



Norwich area museums committee

Date: **Tuesday, 03 December 2024**
Time: **14:30**
Venue: **Mancroft room City Hall, St Peters Street, Norwich, NR2 1NH**

Committee members:

Norwich City Council:

Councillors Huntley (Chair), Caine, Kidman, Schmierer and Wright and 1 vacancy

Norfolk County Council:

Councillors Brociek-Coulton (Vice-Chair), Birmingham, Reilly, Rumsby, Ward and Watkins

Co-opted non-voting members:

Amanda Geitner (East Anglia Arts Fund) and Felicity Devonshire (Friends of the Norwich Museums), Councillor Booth (Broadland District Council), Councillor Graham (South Norfolk) and Danusia Wurm (Norfolk Contemporary Art Society)

Ex officio: Councillor Kybird (vice chair, Norfolk Joint Museums committee)

For further information please contact:

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Agenda

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- 1 Apologies**

To receive apologies for absence
- 2 Declarations of interest**

(Please note that it is the responsibility of individual members to declare an interest prior to the item if they arrive late for the meeting)
- 3 Public questions/petitions**

To receive questions / petitions from the public which have been submitted in accordance with the council's constitution.
- 4 Minutes** **5 - 10**

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2024
- 5 Area Museums Committee 3.12.24** **11 - 12**

Purpose: To receive the report on the activities at the norwich Museums for the period September to November
- 6 Norwich Museums Report 3 December 2024 FINAL** **13 - 46**

This is a standing item to receive the reports from the non-voting members of the committee who represent the voluntary organisations that support the Norfolk Museums Service
- 7 Reports from the Voluntary Organisations**

This is a standing item to receive reports from the non voting members of the committee who represent the voluntary organisations that support the Norfolk Museum Service.

Date of publication: **Monday, 25 November 2024**



Norwich Area Museums Committee

14:30 to 15:37

3 September 2024

Present: **City Councillors:**
Huntley (Chair, following
appointment)
Caine
Francis
Kidman
Wright

County Councillors:
Reilly
Ward
Watkins

Co-opted non-voting Members:

Amanda Geitner (East Anglia Arts Fund) Felicity Devonshire (Friends of the Norwich Museums), Danusia Wurm (Norfolk Contemporary Art Society) and Councillor Booth (Broadland District Council)
Councillor Graham (South Norfolk District Council)
Councillor Kybird (ex officio member)

Apologies: **Norwich City Councillors** Schmierer, Cllr Francis attended as his substitute.
County Councillors Brociek-Coulton, Birmingham and Rumsby

Also present: Stuart Garner, Operations Manager
Francesca Vanke, Senior Curator of Norwich Museums and Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Public Questions and Petitions

There were no public questions or petitions.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2024.

4. Norwich Museums Report – May to July 2024

In the absence of the Assistant Head of Museums, the operations manager introduced the report and together with colleagues presented the relevant sections to allow for members to ask questions or comment.

Members noted that the Percival section had been handed over on 22 July 2024. Visitors were now able to use the new entrance and glazed atrium for access. This included the new café and shop. The construction line had been moved back and this provided a more welcoming entrance for visitors.

The operations manager reported that the number of ceremonies taking place at the Castle had continued to remain steady with 657 between August 2023 and July 2024 which had generated an additional footfall of 16,490. From 2 October wedding ceremonies would revert to being held in the benefactors' room. This was a positive mood as guests would no longer have to access the Castle through the building works.

The Operations Manager then presented Section 2, Norwich Learning Team activity, of the report. The Education room had been refurbished and was being fitted out. Once it was completed the capacity would increase from 60 to 120 children per day. The room would include object handling collections that would be stored away ready to be used once the room opened in the Autumn term. The education room would primarily be used for pupils Reception to year 6. A report would be brought back to a future meeting to update the committee.

The Learning Team had been developing dungeon tours in preparation for the reopening towards the end of the summer. The tours would highlight the lengthy history of the Castle's use as a prison and the prisoners' stories.

It was suggested that members could visit the dungeon and have a hard hat tour of the Castle Keep. Dates would be circulated and agreed.

The operations manager presented Section 3 of the report - Kick the Dust: Norfolk – project activity update. During the current phase of the project there had been a total of 2,056 interventions involving 888 individual young people. The majority of the interventions and activities had been shaped and designed by the young people involved. The Operations Manager highlighted that through the project 57 volunteering opportunities had been provided.

A key aim of the current project which was part funded by Norfolk County Council Public Health was measuring the impact on the young people's mental health. The feedback showed that the majority agreed that the Kick the Dust activity had helped them have more positive mental health. The feedback form had recently been updated to include a question on neurodiversity. 52% of participants self-identified as being neurodivergent, this would enable the service to design new activities to account for the additional access barrier of neurodiversity.

The Chair commended the service and noted that the figures paid testament to the hard work of the staff and volunteers.

One member asked about the relationship with Leicester, and it was explained that Leicester had been taking a similar route and had been in touch with NCC as the pioneers of the service.

Members congratulated all those involved in the project noting the mental health benefits and the difference it had made in the lives of young people and hoped the project would continue to go from “strength to strength”.

In response to a member’s question the Operations Manager said that he would find out more information on the funding, including the length and amount available and share this with members in due course.

The Operations Manager presented Section 4 of the report - Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn – project update. Since the last Committee meeting the principal contractor, Morgan Sindall Construction, had handed back the Percival Wing. This included the new entrance, glazed atrium and café and shop for visitors. All of these could be accessed using internal lifts.

The Operations Manager presented section 5 of the report - other activity across Norwich museums. The Operations Manager highlighted the activities at the Museum of Norwich. Several events had taken place around the *Muslims: Norwich* exhibition. The exhibition had been a collaboration between the Community Librarian from the Norfolk Library and Information Service and the photographer Khalil Mitchell. It featured photographs of the community based at the Ihsan Mosque in Norwich and over 200 Muslim visitors had been invited to a number of events as part of this exhibition. The exhibition would tour across Norfolk over the following months. A key activity at the Museum of Norwich had been the ongoing work on the partnership project with Unilever to highlight the history of the Colman family and Carrow Works in Norwich. The Museum of Norwich had hosted a number of Kick the Dust activities and worked with students from the University of East Anglia (UEA) and Norwich University of the Arts (NUA) on a range of projects.

A member asked about tour dates and venues for the *Muslims: Norwich* exhibition and the Operations Manager agreed to provide this information outside of the meeting.

The Operations Manager presented section 5.2, Strangers’ Hall, of the report. He highlighted that Strangers’ Hall had hosted *Bookscapes Collective* to respond to the Victorian Rooms in pieces that were housed in an exhibition. Strangers’ Hall had also had several accessions to the collections. Ongoing maintenance and research around and of the collections was a key activity for Strangers’ Hall and this included the research talks for various groups. A number of events had been hosted at Strangers’ Hall including an event during Refugee Week on the theme of Marmite and a recreation of a Tudor House Party as part of the summer family activity programme. Feedback for these events had been very positive.

The committee noted that Cathy Terry the Senior Curator for Strangers’ Hall had retired at the end of August. She had been an expert on the

history of the building and its collections. The Chair asked that the Committee's thanks and well wishes be passed on to her.

The Senior Curator of Norwich Museums presented section 6, Norwich Curatorial update, of the report. She highlighted that the Curator of Historic Art had been working on a number of activities. A local artist, Gerard Stamp, had recently gifted a watercolour painting, *The Restoration of a Royal Palace (Norwich Castle) 2022*. The watercolour represented an important moment in the Castle's history. As part of her ongoing work into Catherine Maude Nichols the Curator of Historic Art was developing a talk on the artist's work which would be held in October in Bedford. The Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art was developing a major exhibition on the artist Colin Self which would open at Norwich Castle in 2025. The Senior Curator of Norwich Museums and Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art continued to be busy with the work on the *JMW Turner and Changing Visions of Landscape* exhibition which was the forthcoming Norwich Castle exhibition. A number of activities had been planned for this exhibition including a piece of artwork which would be produced in conjunction with English+ service users on landscapes that are meaningful to them. The Curator of the Regimental collection had been working on an exhibition for the King's Lynn Town Hall. She had also been successful in a recent funding bid with the Friends of the Norwich Museums to acquire a photograph album which contained pictures of the 1/6th Cyclist Battalion, Norfolk Regiment in 1914. The Norwich Freemans Charity had approved a grant which would be used to build on the successful pilot project with NUA Fine Art students in the previous academic year.

The Operations Manager then presented Section 7 of the report covering other developments. The works to treat the outbreak of dry rot were progressing well and the external works to the roof of the Courtroom had been completed. The service was working with colleagues from Norwich City Council on additional works to the drainage systems and the additional works required to the Costume and Textiles store. It was hoped the work to the Costume and Textiles store would be completed in 2025 enabling tours of the building.

