a better understanding of heritage having taken part in the programme although 21% weren't sure and needed more engagement. (Renaissi 85%)
- 87% of young people felt they had the opportunity to influence decisions. (Renaissi 64%)
- 95% stated there was something for everyone irrespective of background (Renaissi 91%) although this needs to be put into context of other demographic data for Norfolk.
- 93% of young people felt that the programme was easy and affordable to get involved in but had concerns that they may not be able to do this in the future if there was a significant cost to them with 50% of this number stating financial concerns as a barrier. (Renaissi 93%).
- 88% of young people said they had found heritage more relevant than they had before embarking on their Kick the Dust journey with 9% neither agreeing nor disagreeing (Renaissi 81%).

Summary

The NLHF-funded Kick the Dust project is due to end in March 2023 with evidence clearly demonstrating the impact on young people and staff engaging in activity. As we deliver activity through our blended offer of face-to-face activity and online engagement, this impact is increased further as more staff engage in the co-delivery of activity and see the benefits to their own development. This has been seen in the delivery of current exhibitions, curation, and through collections.

Kick the Dust was set up as a three-stage journey, with young people developing transferable work-related skills and gaining experiences that they would struggle to find elsewhere, to support them in securing employment. Whilst young people cite being involved in curation and creating exhibitions as the main areas they have enjoyed, it is through these activities that they hone their skills and understanding of the workplace, which will help them secure employment longer term. The introduction of the 10 hour per week pre-traineeship programme allows those young people who have been developing their skills through the Kick the Dust programme, but who lack the confidence to put themselves forward for job roles, to go through a supportive recruitment process and receive mentoring support to help them progress after the programme ends. Feedback from those taking part in the pilot shows that this adds real value to the overall offer and that the process has helped them have the confidence to put themselves forward. The 10 hours a week posts meets the needs of the young person and the participating team and will be used to demonstrate to smaller museums that they can support a young person from a more challenging background in a meaningful way as well as provide opportunities for professional development for their own staff.

Our aim as we move forward is to support more working age young people to progress into employment, training or further learning and long-term volunteering. The new pilot for the bursary pre-traineeship programme will allow us to gauge the need and success of this entry level pathway into the sector. We have seen young people move through the programme, gaining the confidence to take on volunteering roles within NMS, others securing their first job through the Government's Kick Start 6-month placement programme; three young people who have taken up positions within NMS Front of House teams, eight young people progressing onto the Teaching Museum and Kick the Dust bursary traineeship programme, four of the last cohort of trainees securing permanent employment in the sector, one with NMS; two young people progressing onto Teacher Training, and nine young people taking on the Young Ambassador roles, one of whom has recently secured a position with Norfolk and Norwich Festival another on a Teacher training programme. Others have stated that their involvement has helped them make choices around subjects and options at school and college.

Take up continues to grow through the establishment of new partnerships with schools, colleges, Children's Services, and other cultural organisations as well as Job Centre Plus, Prospects (Shaw Trust) and Norfolk and Waveney MIND. The Kick the Dust web pages on the NMS site is bringing traffic and enquiries from young people who would

not ordinarily come to us through our existing partnerships which will support this growth and solidify the way NMS approaches youth engagement going forward.

Quotes from participants

'Make Yarmouth & Saturday Art Club have influenced me to do more creativity and thanks to Kick the Dust for helping and supporting us. I was really shy when I started and didn't speak much. I feel quite confident and have improved a lot more by being here and learning and artists and the history of Time and Tide' (Young Carer East).

'M chose film production after a National Saturday Club taster session at East Norfolk Sixth Form. She is now applying for a volunteering role as a result.' (Project Worker East)

'I still thought it was worth emailing to say thank you for the photos of the museum club enjoying the trail, it's so lovely to know they gave it such positive feedback as well! It was a lovely project to be involved in and I feel I have learned a lot about creating heritage projects in more practical terms, so thank you for that. I also hope that when I have the time there are more Kick the Dust projects I can get involved in!' (Young Person on the Faith and Ritual YAF project)

