

**Great Yarmouth
Area Museums Committee**

**Town Hall, Great Yarmouth
27th March 2014**



**Report on Great Yarmouth Museums for the period:
October 2014 – February 2015**

1.0 Visitor figures

- Visits to the Time and Tide Museum, during the period October 2014 - February 2015 totalled 12,333 thereby showing a 7% increase on last year during the same period. It is expected that the total visitor figure for 2014-15 will evidence a sustained increase on last year and record the best visitor figure for the museum since 2010-11 in the region of 32,000. The highly popular events and exhibition programme have been pivotal to the successful audience engagement plans for the year.
- The Elizabethan House closed to the public on 31st October 2014 and re-opens on 1st April 2015. The number of visits to the museum during October decreased by 15% on the previous year. The decrease has been identified in the number of school visits and paying visitors to the museum as numbers of National Trust members have remained consistent with the previous year.
- The Tolhouse Gaol closed to the public on 31st October 2014 and re-opens to the public on 1st April 2015. The visitor figure of 4,500 for the year will be consistent with previous years since reduced opening times were introduced in 2012. A renewed focus on the unique history of the site, a successful events programme and partnership delivery with the Library service has been instrumental in the successful development of the museum's profile.

2.0 Youth Projects

(2.1) Sir James Paget

The Great Yarmouth Arts Festival has been successful in its funding bid (£9k) to the Heritage Lottery Fund to run a project to raise awareness of the life and achievements of pioneering local surgeon Sir James Paget. Norfolk Museums Service will be supporting the project by delivering workshops at the Elizabethan House and Time & Tide museums for students carrying out research. We will also support students to create an interactive exhibition that will tour community venues in the Great Yarmouth area. Other partners in this project are the Norfolk Libraries and Information Service and English Heritage.

(2.2) Creative Collisions

We have successfully led on an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (Young Roots) on behalf of the local youth arts network, Creative Collisions, for a project called *Crafting History*. The group has been awarded a grant of £38,700. Young People will work with Norfolk Museums Service and County Council Arts & Library services to set up and manage six craft residencies at the Time and Tide Museum. Practitioners will create original work inspired by our museum collection and share their process directly with local young people and teachers. Work produced by artists and young people will be exhibited at Time and Tide. Young People will use the project to work towards Arts Awards.

Creative Collisions has also been awarded a grant of £7,380 by the Cultural Education Partnership (CEP) to deliver two projects to support the Great Yarmouth Arts Festival in 2015. The life sized 'West Runton Mammoth' model will lead the procession at the start of the festival. Young people from Creative Collisions will work with professional puppet makers, Tin House Arts, to create six more giant puppets to accompany the elephant. The puppets will represent other pre historic animals that inhabited the region at the same time as the mammoth. Young people will also work with Norwich Puppet Theatre to create a puppet show for a younger audience. The project will make direct links for the community with the forthcoming major touring exhibition '*Humans in Ancient Britain*'.

(2.3) V&A Museum trip

In December twelve young people from Creative Collisions accompanied the museums' Youth engagement officer on a trip to the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. The group met members of museum's youth panel 'Create Voice' to find out what kind of things they do at the museum. It was an amazing day for young people who took part in workshops being provided at the 'Making it: Careers in Art & Design' event. For several of the group, aged 14 -18 from four different schools and colleges in Great Yarmouth, this was their first visit to London. The trip was funded by a grant from Great Yarmouth Youth Advisory Board.

(2.4) Arts Awards

Time and Tide hosted a Bronze level moderation on 2nd March. We are delighted that 15 young people who have worked with us on a variety of youth arts projects have now passed their award. Time and Tide will host an awards presentation in April.

(2.5) Cabinet of Past Delights

Four students from Norwich University of the Arts (NUA) have begun work on short films to be screened at the Time and Tide museum in a portable cinema tent. They will draw their inspiration from an aspect of the past and seek to immerse museum visitors in an audio visual experience that engages with concepts of memory.

3.0 Learning

Despite a decrease of 11% in the total of school visitor numbers to Great Yarmouth Museums this year the schools programme continues to attract significant numbers of children from local schools in the Borough. The current total of schools visits to Great Yarmouth Museums is 6,804 which compares with 7,538 at the same point last year. The decrease has largely affected the Elizabethan House and Tolhouse Gaol and is largely attributed to the changes in Key Stage 2 curriculum.

(3.1) Stories from the Sea

We are very pleased to have received confirmation from Arts Council England that this successful project will be funded for a further year from April 2015. The funding will be at the same level as previous years and we are currently awaiting confirmation of our strategic targets for the extended period.

A former museum trainee, Sam Jinks, has been appointed to take on the role of project officer on secondment from Norwich Castle. Sam has already been busy working with writers and designers on the creation of an anthology of work by writers and students. He is also liaising with schools to book students onto three days of celebration events in March. We have three writers booked to run workshops during the events including Mark Grist and David Farmer. We are also hoping to use loaned objects from the National Maritime Museum to use as stimulus material for the workshops. Currently over 600 local school children are booked onto the event.

