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

September 3rd 2018

Item No.

KING'S LYNN MUSEUMS REPORT

Report by the Operations Manager - West

**This report provides information on King's Lynn
Museum activities in the period from May 2018 –
July 2018**

1. Temporary exhibitions and events at Lynn Museum

- 1.1 The current major exhibition at Lynn Museum is *Animal ABC from Ammonite to Zebra* aimed at families and drawing upon collections from, or inspired by, the natural world. *Animal ABC* was co-curated with the Curator of Natural History of Norfolk Museums Service (NMS). The exhibition was opened on 29th June by Deputy Mayor, Cllr Geoff Hipperson with a welcome by the Chair of the Area Museums Committee, Cllr Elizabeth Nockolds. Preparation of objects for display and the installation of artefacts was undertaken by NMS conservators and 3D design of the show was produced by the NMS Design & Technical team, working closely with Lynn Museum staff. Items exhibited within this multi-disciplinary display include natural history specimens, geology, toys, textile items and ephemera relating to household products. During this process, the object documentation records have been improved with the addition of photographs and supplementary information. *Animal ABC* opened to the public on the 30th June 2018 and visitors have been enjoying the displays and showing their appreciation. In association with the exhibition, the museum team has been working with the NMS Retail Manager to ensure a good range of animal related items are available for sale in the museum shop.
- 1.2 The previous major exhibition at Lynn Museum was *Shoes!* exploring the changes in footwear from the 13th century to the present day. The exhibition drew upon the museum's collection of historic footwear with additional items from the NMS costume and textile collection. The examples on show included both everyday shoes from the past and more elaborate shoes made for special occasions. There were

medieval shoes from archaeological excavations in King's Lynn, shoes discovered by builders deliberately concealed in old houses and heirloom shoes passed down through the generations. Also on show were a selection of shoes from recent decades. The exhibition ran until 17th June 2018.

- 1.3 In the summer of 2020 the Lynn Museum is planning to mark the bicentenary of Thomas Baines birth with an exhibition about the King's Lynn born artist brothers, Thomas and Henry Baines, drawing upon paintings in the Museum collections. Henry Baines painted a number of local scenes in the second half of the 19th century including many buildings that have since been demolished. These paintings form an interesting record of King's Lynn and the local area as well as having considerable aesthetic value. The following web link provides a list of works by Henry Baines in public ownership, mainly in King's Lynn:
<https://artuk.org/discover/artists/baines-henry-18231894>
- 1.4 In early 2017, the Lynn Museum held a special exhibition of two of the Anglo-Saxon Pentney brooches in the display case in the reception area of the Museum, on loan from the Trustees of the British Museum. This exhibition proved very popular. An application to request a loan of items from the famous Iron Age Snettisham hoard has now been approved by the British Museum and the museum team aims to provide a Snettisham display from March to August 2019.
- 1.5 The reception area display case remains a useful space in which to create changing displays and to showcase items not usually on display. The current display explores the theme of the history of whaling in King's Lynn and the Greenland Fishery. As well as items from the museum collections there are some handcrafted whales made by Jon Jackson, who will be giving a talk at Lynn Museum on whaling and the Greenland Fishery in October. The display was curated by Sam Parker, NMS Teaching Museum Trainee. The previous food themed display was developed by the former cohort of Teaching Museum trainees as part of a 'Display in a Day' training session.
- 1.6 The Lynn Museum offers a programme of afternoon talks and is using a format of a short seasons of talks, with four in March and four in October. The October talks programme is planned and follows the theme of the *Animal ABC* exhibition. The talks include: 3 October - 'Whales, Whaling and Greenland Fishery' by Jon Jackson, 10 October - 'Searching for Birds Named in Honour of J.H Gurney' by Clive Slater, 17 October - 'The Life and Works of Sir Alfred Munnings' by Dayna Woolbright and 24 October - 'Deep History Coast' by Dr David Waterhouse. Attendances for talks are normally in the range of 25-30 people.
- 1.7 An enhanced programme of informal family learning events continues to be offered at the Lynn Museum for the school holiday periods. The

May Bank Holiday saw a 1950s event (42 attendees) and the August summer holiday programme has included events each Thursday. A full programme of events throughout 2018 has been planned and a team day to review and plan for the 2019 programme will take place during September.

