

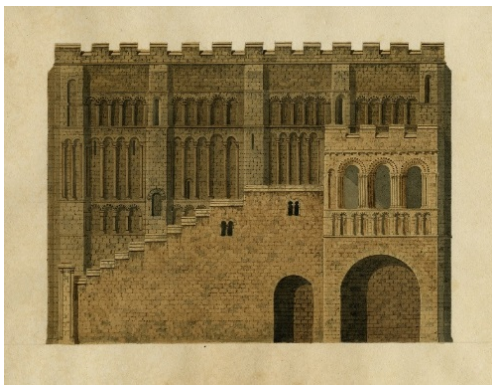
Norwich Museums briefing: March to May 2018

1. Exhibitions at Norwich Castle

1.1 The Square Box on the Hill (10 February – 3 June 2018)

Norwich Castle has dominated the City's skyline since the 12th century, but what is the story of this iconic and much-loved building? Built as a royal palace, Norwich Castle was a Norman showpiece with lavishly decorated interiors fit for a king. By the 14th century, it had become the County gaol confining Norfolk's prisoners within its walls. With the opening of the new prison at the end of the 19th century, the Castle's fate was uncertain, until its conversion into the museum, which it remains to this day.

The Square Box on the Hill exhibition explores the history of Norwich's iconic and Norman keep. Featuring never-before seen archives and artefacts from Norwich Castle's 900-year history, including a wealth of new research uncovered by the *Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England* project to transform the Keep, the exhibition shows this majestic landmark in a new light. *The Square Box on the Hill* illustrates the Castle's rich history, from Norman showpiece palace to county gaol to museum, through a stunning mixture of prints, models, paintings, architectural plans and memorabilia, many of which have never been on display before. Supported by headline sponsors Brown&Co, the exhibition also showcases the latest exciting plans for the Castle's future as part of the *Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England* project supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Along this fascinating journey, visitors come across many surprises which the Castle has housed over the years, from a Japanese Samurai suit of armour to a 1970s draught bitter; from fine medieval jewellery to graffiti etched in stone. Visitors even have the chance to literally walk back in time as pass through the revolving doors which stood at the Castle entrance for many years. Items such as an early museum attendant's uniform and the original ticket machine also prompt memories.

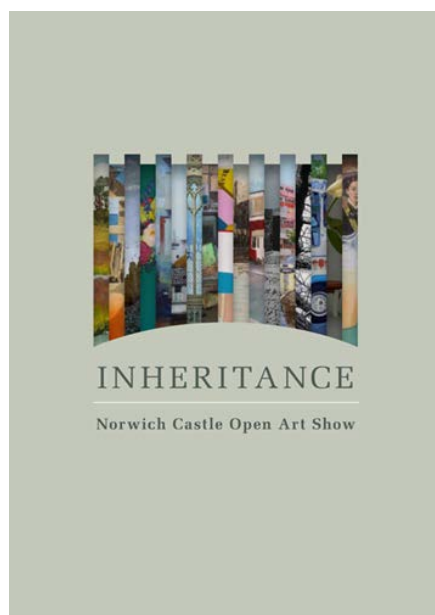


William Wilkins (attrib.) Norwich Castle 1795 ©Norfolk Museums Service

1.2 Norwich Castle Open Art Show: Inheritance (3 March – 20 May 2018)

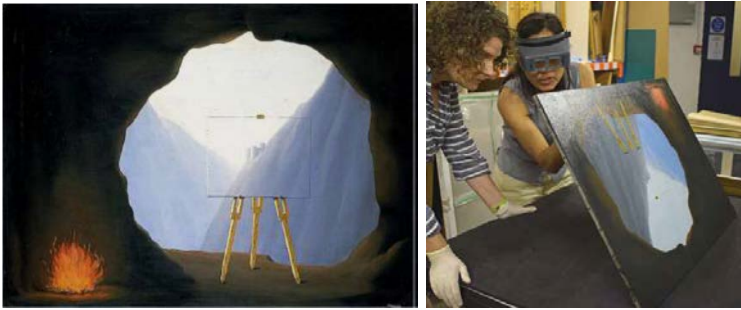
Inheritance: Norwich Castle Open Art Show is the fifth open art show at the Castle. Organised in collaboration with the East Anglia Art Fund, it presents a wonderful snapshot of contemporary artistic talent from across the region. With a record-breaking entry of over 900 works, the panel of distinguished judges Penelope Hughes-Stanton (Director of North House Gallery, Manningtree); Sandy Heslop (Professor of Visual Arts, University of East Anglia) and Lloyd De Beer (The Ferguson Curator of Medieval Europe, The British Museum) had a challenging task shortlisting the entries down to 129 works. The result is an engaging, colourful and surprising show which demonstrates a wide-ranging response to the theme of Inheritance. This theme was chosen to complement *The Square Box on the Hill* exhibition and the range of interpretations is fascinating—from spectacular images of the region's renowned land and seascapes to detailed observations of spaces neglected and overlooked. Fantastical imaginings of the world around us are displayed alongside more abstract interpretations of the past. Those who have left their mark are shown in loving portraits as well as by the traces that remain in ancient pathways, churches and military installations.