'It was a wonderful opportunity to be able to be a part of the SHARE organising group, so thank you for having young people, like myself, involved at an organising capacity at this event. It was very insightful and I learnt a lot. Thank you also for being so patient and helpful with my questions!' (Lily F Young Ambassador KTD). Following the event Lily secured a job with Norfolk & Norwich Festival in Kings Lynn – *'I have been successful in a job application (which I'm so happy about!!), to work at Kings Lynn Festival as their 'events and communications intern'*

'Kick the Dust has helped me to gain real-life experience within the museum and heritage sector. I was able to curate, organise and develop my own creative project which has since been on display in numerous venues in Norfolk. As a result of this, I have been able to kick start my career as a project coordinator within the arts and culture sector. Without the hands-on experience that Kick the Dust gave me, and the help and knowledge of the scheme's organisers, I wouldn't have had the experience or confidence to start applying for the jobs I once dreamed of.' (Young person on the online work experience programme.)

Lily who completed the 6 month Kick Start programme apologised for not being able to apply for the new Project Worker role saying: *'I was starting my application when I received a job offer regarding a role at the GroundWork Gallery in King's Lynn. I have accepted this so will no longer be applying for the Project Worker position. Which is bittersweet as the role breakdown excited me. Thank you so much for sending it over, I really appreciated it as I hadn't seen it.'* Lily – Young Ambassador

One of our complex needs young people who had previously applied for a traineeship has been successful on his work experience with Norfolk Library service. The project worker stated: *'I am sitting with S who was one of the Time Turners and former College of West Anglia students. He has just completed his job placement with the library and has done brilliantly. He is applying for a permanent part-time post with the library service and has successfully been accepted onto their Casual staff list and hoping for a job in the library permanently'*. R Williams Project Worker and mentor

Working on the Baedeker project Aug to Nov 22 one young person stated: *'I feel that working on this project has been a new experience which has really helped me to develop some new skills and gain some new knowledge'*.

Future funding

Whilst the NLHF-funded Kick the Dust project will be ending in March 2023, NMS will be maintaining the *Kick the Dust: Norfolk* brand as the vehicle for our ongoing youth engagement programmes.

NMS has secured 3 years of funding from 2023-26 to support Kick the Dust activity through Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation uplift funding. This will see the Kick the Dust team further developing the existing partnerships with libraries to support the development of young people's cultural and digital skills and provide pathways to employment in the cultural sector.

Additional funding has also been secured in 2023-24 from NCC Public Health to support Kick the Dust activity focussed on young people's mental health and wellbeing.

A National Lottery Grants for Heritage Round 1 application has now been submitted to the NLHF for the 'Your Heritage Your Future' project. The application was submitted by YMCA Leicester, with NMS as Lead Partner. This complex application was put together by a joint project team of staff from YMCA Leicester and NMS.

5. Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn – project update

5.1 Main construction works

In August 2020 the Keep and surrounding site areas were formally handed over to the Principal Contractor, Morgan Sindall Construction following Contract Award for the main build. Internal and external secure hoardings are in place to demarcate the construction site and delineate the contractor compound on the mound. There is an additional contractor compound and deliveries access point in the Lower Castle Gardens. A tower crane has been installed on the mound. An internal hoarding line runs across the entrance to the Rotunda, separating the construction zone from the areas of the museum that remain open to visitors throughout the project.



Drone image of the construction site

Sectional completion of the first phase of the project took place on 11 August 2022, with the formal handover of the new WC block area, which includes accessible toilets, baby changing facilities, a new Changing Place and a 'pop-up' catering facility. The Changing Place is now fully operational and registered <https://www.changing-places.org/find?toilet=2026>.

The installation of internal steelwork structures in the Keep has been completed, with new floor levels installed. Joinery and mechanical & electrical installation is ongoing.



New 'pop-up' café, visitor toilets and Changing Place

A verbal update on recent progress on the construction site will be given at the meeting.

6. Other activity across Norwich museums

6.1 Museum of Norwich

The Museum of Norwich team has been busy delivering a broad range of activities.

Exhibitions

Threads of Connection: A Creative Response to Our Textile Heritage

Wed 23 November 2022 - Saturday 25 February 2023

Over the last year, Curator Hannah Henderson has been collaborating with Art at Work CIC, a local not for profit organisation that creates art-based projects to promote wellbeing and good mental health. The *Threads of Connection* project has been undertaken by their arts for wellbeing group for women and has focused on the Norwich textile industry. This project was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). Through visits, talks, creating and making, the participants have gained new knowledge and become experts in their fields of research. They have also harnessed their creativity to bring our textile heritage to life.

