

## **Norwich area museums committee**

Date: **Tuesday, 07 September 2021**  
Time: **14:00**  
Venue: **Council chamber, City Hall, St Peters Street, Norwich, NR2 1NH**

### **For further information please contact:**

#### **Committee members:**

Committee officer: Jackie Rodger  
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#### **Norwich City Council:**

Councillors Everett, Huntley, Grahame,  
Maxwell, Schmierer and Wright

#### **Norfolk County Council:**

Councillors Brociek-Coulton, Birmingham,  
Reilly, Rumsby, Ward<sup>1</sup> and Watkins

Democratic services  
City Hall  
Norwich  
NR2 1NH

#### **Co-opted non-voting members:**

Amanda Geitner (East Anglia Arts Fund) and  
Felicity Devonshire (Friends of the Norwich  
Museums), Councillor King (Broadland District  
Council) and Danusia Wurm (Norfolk  
Contemporary Art Society)(and 1 vacancy)

[www.norwich.gov.uk](http://www.norwich.gov.uk)

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

<sup>1</sup> Chairman of Norfolk Joint Museums  
committee

### **Information for members of the public**

Members of the public and the media have the right to attend meetings of full council, the cabinet and committees except where confidential information or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting is therefore held in private.

For information about attending or speaking at meetings, please contact the committee officer above or refer to the council's website.

## **Agenda**

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### **1 Appointment of chair**

To appoint the chair of the committee for the ensuing civic year.

### **2 Appointment of vice chair**

To appoint the vice chair for the ensuing civic year.

### **3 Apologies**

To receive apologies for absence

### **4 Public questions/petitions**

To receive questions / petitions from the public.  
Please note that all questions and notice of petitions must be received by the committee officer detailed on the front of the agenda by 10am on Friday, 27 August 2021.  
For guidance on submitting public questions or petitions please see appendix 1 of the council's constitution.

### **5 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)

### **6 Minutes**

**5 - 10**

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2021.

### **7 Friends of the Norwich Museums 1921 to 2021**

Presentation to mark the centenary year of the Friends of the Norwich Museums facilitated by Francesca Makins and

Charles Bingham-Newland.

**8        Norwich Museums Report - June to August 2021        11 - 40**

To receive the report on the activities at the Norwich Museums for the period June to August 2021.  
(The meeting of the committee was not convened in June 2021. The report on the activities at the Norwich Museums for the period February to May 2021 is available on the council's website with the documents for this meeting.)

**9        Reports from Representatives of the Voluntary Organisations**

To receive an oral report from representative of the voluntary organisations that support the Norwich Museums.

Date of publication: **Friday, 27 August 2021**



**Norwich Area Museums Committee****14:00 to 15:40****2 March 2021**

Present: City Councillors: **County Councillors:**  
Price Brociek-Coulton (vice chair)(in the chair)  
Maxwell Barnard  
Schmierer Ward  
Watkins

**Co-opted non-voting members:**

Felicity Devonshire (Friends of Norwich Museums), Amanda Geitner (East Anglia Arts Fund) and Councillor Easter (South Norfolk Council) and Councillor King (Broadland District Council)

Apologies: City Councillors Huntley (chair), McCartney-Gray, and Wright  
County Councillors Clipsham and Nobbs

**1. Public questions/petitions**

There were no public questions or petitions.

**2. Declarations of interest**

None.

**3. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2020.

**4. Norwich Museums Briefing – September to November 2020**

The assistant head of museums introduced the report and proposed that he and his colleagues would present the relevant sections and pause after each section to ask questions or comment.

The assistant head of museums updated members on the arrangements to reopen the museums following the government's road map out of lockdown. Norwich Castle had been one of three sites reopened on 3 December and closed effectively on 24 December, before the third national lockdown was confirmed. Museums would not be permitted to reopen until 17 May 2021, at the earliest. The exception in Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) was Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, as an outside attraction only from 12 April. Wedding services would be able to resume at Norwich

Castle from 29 March with limited attendees. NMS staff were engaged in checking buildings and collections, and extending the digital offer to access objects and collections, whilst museums were closed. Some staff had been deployed to assist trading standards, the registrars and the NHS, as part of the county council's wider response to Covid-19. Preparations for the reopening of the museums was being made, in line with the county council's health and wellbeing team and best practice from the National Museums Directors Council and the English Civic Museums Network, to ensure that premises were Covid-secure and that staff were adequately trained and comfortable with the arrangements.

The operations manager outlined the arrangements that were being put in place for the Norwich museums to reopen on 17 May. Norwich Castle would reopen in line with the plans for Covid-secure restrictions as before but with the visitor experience enhanced, as the hoardings had been removed from the Rotunda following the completion of the drainage works, therefore allowing access by lift or the staircase to the upper floor galleries and the Royal Norfolk Regimental collection. The Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell was set to reopen on 20 May, with a pre-booked ticket option as only 30 people would be allowed in the museum at any one time, and only for 3 days a week initially. It was proposed to open on an additional day one day a week for school group bookings, as it was not possible to permit public visitors at the same time as schools. Strangers' Hall was set to reopen to the public later in the summer and initially only for school groups or permitted pre-booked groups. The layout of the building made it difficult to introduce a one-way system. Wedding ceremonies would recommence at Norwich Castle from 29 March, 7 days a week. There would be about eight exceptional circumstance weddings taking place from now until 28 March.

In reply to a member's question, the assistant head of museums said that NMS would await clarification that normal services could resume from 21 June at either national or local level, and that whilst he would be delighted to open all museums, would be guided by the county council and national bodies. He encouraged members of the committee to pre-book visits when the museums were reopen. NMS was alert to any opportunities to increase visitor numbers, staff were experienced and would adapt the operations of all sites accordingly, and would respond quickly when restrictions were lifted. It was not anticipated that all restrictions would be removed by the end of June.

The learning manager for Norwich museums updated the committee on the learning programme which had continued during the lockdowns and children learning from home. Despite the challenges, teachers had been resilient, there had been a gradual take up of the NMS digital offer and teacher resource packs for live stream events. This was challenging as for safeguarding reasons children often did not have cameras on. There had been 650 pupil engagements during December and January, with fewer pupils engaged in February, as it was a shorter month and due to half term week. There was a good number of bookings for March and as schools returned to the classroom, it was hoped that teachers would be looking to NMS to augment classroom teaching. NMS had received a grant from Festival Bridge *Moving It On* scheme, along with other museums such as the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, to provide a digital programme to support GCSE level history students through revision and exams, and meet the curriculum. It was recognised in the sector that it was difficult for secondary schools to visit or engage in museums but her colleague, Jenni Williams had worked hard to encourage links with secondary

schools and despite the current challenges. The project would be in partnership with history teachers at Dereham Neatherd and would be rolled out to other schools. The learning team had also received positive feedback on its annual programme for PGCE trainee teachers at City College and University of East Anglia, which this year had been a digital offer this year due to Covid-19, on how they could use the collections in their teaching. The visitor programme had been adapted to provide a digital offer. The What's On page on the website set out what was available. Activities included *Scribe School*, inspired by calligraphy, marginalia, the power of words and an exploding king! With regard to youth engagement, small groups of 10 young people were working digitally with Rachel Daniels, the Norwich Kick the Dust coordinator and curators on the Keep Project, to select objects and text to be exhibited in the Keep. The chair complimented the learning officer for the outstanding work of the team where there was always something new and different.

Christine Marsden, Kick the Dust Norfolk project coordinator, gave a presentation on the activities and performance outcomes of the Kick the Dust Project. The project had exceeded its target of 8,000 quality interventions, with another 18 months of the project remaining, which despite the current restrictions from Covid-19 demonstrated the hard work of the project workers and the resilience of young people to engage with the project. (A copy of the [presentation](#) is available on the council's website with the agenda papers and circulated to members.) The project was on course for its third year. A total 54 per cent of activities were led or designed by young people participating in the project, including peer evaluators and mentoring roles. Rachel Daniels, the Norwich Kick the Dust project worker, was successful in recruiting and engaging young people to high quality programmes, falling into the "leader" and "shaper" categories. Members were cautioned to note that whilst only 25 per cent of activities were in Norwich, the project workers in the west and east had the benefit of established youth groups and additional support. 32 per cent of all activities were with YMCA clients which explained the higher age group that the project was working with and were often at "player" level. There was also a lot of work with secondary education and further education establishments. The project was addressing the needs of all the Kick the Dust groups, including running events for young people with special needs who have missed the opportunity for work experience, and providing support and access to wellbeing services to address mental health. In addition, the external evaluators had reported that NMS had achieved all but eight of its 29 recommendations from the 2020 evaluation report on institutional change, and the remaining targets such as young people working with front of house staff, could not be achieved due to the restrictions of the lockdown. The areas of focus for institutional change, included: the establishment of a stakeholder's group and long term links with children's services to provide sustainable creative and heritage, arts and culture opportunities for young people; involving young people in the co-design of temporary exhibitions; training for curatorial and exhibitions staff; bursary traineeships; and, leadership roles and ensuring that young people were aware of opportunities.