Inheritance is supported by headline sponsors Brown&Co and Gallery in the Lanes. Alongside their sponsorship, both companies provided generous artist prizes for their favourite works in the show. Brown&Co chose to award the exhibition prize to James Gladwell for his beautiful and intricate textile 'The Farm' created using the sewing skills passed on to him by his grandmother, while also touching on his Romany heritage. Gallery in the Lanes awarded Mark Mann's monumental bronze sculpture *Acts of Gross Indecency* the prize for an Emerging Artist. Norfolk-based artist Mark's stunning bronze sculpture was created as a monument to the experiences of gay men and marked the 50th year anniversary of the decriminalisation of homosexuality.



1.3 Colman Gallery temporary displays

The current extended exhibition in the Colman Project Space is *Magritte: The Lost Painting*. This explores the story of the detective work recently undertaken on NMS' Magritte painting *La Condition Humaine*, where a quarter of a missing Magritte painting, *La Pose Enchantée* was discovered underneath the later work.



La Condition Humaine by Rene Magritte

1.4 We Came Here to Conquer: Eleven artists respond to the print collections at Norwich Castle (Timothy Gurney Gallery - March 2018)

This exhibition formed part of the 3 year *New Geographies* project funded by Arts Council England which saw NMS working in collaboration with nine arts organisations across the region. This exhibition showcased new work by eleven artists involved with print and printmaking, each of whom explored and responded to the print collections at Norwich Castle. For more information about the project please see: www.newgeographies.uk

2. Forthcoming exhibitions

2.1. The Paston Treasure: Riches and Rarities of the Known World (23 June – 23 September 2018)

This major exhibition in collaboration with the Yale Center for British Art reunites, for the first time in three centuries, rare 17th century works of art and objects originally featured in the mysterious painting *The Paston Treasure*. Painted by an unknown Dutch school artist, circa 1663, the painting's unique and cryptic subject continues to mesmerize and puzzle art scholars and historians. Featuring an array of exotic treasures from around the world, as well as animals and people, the painting chronicles a fraction of what was once one of the greatest private art collections of 17th century England, amassed by Norfolk's Paston family, famed for their medieval letters.

The result of an intensive 10-year research project, *The Paston Treasure: Riches and Rarities of the Known World* sets out to explore the history of the Paston family and how they acquired and lost one of the most distinguished art

collections in seventeenth century Britain. It also examines the puzzle of the painting and its anonymous artist, and finally the history of the beautiful Oxnead Hall, of which only a part still stands today. Supported by the East Anglia Art Fund, the exhibition is divided into thematic sections, which are explained and illustrated by relevant objects, paintings and artefacts, the majority of which have been loaned from distinguished national and international public and private collections. Prestigious international lenders to the exhibition include the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Chicago Institute of Art, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Royal Collection and many others. Collectively the exhibition tells both a very Norfolk story and a genuinely international one.



Anonymous, Dutch School, *The Paston Treasure* c.1665 ©Norfolk Museums Service

2.2. Armistice: Legacy of the Great War (20 October 2018-January 2019)

Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and other funding partners including the Town Close Estate Charity and the Norfolk Regimental Museum Trustees, this major centenary exhibition will explore the First World War in Norwich and Norfolk, showing the physical impact on the county, coastal defences and changes in agriculture and industry, alongside stories of the communities and individuals whose lives were transformed by the War.

3. Norwich Castle Events

3.1 Easter Visitor Programme at Norwich Castle – Castle CSI (Crime Scene Investigation)

The Easter holiday theme at Norwich Castle was a new one for 2018, in the form of *Castle CSI*. Using the prison stories as inspiration, the NMS Learning Team developed a range of activities exploring phrenology and the use of death heads, drawing out the 19th century belief that criminal tendencies could be determined by the shape of the head. Visitors were able to become Castle Crime Scene Investigators, explore crime and punishment from medieval to modern times, follow a Crime Trail, sit in judgement with Judge Childers and explore the prisoners' secret tunnel to visit the dungeons. The theme appealed particularly to older children, a group that previous themes had engaged less. The programme was well received, with good levels of visitor numbers.