As part of the final stage of the project, Hannah Henderson and Holly Sandiford, Group Leader, supported the group to create their own exhibition, which showcases some of the women's artwork. On 23 November the museum hosted an opening event which was a joyful celebration of their experience with us and was a moving moment for many, as they saw their work on display for the first time.

Feedback from the group's participants showed that the women were so engaged and inspired by the project, that they expressed a genuine interest to continue their learning journey:

"I have loved this group brining history and art together."

"Being a volunteer for the first time has really helped my confidence."

"I enjoyed spending time at the Bridewell. Please can we have more time next time?"

Subsequently, Art at Work applied for a further three-year funding package from NLHF, and we have recently heard that this has been successful. The group will be based at the museum for the next three years, meeting in blocks of eight weekly sessions, three times a year. Staff have greatly enjoyed working with Art at Work on this past project and have learned so much from them in terms of developing our wellbeing arts practice. The partnership has been mutually beneficial in many ways. This new 3-year project will empower the participants with more time, enabling them to pursue a deeper exploration of their local heritage. Furthermore, this continued partnership will enable our team to learn first-hand from expert practitioners in wellbeing arts work, enriching our own practice and enhancing future public programmes.



Staff are currently liaising with *Norwich Puppet Theatre*, about their upcoming youth curation project, and how we can host their final exhibition over the summer months.

Community projects & events

The period has been busy, with several active community projects including:

Community Culture Club

On 9 February we came to the end of another successful *Community Culture Club* series, which ran over ten sessions. It has been a pleasure to see the participants flourish under whilst they explored our collections creatively and feedback was very positive. This activity was supported by NMS Learning team colleagues Rosalind Hewitt and Susie Childerhouse.

Kick The Dust Project: 1942: Messages from the Norwich Raids

Over the past six months, staff have been supporting a *Kick the Dust* project, enabling young people to explore the impact of the WW2 bombing raids.

On Armistice Day, we celebrated the launch of a new digital app which presents an audio tour of the city, created by the young people involved, featuring untold stories of local people who lived during the Baedeker Raids on Norwich in 1942.

The celebration event was attended by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Norfolk Joint Museums Committee Cllrs John Ward and Robert Kybird, other local councillors, Director of Culture & Heritage Steve Miller and family and friends. The young people all spoke very passionately about their experience and were very proud of their achievements.

To find the app look for:
ECHOES in Playstore (Android)
or in the App Store (I phones)

Also see:

[1942: Messages from the Norwich Raids - a geolocated audio walk on ECHOES](#)



Vision Norfolk Visit

Museum of Norwich staff have continued to build the partnership with *Vision Norfolk*. Most recently, in the spirit of community collaboration, we teamed up with some of volunteers from the women from Art at Work's wellbeing group to create a multi-sensory tour of the new exhibition *Threads of Connection*.

Curator Hannah Henderson welcomed the group and offered an audio description of the exhibition. The Art at Work volunteers then talked about their own experience of the project, whilst sharing artworks they had created for the group to handle. A firm favourite was a dress that features embroidery of images of refugee children, one of the women had seen on a TV news report about the start of the Ukraine crisis.

Bethan Holdridge, Assistant Curator, then shared some history of the Norwich textile industry, whilst participants were able to touch a Norwich shawl. The session concluded with the group getting creative with some new tactile design resources, created by one of the volunteers, that helped them explore a pine motif which features heavily in Norwich textiles.

Participants fed back comments like:

"It was incredible to hear from the Art at Work volunteers about how much work they put in. They have shown such skill."

"We liked the tactile resources, thank you."

"We've had a wonderful experience."



English Plus Visit

Our partnership with English Plus continues to develop, supported by Bethan Holdridge, Assistant Curator. The group comprises of people from all over the world, such as Hong Kong, Brazil, Ukraine, Iran and India, who come together to make friends, improve their English and boost their wellbeing.

On 24 November the group visited the NMS Conservation Team to see behind the scenes work, including objects which will feature in the upcoming HMS Gloucester exhibition. We then visited Norwich Castle Museum, for a guided introduction by NMS

Modern & Contemporary Art Curator Dr Rosy Gray of the *Slaves of Fashion* exhibition. The group enjoyed both sessions.