In reply to questions from the chair, the Kick the Dust project co-ordinator said that Kick the Dust had been asked by Active Norfolk project to provide digital resources to accompany holiday food boxes for children eligible for the free school meal scheme. The resource packs only could be made available to other groups, such as the volunteer groups providing food boxes for families that were not eligible under the free school meal scheme. The project co-ordinator acknowledged the barriers to

young carers participating in activities and whilst the project was inclusive, it was something that she would share with colleagues so that they could address it. In reply to a member's question, the project co-ordinator confirmed that data on ethnicity and nationality was collected as part of an annual evaluation submitted to the National Heritage Lottery Fund. In terms of engaging in issues which young people were drawn to such as Black Lives Matters and colonialism and LGBTQ+ history, she said that Kick the Dust groups were working on their perspective of rural racism to produce a play at the Sheringham Little Theatre, with a view to tour schools, and regarding LGBTQ+ a Kick the Dust group in the west had hosted an Outing the Past conference as part of LGBTQ+ History month.

The assistant head of museums updated members on the Norwich Castle Royal Palace Reborn project, which was making good progress despite the impact of Covid-19. The main contractor had confirmed the detail of the building project, which included mitigation for the impacts of Covid-19. The contractors were working closely with colleagues at the city council, as landlord and planning officers, and Historic England. Archaeologists were working on the site and some discoveries had been made that related to the prison period. The drainage connections had been completed so the Rotunda was being reinstated for use, and flagstones removed in the basement to facilitate further drainage works. Preparation was being made for piling for the foundations work. The removal of the roof structure from the former café and corridor from reception to the Rotunda had opened up the prospect of the east face façade of the Keep, providing a glimpse of what the completed project would look like, as it would be viewed through the glass atrium. A "hard hat tour" would be arranged for members of the committee when it was possible to do so.

Members noted that the Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell and Strangers' Hall had been closed for the duration of the pandemic period. NMS staff had worked hard to make collections accessible to both existing and new audiences, and had sought opportunities to celebrate and share the collections with other organisations. The Museum of Norwich had worked in partnership with the UEA, city council and Good Gym Norwich on Fine City Neighbours, to celebrate social cohesion, and had also provided a Christmas quiz, available to download and share. Stranger's Hall had been the focus of Christmas activities over the last two years and this year staff had worked with the learning team to provide a digital offer this year.

The senior curator and Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art presented section 7 of the report and highlighted the activities of the curators amongst the challenges of working remotely and little physical access to collections. Members were advised that contained in the report were links to the two Talking Objects videos on the NMS YouTube channel. Preparations were being made for the John Crome bicentennial exhibition, *A Passion for Landscape: Reimagining John Crome*, which was supported by the Friends of the Norwich Museums as a key part of their centenary celebrations in 2021. There had been uncertainties about loans from the British Museum but these had now been confirmed. Conservation work had settled some questions about attribution. A concurrent exhibition of photographs would be held at the Museum of Norwich, *Crome's Norwich* with images of the past and present of the same areas of Norwich. The East Anglia Art Fund's Open Art Show, *Somewhere Unexpected* topic was designed to complement the John Crome exhibition. For the first time entries were being invited in the form of new media and performance. There had been over 100 subscribers. Other activities included preparation for *Slaves of Fashion* exhibition in autumn 2022, which included fund raising for the



acquisition of commission from the Singh Twins, and an exhibition of the work of artist Yelenda Popova, focusing on landscape, geology and nuclear histories, with reference to Sizewell. Dr David Waterhouse, the senior curator natural history, had conducted teacher training sessions on Zoom, and appeared on *Escape to the Country* and Radio Norfolk. He had written a blog post entitled *Queer Nature* for LGBTQ+ History month. The senior curator was preparing for the loan of Bernardo Bellotto painting *The Fortress of Konigstein from the North* from the National Gallery. It would have been part of the *Castles* exhibition that had been cancelled due to the lockdown. The painting would be displayed, accompanied with an online of the version of the cancelled exhibition. The *Textiles Treasures* exhibition that had been due to open in January had been deinstalled and it was hoped that it could be remounted later in the year. The textile curators were using the time to upgrade and update storage facilities. The Curator of the Regimental Collections was updating the website and responding to an increased number of enquiries as people researched their family trees.

The operations manager shared [statistics](#) of visitor numbers and statistics on digital participation with the committee. Norwich Castle had 750 visitors over the 23 days that it was open in this period, averaging 32 visitors per day, which considering that this was in the midst of the Keep project, a traditionally quiet month and Covid, was encouraging. The numbers of followers on social media had increased. In reply to a question, the assistant head of museums said that the art collections came under the Norwich Castle Facebook page. He would check out that a former account was no longer in use. Members of the committee welcomed the use of Twitter and Facebook to increase access to NMS.

**RESOLVED to**

- (1) note the [report](#) and thank the officers for their presentations;
- (2) record the committee's gratitude to the NMS staff for their dedication and commitment to the museums service despite the challenging circumstances of the pandemic;
- (3) note the success of the Kick the Dust Norfolk project.

**5. Reports from Representatives of the Voluntary Organisations**

Felicity Devonshire provided an oral update on the Friends of the Norwich Museums which was in its centenary year. The celebration lunch with Lord Cholmondely, Patron of the Friends of the Norwich Museums, at Houghton Hall had been cancelled. The Friends had intended to arrange a family trail between the three Norwich museums as part of its celebrations but this would now be postponed to 2022. The Friends had welcomed the projections celebrating their centenary on Norwich Castle at around 5:00 pm each evening.

**RESOLVED** to note and thank Felicity Devonshire for her report.

## **6. Schedule of Meetings**

**RESOLVED** to approve a schedule of meetings, subject to approval at Norwich City Council's annual council, as follows (all meetings to be at 14:00):

8 June 2021  
7 September 2021  
7 December 2021  
1 March 2022

## **7. Norwich Area Museums Committee - members**

The chair read out a message on behalf of Councillor Nobbs who was unable to the meeting because of technical IT reasons and that it would have been his last one. In his message, he wished the NMS "the best possible future and look forward to the re-opening of the Keep very soon". Councillor Nobbs had been a long-standing member of the committee.

The chair then took the opportunity to thank other members who were not seeking re-election or were standing down from the committee in the next civic year.

CHAIR

Norwich Area Museums Committee 7 September 2021

### **Norwich Museums Report: June to August 2021**

#### **1. COVID-19 Service update**

- 1.1 All Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) museums closed to visitors on 19 March 2020 as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. The majority of NMS non frontline staff have been working remotely from home since this time. Following a phased COVID-secure reopening of four NMS museum sites including Norwich Castle during July and August 2020, all NMS closed again from 5 November 2020 as part of the second national lockdown. Following the announcement that Norfolk would be in Tier 2, three NMS sites reopened to the public on Thursday 3 December 2020. These sites were Norwich Castle, Time & Tide Museum and Lynn Museum, with the seasonal site at Gressenhall remaining closed until the start of the 2021 season. Following the announcement that Norfolk would be in Tier 4 from Boxing Day, all NMS sites closed again with effect from 24 December 2020. Following the government announcement that indoor museums could reopen from 17 May 2021 as part of Roadmap Step 3, seven NMS sites reopened to visitors in the week beginning 17 May. These sites were Norwich Castle, the Museum of Norwich, Lynn Museum, Time & Tide Museum, the Elizabethan House Museum, Cromer Museum and Gressenhall Farm & Workhouse (outdoor areas at Gressenhall had reopened on 12 April under Step 2). Subsequently, museum reopenings have taken place at Ancient House Museum and Strangers' Hall. All legal restrictions specific to museums were removed by the Government with effect from 19 July 2021 (Step 4).
- 1.2 Despite the ending of legal restrictions on 19 July, many of the existing COVID-secure systems and procedures remain in place, with a focus on keeping staff and visitors safe through minimising the risk of transmission. Visitors are being requested (rather than legally required) to follow these procedures. The key changes to NMS procedures include:
- The wearing of face coverings by visitors and staff is now “expected and recommended” rather than required by law
  - 2m social distancing is no longer a requirement. Visitors are instead being requested to abide by “respectful distancing” from other visitors and staff
  - Test & Trace venue check-in is now advisory rather than a legal requirement
  - The pre-booking of tickets is no longer a requirement, but is now recommended. Walk-in visits are permitted where there is sufficient site capacity
  - Site capacity limits have been increased (previously averaging 30% of normal capacity) and pre-booked ticket slots adjusted to accommodate an overall increase in visitor numbers.
  - Priority on-site activities have resumed including delivery to schools and young people. Some on-site public events have also resumed. All such activities are still the subject of strict COVID-19 procedures, with Safe Systems of Work being created to protect staff and visitors.

