

## York Museums Trust Performance Report: April - October 2006

### Analysis of performance

1. The Partnership Delivery Plan (PDP) sets out a number of key targets relating to the Council's core objectives. The following paragraphs summarise the progress towards the 7 major targets outlined in the PDP.

#### *a) stabilising visitor figures*

2. In August 2002 one of the key objectives given to YMT was that of halting the long-term decline in visitor numbers. During the year from April 2002 to March 2003 the total number of visitors was 395,000. Since then we have seen an upward trend and in the 2005/06 financial year the sites had 465,000 visitors representing an increase of 17.7%.
3. This year YMT set itself the target of breaking the barrier of 500,000 visitors for the first time. During the first 6 months we have welcomed 314,000 visitors to Trust sites, which compares with 276,000 last year representing 13.8% ahead of target.
4. The clearest successes in terms of numbers have been the refurbishment of Kirkgate, the Victorian Street at York Castle Museum (up 24%) and the Constantine Exhibition at the Yorkshire Museum (up 16%).

#### *b) delivering new income streams*

5. YMT has generated nearly £3.5 million during the last 4 years. Details of fundraising applications made during the reporting period are attached at Annex 2. The categories of new income streams are as follows:
6. **Trusts and Foundations** have been generous in supporting new projects. Noteworthy is the major grant of £200,000 from the Wolfson Foundation for the 1960s Experience for the Castle Museum which is due to open in 2008. The Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation also gave support to a small exhibition on Japanese prints and ceramics which is currently on show at York Art Gallery.
7. In December YMT submitted an application to the **Heritage Lottery Fund** for a major capital bid for St Mary's Abbey Precinct, to refurbish the Yorkshire Museum and start the process of improving the Museum Gardens, as well as addressing the collection storage issues. This was to be the first phase of the St Mary's Abbey Precinct project which will involve, in later phases, the extension of the gardens up to the back of York Art Gallery, creating a new green route through the gardens to connect with Exhibition Square. The total bid was for £9.3 million and was rejected by HLF in July 2006. YMT is currently working on a more focussed bid which will be submitted in December 2006. Central to the

plan is the concept of the Cultural Quarter which is to be developed by YMT in partnership with CYC.

8. **Business Sponsorship** was secured for the Constantine project with Shepherd Building Group and we successfully applied for an Arts & Business award to help develop this partnership with employees of Shepherds.
9. **Renaissance in the Regions** is an important income stream from Central Government, which is secured until 2008. The Yorkshire Hub's Business Plan for 2007-8 was agreed by the Museums , Libraries and Archives Council which will enable YMT to continue developing the schools programme as well as improving the displays and programme at the Castle Museum. This additional funding from Renaissance in the Regions was conditional on City of York core funding remaining the same in real terms at the minimum. Continued funding beyond 2008 will be decided by Government at the next Comprehensive Spending Review.
10. **Conferencing and corporate hospitality** continues to grow. This was minimal in 2002/03; the turnover this year will be more than £100k and we are on course to achieve the target profit of £36k. Plans are currently being laid to develop the Hospitium as YMT's primary conference centre by 2008 with facilities including toilets, office, stairs and lift. The Kirkgate refurbishment has prompted renewed interest in it as a corporate hire venue and we expect this to develop.
11. **Retail** business has moved from a loss making position to a profit making one over the past three accounting periods. Retail performance for the 6 months to 30 September is well ahead of that for the same period last year – sales of £281k have yielded a profit of £42k compared with £11k last year.

Long-term Profit / loss:

8 months to March 2003	loss of approx. £11K
12 months to March 2004	£2k profit
12 months to March 2005	£9k profit
12 months to March 2006	£12k profit
6 months to September 2006	£42k profit

c) *new exhibitions and interpretative service*

- 12 The **Constantine** Exhibition was the main event in the Yorkshire Museum. Over the run of the exhibition it received 53289 visitors and 1510 catalogues were sold. The catalogue was short listed for the prestigious AXA Art Newspaper and Exhibition Catalogue prize, having been selected from 124 entries down to the final 20. The award will be announced in London on 27 November. The exhibition was extremely well covered by the press.

The upper gallery at the Yorkshire Museum has been transformed into a **Ceramic Safari** in a joint Decorative Arts/Natural History exhibition. This exhibition displays a wide variety of ceramic vessels using animals as decorative motifs. Also in the Yorkshire Museum, alterations to the permanent archaeology galleries have been implemented to make them more family friendly, including the creation of a small reading corner in the medieval gallery.

13. The exhibition **Tom Bendhem:Collector** was held at York Art Gallery and included works by well known contemporary artists. It was organised by the Contemporary Art Society and was an opportunity to meet up with Collectors from London and Yorkshire. This was followed by the very popular exhibition **Icons and Idols** which was on loan from the National Portrait Gallery. This was the only other showing of the exhibition outside London. A new display of Japanese prints and studio ceramics was opened in the Little Gallery.

At York St Mary's **Echo** by Susie MacMurray was opened in June and ran until October. This site specific installation was made possible by a grant from the Arts Council Yorkshire.

