

Norwich Area Museums Committee 10 September 2019

## Norwich Museums briefing: June to August 2019

### 1. Exhibitions at Norwich Castle

#### 1.1 *Viking: Rediscover the Legend* (9 February – 8 September 2019)



This major partnership exhibition from the British Museum and York Museums Trust explores what it meant to be a Viking and how the Vikings transformed and shaped every aspect of life in Britain, featuring some of the most significant Viking discoveries ever made.

Over a thousand years since the Great Viking Army arrived in East Anglia in 865, the Vikings! *Viking: Rediscover the Legend* exhibition brings some of the most significant Anglo-Saxon and Viking treasures ever discovered in Britain to the Castle for an extended run from 9 February to 8 September 2019.

Featuring star objects from the British Museum and Yorkshire Museum, *Viking: Rediscover the Legend* offers a fresh perspective on how the Vikings shaped many aspects of life in Britain. The exhibition features a number of iconic objects including the Anglo-Saxon York Helmet - the most outstanding example of its type to survive, a knight from the Lewis Chessmen and the most significant Viking treasure ever found in the UK – the Vale of York, Cuerdale and Bedale Viking Hoards.

These finds are shown alongside highlights from Norwich Castle's own extensive collections, including many items on display for the first time, which help to tell the distinctive regional story of the Viking presence in East Anglia.

As well as providing a spectacular display, these fabulous objects are interpreted in new ways which challenge our perceptions of what it meant to be a Viking. The gallery features a range of different approaches to interpretation including interactives, making the exhibition accessible for visitors of all ages. A comprehensive programme of schools and other activities has been delivered alongside the exhibition including gallery tours led by the NMS exhibition curator Dr Tim Pestell.

## **1.2 Timothy Gurney Gallery - *Lines of Sight: Sebald's East Anglia* (10 May 2019 - 5 January 2020)**

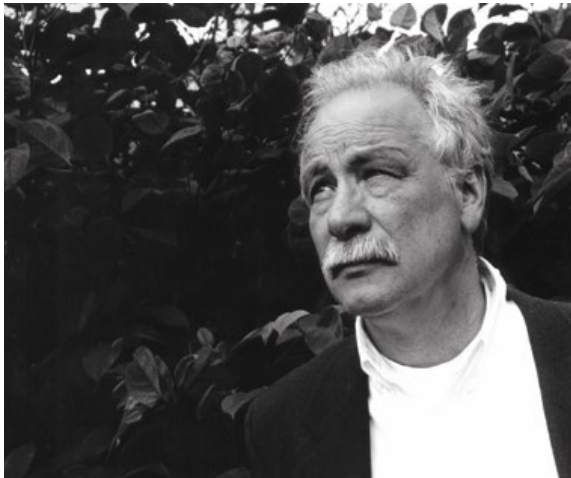
This exhibition brings together a diverse selection of celebrated artworks, curious objects, archive material and the author's own, unseen photographs to tell the story behind the creation of one of East Anglia's most famous literary masterpieces, *The Rings of Saturn* (1995).

From the mystery of Sir Thomas Browne's skull to the secret landscapes of the Cold War, from the ghostly vessels of the vanished Herring fleets to intricate pattern books of Norwich silk weavers, this exhibition gathers the threads of Sebald's enigmatic text to present a uniquely poetic visual portrait of East Anglia that will appeal to both those familiar and new to his work.

W.G. Sebald (1944 – 2001) is one of the most revered, authors of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. His evocative and unclassifiable prose works: *Vertigo* (1990), *The Emigrants* (1992), *The Rings of Saturn* (1995), and *Austerlitz* (2001) - continue to attract a remarkable international following. His reputation and the passionate devotion of readers to his work have grown significantly since his untimely death in 2001 at the age of 57.

The exhibition is a collaboration with the University of East Anglia and is sponsored by The East Anglia Art Fund and The Book Hive

A comprehensive programme of talks has been organised to complement this important exhibition.