- 1.3 In terms of the COVID-19 procedures and systems that remain in place across NMS sites, the priorities remain:
- Ventilation – maintaining existing ventilation arrangements to maximise fresh air flow including supplementary air purifiers at relevant sites
  - Cleaning regimes – maintaining enhanced cleaning arrangements including toilets and regular touch points
  - Hand sanitisation – maintaining existing sanitiser stations and encourage regular hand sanitisation/hand washing. Additional hand sanitiser stations are being introduced where required (e.g. near reactivated interactives)
- 1.4 Many museum activities and services, including general visits and school visits, have been severely impacted due to COVID-19. NMS staff have been involved in supporting key work relating to the Norfolk County Council's (NCC) COVID-19 response, including helping to coordinate volunteer activities, managing the distribution of food and medicine to residents who needed this support, and making telephone calls to identified vulnerable residents. NMS staff have also been helping with other COVID response work including supporting the work of the NHS and the NCC Trading Standards and Registrars' teams.
- 1.5 Throughout the period of the pandemic, NMS staff have developed a broad range of digital resources to support audiences, including resources for children and families. Digital engagement included a significant expansion of social media activity. Resources continue to be made available for those in digital poverty or without ready access to digital content.
- 1.6 The enormous range of NMS activity during the period of COVID-19 disruption continues to be captured in the weekly *Museums Mardle* staff e-newsletter. A reminder that members of the committee can be added to this distribution list on request.
- 1.7 The reopening of museum sites during 2020 and 2021 followed the implementation of strict COVID-19 safety procedures that were reviewed and signed-off by the NCC Health & Safety and Wellbeing team. Reopening also took place in accordance with sector-specific guidance issued by the National Museums Directors Council and in liaison with the English Civic Museums Network.
- 1.8 Staff training has taken place at all NMS sites in advance of reopening. Staff are provided with any identified PPE and protective screens remain in place at key points. Enhanced staffing levels ensure that visitors can be provided with the necessary level of support and advice. Refresher training for staff took place in advance of the reopening of museum sites.
- 1.9 During periods of site closure, all NMS sites were the subject of regular premises, security and collections condition checks. Statutory maintenance continued, as did essential construction and maintenance works, with strict COVID-19 management procedures in place.

## 2. Reopening at Norwich Museums

### 2.1 Norwich Castle reopening arrangements

Visitors continue to use the external entrance door E8 as the temporary COVID-19 entrance (see the Castle plan below). Visitors requiring level access including those with wheelchairs or pushchairs can enter via entrance door E9. The temporary visitor exit is via door E6. Visitors are also able to access toilets. Visitors and staff are advised to wear a face covering in areas accessible to the public and to adhere to a respectful social distance from other visiting parties.



Samples of the COVID signage in use at Norwich Castle

Hand sanitiser dispensers have been placed at strategic points throughout the museum. All visitors are requested to sanitise their hands upon entry, after visiting the toilet and prior to exiting the museum. Additional hand sanitiser units have also been installed at points in the museum where there are increased risks of visitors touching door handles or push plates. Visitor contact information is still being (optionally) collected for the NHS Test & Trace scheme, including via the NHS COVID-19 app.

A 'pop-up' catering offer has been introduced within the Rotunda of Norwich Castle along with a seating section. This interim offer will remain in place until the new catering facilities open as part of the Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England project.



Temporary catering unit at Norwich Castle

An enhanced retail offer has now been installed within the Rotunda, with many more lines of stock being made available for purchase.

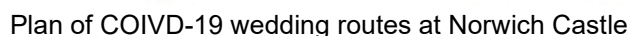


Temporary retail offer at Norwich Castle

## 2.2. Other Norwich site reopening plans

The Museum of Norwich opened to the public on Saturday 22 May and is currently open three days a week, on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

### 2.3. Norwich Castle wedding ceremonies arrangements





### 3. 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. All staff have continued to work mainly from home, with some return to on-site working to facilitate the reintroduction of in-person events at all three city museums. To explore the programmes in more detail and get involved, please visit the *What's On* and *Learning* pages of the Norwich Castle website:

<https://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/norwich-castle>

#### 3.1 Staff updates

Norwich Learning Assistant Susie Childerhouse has recently been appointed as a Learning Officer in the NMS Western Area Learning Team, based at Gressenhall. Maja Michaliszyn has been appointed as the new Learning Assistant in the Norwich team and is preparing for a busy autumn term delivering a wide range of events across the three Norwich museums.

#### 3.2 On-site Schools Recovery

The first on-site school visit since March 2020 took place on Tuesday 8 June at Norwich Castle, since when schools' events have successfully and safely been facilitated at both the Museum of Norwich and Strangers' Hall. The team have been pleased to work with the children again, and staff have seen a high level of engagement from pupils during every visit.



From the first onsite event in early June to the end of the academic year in late July the learning team has facilitated learning engagements for 966 pupils and their accompanying teachers.



Example feedback comments from our visiting schools:

*"It was such a significant and memorable day, thank you. For the children who have never been on a coach before, or to a museum, or on a school trip and many had never seen Norwich Castle or the cathedral or the city wall it was a wonderful day. Our welcome was so warm and despite the children not being able to handle as much as in the past they absolutely loved every moment."*

*"Staff were fantastic. and incredibly helpful. We felt very welcome in the museum and it was well organised."*

*"The day was expertly organised around the current restrictions and the staff ensured that the children still had the enjoyment and learning from the day that we have experienced on every other visit. Thank you to all involved."*

As we head towards the Autumn term, the new Norwich Schools Programme is available on the Norwich Castle website: [Learning - Norfolk Museums](#). Following a review of COVID Risk Assessments and Safe Systems of Work the learning team are able to increase capacity on site from one to two classes. Being able to welcome 60 pupils on the same day has increased the number of bookings - currently, there is only one school day in Autumn 1 that does not have a school visiting one of the Norwich Museums.

### **3.3 Schools Digital and Virtual programmes**

The latter part of the summer term saw a combination of interest in virtual outreach and on-site events being requested by schools. The greatest demand has been for groups to come to the museums, but some more cautious schools or others with a higher number of children at higher risk, have continued to welcome the availability of a digital learning provision.

The Virtual programme provides the high-quality curriculum links, learning outcomes, and engagement opportunities that underpin the historic success of the Norwich Museums schools programme. Digital resources will continue to be part of the Norwich Museums formal learning programme, providing pre- and post-visit resources to extend and enrich the on-site event. Teachers can be provided with pre-recorded films, an associated pack of resources and lesson plans, and for the Key Stage 1 *Life in a Castle* event the team continues to provide the opportunity for a live-streamed *Ask an Expert* session with learning staff (or alternatively questions answered by email for schools not wishing to participate in a live-streamed event).

Supported with funding from the Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn Project Activity Plan, the learning team has collaborated with games designers History Mystery to create an interactive digital version of our most popular secondary event *Storming the Castle*. For this event students travel back to the year 1216 and join events as Norwich

Castle prepares for an attack by Prince Louis of France. Helping Hubert de Burgh, the Castle's constable, students calculate how many weapons and how much armour he will need for the defenders; help his wife work out how long the Castle's water will last in the event of a siege; with Sir Piers de Necton, a supporter of Prince Louis, work out the scale of the Castle and meet Blanche of Castile, Prince Louis's wife, and work out how much money each side is going to spend either defending or attacking the Castle. The pilot event is being offered without charge to schools which visited for the on-site *Storming the Castle* event between September 2017 and September 2020 (or who booked and had their visit cancelled due to coronavirus).