14. The new Kirkgate has continued to attract visitors. We have also added activities during the holiday periods which has added value to the visit to the street. Projects such as **Life of Grime** was a great success.

d) *create an education strategy*

15. The Lifelong Learning Team has been awarded the Sandford Award for educational services to schools. This is a great achievement given that the Learning Team has only been operating fully for a relatively short time. The staff team are now delivering a comprehensive service to an increasing number of schoolchildren and have published the second programme of school sessions that address the needs of the National Curriculum. The team also organises informal activities for the general public and to visitors across the three main sites during the holiday periods. It is YMT policy to have special events at half terms and summer holidays to attract residents and visitors to the museums.
16. The Schools programme is largely funded by the Yorkshire Hub. The funding enables us to employ staff as well as investing in the educational spaces. We now have dedicated learning spaces at each of the three main venues. The impact of these new resources is shown in the figures at annex 4. Each of the learning spaces has its own special qualities and resources that are suitable for the varied programme that we offer to schools. The Lab, is the new e-learning space in the Yorkshire Museum which is fully equipped with new technology including white board, computers, digital cameras, sound recorders and microscopes. It is proving very popular and is an effective way to promote science learning and develop our outreach and e-learning offers, in particular the learning journeys on the Hub website [www.mylearning.org](http://www.mylearning.org).
17. The Studio at York Art Gallery offers opportunities for practical work relating to the National Curriculum whilst the Victorian Schoolroom at

Castle Museum offers a chance to experience Victorian teaching techniques. We consult with teachers regularly as to their requirements and we work with a growing number of organisations on projects. Some of these are as follows: NYBEP, York St John University, Young Archaeology Club, Theatre Royal, City Archives to name a few.

18. We have also organised formal and informal learning activities for the **Constantine** exhibition including workshops on Roman food, army, theatre and entertainment. These events took place in the 'Curia', a specially created Roman room within the museum. A family guide was written based around some of the objects on show and activities on catapults, board games and Roman recreation were held.
19. Science activities included **Wild Wednesdays** that attracted a great number of people in the Museum Gardens. Each Wednesday during August featured a different area of Natural History. We also published **The Garden Explorer** for self directed activity. Astronomy events included Observatory open evenings, sun observing and talks were organised.

Full details of all the events are available if required.

e) *increase use and involvement by residents*

20. The Studio at the York Art Gallery has given us the capacity to have an active programme of activities. An annual event is the Big Draw week in October which attracts a lot of families. Central to our developing relationship with local communities is the **Territories** project which is a community involvement project seeking to work with hard to reach groups. This is an audience development project and is in its third year funded by the Arts Council Yorkshire until December 2006. New funding is being sought for 2007.

We have worked with over thirty community groups over the last two years representing 14 groups of 250 people, over 25 days, in the year 2004-2005 and 20 groups, 395 people, over 32 days in the year 2005 – 2006.

The groups included the following:

- Brunswick Organic Nursery and Craftworkshop - Adults with Learning Difficulties
- Community, Voluntary & Hospital based Mental Health Service Groups:
  - Clifton House, Driveway, New Lane and Red Roofs working with the Assertive Outreach teams as part of Mental Health Rehabilitation Service
  - Sycamore House – Adults from Mental Health Day Centre
  - Our Celebration - Mental Health Charity
  - The Retreat
- York Carnival - Active York Community

- Fathers and children – with Family Learning
- Future Prospects working with the following groups:
  - Dawn Team - Learning Disability Groups,
  - BME groups – Women,
  - Baby Gap – Teenage Mums and Mental Health Community Groups
- The Peasholme Centre - Homeless Group
- Age Concern Cherry Tree House Club – Social Activity Club for older people with dementia or Mental Health Problems
- Informal Carers and Young Carers, Selby and York Carers Centre
- Blind and Partially Sighted Society
- Women’s Aid Refuge
- Songbox 0 – 4 year olds and mums
- Express Yourself – Family Learning Group
- YACRO – York Association for the Care and Re-settlement of Offenders

**Family First** days, held on the first Saturday of every month are primarily aimed at local people.

21. The St Mary’s Precinct project has been developed with the help of a Steering Group that comprises the University of York, the City Of York Council’s planning and parks sections, English Heritage and St Olave’s Church. The consultation process has been expanded to include a wider group of Stakeholders including York Conservation Advisory Panel, CYC Conservation, Yorkshire Philosophical Society, Police and others.
22. As part of the Constantine celebrations, YMT organised a commemorative service for 25 July with the Minster where a special service took place as well as a procession through part of the city leading to a performance by young people from York. This was organised with York St John staff and students. The event was only made possible with the support from many people and organisations within the city. The Arts & Business award we received has enabled us to give special evening access to employees of Shepherd Building Group, our sponsors of the exhibition.
23. We have now appointed a Volunteers Manger who is currently working on two pilot schemes. A full volunteers programme is due to be launched in April 2007. This project is funded by the Yorkshire Hub.

f) *achieve high visitor satisfaction*

24. In October YMT held a Public Meeting which attracted 15 members of the public. This was a good deal less than in previous years but we see

this as positive as local people have less anxiety about the creation of YMT. However, they all asked pertinent questions which we found useful in thinking about future plans. The overall impression was very positive. An on-line Annual Report is now available on the website.