W.G. Sebald ©University of East Anglia

## **1.3 Tor Falcon – Rivers of Norfolk (12 July 2019 – 12 January 2020)**

This remarkable body of drawings currently on show is the result of a three-year project revealing the wonderful variety and beauty of Norfolk's rivers. This exhibition is on show in the Colman Project Space and is supported by the East Anglia Art Fund.

Norfolk's rivers and their tributaries are the focus of Falcon's most recent body of work. Over the last four years, Falcon has painstakingly researched and captured her subject, drawing on location within the landscape. The artist describes being captivated by the poeticism of first encountering the rivers as an alphabetical list, with 'names that read like an Old English poem of all things watery and damp.' The result is an exceptional series of drawings that powerfully evokes this unique county. A second hang of Falcon's work opens in October 2019.



Tor Falcon *Sparrow Beck at Felbrigg Pond* 2018 © Courtesy the Artist

#### **1.4 John Sell Cotman in Norwich and London – until 9 June**

This exhibition provided a chance for visitors to explore the last two decades of Cotman's life through iconic late watercolours and rarely seen drawings.



John Sell Cotman, *Storm on Yarmouth Beach* 1831, watercolour on paper © NMS

## 2. Forthcoming exhibitions

### 2.1. Laura Wilson - *Deepening* 18 January – 29 March 2020

*Deepening* is a new film work by artist Laura Wilson exploring the hidden landscape of Must Farm. Must Farm is an exceptionally well-preserved settlement dating to the Late Bronze Age (1000 – 800BC) located on the edge of a working quarry at Whittlesey, near Peterborough. The site, often referred to as the UK's Pompeii, has revealed many important discoveries about how people lived and worked. *Deepening* explores these discoveries, opening up questions around labour, trade and everyday life.

Wilson's work has been commissioned as part of *New Geographies*, a three-year project which aims to create a new map of the East of England based on unexplored or overlooked places. As part of the project, the public was invited to nominate unexpected places in the region that they found meaningful and interesting. Over 270 sites were identified and ten artists were commissioned to highlight some of those places through new site-specific work. Wilson responds to the nominated site 'View from the North Brink across the Fens' from which Must Farm is visible.



Must Farm © Courtesy the Artist

## 3. Norwich Castle Events

### 3.1 LEGEND! A programme of visitor events at Norwich Castle

Norwich Castle's exhibition *Viking! Rediscover the Legend* has continued to be the inspiration for the holiday events programme branded as 'LEGEND'. Over the summer period the Learning team have introduced new events and maintained popular crafts, activities and trails for children, families and adults.

Highlights from the period June – August included:

- The *Shieldmaidens* event offered a new style of engagement encouraging a more active level of participation by visitors involving physical movement and lively debate.
- The continuation of *Hiccup the Viking* – a hugely popular story-telling drama suitable for all the family. As well as the standard performances, staff were also able to create a non-threatening, safe environment in which to offer a ‘relaxed’ autism-friendly performance of the same drama.
- The strong story-telling traditions in Viking society have also been drawn on with new tales of *Skadi’s Husband’s Feet* and other stories. 90% of visitors thought the event was very good or excellent and comments included “Brilliantly engaging, good for a wide range of ages – liked link to display”
- *Warriors!* – the ever-popular stage and screen fight choreographer Keith Wallis returned to give demonstrations of Viking weapons and combat techniques.
- Craft activities, including flat-braiding and recreations of the famous Coppergate helmet, have again proved extremely popular with families, linking directly with artefacts in the exhibition and stimulating conversations about their making and the stories they can tell.



### 3.2 Taboo: Colonialism in the Decorative Arts

After several months of research and development the Learning team presented this tour to the public for the first time on 1 June. The tour is one in a growing series of events which seeks to present non-standard, alternative or under-represented narratives as a means of engaging with Arts Council England’s Creative Case for Diversity. The programme launched in May with an illustrated talk exploring myths surrounding the medieval morality of chivalry, hyper-masculinity, brutality and gender identity. In feedback the ‘Colonialism in the Decorative Arts’ tour was rated very good or excellent by 100% of participants.

Visitor comments include:

“I found out about interesting artefacts which I hadn't particularly noticed before.”