The Operations Manager presented Section 8 of the report - visitor numbers. The updated figures had been circulated at the meeting. It was noted that visitor numbers for the castle were up on the previous year and both the Norwich Museum and Stranger's Hall were doing very well. Members noted that these figures were indicative of the good work undertaken by both staff and volunteers.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) note the Norwich Museums Report February to April 2024; and
- 2) ask the Operations Manager to liaise with the Committee Officer to organise a hard hat visit to the castle keep and dungeons for Members.

5. Reports of the Representatives of the Voluntary Organisations

Felicity Devonshire, Friends of the Norwich Museums, addressed the Committee. A written report had been circulated and was available on the Council's website here. After a quiet summer the Friends of the Norwich Museums were looking forward to taking an active part in the celebrations for the opening, with a special reception for the Friends. As part of the Heritage Open Days the Friends would have a presence at Strangers' Hall, it was hoped that this might encourage members of the public to join the Friends. A number of artifacts that the Friends had funded to restore were now back on display at Strangers' Hall.

Danusia Wurm, Norfolk Contemporary Art Society (NCAS) addressed the Committee. She reported that prizes had been awarded to Fine Art students and that in June a third round of small grants had been issued for projects and artists. The fourth-round deadline was 30 September.

Amanda Geitner, East Anglia Arts Fund, addressed the committee. The fund had provided small grants of £1000 to seven projects. Major support had also been given to Castle Fine Arts.

The exhibition *Sunlight* by Roger Ackling had been well attended and Amanda Geitner praised the team for making it so successful.

RESOLVED to thank Felicity Devonshire, Amanda Geitner and Danusia Wurm for their reports.

CHAIR

Fiends of the Norwich Museums

Report to the Norwich Area Museums Committee

Mancroft Room, City Hall, 3rd December at 2.30 p.m.

Although the Friends of the Norwich Museums have been relatively quiet in the last few months, we can be pleased that some of the plans we made earlier in the year have come to fruition. Dr. Agata Gomolka, Keep Project Assistant has given us an update on the progress of the Textile Project and has said that remarkable progress has been made in recent months. For example the hangings for the north wall of the Keep will soon be joined together and these will form a magnificent collection of historically accurate textiles. The Friends Tapestry will be the centrepiece of all the textiles in The Keep, and has been made with the Bayeux stitch. Members of the Friends' Council have been given the opportunity to learn how to make the stitch, and a number of us have asked to be shown this authentic technique.

The FNM have made a successful bid for a photograph album which has a valuable collection of photographs of the 1/6th Cyclist Battalion, Norfolk Regiment in 1914. The Friends have been able to purchase the album for the Museum. The Battalion was formed in 1914 when the threat of invasion was considered to be real and the 6th Battalion was mobilized to observe and patrol the British Coast from Wells to Gorleston-on-Sea. The Museum is very pleased that this album has been added to the story of the Norfolk Regiment.

At present we are enjoying a beautiful exhibition of works called 'Changing vision of landscape'. This exhibition is the culmination of a project with JMW Turner's work taking centre stage. Francesca Vanke has curated a show at Lynn Museum on the subject of water, another about bridges at the Time & Tide and the present exhibition at the Castle Museum. There are 78 artworks in the exhibition with many great paintings on display, including a work by Jacob van Ruisdael 'Panoramic Landscape with Cornfields and Dunes beside the Sea, which the Friends of the Norwich Museums recently helped to purchase. Also, there are a total of sixteen works by Turner, including Walton Bridge, 1806, which Turner painted several times. This painting is in the Norfolk Museums' permanent collection.

Felicity Devonshire

Publicity, Friends of the Norwich Museums – 21st November, 2024

Norwich Area Museums Committee 3 December 2024

Norwich Museums Report: August to October 2024

1. Norwich Museums operations

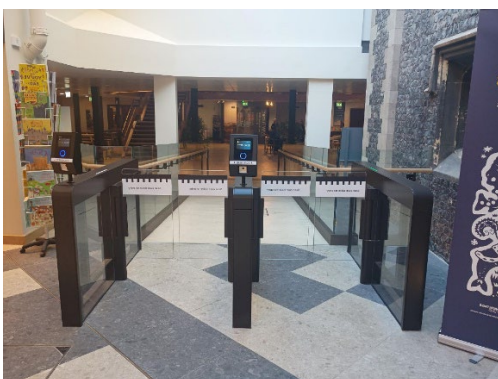
Norwich Castle opening arrangements

Following the handover of the Percival section, from 22 July visitors have been able to access the museum via the new entrance and glazed atrium. The new café and retail spaces are also now in operation. The construction site hoarding line has moved back and the protective decking at the top of the bridge has been removed.



New visitor entrance at Norwich Castle

In October the new automatic access barrier system went live for the first time. The glazed barriers are used to control ticket-holder access into the museum, whilst still allowing non-museum visitors to access the Café and Retail Shop. When a visitor buys a museum ticket, they are given a printed receipt which includes a QR code. Visitors can then scan this code at the barriers to gain access.



The new access barriers

Norwich Castle ceremonies

The number of ceremonies taking place at Norwich Castle has continued to remain strong, with 657 having been completed within the past 12 months.

Month	No of Ceremonies	Footfall
November	33	729
December	40	825
January 24	19	296
February	27	592
March	37	809
April	47	1154
May	71	1848
June	76	1849
July	81	1993
August	66	2187
September	90	2013
October	76	1881
Total	663	16,176

Since the beginning of October ceremonies have returned to the Benefactors Room following an extensive refurbishment of the space. Wedding parties now arrive via the E9 door at the Castle and enter the Castle through a dedicated corridor that takes them into a waiting area within the British Birds Gallery. This helps to keep the main museum entrance free for the use of general museum visitors.



The refurbished Benefactors Room



The new wedding party entrance corridor and waiting area

2. Norwich Learning Team activity – highlights report

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 *Learning Hub* pages of the Norwich Castle website: [Learning - Norfolk Museums](#)



Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn Keep Activity Plan: *Medieval Festival* at Norwich Castle and Norwich Cathedral

On Saturday 2 November (10am – 3pm), Norwich Castle and Norwich Cathedral teamed up to host a free Medieval Festival. The event was funded as part of the build-up to the reopening of Norwich Castle’s Keep through the National Lottery Heritage Fund funded Activity Plan.



Two authentic medieval camps were created by re-enactment groups: Norwich and Norfolk Medieval Association: NANMA (at Norwich Castle Green) and Ordgar (at Cathedral Upper Green). These offered visitors of all ages the chance to experience hands-on crafts, costumed characters, combat skills, weaponry displays and more. The atmosphere was enhanced by the sounds of medieval music.



A special *Castle Mouse Trail* led visitors between the two venues. Cutouts of our medieval mice cartoon characters and their friends Snap the Dragon and Flint the Fox were hidden in the windows of local businesses. Members of our learning team dressed in medieval costumes and engaged with visitors on the route, offering trail maps and stickers, whilst directing visitors to the camps.

The event was well attended, with more than 2,500 visitors at Castle Green and over 1,750 visitors at Cathedral Green.

Feedback has been excellent. Colleagues from Visitor Services recorded the following comments:

“I like the hands-on activities that you can watch and do.”

Young man said, *“Something you don’t see every day!”*

A dad said, *“This is brilliant because we’ve been looking for free activities to do over half term.”*

Mum with children said, *“This is amazing! Is it back every year?”*



We also received lots of positive written feedback on social media and via email:

Social media:

‘We had a wonderful time, excellent day, a lot of people put in so much time and effort making this informative and memorable. Thankyou x’

‘This was absolutely fantastic; my children enjoyed it and learnt a lot by taking part. Thank you to all involved.’

‘Lovely to be part of such a wonderful day! Well done to everyone who came together to put on the event! (from Get Medieval UK)’



Email from a visitor:

'I just wanted to say a big thank you for the wonderful Saxon/Medieval day we attended yesterday. My children really enjoyed all the activities they could take part in (candle making was their favourite), but it was fantastic to have so many different crafts on offer, demonstrations, knowledgeable people, etc. It was a fantastic day out - my children hope there will be another event like this one day. Many thanks for organising and congratulations on putting on such a wonderful event.'

We will undertake a full evaluation with partners and stakeholders and consider options for holding a similar event next year.



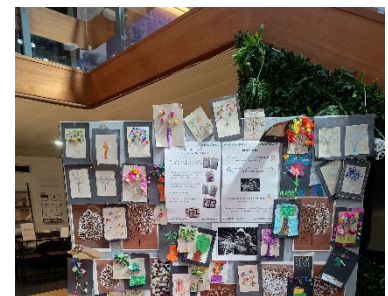
Events and visitor programming

Summer programme

Our summer holiday programme *Explore Nature at Norwich Castle* (23 July – 29 August) was inspired by the major temporary exhibition *Sunlight: Roger Ackling* and our natural history collections. Activities explored habitats and changes in the natural world.

