

## The Norwich Museums Members' Interim Briefing Paper August 2013

### Visitor Numbers

**2013/14** - See *Appendix 1*

Visitor numbers across the Norwich Museums have been lower than hoped for during June and July, particularly at Norwich Castle. This is primarily due to the excellent weather which has benefitted outdoor attractions.

Visitor numbers for the first two weeks of August are looking more promising and we have a very strong autumn and winter programme to look forward to.

### School Visits

**2013-14** See *Appendix 2*

School visits for the summer term for the Norwich Museums as a whole are 8% lower than last year, but this follows bumper numbers in February and March and it's possible that schools choose to visit during the spring rather than the summer term.

### Staffing

The two vacant Learning Officer posts have been filled. The new staff will take up their posts in September.

### Implications of changes to National Curriculum

Due to a successful lobby by the museums and heritage sector, the Government's proposed changes to the history curriculum will not have the negative impact on museums school programmes that had been initially feared. Tudors are no longer on the Key Stage 1 & 2/primary school curriculum, but there appears to be an opportunity to offer this subject under the heading of important people by tweaking the session to focus a little more on Elizabeth I. The impact on Strangers' Hall in particular will hopefully be minimal. There are also new opportunities to develop sessions on archaeology which are now included in the curriculum.

### Schools delivery

We are currently planning the relocation of natural history collections from a ground floor store room behind the natural history galleries in Norwich Castle, down to the Shirehall where the bulk of the Natural History Reserve collections are stored. This will create additional learning delivery space for both schools and other groups.

## OTHER LEARNING SERVICES NEWS

### Snapdragons



This year Norwich Castle has been running its first pre-school activity group, meeting each month for a varied programme of activities, gallery exploration and stories.

Hiding treasure, brushing a mammoth's tooth, rowing down the Nile, washing the Queen's knickers, making parachutes and creating the sounds of a stormy sea. These are just some of the hands-on, sensory and playful activities that 2-4 year olds and their accompanying adults have enjoyed doing in 'Snapdragon' sessions at Norwich Castle in the past ten months.

The immediate popularity and success of Snapdragons has been a welcome surprise. The aim was to create a character which children will associate with; enable children to have a good time in the museum and to develop a fun way to introduce very young children to the museum collections.

Sessions have been pitched appropriately for the age group and a particular set of resources has been developed for each session. These will now be used annually with the addition of occasional new themes related to special events and exhibitions.

## **Norwich Castle Temporary exhibitions**

### **CURRENT EXHIBITIONS**

**SHORTCUTS & DIGRESSIONS: Contemporary sculpture from the Arts Council collection**, Saturday 11 May – Sunday 8 September, 2013

**JOHN SELL COTMAN: A Picturesque Tour of Norfolk and Normandy**, Colman Watercolour Gallery to Sunday 16 March 2014

*The programme has been selected under the European cross-border cooperation programme INTERREG IV A France (Channel) – England, co-funded by the ERDF*

**GERARD STAMP: CONQUEST, Norfolk's Norman legacy reflected in watercolour**

Colman Art Galleries to Sunday 29 September, 2013

### **LOOKING FORWARD**

- **Curiosity: Art, Wonder and the Pleasures of Knowing**, Special Exhibition Galleries 28 September 2013 – 5 January 2014
- **Roman Empire: Power and People**, Special Exhibition Galleries, February to April 2014
- **The Wonder of Birds**, Special Exhibition Galleries 24 May – 14 September 2014
- **Autumn 2014: John Wonnocott and John Lessore**
- **Summer 2015: A touring exhibition from the Artist Rooms**
- **Summer 2016: Leading venue with Norwich University of the Arts for The British Art Show 8**

**Exhibition proposals under discussion and development but not yet confirmed or funded:**

- Building an exhibition around a loan of a Manet painting owned by the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford for Spring 2015.
- Collaboration with Writers Centre Norwich focusing on literary heritage Autumn 2015
- Digital/New Media exhibition Spring 2016.
- Building an exhibition around the possible loan of a Rembrandt painting from the National Gallery Autumn 2018

## **Museum and Gallery refurbishments**

### **Shirehall Courtroom**

The first public tours of the Courtroom began in late July and are proving popular.