“It was really well delivered and covered some very interesting points in a limited time”

“Like that it challenged traditional ideas in a museum environment”



### 3.3 Pride: Queering the collections LGBT+ tour of Norwich Castle

In celebration of Norwich Pride and to increase the museum's relevance to LGBT+ audiences, the Learning team have developed a new *Queering the Collections* tour. The initial public presentation of the tour received 100% excellent feedback from participants and will now become part of our regular tour offer. Visitor comments included:

"The tour was very inclusive, as it also included gender expression. I like how it referred back to local history as well as international."

"Excellent, very interesting and informative LGBT+ tour. Excellent and engaging guide"

## 4. Strangers' Hall

### 4.1 Activity update

Strangers' Hall continues to support a broad programme of family events, talks, tours and school visits.

For spring half-term week there, with a Lego-themed challenge for families. Refugee Week 2019 was celebrated with a special talk by archivist and author Frank Meeres looking at some of the Norwich Stranger families who settled in the City in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. In July, Stranger's Hall hosted part of the NMS Learning Team's conference for Secondary History teachers and the Costume and Textiles Associations' garden party.

This summer's activities theme, *Live Like your Great-Granny* provided a structure for the museum's event programme, inviting visitors to consider life before the age of throwaway packaging. The Strangers' volunteer garden team offered *Great-Granny's Garden Lore* tours of the garden focusing on making herbal remedies and beauty preparations, with an inspiring introduction to the art of composting, and chance to take home a floral nosegay. New family activities include a *Great-Granny's Cupboard* trail and chance to create beads, lavender sachets and fun flowers from scraps that would otherwise be thrown away.

Continuing the re-use theme, the NMS Learning team offered a *Reinvent, Reuse, Rewear* workshop, encouraging visitors to bring their own neglected garments to help them remake them into something new.



*Reinvent, Reuse, Rewear* workshop

Collections recently visited by specialist researchers have included the Sarah Glover collection, the Charlie Green photograph album collection, and the textiles collection, including a rare 17<sup>th</sup> century beaded basket.



Additional interpretation has been provided for a tapestry featuring a biblical scene featuring a young, black attendant. This represents a first step in thinking about new approaches to the Strangers' collections following the delivery of specialist decolonisation training to NMS curators by learning consultant Claire Adler.

The local heritage education provider Curious Spark has used Strangers' Hall for a short dramatic film which will feature in their forthcoming schools package *Putting on a Pageant*. Building work to repair the outstanding leaks to the south-eastern room range was completed according to schedule. The fine weather of the August bank holiday weekend was well-timed for a wedding, with the Great Hall swathed in silk flowers and the stretch tent specially made for Strangers' Hall garden providing welcoming shade for the reception.

## 4.2 Norwich Freeman Fortnight

For the third year running, the Freeman of Norwich supported the Museum of Norwich and Stranger's Hall to open free to all for the first two weeks of the school summer holidays. The grant awarded by the Freeman covers any loss of income at the two museums. The 2019 Norwich Freeman Fortnight took place between 31 July and 11 August, with Strangers' Hall offering free admission across these dates. There were a total of 2,349 visitors as follows:

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>Increase</b>
Wednesday	186	323	185
Thursday	113	261	148
Friday	192	280	88
Sunday	184	254	60
<b>Week 2</b>			
Wednesday	246	288	42
Thursday	212	344	126
Friday	241	373	132
Sunday	168	226	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>1542</b>	<b>2349</b>	<b>839</b>

This represents a sizable increase on 2018 visitor figures on every single day, mindful that the 2018 Freeman's Fortnight coincided with the peak of the hot weather. With extra support from the NMS Visitor Services team, Learning team, new volunteer recruits, NMS Teaching Museum trainees, and Strangers' volunteer steward and gardening teams it was possible to run a range of activities, maintain visitor flow and vigilance in the period room settings. Visitor evaluation registered a large number of new visitors as well as a high percentage returning after a gap of many years. This is due in no small measure to a busy marketing campaign by Moa Marketing boosted by NMS social media postings.



