

**Great Yarmouth Area Museums Committee
25 September 2015**

**Great Yarmouth Museums briefing for period:
March – August 2015**

1. Exhibitions at Time and Tide

1.1 Humans in Ancient Britain (13 June – 6 September)

Our summer exhibition, *Humans in Ancient Britain* opened on 13th June. With the support of the Natural History Museum, this exciting exhibition showcased some of the most important artefacts relating to the early human occupation of Britain.



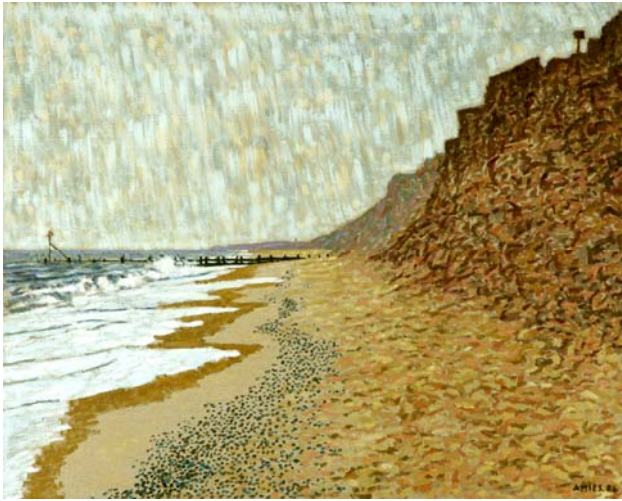
Following the success of their blockbuster exhibition, *Britain: One Million Years of the Human Story*, the Natural History Museum are touring an 'Object in Focus' display across the UK. This display was at the centre of the Time and Tide exhibition and included the Boxgrove Tibia—which at half a million years old represents the oldest human remains ever discovered in Britain. The exhibition also included many important objects from the NMS collections, including parts of the West Runton Mammoth, and Neanderthal handaxes from Lynford.

Norfolk is in a unique position to host this exhibition, as it is the only county in Britain where evidence of at least four different human species has been discovered.

Other highlights of the exhibition were a 3D print of one of the Happisburgh Footprints and accurate reconstructions of the heads of the four different humans species that lived in Norfolk—as featured in *The Times* alongside the living heads of Dr David Waterhouse and evolutionary biologist, Ben Garrod, star of BBC Four's *Secrets of Bones*, who formally opened the exhibition. A private viewing of the new *Humans in Ancient Britain* exhibition also took place at Time and Tide, with a presentation by the renowned expert in human evolution, Professor Chris Stringer.



1.2 Anthony Amies: Land and Sea (25 April – 27 September)



Anthony Desmond Amies is the artist whose work is the focus for this exhibition. Born in Norwich and taught at the Great Yarmouth College of Art and Design, Amies gained inspiration from the local landscapes and seascapes that he grew up with. He moved to London as an adult, studied at the Slade School of Fine Art (University College London) and went on to exhibit and sell his paintings all over the world.

Anthony Desmond Amies: Land and Sea runs until 27 September and includes captivatingly large oil paintings as well as small, intricate sketches and watercolours, all of which mix realism with abstract styles and techniques. One of the main techniques explored in this exhibition is his own reinterpretation of pointillism, using distinctive large blobs of paint of various shapes to create a work. Amies created his art in an array of mediums, and each piece is characterized by his expertise. He experimented with pen, pencil, oil, watercolour, coloured pencil and even crayon to capture his impressions of Norfolk's and Suffolk's landscapes and seascapes.

The works on display include paintings and drawings of Gorleston Beach, fields and trees of Suffolk and Norfolk, as well as cliffs along the coast. Also on display is Amies' sketchbook from his time at the Great Yarmouth College of Art and Design in the early 1960s which includes a variety of everyday images of Great Yarmouth life in mixed mediums.

The work shown in this exhibition is part of a larger collection of over 140 works donated to Time and Tide in 2001 after Amies' death. This is the first exhibition of the collection since its acquisition.

1.3 Witch Hunt: The East Anglian Witch Hunt 1645-47 (22 July – 15 September)



As well as exhibitions at Time and Tide, this summer Great Yarmouth museums also hosted a temporary exhibition at Tolhouse Gaol. ***Witch Hunt: The East Anglian Witch Hunt 1645-47*** is a touring exhibition from Epping Forest District Museum exploring the stories behind the infamous witch hunt in the region, as well as origins of some of the myths around the subject.