Visitors took part in an *All about Beaks* scavenger hunt which explored the Bird Gallery and many families enjoyed our *Beak Food Challenge* – a hands-on activity in which participants decided which 'beak' was best for which 'food'. They expressed their creative side by making paper plate habitats inspired by Ted Ellis' dioramas and engaged in our '*Simplici-trees*' activity, designing their own trees inspired by Roger Ackling's artwork.

Our younger visitors had fun in our sensory play area exploring two Norfolk habitats Woodland and Sea and



everyone was encouraged to relax in our 'Woodland chillout space' listening to soothing sounds of woodland. On Wednesday 24 July, Tuesday 20 August and Wednesday 28 August, we welcomed the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) to the Castle to deliver bird-related activities.

September Early Years and Family Saturdays

Our Early Years and Family Saturdays, held on the second and fourth Saturday of each month respectively, continue to be an important part of the learning team's delivery. In September, the Early Years Saturday event took place on the same day as Heritage Open Day. Hundreds of visitors enjoyed our activities inspired by Margaret Fountain and her collection of butterflies.

Our September Family Saturday explored different museum jobs. Young participants could step into shoes of a museum curator, an archaeologist, an artist and a shop and a café assistant through heuristic play and fun craft activities. As part of our Early Years and Family Saturday events, we continue to provide free family admission vouchers for school settings from areas of greater deprivation.

October half-term programme

This October half-term programme was medieval themed, leading up to the *Medieval Festival* event on 2 November. From Saturday 26 October to Saturday 2 November, visitors to Norwich Castle were able to explore their creativity by printing an illuminated letter and making their own Castle Keep. The family audiences also took part in our medieval trail, helped to prepare a feast for a king, explored our arms and armour and practised combat skills at Knight Club.

Temporary Exhibitions:

***SUNLIGHT: Roger Ackling* Public Programme**

Time Spent in SUNLIGHT

Following on from the last report, we held two further 'in conversations' with artists and curators in the *SUNLIGHT: Roger Ackling* exhibition. All events sold out and audience feedback was very positive. Event details:

22 August - *Time Spent in SUNLIGHT*, Amanda Geitner in conversation with Dr Lydie Rekow-Fond

21 September - *Time Spent in SUNLIGHT*, Amanda Geitner in conversation with Dean Hughes

Visitor feedback:

"Fabulous exhibition, extremely well displayed. Very contemplative - words as well as display. Good to have the archive pieces and interviews at end. An exhibition you come back to several times."

Shared Reading and Writing Workshops with Dr Sarah Lowndes

On Saturday 10 and 24 September, Dr Sarah Lowndes facilitated a reading and creative writing workshop inspired by the works displayed in *SUNLIGHT: Roger Ackling*. Attendees had the chance to explore the exhibition with Sarah, followed by a reading of

excerpts from a carefully selected text. The group then discussed the text and participated in some gentle creative writing exercises. As well as being an academic and experience facilitator, Sarah is currently training as a Mental Health Nurse, and we have been exploring the wellbeing benefits of these workshops.

“I found today's workshop very calming and thought-provoking. I loved the sitting in silence and writing about it.”

“It's a fantastically well curated show and really enjoyed looking at the work in connection to the writing”

We will be working with Sarah for a further run of these workshops for the *JMW: Changing Visions of Landscape* exhibition, through which we will continue to jointly explore how spending time in museums and engaging in creative activities can improve wellbeing.

BSL Tour of *SUNLIGHT*

In early September we ran a BSL tour of *SUNLIGHT*, for d/Deaf visitors. We worked with Daniel Jillings, Deaf user of BSL and a previous Kick the Dust participant. Daniel expertly delivered a comprehensive tour of the exhibition to a sold-out group. The response was overwhelmingly positive, with many people commenting that the use of BSL meant the museum was accessible to them. We hope to do a BSL tour of every temporary exhibition at Norwich Castle, and to improve accessibility of information panels, by offering QR codes that link to BSL videos.



Poetic response to *SUNLIGHT*

To conclude the public programme for *SUNLIGHT*, we commissioned poet Lewis Buxton to respond to the exhibition. After several visits and an in-depth conversation with Amanda Geitner, Lewis responded with the following poem. We will be sharing this online later this year.

Sunsets (Years Apart) by Lewis Buxton

*The teenagers sit on the sand,
the sun burning lines on
their upper arms and the napes
of their necks, marking time
passing. In 2007 I pushed stones
between finger and thumb
like they were the flint of a lighter,
and watched the sun go down.
All teenagers leave
some debris. For me, it was feathers,
stones, uncertainty, and yes
the occasional cigarette.*

6:50pm, 2024

7:07pm, 2007

They shift up the beach to stay in love **7:15pm, 2024**

*with the sun, their shoelaces undone
along with the darkening edge*

*of sand, leaving behind
ring pulls and spent matches. I think*

of them and I think of everywhere

and always. In the dying light

*it is hard to be unhappy, downwind
of jokes, burning and chit chat.*

*We are two groups of burnt lines
on foraged wood, parallel shopping lists*

*of things the world needs but does not
know it needs. The light fades and I see*

outlines, the plumes of vapour,

voices convincing each other,

caught between listening and remembering

things that are lovely to find and lovely to burn.

7:36pm, 2007

7:50pm 2024

JMW Turner and Changing Visions of Landscape

Public programme

On Saturday 26 October, Dr Francesca Vanke launched the JMW Turner events programme with an introduction to the exhibition. In the coming months, we have a comprehensive talks programme, family offer, and creative workshops for adults to complement the exhibition.

Teachers view *JMW Turner and changing visions of landscape* exhibition

Teachers from all over Norfolk attended the teachers' private view of *JMW Turner and changing visions of landscape* exhibition at Norwich Castle on October 23.

Fourteen primary and secondary teachers were given a private tour of the exhibition by curator Dr Francesca Vanke before finding out about the accompanying schools' programme events.

Learning Projects

Eastern ARC conference

We were invited by Community Culture Club funders NICHE to co-present at the Eastern ARC conference on 'Harnessing Heritage'. Rosalind Hewett (Learning & Engagement Officer) and Holly Sandiford (Creative Evaluator for Community Culture Club) collaborated with Colin Howey (MensCraft), Esther Watts (National Centre for Creative Health/NHS Sussex), and Dr Jonathan Webster (NICHE, University of East Anglia) on a session exploring Heritage and Wellbeing. Our seminar was the most well-attended across the conference, and we received overwhelmingly positive feedback. We were delighted to attend the event, to meet new people, share our work, and hear about other work happening in the sector.



The Matthew Project

On Thursday 10 October, we hosted a small group of young people and staff from The Matthew Project at Norwich Castle. The Matthew Project empowers young people and adults to overcome drugs, alcohol, and mental health issues so they can live their lives more fully. We treated the group to a highlights tour followed by object handling of arms & armour. One of the young people told us *'this is the best thing I've done in weeks, I'll definitely be coming back to the museum'* and we hope to welcome another group back when Norwich Castle is fully reopened.

FOUND poetry and visual art exhibition – celebration event

FOUND is a poetry and visual art project responding to objects on display at the NMS sites at Museum of Norwich, Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, and Time and Time Museum in Great Yarmouth.

Since January, writer Daisy Henwood has been working with community groups and the general public to identify people's favourite objects and bring their stories to life through poetry. Artist JMCAnderson has created an installation at the Museum of Norwich in response to the poems created to enhance their visual clues and broaden the dialogue. With clever word, colour and image play, the work captures fragments from the collection of poems, taking the viewer on a whimsical and thought-provoking journey, captivating the imagination.

On Saturday 26 October, we invited project participants and staff members to come and celebrate the exhibition together. The event was hosted in front of the exhibition. Curator of Social History Hannah Henderson welcomed everyone to the museum, and then Daisy Henwood took to the stage to read a selection of poems and reflect on the project. Attendees were also given time to explore the museum, and seek out object-specific poems, which have been turned into alternative labels across the galleries.

3. Kick the Dust: Norfolk – project activity update

Following the successful conclusion of the National Lottery Heritage Fund funded Kick the Dust project, Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) has secured additional funding through an Arts Council England NPO Uplift award for the period 2023-27. This will enable NMS to continue to support young people in the three Levelling up for Culture places of Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn and Thetford. This additional funding will enable young people to participate in high quality cultural and heritage activities that develop their creative and digital skills and potential, as well as prepare them for the workplace.