## 5. Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell

### 5.1 Exhibition – ‘Norwich in 1959’

The current temporary exhibition at the Museum of Norwich, ‘*Norwich in 1959*’, opened on Friday 5 July. The exhibition has been the focus for city-wide celebrations of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Norwich being twinned with Rouen in Northern France. As part of those celebrations over the Lord Mayors’ weekend, a delegation of around thirty people from the Rouen Norwich Club travelled from France to take part in the festivities and attend the exhibition opening. The Sheriff, Dr Marian Prinsley formally opened the exhibition, and ITV Anglia broadcast live from the event, highlighting one of the collections on loan to the museum, the Anglia TV silver knight emblem. Anglia Television launched in 1959 and is one of several stories about the city which are detailed in the exhibition. As a timely reminder of the success of Norwich City football Club, the story of the glorious ’59 FA Cup run is also told, with loans from the club and fans. Forming a backdrop to the 1959 displays are a series of contemporary images of the two cities by local photographer Stefan Ebelewicz.

The exhibition has also provided a focus for work with young people recruited through the NMS-wide *Kick the Dust:Norfolk* project. A group of students were recruited and given responsibility to develop one display case of 1950’s costume (shown below) and worked with NMS staff through every step of the curatorial and creative process, including selecting the objects, working on the conservation and final display of the objects and writing exhibition text and designing a graphic drop back. The artistic talents of one of the students in particular earned her three weeks further work experience over the summer holidays, assisting with a programme of drawing workshops.



Display case of 1950's costume



Silver knight, on loan from ITV Anglia

## 5.2 Norwich Freeman Fortnight

The Freeman of Norwich supported the Museum of Norwich to open free to all for the first two weeks of the school summer holidays. The grant awarded by the Freeman for 2019 also supported a temporary exhibition. Visitor figures at the Museum of Norwich far exceeded those from 2018, with over 1,700 additional visitors from the same period last year. Over the ten-day period of free opening, the museum welcomed 3,877 people. Extensive exit surveys were carried out by volunteers recruited for the task and have showed that 46% of visitors had never visited before, with the majority of those saying they would visit again.

Family activities including a cartoon workshop to create an A-Z of the museum in 26 objects by artist David Shenton were very popular with family audiences.

Week 1	2018	2019	Increase
Tuesday	107	182	75
Wednesday	125	389	264
Thursday	195	264	69
Friday	192	318	126
Saturday	207	333	126
Week 2			
Tuesday	307	475	168
Wednesday	280	402	122
Thursday	217	381	164
Friday	251	492	241
Saturday	280	641	361
Total	2161	3877	1716

## 5.3 Norwich Pride 2019 – Teen Takeover – July 27th

As part of Norwich Pride 2019, the museum was ‘taken over’ by the Ancient House Teenage History Club, who showcased their ‘Pride of the People’ exhibition which included an LGBTQ tour of the museum. Teenage History Club is one of the groups supported by the NMS-wide *Kick the Dust: Norfolk project*.

Following the capacity crowd tour, the group then took their places in the Pride march.



Members of Ancient House Teenage History Club at the Museum of Norwich

#### **5.4 John Newstead**

John Newstead, the donor of over 2,500 objects which form the pharmacy display at the Museum of Norwich died at the end of July. John was 88 and had been in ill health for some time. Earlier this year John was awarded a British Empire Medal for services to pharmaceutical heritage.

John worked at a pharmacist in Norwich and originally set up a small private recreated chemist shop museum in an extension at his home and decided to donate the collection which includes shop fixtures and fittings, raw materials for making medicines, packaging and bottles in 1984. The display forms a significant scientific and social history collection and proves to be one of the most popular with visitors. John's funeral took place in August.



The pharmacy at the Museum of Norwich



John Newstead receiving his award from Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk, Richard Jewson

## 5.5 Friends of Norwich Museums Summer Party

On 11 June the Museum of Norwich hosted the Friends of Norwich Museums for their summer tea party. Bethan Holdridge led an amusing tour of the museum



followed by an afternoon tea. Friends were able to view the new Samson display, made possible with generous funding from the Friends.