### 3.4. Visitor Programme Activities

#### Castle in the Spotlight: a masterpiece by Bellotto



A significant visitor engagement programme was managed by the learning team to support this single loan exhibition, developed in partnership with the National Gallery. To date, Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery has recorded 8,732 engagements with Bellotto's masterpiece

through in-person viewings and activities and online engagements with an ArtUK exhibition, workshops and downloadable resources.

This significant loan painting from the National Gallery was Bernardo Bellotto's masterpiece *The Fortress of Königstein from the North* (1756-58). Displayed in the Colman Project Space gallery, the painting was ready for visitors to view when the site reopened on 17 May 2021 and remained on display for seven weeks. During this period over 7,000 visitors came into the museum.

The external partnership funding from the National Gallery that accompanied the painting's loan enabled the learning team to engage with a diverse range of visitors through a varied programme of activities defined in an Activity Plan. In addition to this activity programme, an ArtUK exhibition was also created to support the Bellotto loan. Prior to the museum closure due to the COVID lockdown, Norwich Castle was due to have hosted a Castles exhibition which would have included the Bellotto painting, as well as other art works including photographic work and sculpture. Senior Curator Dr Francesca Vanke was able to curate this exhibition online via the ArtUK website, where it remains accessible.

All Bellotto events were promoted through social media posts and the museum's e-bulletins, as well as being emailed to museum E-newsletter subscribers.

Having a dedicated activity plan coordinator for this project proved beneficial and resulted in activities being successfully delivered, on time and within the available budget. The activity plan coordinator liaised with the activity strand leaders on a regular basis and offered support where needed. The activities were planned so there were regular engagements with the Bellotto painting before and throughout its loan period. In line with COVID restrictions, all the activities have had to be conducted online or in a socially distanced manner which has included the creation of films, online workshops and resources as well as self-led in-person resources and activities.

### **Bellotto Activity Programme**

#### **Films (Adults including Museum Pass Holders and Friends of Norwich Museums)**

Senior Curator Dr Francesca Vanke, wrote and presented two films to support the Bellotto loan exhibit in association with Eye Film. These were made available through the museum's YouTube channel. The shorter [introductory film](#) was made available when the museum opened on May 17 and introduced the painting and Bellotto the artist. A longer, more in-depth look at the work was broadcast two weeks later. The films were created to allow visitors to learn about the painting before or after a visit. Initially, rather than having a longer film, staff hoped to be able to deliver an in-person talk, but due to the COVID restrictions in place at the time this was not feasible. As a result, staff created a film which people could watch at home. Up to the end of the loan of the Bellotto painting, 120 views had been recorded for the short film and 174 views had been recorded for the longer more in-depth film. These are above average viewings figures for films of this type on the NMS YouTube channel. The films will remain on the NMS YouTube channel.

#### **In the Picture...Out of the House (Children and families)**

Please visit: [In the Picture...Out of the House! - Norfolk Museums](#)

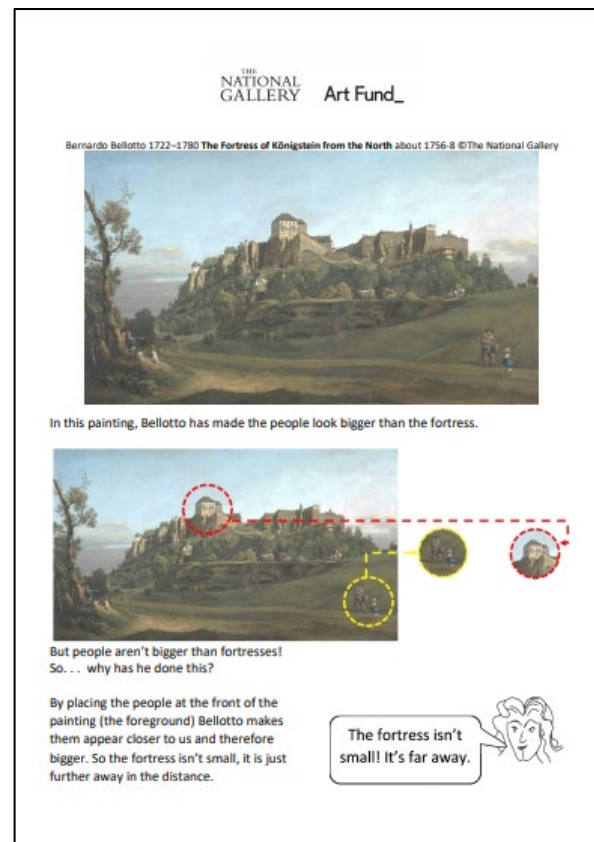
*In the Picture...Out of the House* was the first Bellotto engagement activity and was aimed at families and children. This event was run across the Easter holidays 2021 while the museum was closed due to COVID lockdown restrictions. This event was used as an introduction to the painting and to encourage people to view it in real life once the museum reopened. A downloadable activity sheet 'Castles, Baked Beans and Bellotto' was also created to support this event.

The *In the Picture* programme comprises a series of online resources exploring a given work of art, designed in response to the restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. It aims to increase enjoyment of works of art from the NMS temporary and permanent collections and provide high-quality opportunities for engagement and participation whilst in-person provision is restricted.

Through community video and accessible activities, *In the Picture* seeks to accommodate a wide range of viewpoints in order to increase and support confidence, self-expression, diversity, representation and inclusion.

*In the Picture...Out of the House* introduces issues of scale and perspective, raises awareness of castles near and far and encourages the audience to visit local places and spaces to compare and contrast. It is designed to encourage participation, wellbeing and to generate intergenerational dialogue.

Through the film that was created, staff were able to collaborate with and feature people from a wide range of backgrounds including Eye Film who carried out the editing and post-production for a community voices video and artist Jo Hayes who premiered the first 'physical' response to the video.



Staff have extended the exploration of different audience responses to art works through the *Get a Move On* programme and have continued to use this more 'holistic' approach with subsequent *In the Picture* series' content that is designed to support wellbeing. Staff were pleased to feature Lucy Chiswell, the Dorset Curatorial Fellow from the National Gallery in a community video and would like to identify further opportunities to work with the National Gallery in creative collaborations. Partnerships with intergenerational community participants continue to grow and diversify, supporting access, inclusion and representation.

The *In the Picture...Out of the House* film was viewable on the museums YouTube channel as well as from a link on the NMS [webpage](#). Both the film and the online resources will remain on the NMS website to allow for long-lasting engagement with Bellotto's painting.

### **Fortress for a Tortoise (Early Years children and their caregivers)**

This was an online digital event for children aged 2-4 years and their caregivers. Learning team staff ran two 30-minute interactive Zoom workshops which were led by two members of museum staff, the Early Years learning officer and an experienced learning assistant. During the event, the main deliverer - accompanied by Bernardo the Tortoise (a plush tortoise) - used the interactive PowerPoint features to 'zoom in' and travel to key parts of the artwork on the screen. At each key location (e.g.. cows, caves,

large fortress) playful and creative activities were facilitated which included songs, games, actions and simple activities using everyday household items. A [digital printable online](#) resource was emailed out to participants with ideas for how they could expand upon the playful activities from the session together at home. This resource was also made available on the NMS website for members of the public to download and use at home.

Due to COVID restrictions, this event was exclusively digital and so the session was carefully planned to support the listening and attention needs of a younger target audience. Staff supported caregivers to play with their young children in their home environment and incorporated physical resources to ensure there were multiple points of access in addition to visual and auditory input from the screen. Across the two workshops, 12 children and 12 accompanying caregivers engaged with the sessions.

Feedback samples:

*"Length was just right, facilitators were experienced, good mix of looking in depth at picture and activities. Great that it was on at the weekend as F is f/t in pre-school."*

*"M really loved the creative play. The interaction and the use of his name was really helpful in keeping in him involved. The pace of the session was perfect for him as well. I also really enjoyed it. By being at home it meant that we played together in a way which was much more close than if we had been in 'in real life' where the children (and parents) would undoubtedly interact with each other."*

### **Bellotto Boxes (Early Years children and their caregivers)**

As the Early Years event referenced above was digital, it was decided to create a resource in which young children and their caregivers could interact with the actual painting when visiting the museum and again, once they were home.