Behind the image of the witch from fairy-tales and folklore lies a true story of paranoia and persecution, which led to the execution of 50,000 men and women between 1500 and 1800. England experienced several hundred witch-trials in this period, but only one major witch hunt worthy of the name. This was the East Anglian Witch Hunt of 1645-47, which took place at the height of the political and social unrest caused by the English Civil War.

Amongst the stories on display was that of Elizabeth Bradwell of Yarmouth, who was sentenced to death at the Tolhouse in December 1646. The exhibition included a Flying Broomstick Illusion.

1.4 Forthcoming exhibitions

Beastly machines (17 October 2015 – 21 February 2016)



Thrush hour

This exhibition will comprise of nine kinetic sculptures by Johnny White. The sculptures are humorous and interactive, and influenced by current affairs, media stories and plays on words. All are portrayed by a host of animals and mythical creatures.

2. Events

2.1 Museums at night (15 May 2015)



Local visitors enjoyed an evening at Great Yarmouth Museums where themes from our successful *Stories from the Sea* project were used to bring pirates, shipwrecks and explorers to life. Treasure maps were designed to encourage visitors to make their way between the three museum sites, and children were invited to collect stamps to receive golden treasure. In total we welcomed 1,185 people into the three museums, representing a 17% increase on 2014.

Visitors to Time and Tide were invited to make a pirate hat on arrival then venture through to the courtyard to learn 'pirate speak'. Other activities included 'splat-a-rat' and t-shirt decoation. Visitors were also able to join the Adult Education Service for an art activity inspired by the Anthony Amies exhibition. Younger visitors were dared to get past the sleeping pirate to earn a sticker for their treasure map with our Teaching Museum Trainees Meg and Miles playing the role of pirates.

At the Tolhouse visitors were able to meet Captain Manby and see a replica of the Manby Mortar in action. The gaoler patrolled the gaol looking for naughty shipwreck escapees to put behind bars.

Visitors to the Elizabethan House met intrepid explorer Ida Flowers with some of the more exotic items from our collections being brought out on show for the evening. In the kitchen, Norfolk Adult Education Service provided an activity for visitors to learn more about herbs and wellbeing. Volunteers also helped younger visitors to make fabulous decorated telescopes or binoculars in the toy room.

There was a fantastic atmosphere at the museums and many compliments were received both on the evening itself and afterwards on social media.

2.2 Summer events

Time and Tide:

29 July - Great Yarmouth Fossil Roadshow (211 attended)

5 August – Toy Stories (134)

12 August – Humans Family Fun Day; Making History – Mammoths (126)

19 August – Seaside Family Fun Day (132)

26 August - Humans Family Fun Day; Flint Knapping (383)

Elizabethan House:

18 August – Is There A Doctor In The House? (172)

Tolhouse Gaol:

11 August – Hands On History – Brassed Off (76)

Summer trail at Time and Tide – As part of the Humans exhibition the Fossil Detectives Trail gave our younger visitors the chance to become a palaeontologist for the day and find clues around the museum as well as completing the Ancient Animal colouring activity. A prize draw was offered as part of the trail and 578 people signed up for the opportunity to win their own woolly mammoth toy.

2.3 Great Yarmouth Fossil Roadshow (29 July)



Local people were invited to show off their prehistoric treasures at Time and Tide Museum on Wednesday 29 July. Curator of Natural History David Waterhouse teamed up with national fossil expert Simon Parfitt from the Natural History Museum and University College London to identify fossils and rocks from all over Norfolk and beyond.

The pair were especially interested in recording important fossil finds and artefacts from the coastal deposits known as the 'Cromer Forest-bed' in Norfolk and Suffolk.

With free entry to the museum for those with fossils and rocks to be identified, the day was hugely successful - 211 people visited the roadshow, and over 100 rocks fossils and minerals were examined

throughout the day. Exciting finds included hippopotamus teeth from Happisburgh, and reports of a set of animal footprints at Winterton-on-Sea which could be as old as 6,000 years.