(3.2) Heritage Schools

Additionally a further year's funding for the Heritage Schools project (English Heritage) has now been confirmed. Funding remains at the same level but this year schools and heritage partners will have to bid for project funds rather than money

being automatically paid to schools. There will be a greater emphasis on schools and partners working independently on projects. The CPD programme will continue with quarterly training sessions throughout the year. Museums' staff attended a training session at Great Yarmouth Town Hall in February. A small focus group, comprising five local primary school teachers, met at the Elizabethan House Museum in March where a valuable discussion on the on-going revision to our schools programme was conducted to inform the adaption of museum learning services to the new curriculum.

4.0 Temporary Exhibitions at Time and Tide

The current temporary exhibition at Time and Tide, *Water Ways*, opened to the public on 22nd November 2014 and celebrates the extraordinary natural environment of the Norfolk Broads that makes the area such a rich source of inspiration, relaxation and enjoyment for artists, naturalists and holidaymakers alike. The exhibition has proved to be extremely popular, contributing significantly to greater visitor figures during January and February 2015. At the heart of the exhibition is art work from Norfolk Museum Service collections, including the most renowned Broadland painters from the 19th and early 20th centuries: Charles Harmony Harrison, Stephen Batchelder and Arthur Patterson. Also on display are works by contemporary artists that reveal how this landscape continues to be a rich source of creativity. Loans from the Museum of the Broads, Norfolk Heritage Centre and private collections, as well as natural history and archive sound recordings, add to the story of this unique landscape and its importance to the region.

Following *Water Ways* two exhibitions will open to the public at Time and Tide that will run concurrently throughout the Summer period.

Anthony Amies: Land and Sea (25th April – 6th September 2015). Works for the Great Yarmouth collection by artist, including work created whilst a student at Great Yarmouth Art college during the 1960's.

Humans in Ancient Britain (12th June – 6th September 2015). The story of humans in Britain stretches back nearly one million years. This display from the Natural History Museum collection focuses on significant objects selected specially for the Time and Tide Museum.

5.0 Museum Storage & Rationalisation

Museum staff and volunteers have been busy during the past year working in the Great Yarmouth Library basement stores coordinating the removal of the stored collection to more appropriate storage facilities, including Time and Tide and the Gressenhall Superstore. The aim of the service wide Rationalisation programme is to review the collection storage and documentation needs, and to assess their future significance and merit for re-display and general museum usage, including suitability for handling collections and learning resources for work with schools. Those that are not suitable for future display or study needs will be found alternative homes while we address the documentation needs of retained collections. A number of artefacts have been identified as suitable for rationalisation from the permanent collection held at Great Yarmouth and members of the Great Yarmouth Area Museums Committee are asked to give their consideration for approval of the actions recommended.

(see attached list).

6.0 Blackfriars Road office accommodation

Following a lease agreement, between Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust and Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Museums Service has now taken occupation of the former Foreman's house at the Time and Tide museum site. Following redevelopment between 2002-04 this part of the building was occupied by a private tenant. Following vacancy in 2014 Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust and Norfolk County Council have agreed the amended use of the building for use as office accommodation for up to eight members of staff, consequently creating additional storage space in the main museum building. The new facility has also created a meeting room and staff recreational area enabling greater flexibility of the education room for venue hire and generation of income.

7.0 ADDITIONAL ITEM FROM STEVE MILLER, HEAD OF MUSEUMS

Restructure

Following a loss of funding from Norfolk County Council of £432,000 for the financial year 2015/16, Norfolk Museums Service has had to undertake a staffing restructure. As part of the restructure, a management reorganisation has been enacted with 6 posts being deleted (3 Area Managers and 3 Operations Manager posts) and 4 new posts have been created – Head of Operations and Learning and 3 new Operations Manager posts (Norwich, Western and Eastern). Following a thorough recruitment process, Dr Robin Hanley (currently Western Area Manager) has been appointed Head of Operations and Learning and Andrew Smith has been appointed Operations Manager, Eastern. James Steward, Area Manager Eastern and Rachel Kirk, Area Manager Norwich took the difficult decision to step out of the recruitment process and will be pursuing their careers beyond Norfolk Museums Service. I would like to record my sincere thanks to James for his significant efforts during his time as Area Manager, including his support for me since I took up post in July 2013 and I am sure the Committee will want to join me in wishing James all the best for the future.

For more details please contact Steve Miller.

8.0 Recommendation

That members note this report. If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please contact:

James Steward, Eastern Area Manager (NMS)

Tel No: 01493 743933

Mob: 07768 156205

email address: james.steward@norfolk.gov.uk



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