## 6. Learning Team activities and projects

### 6.1 Youth Offending Team Castle Project

In July the fifth successful run of the partnership between Norwich Castle and the Norfolk Youth Offending Team (YOT) came to completion. What was once an annual event has evolved into a programme that has successfully run every term for the last eighteen months. Over a six-week period including a final celebration show in week seven, Susie Childerhouse from the Norwich Learning Team works with the young people to explore the Castle's collections. Susie is partnered by artist and *Kick the Dust: Norfolk* project worker, Rachel Daniel, who guides the young people through clay-object making.



The programme has been most successful with particularly hard to reach individuals that have issues around self-esteem. The link YOT worker identifies suitable participants that they feel will benefit from the sessions. Attendance can go towards part of the young persons' reparation hours, giving the YOT worker an incentive to encourage participation. Often the young people can have a negative attitude towards education and authority and the project deliberately subverts preconceived ideas about what a museum might be by creating a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. The tours are chatty and informal, exploring aspects that an ordinary visitor might overlook, or not normally be able to see. Staff focus on the stories of ordinary people so that the themes become more accessible.



Through their involvement participants can gain a wide range of skills, including thinking creatively, problem solving, and social skills such as how to engage with adults in appropriate ways. One particular participant created a beautiful version of a bellarmine jar, linking to the memorialising themes of the Regimental collection. The participant included their late grandma's name on the jar as a marker of remembrance imitative of a war memorial maintaining the legacy of the departed soldiers. When asked, the participant said it was going to be used to keep some of the jewellery that Grandma had left them in her will.

The Castle YOT project continues to be small scale but hugely important for its participants and their Key Workers. To further support the Youth Offending Team, Learning team staff plan to run an introductory sessions for Key Workers to help them understand what happens in the sessions and their aims. This will also give chance for the Key Workers to provide feedback and reflect on how the sessions are working for them.

## 6.2 ST\*ART Club summer term success

On 15 June ST\*ART Club held their exhibition and private view to celebrate another successful term creatively interrogating and exploring 3D art and design through the collections at Norwich Castle. Although the Club continues to be oversubscribed, two free places are retained to widen access to the arts and heritage in Norwich.

Participation offers children aged 8-11 the opportunity to develop an awareness of the world around them and their place in it, fostering collaboration, investigation and understanding in a safe yet stimulating environment. At the private view the children were joined by the participants' families and friends and the children were able to talk confidently about their work and share their favourite parts of the course. NMS continues to be very grateful for the ongoing support received from the East Anglia Art Fund and were delighted that Amanda Geitner, Director of the Fund, presented the young people with their certificates and a special invitation to attend the NUA degree show.



## 6.3 Heritage Fund 'Kick the Dust' programme

The National Lottery Heritage Fund (formerly known as the Heritage Lottery Fund) is providing a grant of £776,500 for the project *Kick the Dust: Norfolk*, under the NLHF's Kick the Dust programme. This consortium project is being delivered in partnership with YMCA Norfolk and Creative Collisions (a youth arts network based in Great Yarmouth). The project aims to engage with 8,000 11-25 year olds – including those most hard to reach - during a four year period from 2018-22. Through the project the young people will be able to participate in a range of structured heritage activities that will develop their skills, experience and confidence.

The project team comprises:

- Project Coordinator – Christine Marsden (based at Museum of Norwich)
- Project Worker (Norwich) – Rachel Daniel (based at Museum of Norwich)
- Project Worker (East) – Kate Cooper (based at Time & Tide)
- Project Workers (West) – Rachel Duffield (based at Gressenhall); Rachael Williams (based in King's Lynn)

A summary of what the project aims to achieve:

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

Partnership working has been successful in terms of engaging with young people and in enhancing partners’ existing offers for young people. One of the key partners for ‘Kick the Dust’ is the YMCA. NMS funds an embedded youth engagement worker post in YMCA and this worker has been working alongside the three ‘Kick the Dust’ Project Workers around the county to deliver a range of heritage-based activities. Up to July 2019, 485 young people from the YMCA had taken part in the ‘Kick the Dust’ programme. Having built up trust with the ‘Kick the Dust’ Project Workers and other staff, the young people have gained in confidence and have started to move from ‘player’ to ‘shaper’ activity.