NUA Visit

On 8 December, Kate Farley, Head of Textile Design and Caroline George, Tutor, at Norwich University of the Arts (NUA), visited with 30 of their BA Textile Design Year 2 students. They had been set a project brief by the CTA on the theme of *Norwich Strangers*. The Curators provided access to some of the rare pattern books and the group were very pleased.

Feedback was very positive from the tutors,

"Thank you so much for your time and for the fantastic talk. We loved it!

It was informative and super inspiring. An exciting start to the project. We really appreciate the effort your team made for us to view the rare textile sample books. Absolutely exquisite!"

"I echo Caroline's thanks – the students as well as us were really inspired by your passion and experience of the collection – thanks! They have lots of ideas as a result of the visit and I'm sure they will be back."

Subsequently, we are making plans to link up a few students with the *Kick the Dust* programme as well as arranging to meet students to discuss working in the arts sector, as part of their ongoing career development.



Kick The Dust : Pre-Trainee scheme

For ten weeks, we have been working with Andrew, our new *Kick the Dust - Norfolk* trainee. Andrew has been working alongside our experienced colleagues, learning all about what working in a museum involves.

Andrew has been able to help with opening up the building, working in our shop, selling tickets, using the till, welcoming visitors, checking our historic building is safe and secure, supporting schools' visits, assisting with events and supporting the curators with collections care.

Andrew commented,:

"I like to think I have greatly improved some... skills... such as communication and listening as well as working as part of a team.

I've enjoyed every moment and everyone I have met has been so lovely and has made me feel so incredibly welcome. I felt like a true member of the team from day one. It's been a fantastic experience and I'm honoured to have been able to experience it."

Over many years the team at the Museum of Norwich have been supporting young people to build their confidence and learn new skills. Staff stay in touch with many after they leave the museum. Some have gone on to build careers in arts and heritage, both in the UK and overseas, or to work in education, probation, the law and in the NHS.



School Holiday Activities

Christmas Holidays

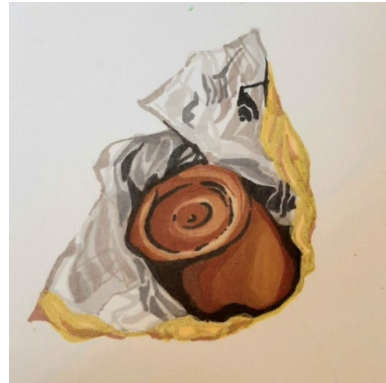
The Museum had a successful Christmas holiday programme centred around a little elf trail. We welcomed 737 visitors over the Christmas period. Continuing our partnership with Art at Work, Holly Sandiford attended on 29 December and delivered a 'zine making workshop, encouraging families to think more about the designs in Norwich textiles. The event attracted 101 people.

February Half Term Holiday

The museum enjoyed a lively half term, welcoming 587 visitors. On 14 February we hosted an event linked to *Norwich Science Festival*, led by the Norwich Museums Learning team called *Skin Deep: Unpacking the Packaging*.

Museums Trainee Shaimaa Kandil, a trained scientist, delivered an event which explored the chemistry behind the products in our recreated pharmacy.

The museum also ran a 'Last Rolo' spotting trail, with replica Rolos hidden all around the museum.



Museum Shop

The museum shop has been a focus for us over the past six months, with staff supported by Harriet Johnson, the new NMS Retail Manager. Staff have been focusing on creating a USP for the shop on the theme of 'Made in Norwich' and started to work with local makers. A partnership has already been developed with Salt Glass Studios, who came to decorate our window for Christmas, with giant baubles and a display of beautiful glassware.

We have also formed a new relationship with local print maker Mandy Doubt, which has brought in some new products and added vibrancy to the retail offer. We have also been a stockiest for the Singh Twins merchandise for *Slaves of Fashion*, in conjunction with the EAST Gallery and this line has sold very well.