The Fossil Roadshow is an important part of the work being carried out jointly between NMS, the Natural History Museum and the British Museum to record both the fossils and flint artefacts from these coastal deposits, something which has never been attempted before.

3. Other Museum Developments

3.1 Offices and meeting room in Blackfriars Road

Staff moved into new offices at no.16 Blackfriars Road during the spring. The offices are in the house attached to Time and Tide Museum (see windows on the left of the building). The house was formerly occupied in 1955 by the Tower Curing Works foreman Ike Chaplin and his family including thirteen children.



The space vacated in the museum has been converted into additional collections storage space accommodating items which were subsequently moved from the basement stores at the library. The move brings together staff previously located in different offices around the building and from Great Yarmouth library. The new facilities have created a meeting room and staff room which has enabled greater flexibility with the main education room for venue hire and income generation.



3.2 Accreditation Success

On 7 May Arts Council England announced that eight NMS museums had been successful in renewing their Full Accreditation status.

All three Great Yarmouth museums were successful; Time and Tide Museum, Elizabethan House and the Tolhouse. There are nearly 1,800 Accredited Museums in the UK, with 25 in Norfolk alone.

Accreditation requires museums to demonstrate they reach satisfactory standards in the areas of governance, management of collections, and user experiences. The Accreditation quality standards expected for a large, complex service like NMS are higher than those for a small, volunteer run museum, so a great deal of work went into preparing the applications to ensure that they were as strong as they could be.

Each NMS museum submits a separate Accreditation application, although policies and plans common to all are shared. Some, such as our Collections Development Policy (previously known as the Acquisition & Disposal Policy) had to be updated to conform with the new standard, and these had to be approved by the Joint Museums Committee.

3.3 Opening new displays



In July we hosted a special opening event for our newest permanent display involving two of our younger visitors—Elsie Feyi and Oliver Colbridge from Orton Colville Primary School. Together they officially cut the golden ribbon for our **1913 Chemist Shop** in the Row Galleries.

3.4 Rare Norfolk find on tour to Time and Tide

During the month of July Time & Tide Museum displayed the Rudham Dirk, a ceremonial Bronze Age dagger on loan from Norwich Castle Museum. We hosted the dirk in the museum on the first stage of its tour around East Anglia. The dirk is estimated to be around 3,500 years old and has a beautiful patina.

Far too large to be used practically as a weapon, the dirk is thought to have been forged with the premeditated intention of bending and burying it as a ritual offering. It was displayed alongside two smaller dirks which would probably have been used as weapons.



3.5 The Young Historians and Archaeology Club



Time and Tide, in partnership with Great Yarmouth Local History and Archaeological Society, has started recruiting members to an exciting new club for aspiring young historians and archaeologists from the Great Yarmouth area.

The Young History and Archaeology Club, for 8 to 16-year-olds, will meet monthly on Saturday afternoons at the museum, where generous funding from Historic England will support a programme of activities including field trips, expert demonstrations, a behind-the-scenes look at museums and research trips to other historical organisations.

The club has been affiliated to the National Council for British Archaeology and will be run by the Great Yarmouth Learning team with voluntary help from members of the Great Yarmouth Society. Several local young historians have signed up so far and the team is looking forward to a September start.

3.6 Weddings and venue hire

Both the Tolhouse Gaol and Elizabethan House have now been licenced to hold weddings. A promotional brochure has been produced and enquiries are building. NMS continues to actively promote the corporate venue hire offer at Great Yarmouth Museums. Corporate hire is recognised to be an area with considerable potential in terms of enhancing earned income. Bookings are being taken for all the museums with paranormal group venue hire particularly strong this year.

4. Learning

4.1 Schools Visits

Following a period of sustained growth our school visits for the summer term were down on the same period last year (2,139 compared to 3,016). Several factors contributed to the decrease but the principle issue is that the radical changes to the national curriculum have meant that key events such as Tudors, Victorians and Seaside Special are no longer core subjects in the history curriculum. While we have been working closely with teachers to create new events to support the revised curriculum these are taking time to build an audience and bookings are not yet at the level to compensate for the drop off. As well as developing new events and updating existing ones the learning team have been channelling resources into upgrading marketing materials, improving communications through web based and social media channels. We have also embarked on a programme of visits to school staff meetings to ensure that teachers are fully aware of the museums offer and that we get the most up to date information on the subjects being studied by individual schools and cluster groups. This is already paying dividends, with bookings for September twice as high as last year and bookings coming in at a steady rate for future months.