Up to July 2019, 2,844 young people had participated in 1,494 hours of high quality Kick the Dust activities.

Rachel Daniel is the Norwich-based project worker for Kick the Dust. Rachel is working with a broad range of young people and groups to encourage, stimulate and facilitate meaningful engagements with the museums, collections, staff and visitors. As Kick the Dust moves into the second year of delivery staff are observing the successful progression of young people from the categories of ‘player’ to ‘shaper’ and ‘shaper’ to ‘leader’. This is a key strength of the project as it is allowing the museum to work in a sustained way with young people over an extended period of time. The second year of programming emphasises skills development, work-readiness and work experience. The project will be encouraging young people’s participation in arts and heritage to learn or enhance work-related skills and abilities to function in a work environment, presenting museums, heritage and the creative industries as potential work environments.

Recent Kick the Dust project activities in Norwich include:

- Norwich Castle Summer Challenge: A 3-day summer school for Looked After Children facilitated by Kick the Dust Project Worker and involving the Teaching Museum Trainees. The days included a Graffiti Art Attack, a medieval arms and armour workshop, and a scavenger hunt. On the final afternoon staff welcomed families, carers, support workers and staff to join for a celebration in the Cotman Gallery to see all the work the young people made and hear about their activities.

- In collaboration with Michelle Gaskin, NMS Volunteer Co-ordinator, the Kick the Dust team welcomed a group of year 10 students on a week-long work experience placement. The students gained insight into many aspects of working life in a museum and were given opportunities to get involved. In just one hour the students researched and wrote a tour of the Viking temporary exhibition which they then presented to staff in the gallery with visitor also present. Many of the young people expressed that they had been sceptical about being able to meet the challenge and were hugely proud of their achievement. The group also worked with escape room game professionals History Mystery, learning how to research and develop a game in a historic environment. The students then worked in groups to develop their own game based on the collections and buildings at Museum of Norwich and finally presented their ideas to colleagues from History Mystery.
- In July Teenage History Club, based at Ancient House in Thetford, showcased their work in Norwich. As part of a touring exhibition and series of tours across the county and beyond they developed and presented discreet LGBT+ tours of Norwich Castle and the Museum of Norwich. Teenage History Club have also curated *Pride of the People: Helping History Out of the Closet* touring exhibition which was displayed at Museum of Norwich on 27 July.

#### 6.4 Norwich Learning Team – Schools Update

The Norwich Learning team continue to facilitate and deliver high-class curriculum-based sessions for schools at the three Norwich museum sites to large numbers of school children (figures as below)

	Castle	Museum of Norwich	Strangers' Hall	Total
<b>June-19</b>	1776	138	85	1999
<b>July-19</b>	1634	148	79	1861
<b>Total</b>	<b>3410</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>3860</b>

Learning Officer Steve Arber leads the primary programme, developing and overseeing the delivery of curriculum-based programmes for Key Stages 1 2 and 3. This remains the core part of the schools' programme and the team continues to receive excellent feedback from teachers and pupils alike.

Learning Officer Jenni Williams leads the secondary programme across all three sites and continues to produce remarkable results in an audience group which the wider sector struggles to engage to such an extent. Key to this success is Jenni's diligence in fostering relationship with teachers across the county and

offering a suite of CPD events. Most recently Jenni led a one-day conference for secondary history teachers. In the morning the teachers were given a detailed overview of the Keep Redevelopment Project, a tour of the site and a discussion of the ways in which schools sessions are being adopted to continue through the period of works. In the afternoon they were offered a document study session at Strangers' Hall and a walking tour of Norwich as a sample of the sessions we offer on the Historic Environment (KS4).

The team continues to offer professional development opportunities for teachers. As a result of the conference staff have set up a teachers' advisory group to act as a point of consultation and collaboration as the Schools' programme is reshaped and updated during and after the Keep redevelopment project.