6.2 Strangers' Hall

Strangers' 100 Centenary programme

Strangers' Hall, a centuries-old merchant house, was initially saved from destruction in the late 19th century by local solicitor Leonard Bolingbroke and opened as a museum by him. After some twenty years Bolingbroke gifted the building and its collections to the City of Norwich in perpetuity and Strangers' Hall opened as a City of Norwich Museum on 4 July 1923. Throughout Autumn 2022 development work has been taking place to ensure that we maximise the promotional opportunities offered by this centenary during 2023.

We aim to involve people in their rich and pioneering museum heritage and showcase the results of new research using the museum's collection of archive documents and photographs. Staff are working on new front window displays and visitors will be able to see several new star items on display inside, as well as displaying the Contemporary Collection selected and collected by Kick the Dust participants. A range of events, costumed interpretation and free openings will take place during the summer ahead. The programme is being generously funded by the Freeman of Norwich and Friends of Norwich Museums.

Strangers' Hall Christmas Season

Strangers' Hall was proud to present our first British Sign Language tours of Strangers' Hall for Deaf visitors who use BSL as part of the 2022 Christmas programme. The tours were delivered by Martin Glover, a Deaf Architect and BSL user with extensive experience of delivering tours and workshops in arts and heritage settings. The tours were well attended and participants gained a deeper understanding of the fascinating history of Strangers' Hall as well as enjoying some festive fun.

Also new this year was a Medieval singing workshop with Richard de Winter, a specialist in early music and regular singer for the ensembles Trouvere and Passamezzo. During this magical after-hours workshop participants tried out some simple and not-so-simple Christmas music from the Medieval period and learned to adapt singing style to location, whilst touring different rooms of Strangers' Hall. The workshop was rounded off with seasonal drinks and mince pies.



The Fools Puppet Theatre Companie family show: *The Incredible Christmas Pie*

On the Sundays and Wednesdays in December leading up to Christmas, Strangers' Hall welcomed back the fabulous *Fools Puppet Theatre Company* with their brand new show *The Incredible Christmas Pie*. Visitors discovered the twelve magic ingredients of the Christmas pie, accompanied by unusual renditions of *The Twelve Days of Christmas*, and followed by a trail through the Parlour, Toy Room and Victorian rooms in search of a curious selection of pie ingredients.

The closure of Norwich Castle owing to boiler breakdown in the run up to Christmas delivered a bonus for Strangers' Hall as the museum was able to open on eight additional days during the latter part of December up until the end of the year. The medieval Christmas family event planned for the Castle was transferred so that none of the visitors already booked lost out, and then hands-on exploration of exquisitely wrapped 'gift boxes' proved a great success. Over 800 visitors were welcomed in December. Thanks are due to Castle staff members who worked over the Christmas period to facilitate this extra opening.



Store 4 repair and decorating

We are pleased to report that ceiling repairs to Store 4 have been carried out following previous leaks and that we are currently awaiting the final painting work in order to return stored collections to their usual locations.

2023 Deep Clean

A period house museum like Strangers' Hall requires an extensive deep clean every year to remove dirt and substances that would harm the collections, ensure the fabric of the building is clean and check for pests from carpet beetle to moth. Every year, our primary focus is to get the display rooms cleaned as this is harder to achieve once the museum is open. Once this is complete, stores can then be cleaned in rotation if time allows. The clean this year flagged up some woodworm in the Victorian Parlour, Great Chamber and Parlour. Several large and significant items of furniture from these rooms were taken to Gressenhall to be frozen in the Collections Centre freezer. Moth damage was thankfully less in evidence. The clean also highlighted some priorities for snagging

work to be undertaken during the forthcoming year, specifically the fitting of blinds in the Victorian Parlour and small textiles conservation jobs.

The Deep Clean was made possible with the involvement of 23 volunteers contributing 252 hours work over three weeks. Participants were of varied ages and from wide social and cultural backgrounds including the People from Abroad Team, English Plus, Aviva, Kick the Dust, university students, recently retired, people seeking employment, staff volunteering their own time and returning volunteers. Thanks to Bethan Holdridge, Assistant Curator, for organising the clean and David Harvey from the Conservation Dept for sharing the team leader role.



7. Norwich Curatorial update

Dr Francesca Vanke, Senior Curator of Norwich Museums and Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art has spent most of her time working with **Senior Curator of Costume and Textiles Ruth Battersby-Tooke** and with colleagues from UEA on the exhibition *The Last Voyage of the Gloucester: Norfolk's Royal Shipwreck, 1682* which opens to the public on Saturday 25 February.