4.2 Cinderella Event

We have finished piloting *Cinderella*, our new and exciting new primary schools event at the Elizabethan House in Great Yarmouth.



This event has tapped into the KS1 and KS2 focus on using classic fairy tales to inspire storytelling and build vocabulary.

The event is perfect for the beautiful Elizabethan House, with children getting a chance to do the household chores in the scullery with

Cinderella, while dressing up in clothes from the past in the bedroom with the Ugly Step Sister.

The event was a big success with all the pilot schools; forty eight year 2's from Ormiston Herman Academy came to a pilot on Friday 8 May and the lead teacher called it "*the best trip we have ever been on*".

4.3 Surviving the Stone Age

We are currently developing this new schools event at Time & Tide, which will provide a really immersive experience to help young learners get under the skin of our pre-historic ancestors. They will meet a hunter-gatherer and learn how to track hunt wild game such as the boar and deer that once roamed in great numbers across the plains of Norfolk. They will learn how flint tools were made and used and build their own portable shelters using animal skins. An encounter with an early farmer will reveal how humans began to shape their environment as they gradually moved towards an agricultural lifestyle.

4.4 Stories from the Sea

Phase 1 of the Stories from the Sea project drew to a successful conclusion in March with a fantastic celebration event at the St Georges Theatre and across our three museums. Around 700 students attended this three day event where they took part in workshops with writers and had their own work celebrated with the publication of a colourful anthology. Representatives from local government and Arts Council England were also there to see first the positive impact on the children who took part in the project.

Between September 2012 and March 2015 the project engaged with 3,837 students who between them made a total of 10,178 visits to our museums. 83% of the students had made 3 or more visits with 1,695 students making 4-6 visits during this period An evaluation report on the first phase of the project will be distributed shortly.



We are very pleased that the Department for Education and Arts Council England have awarded us another year of funding for the project. This year we have been asked to consolidate our work in Great Yarmouth and extend the work to our museum in Cromer where we will be working with the RNLi Henry Blogg Museum to create a dramatic new event exploring an historical shipwreck. In Great Yarmouth we will continue to develop the schools audience for our Pirates, Shipwrecked and Explorers events. We will also be commissioning a new writer to run a series of workshops linked to the Beastly Machines exhibition that will be on show at Time & Tide over the winter. This exhibition will feature a series of moving sculptures of comical and imaginary beasts with a strong theme of linguistic puns. The students will create their own imaginative stories and poems in response to the creatures that they meet in the gallery. We have a target of 2,000 student visits for this year and to date have achieved

881 visits.

Our Education Officer recently gave a presentation at the national conference for the Group for Education in Museums. This was very well received and garnered a lot of enquiries from other museums keen to see how they could adapt the model developed during the project to create new literacy focused events. One person who showed particular interest in the project was Ida Brændholt Lundgaard, who is a Senior Advisor at Danish Agency for Culture. She is keen to explore how the Stories from the Sea model could inform developments in learning services in Danish museums.

4.5 James Paget Project

During the summer we worked with the Great Yarmouth Arts Festival, The Great Yarmouth Community Library and students from the Ormiston Venture Academy and Cliff Park Ormiston schools on an HLF funded project to investigate and celebrate the life and achievements of Sir James Paget, who despite a difficult start in life rose to be an eminent surgeon and physician to Queen Victoria. The students visited our museums to find out about living conditions and health problems in Paget's time. They also visited the sewage works, a local brewery and the Science Museum in London. They then worked with an exhibition designer and builder to create an interactive exhibition using some cutting edge technology such as programmable circuit boards and conductive paint. The exhibition then went on tour starting with a launch event at the library attended by some of Paget's descendents who were thrilled to see the life of their illustrious forbear celebrated by young people in Great Yarmouth.

5. Partnerships

5.1 Cultural Heritage Partnership

Great Yarmouth museums continue to actively support a range of local partnerships. The Head of Operations & Learning attends the Great Yarmouth Cultural Heritage Partnership and also sits on the steering group. The Operations Manager – East is a member of the Cultural Heritage Awareness Group. This group focuses on marketing and promoting the cultural heritage of the borough.