*Bellotto Boxes* were created as a self-led resource for young children and their caregivers and were available to pick up in the gallery at the museum near the work itself. Each Bellotto Box was an A4-sized flat box containing resources and ideas for ways to explore the artwork either in the gallery or using a print of the artwork contained in the box itself. Due to COVID restrictions and the limits on dwell time, the time period for engagement with the work in the gallery itself was designed to be shorter, with a longer, more in-depth engagement taking place at home. Each box contained: a viewfinder to look through and 'zoom in' on aspects of the artwork; an activity sheet with ideas for things to look at and talk about in the artwork; an A4 print of the artwork itself to

use once back at home; ideas for how to turn the box into an imaginary fortress and paper straws and card to make puppets to live in the fortress.



200 Bellotto boxes were created and 180 of these were taken and used by families with young children visiting the museum. 20 were given to NCC Children's Services staff to distribute to specific families.

### **Writing Bellotto (children and families)**

This programme was intended to support children's enjoyment, engagement and participation in works of art and with Bellotto's work in particular. Staff sought to facilitate multiliteracy understanding and competency in the children through a guided exploration of the work and through the supported development of written responses in the form of a Haiku, developed with a professional writer. [Writing Bellotto - Norfolk Museums.](#)

The programme was delivered through a series of two after-school workshops with 15 children from Browick Road Primary and Nursery School in Norfolk who worked with writer and workshop facilitator, Belona Greenwood of The Flying Shop of Imagination. She brought the professional skills of an award-winning writer and experienced arts educator to facilitate and support meaningful engagements and outputs from the children with whom she was in direct contact and to provide an accessible means of accessing the work for digital audiences through the creation of *The Human Nightingale*, a short story inspired by the children's responses to Bellotto's work. The writer then used the children's responses as themes and motifs to create a unique short story *The Human Nightingale*. The story was designed as an engagement for children and their families, carers and friends and is told in the tradition of a bedtime story to encourage 'listening together', support wellbeing and validate creative and 'non-traditional' responses to works of art. This story is told in our YouTube clip here: <https://youtu.be/deKp-hqnxfo>. Staff encouraged children and their families to use the accompanying transcript as a means of becoming the 'storyteller' themselves.

Staff are using the programme model of *Writing Bellotto* to create a larger scale initiative working with after-school groups as part of a year-long programme called *Keeping it Regal*, linked to the Norwich Castle development project. Browick Road and Belona will be part of the pilot scheme for a rolled-out programme in the Norwich area due in spring/summer 2022.

"Many thanks for this Anna. I have shared the link and the poems on my June Newsletter. I've also asked the teacher to share with the children and add to her blog on the school website. I'm really impressed!"

Pauline McMullen, Headteacher, Browick Road Primary and Nursery School, Wymondham, Norfolk.

### **Reality and myth: Writing with Bellotto (workshop for adults)**

Working with local author and artist Amanda Addison, staff created an online creative writing workshop *Reality and myth: Writing with Bellotto* and an accompanying [online resource](#). The workshop allowed the participants to look closely at the painting and use aspects of it to inspire their creative writing. The creative writing workshop held on 19

June lasted 90 minutes and allowed time for performance of pieces written by those who wished to share their work. Numbers were restricted to ten participants to allow for meaningful discussion and quality time. This event proved very popular and had an extensive waiting list.

An online resource was created to continue and extend those who had participated in the workshop itself and for those wanted to develop their writing independently. This writing resource will remain on the NMS website and will allow for long-lasting engagement with Bellotto's masterpiece.

"Really enjoyed Saturday's session, thank you. I'd now like to go and see the exhibition." Jo

### **Creative Careers (Young People)**

Working with the Kick the Dust project worker Rachel Daniel, this five-week long online work- experience programme used the Bellotto painting and accompanying online ArtUK *Castles: In Reality, History & Myth* exhibition as a focus to introduce young people to creative careers in museums and galleries. The young people used the Bellotto painting to hear about the job of a Curator, Communications Officer and Learning Assistant and had a go at designing their own activities and social media campaigns for the Bellotto painting. The young people were able to learn more about all the different people involved in looking after and working with a single painting, whilst learning more about the artwork itself. This event had to be run online due to COVID restrictions and was accessed via Zoom.

For this strand of the activity plan, learning team staff partnered with the Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach to recruit young people aged 13 – 16 who live in areas identified by the government as having low rates of progression to higher education. Staff were able to recruit two new members through this partnership along with six young people who already took part in art workshops at Norwich Castle but wanted to find out more about how museums worked behind the scenes.

"Thank you so much for this course it has been really interesting, it has been really helpful and helped me to think more about displays and how many things you can do with just one painting." Maya

"I've learnt about being creative with grouping different objects and seeing how they could fit together. I've learnt how many different stories you can get from one artwork." Laura

"We had no idea how many jobs were available working within museums. The Bellotto painting helped us learn to look more closely at things." Esther and Elijah

"I learned how to be creative quickly and being able to interact with people online." Esme

## **Bellotto's Legacy**

All digital resources remain on the NMS website and YouTube channels so the engagement with the painting can continue even though it is no longer displayed in the museum. The loan of Bellotto's painting and the generous funding from the National Gallery has enabled staff to create a range of workshops, resources and partnerships which have benefited participants. It has also allowed staff to work with a wide range of people including local artists, school children, curators, museum staff, families and writers. This partnership project was realised at a very challenging moment for the museum and the cultural sector at large. It made a significant contribution to the journey towards rebuilding active relationships with visitors and priority audiences after a year of being affected by the COVID pandemic. The loan stimulated in-person visits to the museum and supported targeted projects which otherwise would not have been imagined or achieved. This most recent iteration of the enduring collaborative partnership between Norwich Castle and the National Gallery has brought meaningful, focused cultural opportunity to a wide range of priority audiences in Norwich and the surrounding region and contributed to staff developing their digital skill and confidence.

### **3.5 Adult Learning: Crome Exhibition live-streamed webinars**

Four webinars have been held in conjunction with the Crome Bicentenary exhibition at Norwich Castle. The four speakers were photographer Nick Stone, whose work is inspired by and develops from that of John Crome; Cathy Terry, Senior Curator of Social History, who led an exploration of Norwich in Crome's time; Dr



Giorgia Bottinelli, curator of the Crome exhibition, who provided a curator's introduction. Dr Joyce Townsend, Conservation Scientist, and Rachel Scott, Painting Conservator, who both work for Tate, covered what technical analysis of Crome's works has revealed about his techniques and materials. Approximately 100 people attended each seminar. Holding the talks digitally rather than in person maximised their reach and inclusivity during the period when COVID restrictions limited what could be delivered in-person at the museum.

### **3.6 Kick the Dust – Norwich update**

Rachel Daniel, the Norwich Kick the Dust Project Worker continues to develop and run a rich programme built around the interests and views of the young people she engages. During early August several in-person activity taster sessions were delivered for Looked After Children, introducing them to the Norwich Museum Club. The club has not been able to run during the pandemic, but will relaunch in the autumn term.

The Kick the Dust Castle Curators group is now well established, supported by the Keep Project curators Andrew Ferrara and Agata Gomolka. Together the group



contributed to the Castle on Tour 'pop-up' exhibition at St Peter Mancroft church: [Norwich Castle On Tour Exhibit | The Church of St Peter Mancroft](#) This 'real world' exhibition and related activities have provided the group with practical experience of curation and other aspects of museum work. A second successful public event day was held on 14 August, and plans are now being made for the exhibition to tour to Kings' Lynn later this year. Opportunities are being developed for the young people who are keen to continue their involvement with the group and to be involved with the touring exhibition.

A new Kick the Dust group has been recently established, comprising young people with an interest in exploring Faith and Ritual in historic and contemporary societies. Supported through the Youth Accelerator Fund this group includes young people who have previously been involved in Castle Curators and Art Lab, as well as new recruits. It is a partnership project linking the two NLHF funded projects running concurrently at NMS and drawing on the medieval faith objects to be displayed in British Museum Partnership Gallery at Norwich Castle and other Norwich collections. With staff guidance and support the group will be developing an outcome which is devised by the young people themselves for presentation as part of Interfaith Week in November.

#### **4. Kick the Dust: Norfolk – project activity update**

The *Kick the Dust: Norfolk* project, funded through the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and delivered in partnership with a range of organisations including YMCA Norfolk, has continued to engage with young people aged 11-25 throughout the COVID-19 lockdown period.