During 2023-25 NMS is also receiving funding from Norfolk County Council (NCC) Public Health to support Kick the Dust activities that focus on the mental health and wellbeing of Norfolk young people.

NMS is partnering with Norfolk Library & Information Service (NLIS) to deliver this exciting programme of activity strengthening partnership working between museum and library staff, increasing levels of cultural engagement by young people in a sustained way, through the successful Kick the Dust approach to youth engagement that uses the three-stage progression model of '*Player-Shaper-Leader*'. The programme is primarily aimed at those in the three priority places aged 16-25 years, with opportunities for 13–16 year olds to engage as part of the progression framework.

The key aims of the current Kick the Dust project continue to be to:

- develop transferable work-related skills with the aim of supporting more working age young people into employment, training or further learning;
- develop digital skills linked to creative industries to address the digital skills gap in heritage and cultural sectors;
- increase young people's creative skills and for young people to gain a range of new cultural experiences;
- encourage an appreciation of the history and culture of their local communities.

Young people work alongside professionals to develop their transferable work-related and creative skills, through the co-production of activity and events, volunteering and work experience operating at a level that meets their needs. Feedback from young people shows that they value the skills they develop as part of the project with the top 5 skills being cited as: problem solving, digital, communication, team working and creativity.

The following data is based on the start of the project covering the period **1/5/23 to 30/10/24**.

Number of interventions with young people:

Between 1/5/23 and 30/10/24 there have been **3,074 interventions** involving **1,249 individual young people** taking part in **2,238 hours** of quality activity. **98%** of the activities were face to face, the other sessions being offered online with young people in the principal target areas.

This blended approach offers a wider range of opportunities for young people to engage in heritage:

- *21% of activity was at Player level (to introduce new young people to the project)*
- *56% at Shaper level (longer term project with young people determining the content)*
- *23% at Leader level (long term engagement – young people leading projects, acting at governance level, mentoring staff)*
- *70% of all activity involves young people in leading and designing projects*

Breakdown of activity taking place in each area:

- *31% (170 opportunities) in Kings Lynn, (inc Gressenhall),*
- *26% (143 opportunities) in Thetford*
- *21% (112 opportunities) in the East (covering Great Yarmouth, Cromer)*
- *20% (107 opportunities) in Norwich*

- *2% (10 opportunities) outside of area and 3 other opportunities for our online work experience programme targeted at Thetford and Kings Lynn young people.*
- *65 volunteering opportunities have been provided, with 3 young people taking on the role of Project Assistant and 11 as a Young Ambassador.*
- *Of all delivery, 84% involves young people being part of a long-term group, providing them with a deeper understanding of heritage and allowing them to explore their identity, develop their skills and confidence and embed themselves more in their local communities, a key aim of ACE.*

The young people have access to all of NMS sites and can visit with a friend or family member for free during their engagement for that year, using the free pass which forms part of the Kick the Dust offer.

We continue to deliver a blended training offer for all staff and volunteers who support youth engagement in NMS. Staff input to the training programme will be formulated as the project progresses and needs are identified. 9 staff and volunteers took part in the Mental Health First Aid training with the YMCA Norfolk team in September and October as an accredited course, 6 members of staff and volunteers are signed up for the Mentoring and Coaching course in November 2024. Three of the team have undertaken Arts Award training to add additional value to the programme enabling young people who have limited experience of gaining a qualification in arts to achieve.

The team are developing a new Masterclass programme to support our young people who wish to apply for external funding to deliver activity in NMS as part of the Kick the Dust offer. This will be rolled out in January 2025 following the piloting with some of the Young Ambassadors.

Our offer to support young people around the important theme of mental health and wellbeing is on-going and is now measured through the evaluation framework using data from the young people's feedback forms as well as narrative evaluation the results of which form part of this report. Working with colleagues in Public Health NCC team we have been able to interrogate the data around impact on mental wellbeing and match this to the interviews with the young people engaged in the narrative evaluation programme. Up to 30/10/24 data shows that **31%** of individual young people who have

taken part in Kick the Dust identify as having a **mental health issue** showing the need for this programme, although this has dropped from 43% in the last quarter and from 34% last month. Through a systematic approach to evaluation, in partnership with Norfolk Library and Information Service, the team can demonstrate the impact on mental health on those talking part and the young people can monitor their progress through the programme in relation to skills, confidence and mental health. NMS and NCC continue to work together through the 'Making Creative Futures' group, chaired by the Kick the Dust Project Coordinator, where members from across NCC Children's Services and Norfolk Public Health identify ways to engage the hardest to reach and most vulnerable children and young people. The focus is on mental health and wellbeing and has representation from the NCC Public Health team who bring a different perspective to the meetings. This group acts as the vehicle to share best practice, ideas and resources and its membership continues to grow.

Target audiences: (some young people fall into more than one category) as of 30/10/24

- FE/HE – 34%
- YMCA clients – 8%
- Secondary schools – 28%
- Young people with mental health issues – 31%
- SEND – 9%
- Outside of mainstream education – 25%
- NEET – 30%
- Looked after children and adopted living those at home - 1%
- Care Leavers – 1%
- Young Carers – 3%
- New arrivals and refugees – 5%
- Pregnant young mums and teenage parents – 0%
- Other groups – 24%

In terms of how young people find out about Kick the Dust, the Kick the Dust website is being used effectively with 32% of young people finding out about the project through the updated web pages ([Kick the Dust - Norfolk Museums](#)) and 26% through social media posts; 27% through a family member or friend, 15% coming via one of our partner organisations and 22% having already taken part in a previous Kick the Dust project. As more young people join having taken part in a previous Kick the Dust project this is impacting on questions relating to knowledge and understanding of heritage and job roles within NMS with 68% stating that they are aware of different job roles in NMS ahead of starting a new project although on reflection following their engagement this rises to 83%.

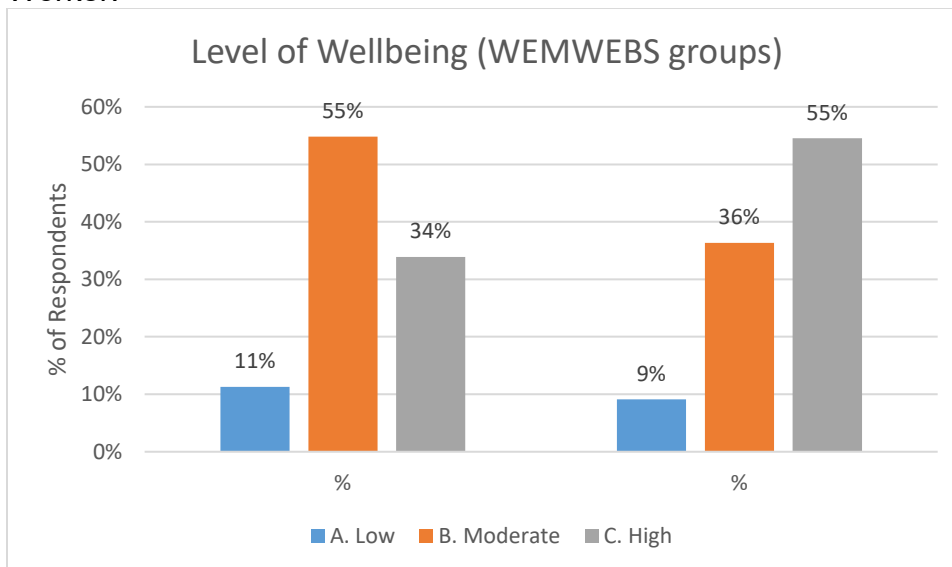
Impacts on mental health and well being

The new young people's feedback form includes the 78 positively worded items from the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale for assessing a populations' mental well-being. The Young Ambassadors developed the new framework alongside Public Health NCC, and this allows us to measure impact in this key area. In addition, we have

worked with a smaller cohort of 13 young people across 5 programmes and the results of this are included in the accompanying Appendices, providing a richer story to the raw data.

From the Young People feedback forms, following their involvement in Kick the Dust, **85%** strongly agreed that this had had a **positive impact on their mental health and wellbeing**. An additional question has been added to identify young people with **neurodivergent** tendencies and is showing that since March **47%** of young people engaged in Kick the Dust identify as neurodivergent which is significant when designing new activity in terms of additional barriers these young people may face.

The following chart shows the impact on young people's mental health and wellbeing using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWEBS) from the responses given by the young people between June 2023 and September 2024 who completed Part 1 and Part 2 of the young people feedback forms. Part 1 is completed at the start of the programme and Part 2 at the end, following a one-to-one session with the Project Worker.



Over half of respondents are in the 'Moderate' category of wellbeing at the start of the intervention (55%), which increases to over half being in the 'High' category at the end of the intervention (55%). This clearly demonstrates the impact on those taking part and is mirrored in the overall responses given by young people who took part in the narrative evaluation.