### **Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum Display in Norwich Castle**

The new displays on the Rotunda Balcony have been installed and are proving very popular with the public. Further interpretation, including an interactive timeline, are on track to open in Autumn. This will be something to which information can be continually added. A formal opening organised in collaboration by the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum Trustees will take place in late October 2013.

### **EU funded Norman Connections Project and HLF funded Collecting Cultures Projects**

The main floor of Norwich Castle Keep has undergone a modest but beneficial re-display and reorganisation. The interpretation of the Castle and medieval collections have been re-interpreted, relocated and grouped together to create a more attractive and coherent display.

The hugely popular Norwich Castle model has been completed refurbished with the 72 small openings which had encouraged people to post all sorts of small items and rubbish have now been filled. The under fives Castle has been replaced with a much superior version and the thrown and other interactive displays have been adapted and improved.

Further improvements planned for the Autumn including historic reconstructions and new interpretation in the Bigod Tower and on the Keep balcony.

We are also investigating opportunities, implications and costs for improving the long-term presentation of the Keep including the potential use of digital media and projections. The British Museum remains an important partner for this development work. Further reports will follow in due course.

### **Improvements to the permanent displays**

Work continues on the development of an animation in Norwich Castle's Boudica Gallery to replace the original much loved but rather out of date film. This will be available for October half-term.

A second film has been commissioned and installed in Norwich Castle's Introductory Room. The theme of this is the Norfolk landscape.

## **Events**

### **REPORTING BACK**

#### **Strangers' Hall**

On Saturday 29 June visitors helped to prepare a Tudor feast as part of a living history event involving music and. This was followed by a sell out Tudor banquet. Staff are exploring the income generating potential and feasibility for further Tudor banquets.

#### **Bridewell Museum**

The Museum attracted over 200 visitors on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> July when it opened specially to support the Norwich Lanes Summer Fayre. Visitors were charged just £1 for the special event. A highlight was the rare opening up to the public of our nostalgic recreated Corner Shop, which we use as a learning space. Being right on the alley

meant we welcomed many non traditional museum visitors and made many new friends with neighbouring shopkeepers and passers by.



On Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July The Bridewell celebrated its 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday since opening following redevelopment.

The museum was polished within an inch of its life and the courtyard was festooned with metres and metres of jolly bunting made by our Museum Trainee Lynn Tye. There was free cake and pop for all our visitors and a vintage DJ set up his decks in the courtyard.

Other highlights included a retro party food display, arranged by Lynn, whilst Molly Molloy, our artist in residence, shared memories of the city with visitors using her interactive memory map. Plus, our resident weavers entertained our visitors upstairs on the mighty loom.

The NYPT Voices Choir added sparkle to the day, with their acoustic lunchtime slot, which entertained many of our visitors as they enjoyed an ice cream in the blazing sun. We received some gushing feedback and thanks and the EDP reported on the event, giving us some great pre-summer hols publicity.

## LOOKING FORWARD

There will be a series **talks and lectures** running through to September supporting the exhibition '*Shortcuts and Digressions*', including short talks by members of the Norwich Castle Youth Forum.

**Summer holiday** family activities will focus on *Heroes of Norfolk* and will include fun activities including costumed characters, hands on crafts and the chance to handle real museum objects.

## Halloween

Working in partnership with the Forum and Norwich City Council Events Team, Norwich Castle will be taking part in a Halloween event including a pumpkin display around the mound, a pumpkin procession to the Forum, a competition and many other spooky activities.

## November 5<sup>th</sup>

Norwich City Council is moving its November fireworks celebration from Earlham Park to the heart of the city with a free firework display on Norwich Castle.

## Christmas Events

Norwich Castle will be hosting its 2<sup>nd</sup> Craft Fair and Christmas Event on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December 5-9pm. An evening of live music, entertainment and Christmas shopping. Visitors can enjoy Christmas carols in the Bridewell Museum's courtyard and make festive decorations inspired by the collections on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> December, and Father Christmas will be visiting Stranger's Hall.

There is a daily programme of drop-in activities and talks in Norwich Castle throughout the year, inspired by the temporary exhibition programme, permanent displays, significant anniversaries and local and national celebrations, together with family focused activities on Saturdays and during the school holidays. See the What's On leaflet or visit the website on [www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk) for up to date information for Norwich Castle, Strangers' Hall and Bridewell Museum.