## 6.5 Early Years and SEND update

In July two members of the Norwich Learning team joined the NCC *Digital Connections* event for Early Years Providers and Partner Services at The Woodside Centre Hub. The event enabled staff to showcase NMS work with Early Years audiences and talk to a range of professionals about how NMS can support their work. The event also provided networking opportunities to meet colleagues working in partner services and share our experiences.



Kate Malyon has recently been appointed to lead the Early Years and SEND programme. Kate continues to develop and deliver the very successful *Snaplings* and *Snap Dragons* Early Years sessions at the Castle, as well as facilitating engagement opportunities for children and adults with Special Education Needs, both at the museum and as outreach. Kate will also be leading the new outreach offer to nurseries and primary schools across Norfolk as part of the Norwich Castle Keep Project Activity Plan due to launch in September 2019.

## 7. Other Developments

### 7.1 Art Department – Recent Acquisitions

The last few months has seen several highly significant acquisitions for the NMS Art Department. Most recently, NMS was fortunate enough, thanks to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Art Fund and a private donor, to be able to acquire the oil painting *Walton Bridges* by JMW Turner. This painting had been subject to a temporary export bar due to its outstanding national importance, which meant that NMS was given a brief window of opportunity to acquire it.



This process, unusually ambitious for a regional museum, has resulted in the successful acquisition of the first Turner oil painting to enter a public collection in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. This work, painted in 1806, is ideally suitable for this region. It will complement existing holdings of British landscape paintings by the Norwich School artists, including John Sell Cotman and John Crome, for whom Turner was a seminal influence. His approach, painting directly from nature, was ground-breaking at the time. His example inspired Norwich School artists who also sketched 'en plein air' to immerse themselves in the local landscape.



*Walton Bridges* JMW Turner 1806 oil on canvas

NMS plans to exhibit the work in Yarmouth and Kings Lynn as well as in Norwich Castle. NMS are also partnering with Colchester and Ipswich Museums (CIMS) to create a wide-ranging and imaginative four-year programme of exhibitions, learning and public engagement across the region. For NMS, the painting will provide a major focus for their *Kick the Dust: Norfolk* youth engagement programme. For CIMS it will complement their collections of landscape paintings by John Constable and Thomas Gainsborough.

In addition, Norwich Castle has just acquired an important painting by John Opie. His *Double Portrait of Amelia Opie*, painted just after the couple married in 1798, celebrates a leading figure in Norwich's history. Norwich-born Amelia was a poet, novelist and well-known abolitionist, giving her name to Norwich's Opie Street. Her husband John's work is already represented in the NMS collections, alongside institutions including the National Portrait Gallery and Tate Britain, but

this is the most significant work by him acquired to date. It was acquired thanks to grants from the Art Fund, the V&A Purchase Grant Fund and numerous private donations. The private fundraising was championed by Ann Farrant, a local historian and biographer of Amelia Opie, working in conjunction with Norwich curators.



*Double Portrait of Amelia Opie* John Opie 1798

Another fundraising campaign to acquire a major artwork is in progress. As a result of the 2018 *Paston Treasure* exhibition and research project, a rare and magnificent *pietre dure* (inlays of highly polished coloured stone) table-top once belonging to the Pastons was identified. Norwich Castle is fundraising to buy this object, which was made in the Grand Ducal workshops in Florence in 1638. It has been described by the Art Fund as probably the most important piece of *pietre dure* in the UK.





The *pietre dure* table-top

## 7.2 Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England project update

During the period covered by this report, work has been progressing with the *Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England* project. The tender process for the main build contractor is currently underway, with the contractor due to be appointed in September.

Construction work is currently due to start in November, following the closure and deinstallation of the exhibition *Viking: Rediscover the Legend*.

Detailed planning work is also underway for the new exhibition galleries, including the creation of detailed case specifications and layouts for the new British Museum partnership gallery.

In preparation for construction work to begin, staff from the NMS Collections, Design & Technical and Conservation teams oversaw the removal of all displays from the Keep. Across the summer, visitors have been able to appreciate the 'clear-view Keep' and an accompanying programme of events is helping visitors make the most of this unique moment in the Keep's history.