The project team have adapted their activities to support existing groups across Norfolk, in particular YMCA groups, using digital means.

From the start of the first national lockdown to 18 August 2021 there were a total of 3,904 interventions, involving 1,540 individual young people taking part in 1,724 hours of quality digital activity.

Total engagement numbers for the project from October 2018 to 18 August 2021 are 9,976 interventions, involving 3,255 individual young people taking part in 4,856 hours of quality activity. Of these interventions, 237 volunteering opportunities have been provided to 109 individual young people.

Of this activity 5% has been at *Pre-Player* (introductory) level specifically designed for YMCA clients; 27% has been at *Player* (initial activity) level; 43% at *Shaper* (project development & delivery) level; and 25% at *Leader* (leadership) level. Of these activities, 68% involve young people in leading and designing projects as well as acting as mentors to staff and other young people through our *Digital Buddies* and Peer Mentoring programmes.

Since October 2018, the breakdown of project activity taking place in each NMS area: 46% in the West (covering Kings Lynn, Thetford and Gressenhall), 30% in the East (covering Great Yarmouth, Cromer and Sheringham) and 24% in Norwich. Since March

2020 the breakdown changed as more activity has taken place online and additional groups have been established: West 28%; East 32% and Norwich 40%.

Throughout lockdown, project staff have continued to develop and deliver an online training offer for all staff and volunteers who support youth engagement in NMS. In total 220 staff have taken part in training since October 2018, with 129 of these opportunities having taken part during lockdown.

Training allows our young volunteers and staff to work together and share best practice, something that will continue post lockdown. Key areas which staff and volunteers had identified for future training have been incorporated into this years' training plan and included a joint venture between the YMCA and Kick the Dust on a new interview preparation programme entitled *You're Hired!* for young people who may wish to progress onto the next cohort of the Bursary traineeship programme or into other employment. All places were filled on each of the sessions for young people and volunteers. Delivery of a new training offer will be rolled out from October 2021. As the team have opened up opportunities to volunteers, a further 16 young volunteers have taken part in training including freelancer training workshops. These workshops enable young people to set up as freelancers in the future.

The *Digital Buddy* programme continues to expand with 6 young people supporting 5 Norwich based curators and the Events and Visitor Programme Manager for Norwich Castle with social media.

NMS and NCC continue to work together through the 'Making Creative Futures' group and its sub-group the 'Norfolk Creative Collective'. The group has developed a new offer to support parents in developing their own creativity and communication skills to engage with their children in a more meaningful way and continues to play a key part in the delivery of activity as part of the DfE funded Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) project.

Kick the Dust was set up as a three-stage journey (*Player-Shaper-Leader*), with young people developing transferable work-related skills and gaining experiences that they would struggle to find elsewhere, supporting them in securing employment. Staff have seen young people move through the programme, gaining the confidence to take on volunteering roles within NMS, with others securing their first job through the Government's Kick Start 6 month placement programme; three young people progressing onto the Kick the Dust Bursary traineeship programme who are set to complete their Level 3 Diploma in Cultural Heritage and two others who have taken up positions within NMS Front of House teams. Three young people currently sit on the Project Steering Group.

Take up continues to expand through the establishment of new partnerships with schools, colleges, NCC Children's Services and other cultural organisations. The launch of the new Kick the Dust web pages on the NMS site will support this growth and solidify the way NMS approaches youth engagement going forward – see:

Evaluation evidence shows that the programme has made a significant impact on young people and staff engaging in activity. As the project team moves to more face to face delivery, this impact will be greater as more staff engage in the co-delivery of activity and see the benefits to their own development.

#### **4.1 Breakdown of Kick the Dust project participants**

This has changed considerably since lockdown due to the high number of YMCA clients project staff have been engaging with through the enhanced digital offer.

- 7% aged 11-13 years
- 11% aged 14-16 years
- 30% aged 17-19 years
- 26% aged 20-22 years
- 26% aged 23-25 years

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

- Asian – 3%
- Black - 0.5%
- Irish Traveller – 0.5%
- Mixed ethnic – 4%
- White – 92%

Those identifying as having a disability which can be a barrier to engagement:

- Disabled – 20%
- Non-disabled – 26%
- Prefer not to say – 54%

#### **4.2 Target audiences** (some young people fall into more than one category)

- YMCA clients – 36%
- Secondary schools – 27%
- FE/HE – 32%
- Young people with mental health issues – 17%
- Outside of mainstream education – 6%
- Young Offenders at those at risk of offending – 4%
- Looked after children and adopted living at home - 5%
- SEND – 8%
- NEET – 5%
- Care Leavers – 2%
- New arrivals and refugees – 1%
- Pregnant young mums and teenage parents – 1%
- Young Carers – 3%

### **4.3 Evaluation**

As part of the feedback, young people are asked how aware they are of the range of job roles available within NMS and the heritage sector and how they perceived museums in terms of being spaces for young people. 74% of young people stated they had little or no knowledge of job roles in NMS or the heritage sector before taking part. After their engagement, 62% of young people stated they now had a good understanding of the different job roles available in the sector with a further 33% stating they had more knowledge than they did before starting their Kick the Dust journey. This shows that Kick the Dust enables young people to gain a greater understanding of the opportunities within NMS and the sector in general. Following their engagement, 88% of young people participating felt that museums were a space they could use and would use in the future.

Evaluation responses from this Kick the Dust project can be compared with those from the other eleven Kick the Dust projects currently running across the UK. This programme- wide evaluation has been commissioned by the National Lottery Heritage Fund from the evaluation specialists Renaisi.

Following their engagement with the NMS Kick the Dust project:

- 94% of young people said they had learnt new and interesting things about heritage (Renaisi survey 90%);
- 93% of young people felt that heritage reflected them (Renaisi 70%)
- 97% felt heritage would engage other young people (Renaisi 89%).
- 86% of young people said they were more likely to become a volunteer as a result of their involvement in KTD and this option was the most popular with work experience for all those who took part. (Renaisi 61%)
- 99% of young people stated they felt welcomed and respected by staff and 97% felt a sense of achievement.
- 79% of young people stated they now had a better understanding of heritage having taken part in the programme with 21% stating they weren't sure and needed more engagement. (Renaisi 78%)
- 90% of young people felt they had the opportunity to influence decisions. (Renaisi 66%)
- 80% of young people felt that there were jobs for young people like themselves to work in heritage. (Renaisi 72%).
- 60% of young people felt that heritage had helped them understand more about their own lives – it had given them context
- 88% said they had found heritage more relevant than they had before embarking on their Kick the Dust journey (Renaisi 77%).
- 96% of young people felt that the programme was easy and affordable to get involved in but had concerns that they may not be able to do this in the future if there was a significant cost to them. (Renaisi 92%).

## **5. Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn – project update**

### **5.1 Impact of COVID-19**

Whilst the award of the main construction contract was delayed due to COVID-19, project progress was maintained during lockdown, with both the internal and external

project teams working remotely. The principal contractor has robust COVID-secure health & safety procedures in place for all staff and sub-contractors.

## **5.2 Main construction works**

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



Recent drone image of the construction site

Recent construction works have included the completion of major new drainage connections in the Rotunda area and the reinstatement of the wooden floor there. Piling work and the laying of concrete foundations has now been completed in the new WC block area (former café). Beam bearing points are being carefully formed within the Keep area to carry the new steel floor structures. Piling work will shortly commence in the museum entrance area, with specialist propping being placed in the dungeon areas. Main groundworks including drainage works have taken place in the Keep, Percival building and former shop and café areas. Additional specialist survey and investigative work has been undertaken, alongside archaeological excavations and watching briefs. Construction works are scheduled to be completed in early 2023.





Before and after the pouring of concrete foundations in the new WC block area

## 6. Other activity

### 6.1 Museum of Norwich: Reopening update

The museum opened its doors to the public once again on Saturday 22 May, with the museum currently open to visitors on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. During the summer term, Wednesdays were designated for school visits.