## First World War Commemoration

### Events and activities

Museum, Library and Records Office staff are exploring funding opportunities for programme of activities and events across the county to commemorate the First World War during 2014-2018. The Norwich Museums are planning a number of modest cased displays in the Rotunda, together with a variety of activities and events.

### Norwich Roll of Honour

Following a detailed condition survey, it has been established that the Roll of Honour located in Norwich Castle's Keep, requires significantly more conservation than initially thought if it is to continue to be regularly handled by the public. Staff are currently considering whether regular handling is appropriate given that it places the Roll of Honour at risk, and are exploring options for improving digital accessibility as well as exploring funding opportunities for any necessary conservation work.

## Other News

### Marsh Award success

Three members of the Norwich Castle young events team have won an award for their work on devising and delivering events at Norwich Castle.



On Monday 8<sup>th</sup> July, three members of the Castle's young events team volunteers travelled down to the British Museum in London to be announced as winners of the Marsh Christian Trust 'Volunteers for Museum Learning' East of England Award.

Deborah Iwo, Ruth Stanley and Holly Webster have all volunteered for Norwich Castle since March 2012 and came together as part of a larger group of young people aged between 16-24 to devise and deliver the *Skin: Dissecting Beauty* event held as part of the Cultural Olympiad in July 2012. This event included live tattooing, taxidermy, anatomy painting and a book covered in human skin.

The event was such a success it was agreed the group should stay on to run further events at the Castle including the follow up event *Skin 2: On the Street*, the Christmas Craft Fair and Museums at Night. The award is fantastic recognition of the work these young people have done and demonstrates NMAS' commitment to engaging young audiences.

The aim of the 'Volunteers for Museum Learning' award is to recognise the crucial contribution made by those volunteers who work directly with museum visitors in any capacity.

### Norwich Museums Summer Season Rover Ticket

The discounted ticket encouraging visitors to the City and local people to visit all three Norwich museums over a month has been launched and is being promoted at each of the sites. The offer will be evaluated in the Autumn.

### Teaching Museum

Recruitment for the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of Teaching Museum trainees started on 26<sup>th</sup> July with two open days which prospective candidates have to attend if they want to submit an application.



## Celebrity Antiques Road Trip



Amanda Donohoe joined antiques expert Philip Serrell at the Bridewell for the filming of Celebrity Antiques Road Trip.

They were fascinated by Norwich's last surviving Jacquard loom, the pharmacy and the Valentine's Eve display. Helen Renton gave them a closer look at some of the comic Valentines from the Strangers' Hall collection. They were particularly taken with one aimed at a Greengrocer. The verse reads:

*You have a voice just like a parrot  
And for your nose you wear a carrot!  
Perhaps you think you are a mash  
But I could never love such trash  
So though your cabbages are fine  
You cannot be my Valentine.*

The programme, which attracts around 2 million viewers, will be broadcast on BBC in November.

## Strangers' Hall



There are over 25,000 objects in the Strangers' Hall domestic life collection. Every one of the NMAS museums has some objects from Strangers' Hall on display.

In the last year it supported two major exhibitions at other sites. Over 50 toys from our collection were included in the *Art + Play* exhibition at Great Yarmouth's Time and Tide, including a pull-along

whirligig toy made by the Keeper of Yarmouth light ship in about 1890 (see image left).

Dolls, puppets, magic lantern slides and children's books from our collection were featured in Norwich Castle's hugely successful *Magic Worlds* exhibition. Jenny, the ventriloquist's dummy who appeared with Lawrence the magician in many local shows, took a starring role.

## Playing cards

The collection of playing cards at Strangers' Hall was featured in the summer edition of the *Journal of the International Playing-Card Society*. Paul Bostock and Ken Lodge made several visits to the museum, and the resulting twelve page article contains a wealth of information on this small but interesting collection. The oldest card in the collection is thought to be French and dates from about 1630.

## Member Induction Programme

Attached is a Autumn programme of museum tours and induction sessions for Norwich Area Museum Members. It is not necessary to book – just turn up.

