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

**March 4<sup>th</sup> 2019**

**KING'S LYNN MUSEUMS REPORT**

**Report by the Assistant Head of Museums**

**This report provides information on King's Lynn  
Museum activities in the period from November  
2018 to January 2019**

- 1. Temporary exhibitions and events at Lynn Museum**
  - 1.1 The current major exhibition at Lynn Museum is *Animal ABC: from Ammonite to Zebra*. The exhibition is primarily aimed at a family audiences and draws upon collections from, or inspired by, the natural world. *Animal ABC* was co-curated with the Curator of Natural History for Norfolk Museums Service. Preparation of objects for display and installation of artefacts was undertaken by NMS conservators and 3D design of the show was by the NMS Design team, working closely with Lynn Museum staff. Items exhibited within this multi-disciplinary exhibition include natural history specimens, geology, toys, textile items and ephemera relating to household products. *Animal ABC* opened to the public on the 30 June 2018 and visitors have been enjoying the displays and showing their appreciation. In association with the exhibition, the museum team worked with the NMS Retail Manager to ensure a good range of animal related items for sale in the museum shop.
  - 1.2 The summer 2019 exhibition at Lynn Museum will be *Journeys, People, Place and Pilgrimage*. It will connect with - and be funded by - projects by partners in the Norfolk County Council's Environment team on the themes of Green Pilgrimage and Coastal Treasures. Funding for the Green Pilgrimage project is derived from the ERDF Interreg programme and for the Coastal Treasures project from the Coastal Communities Fund. The exhibition will draw upon the museum's rich collections relating to West Norfolk including the nationally significant historic collection of pilgrim badges found in King's Lynn's River Purfleet. These badges include a number of medieval lead souvenirs from the important shrine at Walsingham. Additional pilgrim badges

will be loaned from the Peter Sibley Collection at Walsingham and also Oscott College, Birmingham, with grateful thanks to the trustees of these organisations. Other planned exhibits include a feature on the railway journey to Hunstanton for holidaymakers and the display of a knitted bathing costume from the Museum's costume and textile collections and journeys to and from Norway and the Arctic. One of the Interreg project European partners from the Green Pilgrimage project is offering loans of medieval Grimston Ware from North West Norfolk that had been traded to Norway and Sweden and found in archaeological excavations there. There will be a Green Pilgrimage Interreg project partner visit to Norfolk in September and the group plans to visit King's Lynn on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> September.

- 1.3 In the summer of 2020 the Lynn Museum is planning to mark the bicentenary of the birth of Thomas Baines with an exhibition exploring the King's Lynn born artist brothers, Thomas and Henry Baines and drawing upon the significant body of their work in the Museum collections. Henry Baines painted a number of local scenes in the second half of the 19th century, including a number of buildings that have since been demolished. These paintings form an interesting social history record of King's Lynn and the local area as well as having considerable aesthetic value. A list of works by Henry Baines in public ownership, mainly at King's Lynn can be found at:  
<https://artuk.org/discover/artists/baines-henry-18231894>
- 1.4 In early 2017, the Lynn Museum hosted a special exhibition of two of the Anglo-Saxon Pentney brooches which on loan from the Trustees of the British Museum. The brooches were exhibited in the display case in the reception area of the Museum. This display proved very popular, attracting a significant number of visitors to the museum. 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 is working with the British Museum to provide a Snettisham-themed 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 from store that are not usually on display. The Museum team has recently explored the theme of the Four Seasons. It has been developed by the current cohort of NMS Teaching Museum trainees as part of a 'Display in a Day' training session, which formed part of the Teaching Museum development programme. The current display features New Year's resolutions illustrated by museum artefacts.
- 1.6 The Lynn Museum continues to offer Wednesday afternoon talks using a format of short seasons of themed talks with four in March and four in October. The March talks programme include *Egyptology*, *A Cabinet of Curiosities* by Samantha Parker on 6<sup>th</sup> March, *Cooking Equipment in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in King's Lynn* by Tony Weston on 13<sup>th</sup> March, *History Underfoot: Medieval Floor Tiles* by Monika Saganowska on 20<sup>th</sup> March

and *A Natural History of Lynn Museum* by Andrew Tullett on 27<sup>th</sup> March. The talks are normally fully booked. Attendances for talks are normally in the range 25-30.