From the additional questions asked of the young people taking part, the programme continues to meet their needs and is helping them see themselves in a museum or heritage setting. 94% state the programme had gone above their expectations and 100% state they felt welcomed and respected by staff and volunteers.

The following percentages are for those strongly agreeing or agreeing with each statement. Unless stated otherwise, the remaining percentage for each question answered fell into the 'neither agreed nor disagreed' response for each statement.

- 95% of all young people strongly agreed that the museum was a safe space for young people like themselves who were struggling;
- 91% strongly agreed they were given a voice that was listened to;

- 83% strongly agreed that they understood heritage better than they had done before taking part
- 77% strongly agreed that following their engagement heritage was more relevant
- 74% strongly agreed that heritage represented young people like themselves;
- 83% stated they now had a greater understanding of museums and the job roles available with 80% strongly agreeing that they felt there were jobs for them in the sector;
- 89% strongly agreed that the skills they had acquired would be useful to them in the future (3% disagreed);
- 71% strongly agreed they felt more connected to their local community than previously, which is one of the aims of the project (3% disagreed);
- 50% agreed that their involvement had helped them to explore and feel more connected to their own identity and heritage (15% disagreed).

Summary

The NLHF funded Kick the Dust project ended in March 2023 with evidence clearly demonstrating the impact on young people and staff engaging in activity. The programme is now in its second year of the ACE funded project.

Kick the Dust is a three-stage journey, with young people developing transferable work-related skills including digital 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.

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 strong partnerships that have been developed through Kick the Dust provide a strong base on which to build, bringing new young people into museum and library spaces.

Success comes in many guises: one of our former YMCA young people and former Kick the Dust trainee has progressed onto an Access Course at Norwich College with a view to applying for university in 2025, others have secured employment. Another former YMCA young person and Kick the Dust trainee has secured a full-time permanent position in the Norwich Visitor Services team. Both young people cite Kick the Dust for giving them the confidence to take these steps. Former participants and Young Ambassadors have since progressed into employment or onto further and higher education, having gained the confidence to move towards their goals. Another Young Ambassador secured 2 grants the latest through English Heritage to run a project in Kings Lynn entitled 'Rise Up! Hidden Histories of the Castles' which culminated in a launch event on 25th October 2024. Following on from this the team are developing a new Masterclass Development Programme to support other young people in becoming freelancers and in applying for grants to run co-delivered activity with NMS.

Quotes from our Young Ambassadors and others regarding their engagement in Kick the Dust show the impact that the programme has had on them.

'Kick the Dust gave me hands on experience of the industry I want to work for while becoming more proficient in the skills I need to get me there.' Chloe, Young Ambassador (Chloe is now on a Level 4 Apprenticeship working in London for Channel 4)

'The most important thing that Kick the Dust did for me was increase my confidence through representing the voices of other young people, inspiring me to pursue a career in the museum sector by showing me that it's a place where I'm able to make positive institutional change.' Emily, Young Ambassador (Emily is now studying for an MA and remains an active Young Ambassador)

'Kick the Dust has played such a key part in my life and helped me secure employment when most doors were closed to me, giving me the skills and confidence to move forward. It is like being part of a family'. Jazz, Young Ambassador (Jazz has worked on another KTD project and is an active Young Ambassador, presenting at the NLHF and GEM webinar in March 2024) *'I have now been offered a place on an access course to help me realise my dream of going to university next year'*

'My experience has been highly positive. It has allowed me to connect with other young people with a similar interest in the industry. It has also provided me with varied work experience that will contribute significantly to my search for employment in the sector. I have learnt so much more about the heritage sector and the abundance of roles at play, which has led me to new interests and career goals. Engaging with people currently working in the sector has been invaluable and deepens my understanding of the importance of the work the museum services do in the local community.' Marr, Young Ambassador (Marr is studying an MA at UEA and remains an active Young Ambassador)

'I've really enjoyed being part of Kick the Dust and it's given me so many amazing opportunities that I'd never get otherwise. I loved the opportunity to go behind the scenes at museums and learn about objects and collections from experts. It felt like I was being taken really seriously as a young person and that my voice mattered. The project was really well planned and executed and there was always something new to learn. I met people who had really different skills and backgrounds to me and it was so fun to work with a new group of people. It felt like the staff really cared about me and were always trying to support me and provide me with new opportunities. Without Kick the Dust, I don't think I'd have been able to get my first job in the heritage industry and feel confident in my own knowledge and skills.' (Rosa – Young Ambassador and participant in Knights of the Sound Table)

'I just wanted to send a quick email to thank yourself, Leona and the Youth Board for all their help as I got offered a job a couple days ago! The job starts at the end of the month ...I have had multiple one to one sessions .. to help me with the job search process, looking over my CV and in general boosting my confidence! Being a part of this programme and having such a strong support network has given me hope that I will be able to work in heritage soon. Whilst this current job will pay the bills, I would love to continue this contact to help find a heritage engagement job next summer/ autumn when I am able to move wherever I like!' (Imogen, Young Ambassador)

'I have very much enjoyed my time as part of the Kick the Dust work experience program. I feel a bit more confident in social situations than I did before, and I have a

much firmer idea of what jobs are available in the museum service.’ (Amy – work experience)

‘Being part of this organisation, have given me a boarder view of where I see myself in the future and the career I want to go into. It has given me confidence and developed me as a team player when working together. It has given a boost of independence which I keep on achieving.’ (Emily – online work experience and Young Ambassador)

Responses to the Curator Camp in Thetford held in summer 2024 included statements such as ‘this project made me feel happy’, ‘this project has increased my confidence’, ‘I now work better with other people’.

4. Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn – project update

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 base of the Boardman stairs in the new atrium, separating the remaining construction zone in the Keep from the areas of the museum that are now open to visitors.

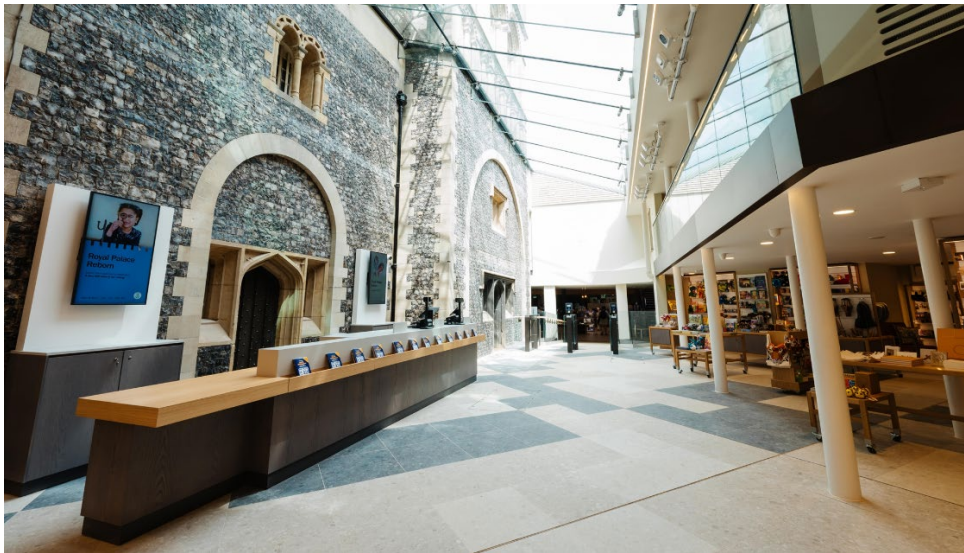


Drone image of the construction site

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. Plastering and decorative works, alongside mechanical & electrical installation is ongoing. The final phase of steelwork installation has been completed on the Keep roof, with the new rooftop platforms installed.

The new entrance area and glazed atrium opened to visitors on 22 July 2024. This area known as the Percival Wing includes the main entrance, atrium and new shop on the ground floor; the new café on the first floor; and the new flexible learning space on the second floor. A new internal lift provides access to all levels. This area also includes café kitchen, storage and washup spaces and accessible toilets.



New entrance atrium showing glazed roof, ticketing desk, shop and café levels



The new shop, with cafe above



The new café

5. Other activity across Norwich museums

5.1 Museum of Norwich

The Museum of Norwich team has been busy working on our new community poetry exhibition and project, continuing our Colman's Project in partnership with Unilever, supporting local students from UEA and NUA, welcoming school children and delivering fun school holiday activities, as well as planning for future projects and exhibitions.

Exhibitions

FOUND



In early September we launched an exciting new exhibition at the museum. *FOUND* is a poetry and visual art project responding to objects on display at three Norfolk Museums sites: Museum of Norwich, Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, and Time and Time Museum of Great Yarmouth Life. Since January, writer Daisy Henwood has been working with community groups and the general public to identify people's favourite objects from the museums' collections and bring their stories to life through poetry.