#### ***Crome's Norwich: 1821-2021 – Art exhibition***

The exhibition *Crome's Norwich: 1821-2021* takes a closer look at the artist's relationship with his native city, then and now, through the lens of contemporary photographer, Nick Stone, who has walked in the footsteps of John Crome, along riverbanks and city paths to revisit the locations which inspired him. The result is a collection of images, which blend Crome's works with contemporary photography, bringing the story of Crome's Norwich up to date. To accompany the exhibition, photographer Nick Stone has created a self-guided walking tour which takes in some of the locations featured in his work. Users follow in both Crome's and Nick Stone's footsteps to see the places which inspired them both.



New Mills – Nick Stone © 2020 (After Crome - Back of New Mills) - Credit: Nick Stone/John Crome

## 6.2 Strangers' Hall

### Reopening work

Strangers' Hall reopened to the public on Sunday August 22 and will be open initially on Sunday afternoons, as well as on other days of the week for schools. There are good levels of school bookings for the autumn term.

The process of working towards reopening has allowed for some necessary repair works on the roof, gutters and drains and for damp problems to be addressed.

Reopening preparations have included assessments of ventilation and work on the historic leaded windows to ensure that a fully ventilated route through the museum is possible, as the rooms are limited in size. An air purification machine has been installed in the Victorian Dining Room to aid ventilation through the Victorian rooms.

Over the summer the Strangers' Hall volunteer garden team, working in fixed pairs to COVID-secure safe systems of work, have been restoring the garden and courtyards after a year and a half of their being closed to the public.



Strangers' Hall Great Hall ready for reopening, showing some of the new bunting

### Activities

Visitors to the museum will see the final results of the combatting loneliness in lockdown project *Flag it Up*, now that the wonderful stitched bunting pieces created by museum volunteers and Kick the Dust youth groups have been stitched together by Trish Irwin and Sarah Harvey. The pieces are now on display in the Great Hall, Undercroft and street front window. The 'Tudor' front window features a 'Vanitas' type installation showcasing artworks created by local artists, working as part of the Edible East focus on food sustainability. This festival which is currently taking place across the city, culminates at the Forum during Heritage Open Days (HODS) in September, with Strangers' Hall contributing to a display and focus on medieval food at the Forum. For HODS 2021, Strangers' Hall will open to the public on Sunday 12 and 19 September and on Wednesday 15 September. Visitors will have the chance to meet our Tudor 'cook' and find out about dining etiquette.

On show for the first time are five new portraits created by local artist Will Teather in response to original portraits in the collections. This exhibition was postponed last year. The new works hang alongside the originals in the Georgian Dining Room and are also displayed in 'Mrs Beeton's' front window.

Although it has not been possible to open to visitors for the first part of the summer, small groups from the Kick the Dust project Yarmouth YMCA group and Kick the Dust family groups visited the museum in July and early August for tours and for an art workshop led by Chris Jackson. As part of the Crome events programme and linked to a resumption of on-site events, the museum also ran two beginners watercolour and improvers drawing and sketching workshops during August. These events were very successful and staff hope to offer further workshops in the future.



Art workshops in Strangers' Hall garden

## 7. Norwich Curatorial update

**Dr Tim Pestell, Senior Curator of Archaeology**, has as his main focus the Keep redevelopment project, which continues to make good progress, as detailed elsewhere in this report. Dr Pestell is acting not only as interpretation lead for the British Museum Partnership Gallery and the reconstructed Keep room spaces, but also as liaison for the archaeological recording of the site.

In addition, he retains the key elements of his role as Senior Curator of Archaeology, by answering enquiries and maintaining regular monitoring of Treasure and Portable Antiquities Scheme cases for the most important finds relevant to Norfolk's archaeology, and fundraising to acquire these. He continues, along with Dr Francesca Vanke, the Senior Curator and Keeper of Art to research medieval art with a view to future acquisitions for the new British Museum partnership gallery.

Dr Pestell has recently been appointed as a permanent member of Arts Council England's Reviewing Committee for the Export of Works of Art. This is a prestigious



post, a sign of professional recognition for his abilities and experience at a national level, and something for Norfolk Museums Service to be proud of.

**Dr Giorgia Bottinelli, Curator of Historic Art**, opened the exhibition *A Passion for Landscape: Reimagining John Crome* to coincide with the re-opening of Norwich Castle Museum on 17 May. This exhibition has been very well received, and she has given several tours for journalists from the national and specialist art press, who have given both the exhibition and accompanying publication good reviews, welcoming in particular the way both have addressed the unjustified neglect of Crome and his work in recent decades. Dr Bottinella has also been giving online talks and written a blog post, which is viewable here –

<https://norwichcastle.wordpress.com/2021/08/11/the-hidden-genius-of-john-crome>

She has also made a film with Eye Films, which will soon be available on our Youtube channel. In addition, she is working on re-mounting her exhibition on Norfolk's waterways *Where Land and Water Meet* for the Watercolour Gallery, which had to be cancelled due to COVID.

**Dr Rosy Gray, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art**, having opened the East Anglia Art Fund's Open Art Show, *Somewhere Unexpected*, in the Timothy Gurney Gallery to coincide with the John Crome exhibition on 17 May, is now focusing on several forthcoming projects.

Recently she was able to re-hang the *Alfred Cohen: New Horizons* exhibition in the Colman Project Space which had had its run severely curtailed due to COVID. This includes the work generously donated to NMS by the Alfred Cohen Foundation, *Sloping Farm Building* c1965



Alfred Cohen, *Sloping Farm Building* oil on board, c1965, image © Charles Hall

Dr Gray's present exhibition projects include *City*, for May 22 – September 2022, which is based around a touring exhibition of modern and contemporary artworks from the Arts Council England collection. She is also working on *Slaves of Fashion*, a major exhibition with the acclaimed contemporary artists the Singh Twins planned for 1 October 2022 – 22 January 2023. Examples of works from this ground-breaking exhibition may be viewed here –

[https://www.singhtwins.co.uk/exhibitions\\_current-and-forthcoming\\_sof.html](https://www.singhtwins.co.uk/exhibitions_current-and-forthcoming_sof.html)

Earlier versions of this show have already been highly successful at Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool and at Wolverhampton Art Gallery, but *Slaves of Fashion* will be re-imagined and re-configured uniquely for our venue, to incorporate artefacts from the NMS art and social history collections with the Twins' large-scale paintings. An object list is being put together at present in liaison with the Twins, Senior Curator of Costume and Textiles Ruth Battersby Tooke and Keeper of Art Dr Francesca Vanke.

Dr Gray is also fundraising for a large-scale commission from the Twins both as a permanent legacy of this exhibition and putting into practice NMS' decolonisation goals. She has already been successful in obtaining a substantial grant towards this and is in the process of making other applications.

Other projects include working with artists on exhibitions/commissions: Yelena Popova on an exhibition for the Timothy Gurney Gallery late in 2022, Colin Self for a major exhibition in 2023-24 and Amartey Golding for a film commission.

**Dr David Waterhouse, Senior Curator of Natural History and Geology**, has been working on aspects of the Deep History Coast project, including continuing work on the book he is co-authoring with Dr John Davies, formerly of NMS.

As he put together a small display to complement the loan of Dippy the Diplodocus from the Natural History Museum for Norwich cathedral, Dr Waterhouse gave an accompanying lecture on *Norfolk's Deep History Coast: one hundred million years of history beneath our feet* at the cathedral; and has been working on a series of related talks and events elsewhere, including a dinosaur family event and handling session at Lynn Museum in Kings Lynn, a Museums Club event and a talk *How to Dig Up a Tyrannosaurus... and Other Stories* at the Castle.



Lynn Museum family Dinosaurs Event on 17 August and at Norwich Cathedral on 10 August

He is also working on a fossil display for the British Wildlife gallery and has recently made a film for Visit North Norfolk as a promotion for Deep History Coast at East Runton. A date for the *Fossil Giants* exhibition at the Castle has now been set for 2024, so Dr Waterhouse is now working towards this internationally important project. Priorities for this exhibition will include the conservation and 3D scanning of the mammoth bones. He will also be working on fundraising including making a National Lottery Heritage Fund application.