3.2. ST*ART Art Club for 8-12 years at Norwich Castle

The NMS Learning Team have recently concluded the latest ST*ART course entitled *ST*ART 3D*, led by artist Ali Atkins and a team of dedicated volunteers. Over 93% of participants rated *ST*ART 3D* as 'Excellent' with the remaining feedback rating it as 'Very Good'.

*'ST*ART is amazing and if I can I will do it again. I would recommend it to anyone!'*



ST*ART is a termly programme comprising five Saturday morning sessions run by local artist Ali Atkins. The programme was established by the NMS Learning Team in 2015 in response to limited art provision for 8-12 year olds in the city. Each term the programme focuses on either drawing, painting or 3D. The programme aims to inspire and support creativity and foster interest in a career in the arts. As well as acquiring and developing technical skills, knowledge and understanding, it is intended that participants enjoy the power of play and also develop their imaginations.

A number of previous participants are planning to go to Art School and pursue creative fields. As a result of this, staff have reviewed how ST*ART can be part of a 'pathway' to HE and have put a number of progression steps in place. Junior ST*ART Masterclasses have been initiated, including the recent Karl Foster led workshop *Drawing on the Lines of Rembrandt*, which produced some outstanding work. Norwich University of the Arts (NUA) are now a strategic partner for the programme and will add the following enrichment to the ST*ART offer: using the NUA logo on the certificate and a member of NUA staff presenting the certificates at the end of course event (3 times a year); inviting participants to attend the NUA BA Degree show with their family; inviting participants to come and see NUA students at work; a volunteering opportunity for NUA students to support the course.

The Learning Team intends to strengthen the links with educational institutions, to make clear the importance of the creative economy and underline the value of the arts in physical and mental wellbeing. ST*ART is funded by East Anglian Art

Fund with the support of the Norwich Freeman's Charity (formerly the Norwich Town Close Estate Charity). There are two funded places on each course for disadvantaged children.

3.3. Museums at Night – Saturday 19 May

Norwich Castle opened free to visitors between 5pm and 9.30pm as part of the national Museums at Night campaign. Visitors were able to meet the Black Knight and his friends, enrol in the Sword School and explore the secrets of the Castle in a candlelight trail. The evening was supplemented by music, tours, activities and crafts.

4. Strangers' Hall

4.1 Britain's Most Historic Towns TV series filming

Strangers' Hall featured on the Channel Four documentary *Norwich - Britain's most Tudor Town*, presented by Dr Alice Roberts. Curator Cathy Terry spoke about the Strangers' of Norwich and Bethan Holdridge demonstrated the tradition of Morris dancing in Tudor times.



4.2 Toyroom redisplay project

Staff are continuing to work on a project to redisplay the Toyroom collections at Strangers' Hall and increase access to the important toy collections. A programme of visitor consultation has been undertaken and plans are currently being developed. It is anticipated that a funding application will be made to the Heritage Lottery Fund's Our Heritage grant programme in 2018.

5. Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell

5.1 Samson fundraising campaign success



The six week crowd funding campaign to raise £15,000 to display the recently renovated statue of Samson reached a conclusion at the end of March with the final total being met. More than 300 generous donors pledged cash for the campaign, along with support from the Friends of Norwich Museums, the Paul Bassham Charitable Trust, the Geoffrey Watling Charity and the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society. The campaign was run on the Art Fund 'Art Happens' platform, and attracted extensive media and social media coverage.

Samson has been in the care of Norfolk Museums Service since the 1990's, when along with his partner Hercules, he was removed from the front of the building in Tombland for safekeeping. In 2014 Samson was moved to the conservation studios of Plowden & Smith in London, where for over four years specialist conservators carefully removed over 60 layers of white paint, to reveal the original statue. The ambition to display the 17th century figure at the Museum of Norwich can now be realised, thanks to the success of the crowd funding campaign. Funds raised will cover the cost of a bespoke, environmentally controlled display case, and the interpretation.