The Learning team are starting to deliver the four-year Activity Plan which forms a key part of the project, with a number of pilot events being run.



The “Clear View” Keep

Recruitment to all relevant project funded posts has been completed with the following staff appointed: Project Curator – Andrew Ferrara; Project Assistant Curator – Dr Agata Gomolka; Project Support Officer – Lucie Molkova; Project Manager (Build) – Jim Mills; Learning & Engagement Officer – Lee Warden



Keep Project Team L-R: Lee Warden (Learning & Engagement Officer); Jim Mills (Project Manager – Build); Dr Agata Gomolka (Assistant Curator); Dr Tim Pestell (Curator of Archaeology); Lucie Molkova (Project Support Officer); Dr Robin Hanley (Assistant Head of Museums & Project Director); Hannah Jackson (Project Manager); Andrew Ferrara (Project Curator)

The Wider Impact Group (WIG) coordinates all operational issues arising from the delivery of the main Keep project. Gemma Rayment has recently been appointed as the WIG Project Officer and will have a key role ensuring all aspects of the WIG project meets key deadlines.

Building works are currently underway to adapt the G32 corridor opposite the Control Room (adjacent to the current staff and contractor entrance) from a store into a temporary staff and contractor entrance. This entrance will be used by staff and contractors during the Keep project construction period and will then provide a dedicated long-term entrance for wedding guests accessing the Ceremony Room operated in partnership with the Norfolk Registrars' Service. These works are funded through the Norfolk County Council Capital Programme and will be completed by early September.

Bride entrance & interview room

Temporary entrance

Temp cafe

Construction zone

New wedding guest entrance

Key areas and galleries shown include:

- TEE GALLERY G07
- DUTCH GALLERY G67
- TEAPOTS G10
- DEC ARTS GALLERY G14
- COTMAN GALLERY G16
- NATURAL HISTORY G23
- HISTORY G24
- BIRD GALLERY G30
- TELLIS GALLERY G31
- KEEP BASEMENT KG41, KG42, KG43, KG44
- FRONT ENTRANCE G01
- CEREMONY ROOM G37
- WAITING ROOM G38
- SHOP G02
- ROTUNDA G05
- BOUDICA GALLERY G50
- CRONE GALLERY G55
- 18TH CENTURY GALLERY G59
- VICTORIAN GALLERY G61
- SOILS ROOM G61
- PACKING ROOM G63
- TEMPORARY TRASH GALLERY G20
- NORFOLK GALLERY G27
- G08, G12, G13, G14, G15, G16, G17, G18, G20, G22, G25, G26, G28, G34, G36



## 7.5 Relocation of offices and equipment

As part of the preparation for the construction phase of the Keep project, all offices and equipment within the construction zone need to be cleared. Relevant staff offices are being relocated to the Shirehall, Shirehall House and other parts of the Castle. The majority of equipment and furniture is being temporarily housed off site. These relocation works will take place by October.

## 7.6 Temporary catering unit

As the current Castle Café falls within the construction zone of the Keep project, a temporary catering offer is being prepared. This has proved to be a challenge as the Rotunda does not have a water supply or waste drainage system. To this end staff have sourced a self-sufficient mobile catering unit that can be operated with the use of water tanks and therefore meet requirements. The unit will be operational within the Rotunda area of the Castle from early November.

## 7.7 Carers Week 10-16 June

NMS staff from the Museum of Norwich and the *Kick the Dust: Norfolk* project team supported the Norfolk programme of events linked into the national Carers Week running 10-16 June. Staff attended the Carers Fair at the Forum, talking to large numbers of people about how NMS works with different community groups including Kick the Dust project activities and the Dementia Friendly Coffee Mornings at the Museum of Norwich. Staff hosted an after-hours lino cutting workshop, attended by young people from the YMCA. The artwork they produced was inspired by museum collections.



## **8. Visitor Numbers**

Detailed visitor numbers will be circulated at the meeting.

### **Report contact:**

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