- 1.8 Lynn Museum participated in the first Norfolk Day on 27th July with an event day themed around the heritage of Savage's, King's Lynn's fairground ride manufacturer. This included the opportunity for members of the public to see a miniature model steam engine operate in the museum. The event was paired with Savage themed activities in the afternoon at Stories of Lynn and a joint ticket for both sites, the Custom House and True's Yard was made available. During the day, the museum had 98 visitors, of which 27 attended a pop up concert (see 4.10 for more information).
- 1.9 During the school holidays the Lynn Museum continues to offer a popular programme of themed gallery discovery trails, with a new trail developed by the museum team available for each week of the school holidays. The trails use different themes each time and children completing the trails receive a small prize. During the May Half Term holidays a 1950s themed trail was offered (73 participants). The first of the summer trails to link with the new exhibition *Animal ABC* was explored by 35 people.
- 1.10 To publicise the museum's events programme and enhance visitor numbers the Museum uses a variety of media including a 2018 version of the *History in Your Hands* event flier distributed through local schools and through a number of local attractions and businesses. Facebook and Twitter are also used to publicise events as well as press releases to local media. Over the summer in 2018 from 30 July to 20 August advertising on 10 buses is being undertaken following last year's successful bus-back campaign. For the first time a campaign using Google Ad words is also being run. In its first week this generated 9000 page impressions which in turn saw 104 people accessing the museum's website.
- 1.11 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. Recent themes include mindfulness, origami and making jam jar terrariums.

2. Other Museum Developments

- 2.1 The Lynn Museum, working in partnership with the Google Cultural Institute, currently has an online exhibition *Blubber, Bone and Baleen* exploring the history of the whaling industry using collections from Lynn Museum. Staff plan to create a new online exhibition on pilgrimage and

pilgrim badges, which was the subject of a study day at Lynn Museum in 2017, and an exhibition on Seahenge created by our new Coastal Treasures NMS Teaching Museum trainees.

- 2.2 The Lynn Museum continues to develop its social media presence, with Twitter and Facebook accounts being maintained by staff. The Lynn Museum accounts continue to grow with the Twitter account having 2,348 followers while the Facebook account has 578 follows. The Museum has been sharing images of watercolours of the town by former curator Christopher Thomas Page under the hashtag #WatercolourWednesday and has started running through the alphabet of the current Animal ABC exhibition. On Facebook there have been a number of posts using the 'History of Kings Lynn in 100 Objects' theme.
- 2.3 A team of collections volunteers continues to meet on a weekly basis in the NMS offices at Queen Street. Volunteers are engaged with a programme of work involving the scanning and cataloguing of the drawing collections by local artists and topographical prints of the King's Lynn area. The team's work enhances and illustrates the museum catalogue available online through the NMS collections website. Volunteers have also been assisting with the accessioning of new gifts to the Museum and collating useful information about collections for our catalogue.
- 2.4 The Museum's fortnightly *History of King's Lynn in 100 Objects* series with the Lynn News has generated significant interest. Recent artefacts featured include an African mask, a piece about the card playing taxidermy frogs in the current *Animal ABC* exhibition and an image of the South Gate. As the series comes to its 100th article, museum staff are in correspondence with Mark Leslie, editor of the paper about a follow up series perhaps focussing on local drawings, engravings and paintings.
- 2.5 Following issues with the stonework in one of the former chapel windows, protective scaffolding was erected inside and outside the museum prior to repairs being carried out. Funding is now in place for this maintenance work to go ahead and the repairs are planned for September.
- 2.6 2018 sees the 20th anniversary of the start of investigations into Seahenge and the 10th anniversary of the display of the preserved timbers at Lynn Museum. To mark this anniversary, the museum team is working with Clive Bond from the West Norfolk & Kings Lynn Archaeological Society and colleagues from the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment team to stage a Seahenge conference in November. This will be an opportunity to reflect on the significance and meaning of Seahenge in light of recent research and findings, most notably David Robertson's study of Holme II, the second and contemporary structure found on the beach. The 'Coastal Treasures'

NMS Teaching Museum Trainees Andrew Tullett and Monika Saganowska will be assisting with the conference arrangements. Francis Pryor has agreed to speak and open the day on Saturday 10th November. There are proposals for a schools conference event on the 9th November. The Museum team is also looking to use this opportunity to create a popular souvenir publication about Seahenge for sale in the museum shop.