Artist JMCAnderson has created an installation in response to the new poems to enhance their visual clues and broaden the dialogue. With clever word, colour and image play, the artwork uses fragments from the poems, taking the viewer on a

whimsical and thought-provoking journey. On Sat 26 October the museum hosted a celebration event for all the community collaborators, with 22 participants attending. This project is funded through Arts Council England. Moving forward, the team are looking to develop our poetry offer, and so we are working with local poet John Osbourne on a performance of his sell out show *Norwich: A Love Story* in January.

Peter the Wild Man Exhibition, Hamlyn Museum, Germany

For the last year, Curator Hannah Henderson has been working with Dr Mareike Ahlers, Curator at Hameln Museum. Mareike first contacted the museum as she was keen to tell the story of Peter, who was found in woodland close to the town. Depending on what she found, Mareike was hopeful of creating an exhibition.



Hannah has been supporting her with information, and more recently Lily Alden, NMS Teaching Museum Trainee, has been helping her to create short films featuring local people, talking about this local story.

The exhibition will open on 22 November and we will work together on a small social media campaign, highlighting Peter's story and people's response to it.

Another part of this project has involved working with Tabby Hartnell, a local artist who we originally met through our creative wellbeing project with *Art at Work*. Over the last nine months, Tabby has been researching the story of Peter the Wild Man and making a story sack and doll (pictured) for children charting Peter's own extraordinary story. Tabby was drawn to the story, as she feels a strong connection with Peter's personal life.

Muslims: Norwich

Photographs from the Ihsan Mosque by Khalil Mitchell

This month we have been evaluating our summer exhibition by Khalil Mitchell. Overall, the museum welcomed 1,752 visitors over this period, of which our exhibition was part of the visitor route. We welcomed 275 people from the Muslim community for special events, with around 100 attending our special opening event.

One partner, Maria Pavledis, Community Librarian for Norfolk Libraries, reflected, *"I found the events at the museum very moving, especially when our Muslim visitors explained how important this exhibition was to them. It reinforced the idea that this was a really special thing to have done. It really brought people together. It was amazing."*



A female Muslim visitor shared with us,

“I appreciate the thought that goes into showing the world that Muslims are normal people, cheerful, full of life. Thanks and I loved each and every picture...”

Thanks are due to Maria Pavledis & Khalil Mitchell for partnering with the museum and to the Norwich Freeman for supporting this project.

The Colman’s Story: A partnership with Unilever



Our partnership project with Unilever has been developing, exploring the history of the Colman family, the Carrow Works and its wider global context.

Project Curator Agata Gomolka has now created a large body of data, which we will soon be sharing on the NMS collections website. Work on this project has been extended to the end of March, as we finish this website phase and move into improving our displays and interpretation in the museum.

Image credit: Unilever

Heritage Open Days

The museum offered free entry – including to the new *FOUND* exhibition - as part of HODs over Friday 13 and Saturday 14 September. In all we welcomed 758 visitors over the two days.

Working with young people

Museum based groups

The museum continues to serve as a focus for *Kick the Dust* project activity in Norwich, with increasing numbers of young people using the museum as a base for having fun, gaining new skills and flexing their creative muscles.

Kick the Dust Project Worker Eve Mathews runs our popular *Heritage Collective* every Wednesday. Currently this group are working on a zine to support the new Turner exhibition at Norwich Castle Museum.

On Thursdays, our *Knights of Sound Table* young persons' group run by writer Jax Burgoyne, has been busy creating support material for the new Castle Keep displays, including animation, zine making and much more, as the young people explore new & interesting histories.

We are planning for the groups to participate in a 'take over day' on the museum's social media channels, as part of *Kids in Museums Takeover Day*.

Developing links with university students

We have welcomed a large number of students to the museum this quarter, as they start their new courses. In early October the *UEA History Society* visited and we are thinking about new ways of working together in future. We received some positive feedback. The chair of the Society wrote to us, *I just wanted to say a massive thank you for having us at the Bridewell today & for giving us an introductory talk! Everyone seems to have loved it, and we've had great feedback.*



Plans are in train to work with a small cohort of students to develop a social media campaign to encourage more students to visit the museum, making the most of the free entry to which all UEA and NUA students are entitled.

Working in partnership with university tutors

Curator Hannah Henderson is building links with tutors at both NUA and UEA.

After having judged the BA Textile students work in the summer, Hannah is now in talks with Course Director Kate Farley, to see how the museum can exhibit the students work next year in partnership with the C&TA.

On Thursday 24 October, Hannah spoke to 30 *UEA BA Heritage and History* students, when they visited the museum. The tutor was pleased for the young people to meet someone who worked in the field and could give an overview of what it was like to manage a heritage site as well as develop links with the community.

We hope to work further with the Landscape History tutors, who are keen to build links and utilise our expertise.

Wellbeing work

We are continuing to develop and nurture our partnership with *Art at Work*, an arts and wellbeing organisation. This year's cohorts for the new NLHF-funded Norwich textile themed sessions have come to an end and we look forward to welcoming a new theme and round of participants in January.

Recent sessions have been led by local artists looking at natural dyes, spinning, weaving and photography. A recent photography walk around the city's historical textile sites was led by photographer Rachel Wright.



Continued evaluation is tracking the impact on the individual's wellbeing. We are now looking forward to recommencement of the popular Community Culture Club programme, now in its fourth year.

Events programme

School summer holiday

We welcomed over 2,200 people over the summer holiday period.

This summer's activities focused on the beautiful patterns within our textile collections. Every Tuesday of this summer holiday, we offered a weaving inspired activity, where families could create their own woven mat. In addition, every day we offered a *Brilliant Birds* craft activity, where children could create their own bird decorations to take home.

October half term



We hosted a fun October half term programme where we welcomed 586 people over the week. Family visitors enjoyed a spooky scavenger hunt around the museum and a very popular craft activity where they could make their very own lucky black cat.

On Tuesday 29 October, we ran a children's poetry session, where participants could create their own Halloween inspired poems. This session was linked to our current community poetry exhibition *FOUND*.

Thanks are due to the Norwich Learning Team for creating and delivering our family activities.

Building History Tours

We were pleased to begin a new season of tours, back by public demand. On the first Saturday of every month we offer a tour exploring the heritage of the museum site, including a closer look at the magnificent medieval flint wall and a behind the scenes walk around the largest vaulted undercroft in the city.

Joolz Bailey who leads the tours always receives positive feedback.

"Joolz made our tour really interesting and was full of dates, facts and information."

"I have lived here 78 years and I never knew! So much to tell the grandchildren!"

"The visit has broadened my mind!"

"These tours stimulate the imagination!"

Collections

Pharmacy deep clean

Over the last few months our Conservator Daid Harvey and his two volunteers have been deep cleaning the collections in our recreated chemist shop. With over 2,000 items in the collection, this is a major task.



Collections Development: Acquisitions

One of our most recent acquisitions has been the shop sign of legendary *Backs Records* of Swan Lane.

Founded by Johnny Appel in 1979, *Backs* was at the heart of Norwich's independent music scene through the 1980s and beyond, selling hard-to-find vinyl and getting Norwich bands to a wider national audience through its record production and distribution business.



Backs helped bands such as *The Higsons* and *The Farmers' Boys* to gain national prominence and released tracks by at least 58 bands, many of them local to Norwich and Norfolk. *Backs* was also a major supporter of the campaign to launch *The Waterfront* as a venue for local and visiting bands, helping the city's local music scene and counter-culture to thrive.

Jonny Appel died in 2017, but the distribution business continues to this day as *Shellshock/Backs* based in Duke Street, which this year helped to launch 70 new records by independent bands in January alone. The spirit of the shop itself lives on around *Soundclash Records* on St Benedict's Street, launched by former *Backs* staff member Paul Mills after the original shop closed in 1991.

Richard Price (right in photo, featured with shop worker Pete Keeley) who donated the sign, said,

"I spotted the sign in an auction and was horrified at the idea of it leaving the city and ending up in someone's shed. When I was a kid, Backs was as much a part of Norwich's culture as the cathedral or the football club. It was a pioneering part of Norwich's creative economy and culture, something we now almost take for granted. The Backs sign is a bit of an icon of that, and it belongs in the Museum of Norwich where it can help to tell an important part of the city's story."



Christmas collaboration

Building on the successes of Christmas 2023 and February 2024, Hannah Henderson, Curator and Harriet Johnson, NMS Retail Manager, have been working again with both Petra Boase and Mandy Doubt, Norwich based printers and designers, on a new combined Christmas pop up in our old corner shop.

