

Report to the Norwich Area Museums Committee, 4th June 2019

The AGM of the Friends of Norwich Museums took place on Monday 13th May. It was the last time our President, The Lord Lieutenant, Mr. Richard Jewson, would chair the AGM, as he was stepping down after several years. The Chairman of the FNM thanked him for his wonderful support of the Friends over the years and presented Mr. Jewson with a gift from the Friends, to show our deep appreciation.

After the business of the AGM, Steve Miller, Head of Museums gave an address to the Friends, in which he outlined many of the activities that the Museums had been involved in, after a very successful year. The highlight of 2018 had been the Paston Treasure Exhibition. Since then the Friends have agreed to help with the purchase of the inlaid marble table that had been on display at the exhibition. It is very pleasing that this important object will now remain in Norfolk as part of the Paston heritage, and displayed at the Castle Museum.

Dr Tim Pestell, Curator of Archaeology, gave the Friends an update on the Castle Keep. We were all very interested to hear about the plans for the development of the Keep, which is at present empty for the first time since the 19th Century, and Tim described how it is going to be restored to being a royal palace, as it was after the Norman Conquest. Amongst the refurbishment plans, the Friends were particularly interested to hear about the progress of the Tapestry/Embroidery which the Friends of Norwich Museums are funding. This piece will add a great deal to the newly refurbished Keep. It is in the style of The Bayeux Tapestry, is 18 metres in length and tells the story of East Anglia. The stitches being used are typical of the Medieval Period and we are lucky to have now recruited 100 volunteer stitchers.

Tim Pestell also highlighted the archaeological finds that have been purchased with the help of the FNM, including the Winfarthing Pendant, and hoards of coins that are displayed in the Viking exhibition.

Our Guest Speaker at the AGM was Andrew Sinclair (BBC Look East). He gave a fascinating talk entitled 'The Changing Face of the News'.

We continue to plan for our 100th birthday in 2021, and these are beginning to take shape. I will report to the Norwich Area Museums Committee at the next meeting outlining specific events that will be taking place.

Felicity Devonshire (Representative, FNM) 29.05.19