As part of the campaign, donors are given rewards as a thank you, so the museum worked with local print artist, Leanda Jaine Hughes, who offered her time for free to produce a limited edition print of the Samson and Hercules house, and a lino print of Samson's face, which will be replicated on tote bags and a wood cut. These are now in production and are being sent out to donors mid-June. Curators held an open day at the stores at Gressenhall in April for key supporters and also researchers who were able to get close to Samson for the first time. Samson was chosen as one of just 100 objects to be featured on a BBC app, linked to the BBC Civilisations programme. Thanks to the app, users

were able to see an augmented reality version of Samson wherever they chose to place him.



The Samson BBC app in action

5.2 Dementia friendly work at the Museum of Norwich

Dementia friendly coffee mornings at the museum are proving more popular, as the museum extends networks with local charities working with those living with dementia and their families. Coffee mornings run once a month, and are free. Visitors have a relaxed friendly guided tour of some of the galleries, with a specially trained staff member, followed by refreshments and a chat. Staff welcomed a group from Harford Hill Dementia Services in March.



6. Learning Team activities and projects

6.1 Norwich Castle working with secondary schools

Norwich Castle's work with secondary schools has been recognised as a national case study by the Group for Education in Museums (GEM). Over the last four years, the Castle has seen an increase of over 1,000 secondary school students and 15 secondary schools visiting for learning events. A report outlining the increase has been published by GEM in their latest Case Studies edition (Vol.20). Norwich Castle Learning Officer, Jenni Williams said, *'I am ecstatic that GEM have chosen us as one of their Case Studies and would like to thank everyone who has made this work possible.'*

The number of secondary school visits to Norwich Castle has grown impressively over the past three years, bucking the national trend and demonstrating the need to be responsive to curricular changes and schools' needs. The increase is due to the offer of learning events relevant to the new Key Stage 3 (11-14-years) curriculum in History, Maths and Geography and to the new History GCSE (14-16-year). At Key Stage 3 schools can choose our events on the Norman Conquest (history), the 1216 siege of the Castle (maths), Norwich's changing land uses (geography), the history of slavery, the Industrial Revolution (history) and the First World War. For History GCSE students can visit for the history of

medicine, crime and punishment, Anglo-Saxon and Norman England and studying a historic environment site. The Learning Team now intends to improve events using evaluations from teachers and also to expand the offer for 16-18-year olds

Secondary School Visits to Norwich Castle 2015-18:

	Total number of secondary students	Total number of schools
2015-16	1,953	29
2016-17	2,613	34
2017-18	3,203	48



6.2 HLF Kick the Dust programme

The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded Norfolk Museums Service a Round 1 pass for a grant of £776,500 for the project Norfolk Journeys, under the HLF's new Kick the Dust programme. This is a consortium project delivered in partnership with YMCA Norfolk and Creative Collisions (a youth arts network based in Great Yarmouth). The project aims to engage with 11-25 year olds – including those most hard to reach - during a four year period from 2018-22. Through the project the young people will be able to participate in a range of structured heritage activities that will develop their skills, experience and confidence. The Round 2 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund was submitted to the HLF in early February 2018, accompanied by a detailed Activity Plan. The

HLF final decision should be known by June 2018, with project activity commencing in September 2018.

A summary of what the project aims to achieve:

“This project will create a model that will facilitate sustained engagement with the young people of Norfolk, including those most hard to reach. NMS will work with YMCA Norfolk and Creative Collisions, two organisations with a strong record of engaging the most vulnerable young people. Young people will create an individual journey into active engagement with Norfolk’s heritage, using structured progression pathways based around a menu of options, tailored to meet individual needs. Specialise mentoring and the support of NMS will ensure young people reach their potential and achieve their aspirations. Outcomes for young people will include certificated skills and training, enhanced employment opportunities, active involvement in programming and a chance to shape the direction and governance of heritage organisations.”

7. Other Developments

7.1 Registrars wedding offer at Norwich Castle

The Registrars weddings offer at Norwich Castle continue to perform strongly with the number of bookings being up year on year. 2017-18 saw a total of 622 ceremonies conducted at Norwich Castle. This was an increase of 5% against the previous year.

7.2. History Mystery Escape Room games

NMS will shortly be commencing a new working relationship with local company History Mystery, with ‘escape room’ games being hosted at the Museum of Norwich. The undercroft at the Museum of Norwich has been cleared so that this atmospheric but previously unused space can facilitate the games.