Not only does this add a new dynamic dimension to our Christmas programme, but it also supports income generation

Growing our social media presence

Since February 2023, Hannah Henderson, Curator, has been building a presence of Instagram and created a strong following, as well as maintaining our Facebook and X accounts.

To date, we now have 1461 followers (up from 1322 in the last report) and have created 361 posts. Over the past 3 months, Hannah has created around 200 Instagram posts, reaching 6,319 accounts and attracted 1,462 followers, an increase of 9.4%.

These posts can have a great impact in engaging with audiences. A recent reel showing a performance by the Common Lot, singing their heritage inspired songs, attracted 1045 plays with a watch time of 2hr 19 mins. 68.3% were existing followers, whereas 31.7% were non followers. Adverts for our new *FOUND* exhibition, reached 2290 accounts in two posts, and a post featuring our photography walk reached over 1081 accounts. On Facebook, we have 4,400 followers. Our photography walk posts reached 925 accounts, whilst another post about our creative wellbeing work reached 1214 followers.

This demonstrates how effective social media is with engaging with audiences and traditional non visitors. It is an effective way of showing what we do behind closed doors and to share our work and expertise with a global audience.

Future projects

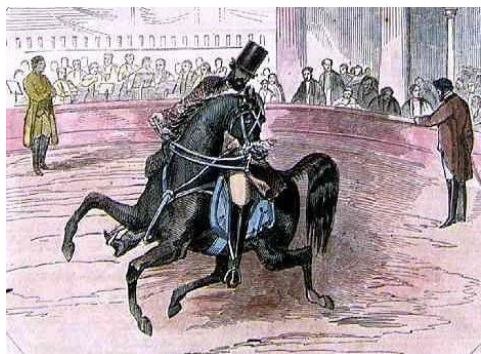
Centenary celebrations

2025 will mark the 100th birthday of the museum, and Hannah Henderson, Curator, is looking to mark the anniversary in a variety of ways. She is currently working with Alicia Grix, NMS Development Officer, on potential sources of fundraising.

Meanwhile, our Research Volunteers have been researching the foundation of the museum by shoe factory owner Sir Henry Holmes, as well as *Norwich in the 1920s*, for a possible exhibition if funding can be secured.

For the Benefit of Pablo Fanque

We have recently met with artists Natalya Martin and Ashton Owen to discuss how we can support the research & development of a new exhibition called *For the Benefit of Pablo Fanque*.



This will tell the story of Pablo, the UK's first Black circus proprietor, who was born in Norwich in 1810. The show will be created for a young audience of 3-8yr olds and their families.

The artists are in the process of applying for an Arts Council England grant and if successful, we hope to support them by sharing our spaces, expertise, and networks across Museum of Norwich and the Castle Museum.

5.2 Strangers' Hall

Cathy Terry

The end of August saw Cathy Terry's retirement as Senior Curator of Social History at Strangers' Hall and Bethan Holdridge (Assistant Curator at Strangers' Hall and the Museum of Norwich) taking on the role of Acting Curator at Strangers' Hall. Cathy is planning to return to Strangers' Hall as a voluntary Research Associate to continue the work she began documenting the early archives of the museum. As Strangers' Hall is one of, if not the first, social history museum and collection in this country, this work is important in the understanding of social history museums and their role. Staff and volunteers from across the service contributed to Cathy's leaving present which included a bespoke artwork by the artist Hannah Broadway, who was commissioned to rejuvenate Strangers' Hall front windows as part of the 100th anniversary celebrations in 2023.



Curatorial and collections updates

Staff received new information about one of the teddies in the collections in October. This teddy (NWHCM : 1973.11.1) is featured in the front window displays that were redesigned for our 100th anniversary celebrations in 2023. Ed Percival was walking past the museum and thought that he recognised him as the teddy donated by his late parents. He put a picture of the bear into his family forum chat; his eldest brother exclaimed '*It's Murdoch!*' Searching for this bear in the museum collections database it is indeed Murdoch; although we did not know him as such. Ed has told us that he was named after the pianist who used to accompany his grandfather, F Percival Driver, who used to sing in the early 20th century. The records shall be updated to reflect this information and to make sure that Murdoch's name is recorded for posterity.

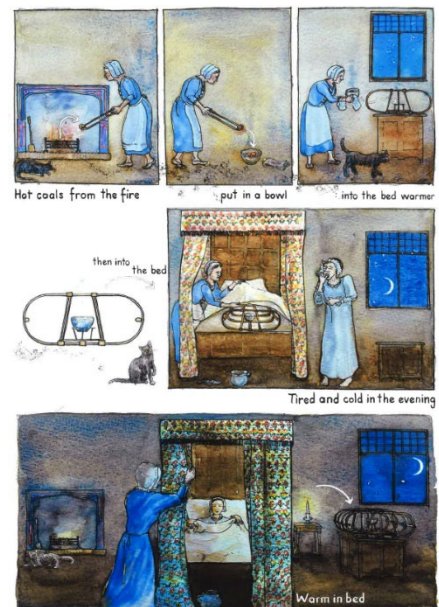


History without Words

Over the past year, Senior Curator of Social History, Cathy Terry, and Assistant Curator Bethan Holdridge have been working with artist Cassie Herschel-Shorland on an Arts Council England funded project '*History without Words*'. Since Cathy's retirement, Bethan has continued to support this partnership, which has now been completed and will be made available for our visitors to use for our 2025 open season.

The project is designed to improve understanding of the building and its displays for people who use picture communication and have limited access to English for multiple reasons. The two rooms selected for this project were the Great Hall, with a focus on the Ambrey, and Lady Paine's bedchamber, which looked at the Bed Wagon.

To develop this resource, Cassie worked closely with Cathy and Bethan to ensure the accuracy of the information communicated as well as in curatorially supported sessions at Strangers' Hall with Bethan's English+ Museum Club and Art Link Suffolk's 'Brave Art' group, both of whom have limited access to spoken and written English for different reasons.



English+ and Turner

Bethan has continued to maintain the monthly Museum Club run with English+. In October, an afternoon was arranged with exhibition Curator Dr Francesca Vanke as she took English+ to see their artwork in the beautiful *Turner and changing visions of landscape* exhibition at Norwich Castle. Over the summer, participants of English+ were asked to send images of landscapes that resonated with them and post them in the



Museum Club's WhatsApp group. Artist practitioner, Holly Sandiford from Art at Work, then worked with the group to bring the images together with the addition of natural elements to create a larger collaborative piece. Participants chose their landscapes because of the memories and feelings that these places evoked. Landscapes were submitted from individuals' home countries, others fondly remembered holidays with family and others local scenes from their new home in Norfolk. Collaboratively, the artwork demonstrates the many ways people consider and emotionally respond to the idea of a landscape for them. The group were thrilled to have something they created on show in the museum *'I recognised my photos. That's made me really happy.'*

Strangers' Ale

For many years Curator Bethan Holdridge has worked closely with Norwich City of Ale and this has inspired the Norfolk and Flanders collaboration beer 'Strangers' Red'. The inspiration for the beer comes directly from the story, represented in Strangers' Hall, of our welcoming the strangers from the low countries to Norwich in the sixteenth century. These strangers brought with them highly hopped beer (such as we drink now) and improvements in the manufacture of cloth. This ultimately led to the development of a Norwich red dye invented by Michael Stark in the early eighteenth century.



Grain Brewery, Poppyland, Tindall, Moongazer, and Brouwerijdecoureur in Leuven, near Belgium, used the same ingredients to create their Strangers' Red beers using their own brewing methods resulting in a British and Belgium style beer. The beer was launched at the end of October at The Plough on St. Benedict's Street. Bethan appeared alongside the brewers from Grain and Brouwerijdecoureur on *Anglia News* to explain the connection. Both styles of beer were available at The Plough on St. Benedict's Street, at other pubs around the region and in Belgium

October Half Term: Sounds Fun

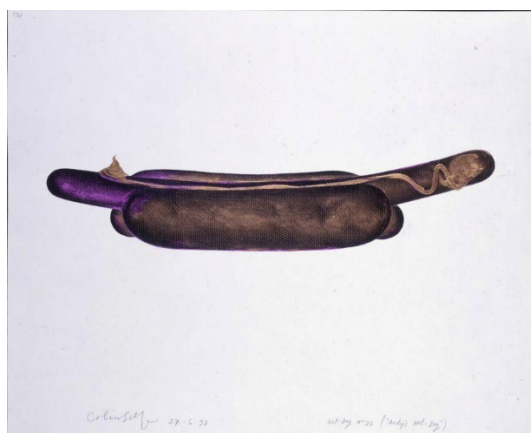
Our October programme had us considering what sounds would have been heard at Strangers' Hall in the past. At four points around the museum Kate Malyon from the NMS Learning Team placed a game, some history of the game, instructions on how to

play it and a sound box, which, when activated, played a recording of a game in progress. Visitors were encouraged to think about the sounds they were hearing, how they would have been the same sounds heard in the past and to see whether they could recreate the sound with the game in front of them. They could then choose to continue playing the game or to move on. The games included an ancient dice game Mia, Tiddly Winks and Dominoes.



