

Great Yarmouth Area Museums Committee
Town Hall, Great Yarmouth
24th October 2013

Report by the Eastern Area Manager,
Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service (NMAS)

Report on Great Yarmouth Museums for the period:
July – September 2013 (Qtr. 2)



Detail from Lorina Bulwer sampler (c.1901) on display at Time and Tide as part of the
Frayed: Textiles on the Edge exhibition

1.0 NMAS - Five Year Strategy

NMAS is currently developing a new five year strategy to ensure a strong vision for the future, making the best use of limited resources and with an innovative partnership approach across all areas of the Museum's work. The strategy will involve key stakeholder, officer and member consultation to ensure the ambitions and priorities of the Service going forward reflect the challenges and opportunities of the current period in which we operate. Through member involvement NMAS will seek to ensure that our Service ambitions are clearly stated in line with Borough, County and external funders strategic priorities whilst ensuring our services are defined by sector leadership, excellence in our programming, developing audiences and service users, working towards sustainability and inspiring young people with a world class collection.

2.0 Staff

We are currently recruiting for the Operations manager post vacated in August. This post holder will be responsible for building maintenance and security, leading the visitor service team across the four sites of the Eastern area operation in addition to delivering a vital role in supporting our commercial ambitions, notably in driving up retail income and exploring other means of income generation. Selected candidates will be interviewed at Great Yarmouth Town Hall on Friday 18th October.

3.0 Visitor figures

Visits to the Time and Tide Museum, during the period July – September 2013 totalled 8,531 thereby showing a significant 11% increase on the same period in 2012.

Visits to the Elizabethan House Museum, during the period totalled 4,682 thereby showing a 9% increase on the same period last year

Visits to the Tolhouse museum, during the period totalled 2,374 thereby showing a 10% decrease on the same period last year. It should be noted that the opening times for the Tolhouse museum have been reduced this year by 15%.

4.0 2014 /15 Museum admission and opening times

The admission charges for 2014/15 will be amended as follows, with effect from 1st April 2014. The proposed changes are based on the consideration of the current core visitor profile at each site in addition to the potential for growth in visitors and

associated admission income during the next financial year. A fundamental consideration in the agreement of admission prices is that of ensuring our sites and services remain accessible and affordable to the residents of Great Yarmouth and Norfolk.

Site	Proposed 2014-15 (£)	Current 2013-14 (£)
Time and Tide Museum	Full 4.95 Concession 3.95 Child 3.50 Family (2A+2C) 12.00 Family (1A+ 2C) 9.00	Full 5.20 Concession 4.20 Child 3.70 N/A N/A
Elizabethan House	Full 4.50 Concession 3.50 Child 2.50 Family (2A+ 2C) 10.50 Family (1A+ 2C) 7.00	Full 3.90 Concession 3.30 Child 2.00 N/A N/A
Tolhouse Museum	Full 3.50 Concession 2.95 Child 1.95 Family (2A+ 2C) 8.00 Family (1A+ 2C) 5.50	Full 3.60 Concession 3.00 Child 2.00 N/A N/A

It is proposed that museum opening times in 2014 -15 will remain the same at all three museums as this year with the exception that the Elizabethan House Museum will extend opening hours on Sundays and will reduce opening on Saturdays between April – October 2014.

5.0 Heritage Open Days

Both the Elizabethan House and Tolhouse Museums participated in this year's Heritage Open days (12-15th September) joining many of the town's other historic sites in this annual 'behind the scenes' celebration. In the genteel surroundings of the Tudor

Merchant's House on South Quay and the torturous chambers at the Tolhouse, Great Yarmouth museums' staff invited visitors to experience life in the town spanning 800 years.

A variety of themed events were staged at each site and visitors responded positively to the opportunity to see parts of the buildings that are otherwise inaccessible during regular opening times. The growing profile of the Borough's participation in this national initiative has made Great Yarmouth a key part of the County's heritage trail. Over 1,050 visits were recorded showing an increase on last year's event of 35%.

6.0 Museum Learning

The diverse learning programme supports the needs of both adult learners and local schools in the Borough. Learning staff provide an immersive learning experience that is both enjoyable and which enables both key stage and life long learning to take place in a variety of informal learning settings.

During the period Great Yarmouth museums received a total of 1,965 organised school visits showing a significant increase of 25% on the same period in 2012. The majority of these visits were received at Time and Tide as a result of the Museums and schools programme.