3. Friends of King's Lynn Museums

- 3.1 The Friends are continuing to offer a varied programme for members including a newsletter, trips and an annual lecture. Other Friends benefits include free admission to the Museum and to the afternoon talks programme.
- 3.2 The annual fundraising lecture organised by the Friends will this year be by Dr Jody Joy, Senior Curator of Archaeology at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge who will be speaking about the Snettisham Treasure in its East Anglian context. The talk will take place at Marriott's Warehouse at 7.30pm on the evening of 26th September.
- 3.3 The Friends of the Museum hold regular committee meetings at the Museum and receive reports on the museum activities, upcoming events and requests for supporting museum purchases or conservation.
- 3.4 An unveiling event for the recently acquired painting by Henry Baines in December 2017 was hosted by the Friends, who are looking at making a Christmas social event an annual occasion for members. A Friends event including object handling is planned for the afternoon of the 10th December 2018.
- 3.5 A Junior Friends of Kings Lynn Museum scheme continues to be offered to encourage more young people to be involved.

4 Partnerships

- 4.1 The delivery of NMS services in King's Lynn & West Norfolk continues to operate under the terms of the 2018-19 Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Borough Council. Under an extension to this agreement, NMS continues to provide curatorial and conservation advice, support and an enquiry service for those Borough collections currently held in the Town Hall including fine art and Civic Regalia.
- 4.2 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 SLA between the Borough Council and NMS.

- 4.3 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, NMS continues to lead on the delivery of the project Activity Plan.
- 4.4 NMS is continuing to host the Stories of Lynn Learning & Engagement Officer, who works closely with colleagues from the Borough Council and the Norfolk Record Office. Rachael Williams, Learning and Engagement Officer works with Melissa Hawker, Learning Officer and Dayna Woolbright, Assistant Curator on such aspects as school visits and temporary exhibitions.
- 4.5 Dayna Woolbright, Assistant Curator for Lynn Museum continues to support curatorial aspects of Stories of Lynn, such as display snagging, assistance with exhibitions and work on the Town Hall's collections storage facility.
- 4.6 A programme of summer holiday activities are being delivered at Stories of Lynn organised by Learning and Engagement Officer Rachael Williams with the following daily programme: Mondays: Merchants Making Day, Tuesdays: Fairground Fun Time, Wednesdays: Pirates Playtime, Thursdays: Guilty! Get into Gaol!, and Fridays: Fairground Fun Time.
- 4.7 Partnership working with the Borough Council on events continues and NMS staff were once more involved in the planning and delivery of the Second World War themed town-wide event *Forties Lynn: Life on the Home Front* on Sunday 22nd July. The *Forties Lynn* event again proved very popular at Lynn Museum with 846 visitors attending and enjoying the wartime themed activities both at the museum and around the town. The Museums Service will also be participating in the Heritage Open Day in September.
- 4.8 On behalf of the Borough Council, NMS staff have been working on the project for improving the interpretation and display of the town's South Gate, a grade one listed building and scheduled ancient monument. The South Gate project team comprising Borough Council and museum staff has been meeting monthly to plan and to review progress. A building conservation plan brings together information about the architectural, historical and archaeological significance of the site. The new displays have been installed and the site opened to the public on 4th August 2018. The interpretation renewal improves the way information about the building is presented, making it more attractive and engaging to visitors. The Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk worked in partnership with NMS to secure £89,500 of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, made possible by money raised by National Lottery players. The project also received a generous donation of £3,500 from The Friends of The Walks, a group of volunteers who

show visitors round the South Gate and the Red Mount; the 14th-century chapel in King's Lynn's renowned town centre park. The work undertaken at South Gate includes installing new interior lighting and replacing the information panels inside and outside the building, which date from the 1980s. Some of the interpretation panels show the view from upper windows as it would have been in centuries past; Interactive elements like a scale model, and an activity table where visitors can make brass rubbings have been added. Displays of replica furniture, smells and objects bring the history of the South Gate to life; visitors can try on replica helmets for a taste of life as a defender of this ancient gateway. The South Gate is open to the public on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday from 1pm to 4pm, from mid-May to mid-September.