- 1.7 An enhanced programme of informal family learning events continues to be offered at the Lynn Museum during the school holiday periods. A full programme of events throughout 2019 has now been planned. The February Half Term sees a 1940s themed event on 21<sup>st</sup> February with object handling, crafts and food and an Egyptians themed event is planned for the Easter holidays on 11<sup>th</sup> April.
- 1.8 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 this activity receive a small prize. Christmas themed trails were available over the Christmas holidays.
- 1.9 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 have included Egyptians and Christmas.
- 1.10 The team at the Lynn Museum has trialled a Mini-Museum Club aimed at under 5s. This programme ran over 6 weeks from 2 October to 13 November with an average of 10 children participating per session. Following this successful launch, the museum team is starting a Mini-Museum programme of activities for very young children on the second Tuesday of the month during 2019.
- 1.11 To publicise the museum’s events programme and enhance visitor numbers the Museum uses a variety of media. The 2019 version of the *History in Your Hands* event flier will be 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.

## **2. Other Museum Developments**

- 2.1 The Lynn Museum’s partnership with the Google Cultural Institute currently included the online exhibition *Blubber, Bone and Baleen*, exploring the history of the whaling industry using collections from Lynn Museum. Staff plan to follow this up with a new online exhibition on the theme of pilgrimage and pilgrim badges
- 2.2 The Lynn Museum continues to develop its social media presence, with Twitter and Facebook accounts being actively used and maintained by staff. The Lynn Museum accounts continue to grow with the Twitter account having 2,476 followers while the Facebook account has 649 follows. The Museum has been sharing images of watercolours of the

town by former curator Christopher Thomas Page under the hashtag #WatercolourWednesday and has been 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 these collections for the catalogue.
- 2.4 The Museum's fortnightly *History of King's Lynn in 100 Objects* series with the Lynn News has generated significant interest. After the series came to its 100<sup>th</sup> article, museum staff have now started a follow up series *Picture This*, focussing on local drawings, engravings and paintings. Examples of published works have included a painting of Aickmans Yard and a photograph of Frederick Savage's workshop.
- 2.5 2018 was the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of investigations into Seahenge and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the display of the preserved timbers at Lynn Museum. To mark this anniversary, the museum team worked with Dr Clive Bond from the Kings Lynn Archaeology Society and colleagues from the Historic Environment team to stage a Seahenge conference on 10 November. This event provided an opportunity to reflect on the significance and meaning of Seahenge in light of recent research and findings, most notably Dr David Robertson's study of Holme II, the second and contemporary structure found on the beach. The NMS Teaching Museum 'Coastal Treasures' Trainees Andrew Tullett and Monika Saganowska assisted with the planning and arrangements for the event. Professor Francis Pryor introduced the day and other speakers include John Lorimer, who brought attention to the timber structure on the beach, Dr Peter Bray examining early metallurgy, Dr Nick Thorpe discussing the European significance and Debbie Harris from the NMS Conservation team speaking about the conservation of the timbers. The conference was fully booked with 67 tickets sold to members of the public. The conference also included a visit to the Lynn Museum to see the Seahenge displays and hear presentations from Hannah Jackson and John Lorimer. Volunteer students from the College of West Anglia filmed the conference and museum staff plan to publish the talks. The museum team are working with NMS Retail Manager to create a popular souvenir publication about Seahenge for sale in the museum shop in 2019. There are also plans to update the information in the displays to include reference to Holme II.