Other projects include working with Dr Rosy Gray on *An Ode to Flint* exhibition with Yelena Popova in the Timothy Gurney Gallery and coordinating new displays in the Fitch Room. Dr Waterhouse also wrote a blog post about Margaret Fountaine, the eminent Victorian butterfly collector, viewable here –

<https://norwichcastle.wordpress.com/2021/07/02/a-love-of-butterflies-the-fountaine-neimy-collection>

**Dr Francesca Vanke, Senior Curator and Keeper of Fine and Decorative Art,** Turner's *Walton Bridges*, which was acquired by NMS in 2019, has gone back on display at Norwich Castle following its return from loan. To celebrate the painting's return, she has given an interview for Radio Norfolk about the work, and her first in-person talk since February 2020, for the Friends of Norwich Museums. She has also written a blog post, available here -

<https://norwichcastle.wordpress.com/2021/06/08/walton-bridges-and-19th-century-landscape-painting>

To continue its East Anglian tour, the picture will go to Lynn Museum from 25 June – 16 October 2022 and from there to Christchurch Mansion Ipswich, 23 October 2022 – 30 March 2023. Dr Vanke is curating the Lynn exhibition, on the theme of water which, apart from *Walton Bridges*, will incorporate other works by artists of the Norwich School who were influenced by Turner. Examples include John Sell Cotman's *Barmouth Estuary* of 1801.



Image: John Sell Cotman *Barmouth Estuary* 1801, NMS



Dr Vanke is currently unpacking and documenting a large new bequest of teapots from a Mrs Marilyn Theobald, which came to NMS very recently. These include a number of important 1920s-30s pots, a time period which up till now has been poorly represented in the collection. Also included are a number of interesting novelty teapots, such as the example below:



'Ronald Reagan' 1980s teapot based on *Spitting Image* puppet, NMS

. Dr Vanke is working towards putting a selection of these teapots on display as soon as possible.

**Ruth Battersby Tooke, Senior Curator of Costume and Textiles** is reconfiguring the *Textile Treasures* exhibition - which had to be postponed from December 2020 due to COVID - for the Timothy Gurney Gallery, opening on 22 October 2021. She is working on a series of online and in-person events, films and tours for this exhibition. Ruth is also in the process of making a film on one of the important 16<sup>th</sup> century tapestries in her collection which, destined for display in the new Keep, is undergoing research and conservation at the National Trust conservation studio at Blickling. This film will be completed soon and more details will be available in the next report. Ruth is also at present beginning to prepare for a new partnership project on the subject of fancy dress 'Room in the Wardrobe', which will culminate in the exhibition, *Masquerade*, at present planned for 2024.

**Kate Thaxton, Curator of the Regimental Collections**, continues to work on a major stores move and re-organisation and is on target to complete this to deadline. Two of Norwich Castle's Teaching Museum trainees, Hemali Chudasama and Natascha Allen-Smith, have been working with Kate on the complex and multi-layered task of moving, re-organising and photographing the regimental collections. Natascha has written a blog post about some of the activities involved here – <https://norwichcastle.wordpress.com/2021/08/06/bloodstains-buttons-and-badges-photographing-the-royal-norfolk-regimental-collection/> Kate is also still working on her complete update and overhaul of the Regimental Museum's website

## 8. Visitor numbers

	From 17th May to 22nd August				
	May	June	July	August	Total
<b>Norwich Castle</b>	2138	4838	7354	8937	<b>23267</b>
<b>Museum of Norwich</b>	111	478	550	387	<b>1526</b>

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## Headline stats for Norwich Museums February 2021 - July 2021

Compiled August 2021

### Audiences

Item 8

The Norwich Museums have gained in total over 4,077 new followers on the three key social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) since February 2021 (a 7.3% increase). In addition, Norwich Castle has gained 232 subscribers on the YouTube account which launched in October 2020, and the central Norfolk Museums Service YouTube account, which is shared by the other nine museum sites, now has a total of 597 subscribers.

The Norwich Museums now have more than **60,500 followers** in total across the four platforms.

	Twitter	Facebook	Instagram	YouTube
<b>Norwich Castle</b>	14,390	12,648	6332	345
<b>Museum of Norwich</b>	8254	3773	n/a	597*
<b>Strangers' Hall</b>	4029	1343	1988	597*
<b>Norwich Castle Art</b>	3403	n/a	3453	n/a
<b>Totals:</b>	30,076	17,764	11,773	942

\*central NMS YouTube account shared by the other 9 NMS sites

### Engagement and Reach

**Norwich Castle's tweets** were liked over 11,600 times and re-tweeted 2,300 times throughout December and January. They earned 1637.2k impressions (the number of times our tweets have been seen.)

**Norwich Castle's Facebook** reach (the number of people who saw our content) was 179,006 from February-July, which is around 15.5% lower than the previous six months. Staff sickness during the second half of this period had an impact on output from the Norwich Castle feeds.

**Norwich Castle's Instagram** reach was 71,894 down 10.9% on the previous six months. Further breakdown of the six-month period shows that the decline in reach was concentrated in the period February-April. Further analysis is needed, but it looks as if the increase in reach from May-July was driven by key posts around Norwich Pride and the sharing of images of the Castle Keep which attracted high levels of engagement. This fits with what we know about Instagram as a platform which is very much content-driven.

Tweets from **Museum of Norwich** were retweeted 537 times between February and July, and they received over 1500 likes and 268.6k impressions.

**Museum of Norwich's Facebook** reach was 12,002 in total February-July. This represents a significant decrease compared to the previous six months (down 83.4%). However, further

analysis shows that reach increased hugely as soon as the museum reopened in May (up by 97.7%).

On Twitter, tweets from **Strangers' Hall** were retweeted 337 times. Their content earned 153.6k impressions and 1370 likes.

**Strangers' Hall's Facebook** reach was 5721 from February to July, a decrease of around 50% on the previous six months. In contrast to the Museum of Norwich, the museum's Facebook performance was fairly steady during this period, perhaps reflecting the fact that, at the time of writing, the museum has only just reopened. However, the museum's **Instagram** account performed very strongly over the same period, with reach up by 61.9% at 2,900.

### Social Media and digital highlights:

- Throughout February, Norwich Museums celebrated **LGBT+ History Month** and, as we do all year round, we continued to raise the visibility of LGBT+ people, their histories, lives and experiences through our collections. We promoted some fantastic events, activities and celebrations planned for museums around the Service through the official hashtag #LGBTHM21 and our own LGBTQ+ history hashtag, #QueerNMS. Curator-written articles on LGBT+ history were published on the [Norwich Castle blog](#)
- The month of March was dedicated to Women's History Month, celebrating the achievements of women throughout history, and Norwich Museums were proud to contribute. As with LGBT+ History Month, our museums shared stories of women linked to our collections, particularly International Women's Day on 8 March:
  - **Norwich Castle** highlighted the many famous women from Norfolk, whilst also remembering those whose story is less well-known. With the delightful 'Rosie's Plaques', they co-delivered content on some of Norwich's amazing women, particularly those whose story is not often told. They also delivered two new blog posts on [Margaret Paston](#) and [Boudica](#), and popular social media posts such as those dedicated to Edith Cavell and Margaret Fountaine.
  - **Strangers' Hall** also delivered brilliant blog posts, including those on [Sarah Glover](#) (inventor of the Norwich Sol-Fa System) and 'fine accomplish'd lady' [Margaret Wake Tryon](#).
- A new digital exhibition called [Castles in Reality, History and Myth](#) is now live to enjoy on the Art UK website. Curated by Dr Francesca Vanke, the exhibition anticipated the arrival at **Norwich Castle** of the magnificent painting *The Fortress of Konegstein from the North* by Bernardo Bellotto, on loan from the National Gallery.
- With the reopening of the museum, followers of **Museum of Norwich's** social media feeds enjoyed seeing local artist Owen Mathers at work creating a wonderful illustration in the windows at the front of the museum. Owen also created some social media graphics to promote the reopening.
- Working with artist Nick Stone who has a large social media following himself, **Museum of Norwich** has been promoting the exhibition 'Crome's Norwich' using #CromesNorwich, including an exclusive blog from Stone on his process of recreating scenes from Crome's paintings. This will go live on the blog later this summer.
- As well as blog posts and social media as part of International Women's Month, the social media team at **Strangers' Hall** started a new campaign called #SelfieSaturday where they share photos of the building each week. These have proved popular with followers who enjoy reminiscing about happy visits to the museum.

[The Norwich Castle blog](#), featuring posts from Museum of Norwich and Strangers' Hall, has published 25 posts since February 2021, including articles on art (Turner's *Walton Bridges*, the genius of John Crome), Natural History (Queer Nature, Fountaine-Neimy collection), social history (Sarah Glover and the Norwich Sol-Fa system), volunteering (volunteer at Strangers' Hall) and engaging young people in early manuscripts.