This ship sank off the Norfolk coast while on the way to Edinburgh, carrying James, Duke of York, brother of King Charles II and the heir to the English throne. Over 150 lives were lost. This unique exhibition displays fascinating historical contextual material on loan from national and international museums, alongside objects rescued from the wreck, revealed to the public for the first time. We explore the story of the ship itself, as well as detailing the extraordinary endeavours of the divers from Norfolk, Julian and Lincoln Barnwell, who found the wreck in 2007, and the ongoing conservation of the rare artefacts rescued so far.



The Wreck of the Gloucester, 1682, Johan Danckerts, c 1682,
© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich

An 80-page catalogue, written jointly by Dr Francesca Vanke, Ruth Battersby-Tooke and co-curators Prof Claire Jowitt and Dr Ben Redding, maritime historians from UEA, accompanies this show.

Francesca also continues to work on her Turner project. *Landscape Rebels*, the exhibition at Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich, is going well. Visitor figures and comments so far show that this exhibition is popular and that the topical theme of climate change is appreciated. Francesca is also progressing on her new exhibition based around *Walton Bridges* programmed for Time and Tide Museum, Yarmouth, in October 2023. Entitled *Constructions, Crossings and Connections: JMW Turner and Bridges Old and New*, it explores how bridges are portrayed by Turner and other artists, from Norfolk and elsewhere.

Bridges played an important part in the Industrial Revolution, enabling travel, communication and commerce. The building of a bridge has been a cause for celebration and pride, both for the place that houses it and the people who design, build and sponsor it. We aim in the exhibition to make links between bridges painted by Turner, with the building of the new bridge in Yarmouth, the Third River Crossing, due to be completed during the show's run. The engineering firm working on the Third Crossing will lend material relating to the building process, including an architectural model and time-lapse film footage.

During this period Francesca has also given online talks to Kick the Dust groups about *Walton Bridges*.

Senior Curator of Natural History & Geology, Dr David Waterhouse was invited to give a presentation in late November to Visit North Norfolk's Networking Marketing Event at the Woodland Holiday Park, Trimmingham. The presentation, attended by representatives of local small businesses as well as North Norfolk District Council, was about North Norfolk's Deep History Coast and was very well received.

The Sedgwick Museum at the University of Cambridge along with Ipswich Museum played host to an online conference on 26 November. This focussed on the internationally important Pliocene and Pleistocene Epoch sediments exposed

throughout East Anglia. David Waterhouse represented Norfolk Museums Service by being invited to talk about Norfolk's Deep History Coast project – discussing how geology and fossils can have a positive effect on the regional tourism economy. David has trained four members of staff from Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) in the fossils and geology of North Norfolk. NWT are an important local partner in wildlife and the environment and regularly run rock-pooling and fossil-hunting trips to West Runton. Staff are now fully trained, empowered and confident in leading events into the future. In a similar event held at Cromer Museum, David also trained staff from North Norfolk Visitor Centre on Monday 12 December for the Deep History Coast project in fossils and geology – many people bring in fossils to the centre and also email and send queries via social media. Staff felt much more confident in dealing with these enquiries. David also led a session at Time and Tide Museum on the fossils of Norfolk for the Great Yarmouth Young Archaeologists Club on Saturday 17 December. In BBC's Winterwatch programme's last visit to Wild Ken Hill near King's Lynn, once again the Natural History collections at Norfolk Museums Service played a starring role. Common shrew and European Beaver skulls were loaned to the programme.



Winterwatch presenters Chris Packham and Michaela Strachan with Norwich Castle's skulls

David was invited to talk about Norfolk's best places to find fossils (and how to hunt for them responsibly) on Chris Goreham's Breakfast Show, BBC Radio Norfolk. David has also done two interviews on the regular *History at Home* spot on Radio Norfolk's Kirsteen Thorne show: once about skulls and teeth in the Castle's animal osteology collections and for a second time about NMS's first 3D printed accession – a 850,000 year old human footprint found at Happisburgh in North Norfolk.