The History Mystery Game is the next generation of interactive visitor experience – a fusion of immersive, entertaining heritage discovery with the ‘escape room game’ concept that is proving hugely popular in cities around the globe. Escape rooms games are a visitor attraction phenomenon across the world, winning huge appreciation scores on Trip Advisor. The concept started in Japan, grew in continental Europe, and is now rapidly taking hold in the UK and North America. The History Mystery Game borrows from this proven format and adds unique heritage elements to create an exciting interactive experience that is directly relevant to the historic locations. The games will be based around the real stories of places and people – old cities, historic houses, castles, wartime installations, historic figures and families – and will take place in the locations where those stories happened. The History Mystery Game brings new life to unused spaces in heritage locations as the venue for an exciting hour of interactive entertainment

for friends, colleagues or family groups of all ages. Teams of players aim to solve a mystery through a series of fun and challenging physical and mental puzzles that draw on the history of the location, all in a race against the clock. The games are in the latter stages of being designed and we hope to officially start running the games this summer.

The proposed Museum of Norwich game, called The Merchants' Vaults, is linked to the collections within the museum and sees players, 'trapped' in the past with no money. Thankfully, Norwich has a long history of thriving industries and it's up to the team to find a way to use them to survive and make it back to the present. Teams of between two and eight players have exactly one hour to master the secrets of Norwich's industrial past before time runs out. A series of puzzles and challenges are scattered through four evocative underground rooms, each focused on a different industry, reflecting the themes of the museum above. Fantastic settings and authentic looking props add to the atmosphere and intrigue.



7.3 Norwich Castle external lift improvements

Work to undertake the refurbishment of the external lift at Norwich Castle will be commencing in early summer with a view to it being completed in autumn 2018. The works will include a new lift carriage, new electric motor operating control systems to replace the current hydraulic systems, a refurbishment of both entrances of the lift (top and bottom) and also include works to eradicate water ingress issues. This project is being delivered with funding from the Norfolk County Council capital programme.

7.4 Teaching Museum Recruitment

The latest cohort of Teaching Museum trainees have recently taken up their 12 month paid posts. All interested candidates were invited to attend a briefing event prior to application. Shortlisted candidates were then invited to an Assessment Centre run by NMS staff across two days in February. This programme is funded by Arts Council England as a key part of the NMS National Portfolio Organisation Business Plan 2018-22. The 2018-19 trainees are:

Kate Raczynska – Armistice Exhibition (Regimental Museum)

Laura Reeves – Collections Management (countywide)

Ruth Stanley – Learning and Youth Engagement (Time and Tide Museum)

Samanth Parker – Curatorial (Lynn Museum & Ancient House)

Andrew Tullett – Coastal Treasures (King's Lynn)

Monika Saganowska – Coastal Treasures (King's Lynn)

Jessica Harpley – Costume and Textiles (Norwich)

Nicole Hudson – Collections and Exhibitions (Time & Tide Museum)



7.5 Museums & Heritage Awards Conservation Award 2018

The conservation of the Ensign of *Le Généreux* has been awarded a 'Highly Commended' in the Conservation category for this year's prestigious Museums & Heritage Awards. This recognises the enormity and complexity of the task faced by the NMS conservation team when it came to treating the Ensign, the largest object in the NMS collections and the centrepiece for the *Nelson & Norfolk* exhibition held at Norwich Castle from 29 July to 1 October 2017. The six month project included a full condition assessment in St Andrews Hall—the only city

centre space large enough to accommodate the flag—followed by months of painstaking repair work involving the stitching of a new conservation grade lining to the blue section of the flag. Delivering such a large-scale project, needed large-scale resources. Every single logistical consideration had to be scaled up, from creating a 9 metre roller to roll the Ensign on for handling and working, to hand dyeing 60 metres of support fabric of the same colour, creating a continuous table surface for working over 8 metres, using car jacks to lift the heavy roller at each revolution of the Ensign, through to creating a giant, sloping plinth in the exhibition gallery to display the Ensign. The end result was spectacular with the Ensign filling the first exhibition gallery at the Castle. The creation of a long-term accessible storage solution and the production of two films ensures significant numbers of people will continue to be able to engage with this remarkable object. The project involved the curatorial, conservation and design and technical teams, working alongside Lindsay Blackmore, specialist textiles conservator and the dedicated team of volunteers who worked tirelessly to stitch the new lining in place. The conservation work was supported with generous grants from the Costume & Textile Association and the Nelson Society.



8. Visitor Numbers

2017-18 was a record breaking year at Norwich Museums. All three Norwich sites saw a significant year on year increase, but Norwich Castle had an exceptional year with a record breaking 222,260 visitors. This represents an increase of 17,000 visits year on year and an increase of 8,000 visits compared to the previous record of 214,000 visits set in 2014-15.

Detailed visitor figures up to the end of May 2018 will be circulated at the meeting.

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