If you want to discuss any matters in this briefing please contact Rachel Kirk [rachel.kirk@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.kirk@norfolk.gov.uk)

For further information about the Norwich Museums, their services and programmes check out the website on [www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk) where you can also sign up to receive regular e-bulletins.

# APPENDIX 1

MUSEUM VISITS 2013/14		APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	TOTAL TO DATE	Annual TOTAL
Castle Museum															
	2011/12	13,502	12,790	12,731	18,423	23,434	13,878	15,624	10,896	7,352	9,558	14,489	16,231	57,446	168,908
	2012/13	21,242	12,846	15,198	18,019	19,998	14,202	14,469	13,224	8,757	8,346	20,218	16,465	67,305	182,984
	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>17,529</b>	<b>15,710</b>	<b>11,979</b>	<b>14,473</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>59,691</b>	<b>59,691</b>
Strangers Hall															
	2011/12	903	668	918	1,013	1,286	842	1,076	884	750	CLOSED	418	911	3,502	9,669
	2012/13	764	650	677	687	876	978	1,085	941	684	Closed	357	1,203	2,778	8,902
	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>735</b>	<b>880</b>	<b>1,107</b>	<b>1,042</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,764</b>	<b>3,764</b>
Bridewell															
	2008/09	732	673	920	756	1,016	872	963	283	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	3,081	6,215
	2012/13	Closed	Closed	75	2,745	3,015	2,379	1,609	1,473	996	1,029	1,662	1,490	2,820	16,473
	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>1,556</b>	<b>1,453</b>	<b>953</b>	<b>1,152</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,114</b>	<b>5,114</b>
Norwich Castle Study Centre															
	2011/12	137	159	140	111	130	259	257	236	74	190	106	100	547	1,899
	2012/13	178	77	98	157	107	142	168	149	178	91	159	163	510	1,667
	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>800</b>
NORWICH MUSEUMS TOTAL															
	2011/12	14,542	13,617	13,789	19,547	24,850	14,979	16,957	12,016	8,176	9,748	15,013	17,242	61,495	241,971
	2012/13	22,184	13,573	16,048	21,608	23,996	17,701	17,331	15,787	10,615	9,466	22,039	18,118	73,413	208,466
	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>20,057</b>	<b>18,228</b>	<b>14,239</b>	<b>16,845</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>69,369</b>	<b>69,369</b>

\$ Pre-Refurbishment

\* Totals for Norwich Museums 2011/12 does not include Bridewell figures as closed to public for refurbishment.

## APPENDIX 2

<b>SCHOOL VISITS 2013/14</b>		<b>APR</b>	<b>MAY</b>	<b>JUNE</b>	<b>JULY</b>	<b>AUG</b>	<b>SEPT</b>	<b>OCT</b>	<b>NOV</b>	<b>DEC</b>	<b>JAN</b>	<b>FEB</b>	<b>MAR</b>	<b>TOTAL TO DATE</b>	<b>Annual TOTAL</b>
<b>Castle Museum</b>															
	2011/12	550	1,287	1,985	2,097	37	510	1,489	2,529	772	1,583	1,580	2,946	5,919	17,365
	2012/13	565	1,788	1,576	1,900	83	619	1,320	2,155	1,032	1,082	2,575	3,037	5,829	17,732
	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>1,034</b>	<b>1,897</b>	<b>1,104</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,703</b>	<b>4,703</b>
<b>Strangers Hall</b>															
	2011/12	29	168	164	94	0	0	223	253	78	CLOSED	68	447	455	1,524
	2012/13	0	154	160	145	0	0	431	472	89	CLOSED	87	454	459	1,992
	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>624</b>
<b>Bridewell Museum</b>	2012/13	0	0	0	0	0	33	62	140	-	-	9	46	0	290
	<b>2013/14</b>		<b>144</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>316</b>
<b>TOTAL SCHOOL VISITS</b>															
	2011/12	579	1,455	2,149	2,191	37	510	1,712	2,782	850	1,583	1,648	3,393	6,374	25,263
	2012/13	565	1,942	1,736	2,045	83	652	1,813	2,767	1,121	1,082	2,671	3,491	6,288	19,968
	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>727</b>	<b>1,359</b>	<b>2,215</b>	<b>1,342</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,643</b>	<b>5,643</b>

\*