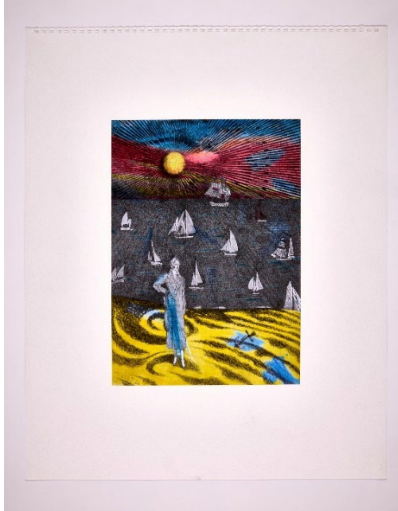
6. Norwich Curatorial update

Dr Giorgia Bottinelli, Curator of Historic Art has mainly been working on a major exhibition based around the work of internationally known, Norfolk-born artist Colin Self, which is due to open in March 2025.



Hot Dog No.26 (*Andy's Hot Dog*),
Colin Self 1993, Norfolk Museums © the artist

Dr Rosy Gray, our Modern and Contemporary Art Curator, left in September having just begun the process of curating this exhibition, but Giorgia has since taken up the baton. She has been working with the artist himself to document the many works in his own collection, combining these with loans and works from our collections, to put together a representative survey of the many phases of his long and distinguished career. Giorgia is also working on a catalogue.



The Tourist (On the Shore, Sunset),
Colin Self 1997, Norfolk Museums © the artist

Dr Francesca Vanke, Senior Curator of Norwich Museums and Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art has been working on the exhibition *JMW Turner and changing visions of landscape*, which opened on 19 October. This exhibition brings together four of Turner's versions of Walton Bridges, which have never previously been displayed together, see below:



L-R: *Walton Reach*, c1805 (Tate) *The Thames near Walton Bridges* c 1805(Tate), *Walton Bridges* (Norfolk Museums) and *Landscape with Walton Bridges*, 1840s (private collection)

These include one which has never been displayed in a museum before, having always been in private collections abroad. This exhibition forms a history of the way we look at landscape and includes 16 works by Turner himself as well as many other artists.

Francesca has also been putting together an events programme to accompany the exhibition and has been working with English + to produce a collaborative artwork, which has been incorporated into the display. She has also been working with the newly formed Norwich Kick the Dust Heritage Collective, to produce a zine.

In addition, while the modern and contemporary art curator's post is vacant, Francesca has started work with a group of artists for an exhibition on contemporary watercolours for the Timothy Gurney Gallery for October 2025.

Kate Thaxton Curator of the Regimental collections has had six third year students from the Fine Art Department of Norwich University of the Arts coming to work with the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum in mini 'artist in residences'. In order to display the students' work inspired by the collection, a grant of £7,500 provided by the Norwich Freeman's Charity will be used to renew the interiors of the display cases in the reception area of the Shirehall. Kate says *'we have some good examples from last academic year to highlight, and we are very pleased that one of last year's students, Katie Chennells, is now working at the National Holocaust Centre and Museum in Nottinghamshire as their Digital Collections Officer, on the back of the work she did with our collection.'*

NMS Teaching Museum Trainee Sam Wiggin continues to work on the Far East Prisoner of War exhibition for next year. (The Town Hall, King's Lynn 22 March – 21 September 2025). Although the space is modest, it will include early documentary film footage, archive material and objects. We are producing a browsable bound register of men of the Royal Norfolk Regiment who became Far East Prisoners of War. It includes their battalion, where in Norfolk they lived, and if they died; what they died of and when. This information, on almost 3,000 men, is being compiled from nominal rolls within the collection by museum volunteer, Sarah Salmon.

Kate and Sam are also starting a book which will grow through the six-month run of the exhibition. Families are invited to provide information on individual soldiers, together with a photograph, which will be added to the volume, creating a lasting legacy for the Regimental Museum archive.

Kate has also been fielding large numbers of enquiries, which always peak around 11 November. She has shared the very good news that Dicky Bird, long term volunteer, is back doing the time-consuming legwork of trawling card indexes, discharge registers and regimental histories, after being extremely ill earlier in the year. It is notable that the balance of enquiries is now firmly towards the Second World War rather than the First World War.

Ruth Battersby, Senior Curator of Costume and Textiles reports that the building work in the Costume and Textile store is drawing to an end with a handover expected before Christmas so planning for the return of collections is getting underway in earnest. One key aspect of the planning is to seek opportunities to improve the security of

collections storage such as extra locks and a reorganisation of storerooms to more effectively group salvage priority objects.

The end of September saw the first '*Gathered at Gressenhall*' event, which focussed on textile collections and narratives. Ruth supported the event with a talk on the textiles of Lorina Bulwer and it was wonderful to see the enthusiasm of attendees and range of activities and speakers. Lorina Bulwer's embroidered testimonies were also the subject of a paper Ruth delivered at the annual Dress and Textiles Specialists conference at V&A Dundee in October.

While the majority of collections are off-site, and space is limited at the Norwich Castle Study Centre, the volunteer team have been working on adding images to the museum documentation system and taking new images of (small) objects to enhance the records. Almost 1,000 new images have been added including Norwich shawls and textiles, the quilts that were on display in the *Textile Treasures* exhibition and a collection of samples of 1970s printed cottons produced by the Norwich-based Dove Clothing Company.

Ruth has made a few acquisitions including a 1960s ballgown worn by a popular local semi-professional contralto Audrey Yates for a performance of 'Messiah' at St Andrews Hall, a 1920s driving cap made by Thomas Wells and Son and worn by building contractor Sidney Gill whilst travelling to oversee projects, and a Dove Clothing Company dress bought for the collection by the Costume & Textile Association.



Sidney Gill's cap



Dove Clothing Company Dress



Audrey Yates at St Andrews Hall



Screenshot of a selection of new images added to the online database

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

7. Other developments

Courtroom

Works within the Shirehall Courtroom to treat the outbreak of dry rot are progressing well. The external roof element of the Courtroom works is now complete. Some additional rot was discovered within some of the internal timbers and we are working with a specialist contractor to determine the full extent of the issue and agree an effective methodology for treatment.

NMS staff have been working alongside Norse and Norwich City Council Planning colleagues. As part of the project, we are aiming to significantly improve the drainage systems, so that future water ingress can be avoided. Norwich City Conservation Officers have been in attendance on a regular basis and have now approved the proposed gutter detail, along the western side of the building.

The works also includes the requirement to make significant repairs to the roof and walls of the Costume & Textile Store within the Shirehall. These works are outside the original project scope and now include works to external window lintels, further roof beam replacements, repairs to the roof castellations and the replacement of roof slates.

The Courtroom works are due to be completed by the end of December 2024. The Costume and Textile Store remedial works will be completed by mid-November. This is so that the building fabric is allowed to properly dry before remedial works take place.



The new Courtroom roof and repairs underway in the Costume & Textile store

8. Visitor numbers

		APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	YEAR TO DATE	TOTAL
Castle Museum	2022-23	8,129	6,857	9,070	8,289	9,390	8,064	8,900	7,259	2,995	7,483	7,914	14,373	58,719	98,743
	2023-24	13,471	9,922	10,889	12,590	15,391	10,647	11,597	7,256	6,079	6,031	8,576	10,031	64,501	122,480
	2024-25	8,942	9,907	7,932	11,031	13,015	11,590	12,883						75,300	75,300
Norwich Castle Study Centre (Shirehall)	2022-23	24	59	43	56	46	29	85	46	49	82	116	121	342	756
	2023-24	106	53	126	92	101	75	63	79	178	58	150	118	619	1,199
	2024-25	119	213	130	161	32	21	57						733	733
Museum of Norwich	2022-23	1,406	1,552	1,044	1,666	2,476	1,970	1,431	1,406	1,387	1,185	1,587	1,917	11,545	19,027
	2023-24	1,589	1,378	1,241	2,064	2,059	2,381	1,824	1,329	821	1,244	1,707	1,863	12,638	19,500
	2024-25	1,666	1,603	1,754	1,837	1,983	2,055	1,820						12,718	12,718
Strangers Hall	2022-23	478	642	639	635	779	843	713	620	863	16	329	986	4,729	7,543
	2023-24	468	522	453	1,185	1,699	962	850	770	470	0	387	1,093	6,139	8,859
	2024-25	484	785	705	766	626	1,122	719						5,207	5,207

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