6.1

Presentation on ACE Museum & Schools / *Stories from the Sea* programme by John Simpson-Wedge (Project Officer, Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service)

In 2012 Great Yarmouth Museums received £180k from the Department for Education through Arts Council England for a three year programme, Museums and Schools (until 2015). The aim of the programme is to increase high quality educational visits to local museums and galleries by schools in areas of low cultural engagement. As a result it is expected that Great Yarmouth school children will develop a greater understanding of their local heritage and its significance, and improve their educational attainment.

6.2 Youth engagement

One of the key priority areas at Great Yarmouth museums for the Major Partner Museum programme (funded by Arts Council England) is youth engagement (16-24). The principal aims of the programme are that more local children will access cultural

activities at our museums through youth engagement opportunities and a comprehensive schools service. It is also anticipated that more young people will be inspired by our museum collections and will take a more active role in museum services, becoming co-producers not just consumers.

One of the recent projects, named #Generation produced two photographic displays installed at Time & Tide and Great Yarmouth Library (16th – 22nd July). Students from Great Yarmouth High School captured family life in a single photograph and explained why it was meaningful to them. Working alongside photographer Paul Osborne students took part in two workshops. They borrowed DSLR cameras for one night and took lots of photographs. Then each student made a voice recording, assisted by BBC Voices, about their chosen photo. Students named this exhibition #Generation and it eloquently reflects Yarmouth families in 2013 through the eyes and words of local teenagers. Photographs and voice recordings will remain on display at Time & Tide until November 2013.

7.0 Display development

The final stage of re-developing the seaside holiday display at Time and Tide has now been completed with the addition of an Edwardian bathing machine structure which we have used to display collections on the theme of 'a day at the seaside' and brings together, costume, accessories, games and programmes from the 1940s – 1960s.

As part of this redisplay the museum recently took delivery of a new automata created by artist, and toy-maker, Ron Fuller. This depicts a collection of seafront attractions from the past that includes the Revolving Tower that was situated by the Britannia Pier until WWII until being demolished and recycled for the war effort. The former Hotchkiss Railway that enabled visitors to cycle along the promenade in the 1900s and the famous Joyland snail rides, built in 1949, also feature. The automata, which operates on receipt of 20 pence also features Admiral Nelson doing battle with a band of pirates and Britannia, from Nelson's monument, dances in the foreground. The exhibit has proved an instant success with visitors of all ages.

8.0 Temporary exhibitions

Frayed: *Textiles on the Edge* opens on 10th October 2013. This exciting and unusual exhibition explores historic and contemporary textiles, examining issues of individual self expression and mental health through stitch. At the heart of the show are some of

Norfolk Museum & Archaeology Service's most fascinating and poignant objects, including:

Two embroidered 'letters', each over three metres long and entirely covered in text, made by Lorina Bulwer whilst an inmate in the lunatic wing of Great Yarmouth Workhouse between 1901-5 (see front page).

The extraordinary counterpane and bed hangings made by Anna Margareta Brereton while in deep mourning for the loss of her two children in 1801.

This will be the first time the Lorina Bulwer samplers have been displayed together – the second sampler is being loaned by the Thackray Museum, Leeds – and also the first time that the NMAS sampler has been displayed in its entirety. Alongside these will be significant loans including a piece by artist Tracey Emin and Elizabeth Parker's sampler from the V&A collections which, like the Bulwer sampler, has been an inspiration for contemporary artists' work.

The exhibition will allow each object to speak for itself, with interpretation focussing on the biography of the maker and the context in which it was made. This is in keeping with the deeply personal resonance of many of the pieces on display, such as the Parker sampler which is known by the name of its maker, rather than by the title of the work or location of its creation.

Issues of mental health, grief and long term illness will be articulated in part by the inclusion of contemporary works, including Tracy Emin and Sara Impey. This will enable these issues to be explored both in a historical context, and also will demonstrate that textile arts are still a means of personal testimony and therapy and that these historic objects have been a hugely important influence for artists working with textiles.

9.0 Curatorial Report (Annex Report A)

A summary of activity relating to collections management work completed during the period is attached.

10. Recommendation

That members note this report.

The next AMC report by the NMAS Eastern Area Manager will be for the period October - December 2013.

Officer Contact:

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please contact

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