



If you need this report in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Robin Hanley on 01603 493663 and we will do our best to help

**KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK  
AREA MUSEUMS COMMITTEE**

**9 November 2015                      Item No. 5**

**KING'S LYNN MUSEUMS REPORT**

**Report by the Head of Operations and Learning**

**This report provides information on King's Lynn  
Museum activities in the period from September –  
October 2015**

**1. Temporary exhibitions and events at Lynn Museum**

- 1.1 The current major exhibition at Lynn Museum explores the life and work of Frederick Savage and is entitled *Art of the Mart: Savage's - the famous fairground makers of Lynn*. It tells the story of King's Lynn's iconic creator of merry-go-rounds – including a close look at the art, craft and design of the fairground. The exhibition includes a number of products from the St Nicholas Ironworks that have not been on public display before including watercolour designs, accessories from the costume collections, taxidermy, a finely carved canopy, wooden patterns and a large chalk drawing of a racing cockerel, conserved and framed with support from the Friends of King's Lynn Museums. The exhibition includes the modern 'Mart' horse, and the bell used in the Opening Ceremony in February, on loan from the Town Hall collections. A painted decorative frieze in the display was a gift from Harry Overton, local sign-writer and member of the Showmen's Guild. The exhibition runs until 2 July 2016.
- 1.2 A programme of illustrated talks continues to be offered at Lynn Museum on Wednesday afternoons. Recent topics have included *the Archaeology of Tattooing* by Ken Hamilton and a talk by Dayna Woolbright on the *Art of the Mart exhibition*. Attendances average 15-25 and most talks are delivered by NMS staff.
- 1.3 An enhanced programme of informal family learning events continues to be offered at the Lynn Museum for the school holiday periods. 'Drop-in' format events this year have included: *Big Draw* and *Halloween* themed events during the October Half Term.

- 1.4 During the school holidays the Lynn Museum continues to offer a popular programme of themed gallery discovery trails, with a new trail available for each week of the school holidays. Participants who completed a number of trails over the summer holidays were invited to a celebratory tea party at the Museum on Saturday 19 September.
- 1.5 The Lynn Museum continues to host monthly *Coffee, Cake and Collections* “coffee morning” style events for adults, with each session exploring a different aspect of the collections. Topics have included a Mystery Object quiz. The September morning was held as part of the national charity Macmillan Coffee fundraising events. The event was well attended and featured in the Lynn News.
- 1.6 The reception case at Lynn Museum has seen a display featuring historic roller skates and currently displays drawings by Artist in Residence Rosie Redzia alongside objects from the museum collections she has illustrated.
- 1.7 Museum staff delivered a workshop about the story of whaling in King’s Lynn on the 8 October, commissioned as part of the activity plan of the Narborough Bone Mill conservation project, a Heritage Lottery Fund-funded project. Participants were able to learn about the King’s Lynn whaling ships, see whaling related specimens and artefacts and visit the Greenland Fishery building, once a meeting place for the whalers. Collections items featured included an 18<sup>th</sup> century dress and stays stiffened with whalebone, scrimshaw carvings on sperm whale teeth, a pilot whale skull and a bottle nose whale skull, a model of the Fountain, one of the town’s whaling ships and a mug featuring the Baleana of Lynn.
- 1.8 The Lynn Museum played its part in the town’s successful Heritage Open Day on 13 September, with 441 participants attending.
- 1.9 The Museum has loaned three oil paintings for an exhibition at the King’s Lynn Arts Centre *the Bigger Picture 3* which ran until 31 October. The paintings lent were *The Purfleet* by Unknown Artist c.1800, *Too Late for the Ferry* by Robert Walker Macbeth (1848 – 1910), and *Red Mount, King’s Lynn* by Thomas Baines (1820 – 18875). Local artists had been given a small square of the image to paint, then for a big reveal all the squares were put together to create a large reproduction of the original painting displayed alongside.

## **2. Other Museum Developments**

- 2.1 The Lynn Museum continues to develop its social media presence, with Twitter and Facebook accounts being maintained by staff. The Lynn

Museum Twitter account has 1969 tweets and 1258 followers while the Facebook account has 210 likes.