- 4.9 During 2018 the Lynn Museum is open once more on Sunday afternoons from 12pm until 4pm from April until September. This additional opening is made possible by financial support from the Borough Council. A Sunday joint ticket, available to visitors of Stories of Lynn to also explore both the Custom House exhibition and the Lynn Museum is also available. Previously, this joint ticket has seen positive uptake.
- 4.10 The Museum has worked with the King's Lynn Festival again in 2018 to follow up three years of successful partnership working. The Lynn Museum works as a 'pop-up venue' for recitals during the July Festival period. On Friday 27 July, the museum hosted the Consone Quartet playing in the atmospheric replica Seahenge circle to an audience of 27 people. In addition, the museum supported the *Lynn from all Angles* exhibition of Walter Dexter and works by contemporary artist Jon Harris. The exhibition, held at the Fermoy Gallery, featured loans of oil paintings, sketches and posters from the Lynn Museum collection. This Festival exhibition ran over three weeks from 14 July - 4 August with attendance of 1,075 visitors, more than in previous years. A further collaborative art exhibition drawing on NMS modern & contemporary art collections and celebrating the theme of 'Place' is planned for display at the Fermoy gallery in October 2018.
- 4.11 The Museum has been working in partnership with Norfolk County Council's Children and Adults Social Services by providing free admission cards to the Lynn Museum for care leavers. One hundred cards were delivered to NCC colleagues at Priory House, King's Lynn for distribution to the young people.
- 4.12 The Museum team is currently working with the 'Digital Pilgrim' project, supported by the Paul Mellon Foundation and in conjunction with the University of Cambridge and the British Museum. On 26th June the museum welcomed a visiting Canadian academic from Waterloo University and her students to improve documentation of the town's significant pilgrim badge collection.

5 Learning & Outreach

- 5.1 During 2018-2019, the Lynn Museum is hosting three 12 month Teaching Museum traineeships provided through the NMS *Teaching Museum* programme. Samantha Parker is the new Curatorial Trainee, based at the Lynn Museum and the Ancient House Museum in Thetford. Her traineeship is funded through the Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation 2018-2022 Business Plan. Amongst a range of other activities, Sam has helped on the South Gates project, Animal ABC exhibition and is continuing to work with colleagues to support visitors with autism to explore the museum.
- 5.2 Fellow Teaching Museum trainees Andrew Tullett and Monika Saganowska are funded through the Norfolk *Coastal Treasures* project. In July 2017, Norfolk County Council was awarded funding from the Government's Coastal Communities Fund for this project to promote sustainable tourism and new ways of accessing the wealth of heritage interest in the coastal area between King's Lynn and Holme. The project will develop walking and cycling trails, aligned to the delivery of Stretch 4 of the long distance England Coast Path, and use new technologies to bring the heritage assets of this area to life. Andrew and Monika are based in the museum offices at the Town Hall. During the year they will focus on key heritage assets of this area including the Holme timber circle known as Seahenge and the internationally important Iron Age finds from Snettisham.
- 5.3 The Coastal Treasures project aims to complement the West Norfolk Trails Development programme and meetings have taken place with Undina Reinfelde, the Borough Trails Officer to consider linkages and joint working.
- 5.4 Lynn Museum has continued to work with local schools to deliver a broad range of formal learning sessions. Learning programmes have been adapted following the changes to the history National Curriculum. The Seahenge and early history displays and themes remain popular, with schools and school numbers up on last year's total.
- 5.5 Recent partnership work with the Stories of Lynn project at the Town Hall has included a number of joint session for schools exploring the town's heritage.
- 5.6 As referenced in the previous report, the learning programme is delivered by a combination of museum staff and specialised freelancers. Key to the sustainability of the schools programme is the involvement of the Front of House Supervisor and Museum Learning Assistants in assisting with development and delivery. In order to do this, they need to be able to deliver quality learning and respond flexibly to teachers' needs. We are pleased to report again that, following training from Learning Officer Melissa Hawker; Sophie,

Bethany and Folasade have been doing excellent work supporting learning at Lynn Museum.

6 Visitor numbers

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

7. Resource implications

(a) Finance

Lynn Museum receives funding to support core operations and activities from Norfolk County Council and through a Service Level Agreement with the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk. A number of activities are financed as part of funding to Norfolk Museums Service from Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation under the terms of the current 2018-22 Business Plan. Project activities are funded from a range of external sources including the Heritage Lottery Fund. The source of these funds are detailed within the report. The above report includes no additional or unfunded financial implications.

(b) Property

Unless specified, the above activities relate to the Lynn Museum, the Town Hall NMS offices and Aickman's Yard museum stores. The above report includes no additional implications relating to property.

(c) Staff

The team at Lynn Museum are supported by a wider team of colleagues within Norfolk Museums Service, in addition to partnership working with the Borough Council to deliver additional projects and activities. Some current posts are funded by external project funding. The above report includes no additional implications relating to staffing and personnel resources.

(d) Information Technology

Digital operations at Lynn Museum are supported by Norfolk County Council's IMT department. Social media is delivered by the Lynn Museum team. The above report includes no additional implications relating to Information Technology.

8. Recommendations:

1. That the Area Museums Committee notes the report

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