25. Visitor satisfaction at York Castle Museum continues to be high – research on the reaction to the Victorian Street showed that 89% of visitors thought it ‘Good’ or ‘Excellent’. At the other venues we monitor visitor satisfaction through a comments book and questionnaires. This is more qualitative than quantitative but is a good guide as to our visitor’s reactions. The responses to ECHO were particularly positive.

Currently we are undergoing market research process for the HLF bid for Yorkshire Museum which will inform the displays and exhibitions within the refurbished museum.

MORI were in the museums during October half-term and we await the results.

We are currently working on a touch-screen system for tracking and reporting customer feedback on a more regular basis. This is already being used to ascertain the opinions of visitor’s with regard to possible changes in the café at the Castle Museum.

*g) ensure the cataloguing of the collection*

**26. Major Projects**

A highlight of this period has been the launch of the North Yorkshire volume for the Public Catalogue Foundation which features all the paintings in public collections held in North Yorkshire, of which York’s collection is the largest. The catalogues are now on sale in York Art Gallery. Proceeds from the sale of the catalogue benefit the conservation of our Fine Art Collection.

**27. Documentation**

We have continued progress against both our collections plan and our retrospective documentation plan and we are monitoring progress quarterly to ensure we will complete the retrospective documentation to accreditation standard by our target of 2010. Statistics for progress on retrospective documentation are included at annex 3.

There are many specific documentation projects that warrant specific mention. All items that are on display in Kirkgate have been re-catalogued and photographed, and are now being added into our computer database. This has been a huge undertaking, and is in line with our collection plan whereby collection management and public programmes are linked together.

The Geology collection is now completely up to Accreditation Standard through bulk accessioning. Work is now proceeding on enhancing the

records for individual objects within the bulk records, and appears to be moving well on target. Progress has also been made on the documentation of the rock collection, the scientific instruments catalogue, the Herbarium and the exotic shell collection.

Archaeology has focused on a location audit for the prehistoric collections and work has begun on completing the documentation of the architectural collections stored at Birch Park. Several volunteers have started to catalogue parts of the collections that have not received a great deal of attention in recent years: the medieval and later document seals and some of the Anglo-Saxon coinage.

Over 4,000 works on paper have been catalogued with support from the Paul Mellon Foundation, and the WA Ismay collection now has over 1,800 of the 3,000+ works catalogued. The Japanese prints in our works on paper collection have been documented for the **Art of Life** exhibition which combines these exquisite and beautifully coloured works with studio ceramics.

We have continued to make progress on retrieving records from the previous City of York DCF-funded cataloguing exercise, with 28,411 records being recovered from laptops and integrated into our database. Progress continues to be made on entering paper records from this project, and we hope to have cleared all paper records from the 1999 project by the end of this financial year.

We now have safety copies on CD for all the accession registers at York Art Gallery, in line with Accreditation standards. The work is being carried out by the North Yorkshire Archives to a very high standard.

### 28. **Storage**

Social history collections are moving out of the Darnborough Street store; a new mezzanine and additional shelving has been installed at James Street and additional shelves at Fulford in preparation for the move. This will enable us to vacate Darnborough Street entirely by the end of October, and to move collections out of container storage.

The decorative arts store at the Yorkshire Museum is being repacked and moved onto more accessible and less vulnerable shelving out at Birch Park.

Several volunteers have assisted with the geology collections repacking all the larger fossil material and labelling it all up while the accession records are being created by curatorial staff. This process has helped to transform the geology store so that we can now get at them and use them. This exercise has also had some additional benefits – seemingly 'lost' specimens have been found and split groups have been reunited once again.

## 29. Detailed performance indicators

**Visitor Numbers**

6 months from April 2006 to September 2006

	Actual	Last year	% Change
Castle Museum	156,145	126,355	24%
York Art Gallery	91,177	86,688	5%
York St Mary's	15,873	19,117	-17%
Yorkshire Museum	50,726	43,747	16%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>313,921</b>	<b>275,907</b>	<b>14%</b>

## 30. Financial stability

YMT is financially stable at the moment, but it has always been recognised that in an increasingly competitive and demanding market it would require further investment funding and capital investment to prosper. **Core funding for 2008-2013 has been agreed at the current level, plus an inflationary uplift.**

31. It has not been possible for the Council to commit to any additional investment funding. However the Council is holding **£1.763m** of **capital funding** for YMT (the original £1.898m less £85k against the HLF scheme at York Art Gallery and £50k towards the Kirkgate redevelopment at York Castle Museum).

YMT are proposing the following:

2007-8	Hospitium	200k	
	1960's Experience	200k	
2008-9	Prison Experience	100k	
	Yorkshire Museum	500k	
2009-10	Yorkshire Museum	500k	
	Gardens	263k	
Total investment)		1763k	(of 22 million



## **Annex 1**

The Trustees agreed the Forward Plan 2006 – 2013 at the last full Board meeting which outlines the longer term plans of YMT including capital projects, major projects and redisplay of collections.