Dr Rosy Gray Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art has been working on a major exhibition at Norwich Castle: *The Singh Twins: Slaves of Fashion* (1 October 2022 – 22 January 2023) in partnership with East Gallery, Norwich University of the Arts. The Singh Twins work as a single-entity artist duo, combining traditions from Eastern and Western art, and exploring contemporary British culture through interconnected colonial and global histories.

Slaves of Fashion explored hidden narratives of empire, colonialism, conflict, and slavery through the lens of India's historic textile trade, with its relevance to modern day legacies and debates around ethical consumerism, racism and politics of trade. The exhibition included objects from across NMS's collections, chosen in collaboration with The Singh Twins and seven NMS curators. The Singh Twins' cross-disciplinary approach was particularly valuable for NMS, with the artists' research into the collections highlighting new connections and perspectives.

This exhibition was extremely popular with our visitors, who appreciated the combination of the works' aesthetic beauty with the detailed historical narratives and the political relevance.

Rosy also delivered an 'In-Conversation' event in January with the Singh Twins at NUA. This attracted a full house audience and was very well received.

As part of the exhibition, NMS commissioned The Singh Twins to create a new work inspired by the collections, *Alternative A-Z of Empire*, which will be placed on permanent display in the Wider World Gallery at Norwich Castle in 2023. Rosy will work with Francesca, and the Twins, to re-display surrounding cases to complement this prestigious commission which incorporates items from the decorative arts collections.



The Singh Twins, *Alternative A-Z of Empire* (2022)

Commission made possible with support from Art Fund,
Friends of Norwich Museums and Norfolk Contemporary Art Society

Kate Thaxton, Curator of the Regimental Collections has two main projects running currently at the RNRM.

Firstly, she is working on the *New Views* project which is about broadening, not only the audience for the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum (RNRM), but the way the collection is used and how it is interpreted. It builds on recent improved physical access to the reserve collection and research facilities. It is aimed at the significant student population of the city which currently does not engage with the collection.

A new website, hosted by the Trustees, will highlight the diverse nature of the collection and different ways it can be used, other than for historical research, such as construction and pattern making, the study of materials, design, fine art and creative

writing. As part of the project, a programme of high-quality object photography, financed by AMOT (Army Museums Ogilby Trust), provides a fine image bank.



Detail of recently photographed Burmese silver bowl, c 1865 (NWHRM : 3248)

Kate is also working on new interpretation in the RNRM displays. Three new interactives are being installed, which will provide badly needed additional interpretation. They include a *Life of a Soldier in the County Regiment* touch screen, which explores the history of soldiers' daily lives with subjects such as food, barracks, family life, sport and pay.

At the same time the Museum continues to provide information to various enquirers from family history to academics, many require considerable research. 220 such enquiries have been dealt with over the past few months. There are currently eight regular volunteers who work with the Curator to assist with this research

Dr Tim Pestell, Senior Curator of Archaeology continues to be fully occupied with the Norwich Castle project.

Dr Giorgia Bottinelli, Curator of Historic Art, has been fully occupied with an audit and reorganisation of the art stores at Norwich Castle.

8. Other developments

8.1 External lift – Glass repairs

The external lift at Norwich Castle is now operational again following its closure in October because of vandalism. Scaffolding has been erected that has allowed contractors to remove the broken glass. They have also put in place a temporary timber hoarding, while a new glass panel is fabricated. It is anticipated that the new glass panel will be installed by the end of March 2023.



The scaffolding providing access from Castle Gardens

Access is being maintained at the bottom of the lift, with a protected walkway beneath the scaffold tower.

8.2 Norwich Castle heating issue

In December 2022, during a period of extremely cold weather, there was a total failure of the heating system at Norwich Castle. This resulted in a decision being taken to close the Castle to the public while investigatory and remedial works were carried out.

The boilers at the Castle were over 20 years old and following an investigation into the issues, it was not possible to repair the old boilers. This meant that new boilers needed to be sourced and installed in the last week before Christmas. The decision was taken to keep the Castle closed in the build up to Christmas, as the heating failure coincided with a very cold period and temperatures within the museum had fallen significantly.

A bank of six new boilers were procured and the installation was completed on Friday 23 December. However, staff were still faced with a difficult decision with regards to opening the museum. The Arts Council England Government Indemnity Scheme (GIS) which covers key loans, states the standard requirement for temperature is: 16 °C – 24 °C with a maximum fluctuation of 4 °C within 24 hours. This meant we needed to have a planned approach to turning the heating on, whereby we could slowly increase the temperature by no more than 4 degrees in any 24-hour period.