- 2.6 To complement the Seahenge conference, the 'Coastal Treasures' trainees led a walk at Holme on Thursday 8 November. This was also fully booked. This walk included a visit to the beach where the timbers were discovered and talks by Dr David Robertson. Participants also were able to see the recreated wooden monument on the outskirts of the village built as part of a Time Team episode with Dr Francis Pryor.
- 2.7 Also connected with the conference was a popular evening author event at Lynn Museum on the 10 November with author Elly Griffiths, who read from her novel *The Crossing Place* which featured her character forensic archaeologist Dr Ruth Galloway and an ancient timber circle not unlike Seahenge. Again, this event was fully booked in advance. The Museum now sells a number copies of Elly Griffiths' books in the museum shop.
- 2.8 To mark the First World War Armistice Anniversary, six heritage and educational organisations across King's Lynn (King's Lynn Library, Stories of Lynn, Custom House, Lynn Museum, St Nicholas' Chapel and True's Yard) worked together on a First World War remembrance project: *Scars of War*. The project has been focused on graffiti, using the soldier's graffiti found on King's Lynn Library tower as inspiration to create six permanent memorials using lino-cutting and printing. Artist Rebecca Hearle led free workshops across the six sites in King's Lynn. This project also included the production of a town wide Graffiti Trail involving all six sites. Participants followed the trail leaflet map and visited the settings to view the art work produced through the project, alongside the "historical graffiti" including the inscriptions on the window at Stories of Lynn. The trail was launched on 19 January 2019 at the Town Hall with the Military Wives Choir performing.
- 2.9 The Lynn Museum contributed exhibits to the museum service's county-wide commemorative *Armistice* exhibition at Norwich Castle, including examples from the important poster collections and reference to the first zeppelin raids and the manufacture of bombs by local firm, Coopers. These items are now safely returned following the end of the exhibition.
- 2.10 Lynn Museum and Stories of Lynn have started to play a significant part in *Kick the Dust* project. This is an exciting 4 year project supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It is aimed at young people aged 11-25 years of age with specific focus on young people who face significant barriers to participation in heritage and arts activities. This includes harder to reach groups of young people: care leavers, children who are looked after, refugees and YMCA clients. The *Kick the Dust* project aims to work with 8,000 young people between July 2018 and June 2022 working in consortium with Creative Collisions and YMCA (Norfolk). Designed by young people for young people the project offers the chance to take part in a range of exciting activities and events inspired by the vast collections and objects held by Norfolk Museums Service as well as structured work placements

and work awareness opportunities which will support the development of work related skills as well as open young peoples' eyes to the range of job roles within the heritage sector. Each young person will be supported in developing their own unique pathway which meets their needs and interests and which in turn will help shape the future of the Museums Service in attracting more young people in the future. As well as taking part in a range of activities the young people will have the opportunity to gain a 'behind the scenes' understanding of museums and how they operate. They could find themselves working in a team to host an event or put on an exhibition; learn how to display and mount work; produce a tour; developing the social media around such an event; be involved in 'Take Over days'. In addition all young people will have the opportunity to gain accredited skills and training through the Arts Award programme.

- 2.11 Current *Kick the Dust* projects in King's Lynn include establishing a regular forum for young people, making a film for the South Gate and a Queer History project. For the latter, young people from Thetford's Ancient House's Teenage History Club will be coming to Lynn Museum to mark LGBT History Month, researching the collections and leading tours. The Teenage History Club members are going 'on the road' to queer the collections at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse on 20 February and Lynn Museum on 22 February. The tours build on the Teenage History Club's *Rainbow Pride* project and *Pride of the People: Helping History Out of the Closet* exhibition which ran at the Ancient House Museum. The Pride project came out of a discussion at one of the Club's sessions, where the young people were shocked to discover homosexuality was illegal until 1967. The group requested a project to explore what life was like for non-heterosexual people in the past in the local area. The project has particular appeal as some of the group identify as LGBTQ+ or queer. The young people have been working on the project since September 2017.

### **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 At a recent committee meeting, ideas were considered for the Annual fundraising lecture in September 2019. Last September, Dr Jody Joy's talk about the 'Snettisham Treasure' proved very popular.
- 3.3 The Friends of King's Lynn 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. A badge making machine has been acquired for the museum by the Friends for use with school groups and on family event days.