- 2.2 A team of collections volunteers continues to meet on a weekly basis in the NMS offices at Queen Street. Volunteers have continued with a programme of work involving the scanning and cataloguing of the drawing collections. The team have now scanned around 2,000 items from the Museum's prints and drawings collection helping to make them much more accessible.
- 2.3 In addition to the scanning project, a small team of volunteers is working with Curatorial Assistant Dayna Woolbright on a weekly basis, undertaking an audit of collections at the museum stores at Aickmans Yard. They have been joined by a local artist who has been creating drawings of different objects which currently form part of an exhibition in the reception display case.
- 2.4 The Museum has been successful in obtaining grant funding of £1,160 from the Woodmansterne Conservation Awards, supporting the conservation of two newly acquired portraits in poor condition. The portraits are of John Langley and his wife Elizabeth. John Langley travelled around the world with Captain Vancouver and later in life managed a public house in King's Lynn. The Friends of Kings Lynn Museums and two private donors are also contributing to the costs. The paintings are currently being conserved by Julie Crick, Fine Art conservator.
- 2.5 The Museum's fortnightly *History of Kings Lynn in 100 Objects* series with the Lynn News has generated significant interest. Members of the public have visited the museum with additional information for the museum records. Recent artefacts featured include a product of LinCan canneries, the historic roller skates recently displayed in the reception case, and papier-mache model of an Indian temple.

### **3. Friends of King's Lynn Museums**

- 3.1 The Friends are continuing to offer a varied programme for members including lunchtime talks, trips and an annual lecture. The annual lecture this year was well attended by Friends and other interested individuals. It was held on the 24 September at Marriott's Warehouse on *the Goldsmiths of the Early Anglian Kings* and given by Angela Care Evans former keeper of Anglo Saxon collections at the British Museum. The Friends have continued to support the afternoon talks programme being offered at the Lynn Museum during 2015.
- 3.2 The Friends are continuing to fund a programme of fine art conservation, most recently the cockerel drawing for the Art of the Mart exhibition and support for the conservation of the portraits of John and Elizabeth Langley.

- 3.3 The Friends held their AGM at the Lynn Museum on 12 October. Bryan Howling has stepped down as Chair after five years in this office. The new Chair of King's Lynn Museums is Susan Thompson.
- 3.4 A Junior Friends of Kings Lynn Museum scheme has been launched and members of the Friends Committee have been attending the summer family events to invite children and young people to join. 37 Junior Friends have joined up.

## **4 Partnerships**

- 4.1 The Lynn Museum free admission period runs from October to the end of March. This free admission period is provided under the terms of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Borough Council and NMS.
- 4.2 NMS continues to support the Borough Council with the delivery of the HLF-funded *Stories of Lynn* project focussed on King's Lynn Town Hall. As well as being part of the project steering group and Project Board, NMS continues to lead on the development and delivery of the project Activity Plan and the development of exhibition designs and site interpretation.
- 4.3 NMS continues to host the two *Stories of Lynn* project funded posts, the Project Curator (12 months) and the Learning & Engagement Officer (48 months). Both postholders continue to work closely with colleagues from the Borough Council and the Norfolk Record Office, alongside the external designers responsible for developing the new exhibitions at the Town Hall. NMS staff have recently supported the Borough Council's procurement process for the main exhibition fit-out contractors and the provision of an App-based tour of the Town Hall and wider town.
- 4.4 Following the success of the 2015 town centre events delivered in partnership with the Borough Council including *Magna Carta 800* and *Lynn at War: Life on the Home Front*, NMS staff are liaising with borough colleagues to explore opportunities for future events in 2016.
- 4.5 The delivery of NMS services in King's Lynn & West Norfolk continues to operate under the terms of the 2015-16 Service Level Agreement with the Borough Council. Under an extension to this agreement, NMS continues to provide curatorial advice, support and an enquiry service for those Borough collections currently held in the Town Hall including fine art and Civic Regalia.

## **5 Learning & Outreach**

- 5.1 During 2015 the Lynn Museum has been hosting a 12 month Teaching Museum traineeship provided through the NMS *Teaching Museum* programme, funded by ACE as part of the 2015-18 Major Partner Museum ACE business plan. Trainee Morgan Bell is working as Curatorial Trainee

for King's Lynn and Thetford. Amongst a range of other activities, she helps coordinate the summer trails programme, supervises collections volunteers and schedules displays in the museum reception area.

5.2 Lynn Museum has continued to work with local schools to deliver a broad range of formal learning sessions. Learning programmes have been adapted following recent changes to the history National Curriculum. The Seahenge and early history displays and themes are proving popular with schools.

5.3 A recent partnership with local schools saw a project to decorate small wooden horses in connection with the *Art of the Mart* exhibition at Lynn Museum. The horses have been mounted on a turntable to form a colourful merry-go-round exhibit. This project was funded with a generous grant from the King's Lynn area Decorative and Fine Art Society.

## **6 Visitor numbers**

6.1 Visitor figures for the period will be circulated at the meeting.

## **7. Resource implications**

(a)	<u>Finance</u>	None
(b)	<u>Property</u>	None
(c)	<u>Staff</u>	None
(d)	<u>Information Technology</u>	None

## **8. Recommendations:**

1. That the Area Museums Committee notes the report

Originator of report:

Dr Robin Hanley

Head of Operations & Learning

Norfolk Museums Service

Shirehall, Norwich

Tel: 01603 493663

e-mail: robin.hanley@norfolk.gov.uk