The Learning Manager – East is part of the Cultural Educational Partnership for the borough and has been involved in the planning of the Cultural Heritage Partnership Conference, which will take place on 18th November at St. George's Theatre. The conference will explore how heritage and culture can support the regeneration of

seaside towns with speakers sharing case studies from other towns facing similar challenges to Great Yarmouth.

5.2 Cultural Education Partnership

The Learning Manager has recently taken on the role of chairperson for the Great Yarmouth Cultural Educational Partnership, taking over from the Norfolk and Norwich Festival Bridge. This is one of several CEP groups set up by Arts Council England to investigate different ways to meet the challenges set out in the Henley Review. The broad aim of the network is to work together to increase the opportunities for children and young people to learn through engaging with a broad range of cultural activities. The chair is currently engaged in recruiting more schools to the network to ensure that they are embedded in the programme and can play a leading role in setting the priorities for the group. Schools are now engaged in a project to create a template for cultural guarantees for their students and are working to identify gaps in provision that heritage and cultural organisations in the network can help them to address. Schools will use the template to draw up their own lists of cultural experiences that will be provided for their students during their time at the school. This will be linked to the Arts Councils Cultural Challenge programme that will be launched in October and will support the drive to increase the take up of Arts Awards and Arts Mark across the borough. The CEP is also organising a Creative Teachers CPD programme to run a series of training workshops with different artists to support teachers to develop students' creative thinking skills.

5.3 Creative Collisions

Museum learning staff continue to play a leading role in the development of the Creative Collisions youth arts network. We are working with teachers from five high schools and colleges to create opportunities for young people to take part in creative projects with artists and photographers.

During the summer we secured funds from the CEP to run two projects to get young people involved in the Great Yarmouth Arts Festival. One group worked with Tin House Arts to create large puppets of prehistoric animals that were paraded in the carnival procession at the start of the festival. The puppets were inspired by the Humans in Ancient Britain exhibition at the Time and Tide Museum. A second group used the same exhibition as a starting point to work with the Norwich Puppet Theatre to create a shadow puppet show that they performed at St



George's Theatre. We received very positive feedback from the public and the festival organisers and are currently seeking funding to run a similar project for next years festival.



We are also running a two year project at Time and Tide thanks to a £38,750 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund – Young Roots programme. The Crafting Histories programme will pay for a series of six artist's residencies each focusing on a different heritage craft form. The first artist to be

employed by the project was print maker Sally Hirst, who ran a series of workshops with young people as well as a CPD day for teachers. Sally is now working on her own pieces inspired by the museum and its history as a smoke house. The work created by artists, teachers and young people during the project will be shown at the museum in summer 2016. You can see pictures of some of our projects on our new Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/Creative-Collisions-863942330366499/timeline/>

5.4 Maritime Effect Project

The Maritime Effect Young Roots project also drew to a successful conclusion during the summer after two years of heritage focused creative work. The final group of young women from the Girls Friendly Society worked on a project to create textile and basket work pieces inspired by the Scots fisher girls who worked in the town in the heyday of the herring fishing industry. This has been a multi agency partnership initiative led by the Mancroft Advisory Project and involving several schools and organisations working with young people. We have supported the project throughout as part of our ACE funded youth engagement programme.

5.5 Heritage Schools Project

Learning staff continue to play a central role in the Heritage Schools project being run by Historic England. We have worked closely with project officer Kate Argyle, local schools and heritage partners to deliver projects a CPD days for teachers. We have recently worked with the Great Yarmouth Local History Society to create a set of online teacher resources as part of a national timeline project by Historic England. We have also created a set of resources to encourage schools to make greater use of the Burgh Castle Roman



fort site in conjunction with our Romans and Saxons event at Time and Tide Museum.

6. Visitor numbers

April - August 2015:

Time and Tide Museum 12,943 (14,808 in 2014/15)

Elizabethan House Museum 6,126 (5,878)

Tolhouse Gaol 2,619 (2,740)

Detailed visitor figures will be circulated at the meeting.

7. Recommendations

7.1 That the Area Museums Committee notes the report.

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