- 3.4 A Christmas social event took place at 3pm on the afternoon of 10 December 2018 for the Friends as a follow up to last year's successful 'unveiling' event for the new Baines painting. The event this year included object handling and a chance to see the various important contributions made by the Friends to the work of the Museum in recent years including the purchase of exhibits. The event was attended by 20 Friends and enjoyed by participants.
- 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. NMS manages the Stories of Lynn Learning & Engagement Officer post. The postholder Rachael Williams works closely with colleagues from the Borough Council and the Norfolk Record Office. Funding from the Borough Council has enabled this post to continue for a further 12 months from the ending of HLF funding in November 2018.
- 4.4 Partnership working with the Borough Council on events continues and the Norfolk Museums Service is once more involved in the planning and delivery of the Second World War themed town-wide event *Forties Lynn: Life on the Home Front* in July 2019. NMS will also participate in the town-wide Heritage Open Day in September 2019.
- 4.5 On behalf of the Borough Council, NMS staff have been working on the project to improve the interpretation and display of the town's South Gate, a grade one listed building and scheduled ancient monument. The Borough Council worked in partnership with NMS to secure £89,500 of funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The project also received a generous donation of £3,500 from The Friends of The Walks. The new displays have been installed and the site opened to the public on 4 August 2018. The new interpretation improves the way information about the building is presented, making it more attractive and engaging to visitors. The work completed includes installing new interior lighting, and replacing the information panels

inside and outside the building, which date from the 1980s. Additional work under the scheme to be completed in 2019 includes the delivery of a holiday event programme, work with schools and production of a film working with young people.

- 4.6 The Lynn Museum will open once more on Sunday afternoons from 12pm until 4pm between April and September 2019. This additional opening is made possible by financial support from the Borough Council. A Sunday joint ticket, available to visitors of Stories of Lynn also explore both the Custom House exhibition and the Lynn Museum is also available.
- 4.7 The Museum Service will be working with the King's Lynn Festival again in 2019 to follow up four years of successful partnership working. The Lynn Museum works as a 'pop-up venue' for recitals during the July Festival period. In 2018 the museum supported the *Lynn from all Angles* Festival exhibition of Walter Dexter and works by contemporary artist Jon Harris held at the Fermoy Gallery, which featured loans of oil paintings, sketches and posters from the Lynn Museum collection. A further collaborative art exhibition drawing on NMS modern and contemporary art collections and exploring the theme of *Place* was held at the Fermoy Gallery in October 2018 as part of the Look Sideways East project providing partnership support to the King's Lynn Festival by NMS and the Norfolk & Norwich Festival. Further collaboration is planned for Fermoy Gallery exhibitions linked to Festival weekends in April and October 2019, curated by the NMS Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art and drawing on NMS collections.
- 4.8 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 our colleagues at Priory House, King's Lynn for distribution to the young people.

## **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 and funded through the Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation 2018-2022 NMS Business Plan.. Samantha Parker is the current Curatorial Trainee, based at the Lynn Museum and the Ancient House Museum in Thetford. Amongst a range of other activities, Sam has helped on the South Gates project, *Animal ABC* exhibition and displays in the reception case.
- 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 is developing walking and cycling trails, aligned to the delivery of Stretch 4 of the long distance England Coast Path, and is using 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 have focussed 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 Lynn Museum has continued to work with local schools to deliver a broad range of formal learning sessions. The Seahenge and early history displays and themes remain popular with schools and school numbers up on the previous year. The NMS Learning Officer offers flexible bespoke workshops to suit teachers' needs. Recent examples have included a Great Fire of London day at Lynn Museum and Stories of Lynn and a workshop comparing King's Lynn with its twin town in Germany.
- 5.4 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, with a particular focus on Flooding, Vancouver and Frederick Savage, with these sessions often using the archive as a 'jumping off' point for exploration. Successful co-working between NMS, Borough Archive staff, Lynn Museum and Stories of Lynn staff has been supported by Work Experience students from the College of West Anglia.

## **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

Originator of report:

Robin Hanley  
Assistant Head of Museums (Head of Service Delivery)  
Shirehall, Market Avenue, Norwich NR1 3JQ  
Tel: 01603 493663 e-mail: [robin.hanley@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:robin.hanley@norfolk.gov.uk)