As we were so close to the Christmas closure period, where we would have a very limited staff presence on site and with limited availability of specialist contractors, it was decided to delay starting the phased heating increase until staff and relevant contractors returned on 27 December. The temperature was successfully increased over the remainder of that week and the museum was reopened to the public on Saturday 31 December.

To mitigate visitor disappointment and to provide an alternative base for planned festive events, Stranger's Hall was opened for a number of additional days.



The bank of six new gas boilers following installation

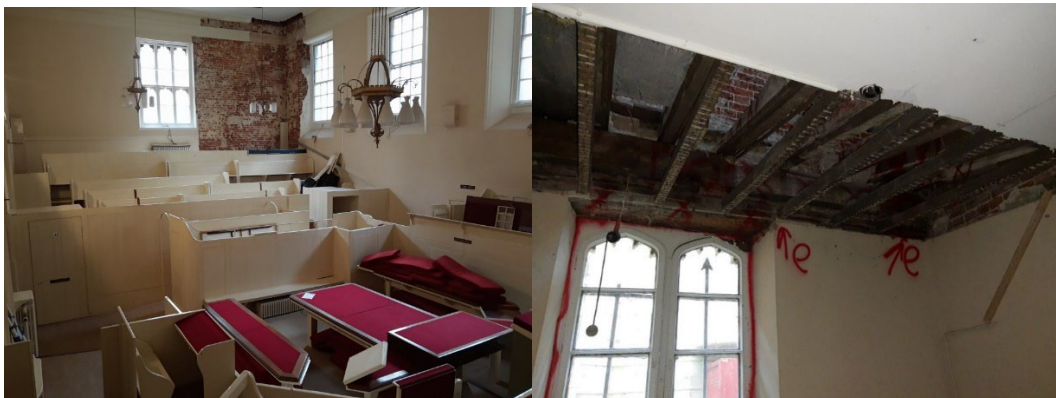
The new boilers are considerably more efficient than the old ones they replaced. The system can also run if two boilers fail, thus making the heating system substantially more resilient against future issues.

8.3 The Shirehall Courtroom

Works within the Shirehall Courtroom to treat the outbreak of dry rot are well underway, funded through the NCC capital programme. NMS staff have been working alongside Norse and Norwich City Council Planning colleagues to identify the extent of the damage and agree on the methodology for the remedial works.

Following a formal tender process and successful planning application, T.C Garrett Roofing have been appointed as the Principal Contractor. The works will include the removal and replacement of affected timbers, along with the introduction of steel interventions to reduce the risk of future outbreaks.

The scaffolding is due to be erected week commencing 6 March. This will include a full internal 'birdcage' scaffold. Following this, the construction works are due to start on week commencing 3 April 2023. The construction works are due to take 6 months to complete.



The south-west corner of the Courtroom where most of the dry rot is prevalent



Some of the affected structural timbers

9. Visitor numbers

			APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	YEAR TO DATE	TOTAL
N O R W I C H	Castle Museum	2020-21					245	238	2,454	357	756				4,050	4,050
		2021-22		2,732	5,309	8,053	12,796	7,652	8,964	6,226	4,068	4,962	8,110	6,605	60,762	75,477
		2022-23	8,129	6,857	9,070	8,289	9,390	8,084	8,900	7,259	2,995	7,483			76,456	76,456
	Norwich Castle Study Centre (Shirehall)	2020-21													0	0
		2021-22		0	0	0	2	0	0	0	7	3	23	27	12	62
		2022-23	24	59	43	56	46	29	85	46	49	82			519	519
	Museum of Norwich	2020-21													0	0
		2021-22		115	504	595	614	842	749	767	422	647	1,308	1,165	5,295	7,728
		2022-23	1,406	1,552	1,044	1,666	2,476	1,970	1,431	1,406	1,387	1,185			15,523	15,523
	Strangers Hall	2020-21													0	0
		2021-22		0	0	24	39	450	508	521	460	0	302	883	2,002	3,187
		2022-23	478	642	639	635	779	843	713	620	863	16			6,228	6,228

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