

Annex 1

York Museums Trust Performance Report: April 2012 – December 2012

Executive Summary

From April to December 2012 we continued to plan for the major capital developments at York Art Gallery and York Castle Museum. We played an important part in the city's *York 800* celebrations, mainly as a major partner of York Mystery Plays, and the launch of Yorkshire Museum's *1212: The Making of a City* exhibition. Her Majesty the Queen visited the exhibition on her visit to the city.

Partnership work continued on such projects as Illuminating York and the possible development of Exhibition Square and the York Science and Innovation Grand Tour. We also led on the major regional art project *Art in Yorkshire goes Modern* which this year included 27 galleries across Yorkshire.

In April we hosted a useful evening event for 17 Councillors to update them on our plans for York Castle Museum. YMT was successful in a competitive process to become one of only 16 museum services in England to receive Renaissance Major Partner Museum funding. This is from the Arts Council England amounting to £3.5m over three years. We also received funding for Museum Development Funding amounting to £800,000 for 2012-15 to lead on supporting smaller and medium sized museums across the Yorkshire and Humber region.

We have introduced new jobs to boost our Digital work as well as Collection Facilitators to record collections and help more volunteers and scholars to access the collections. We have increased our team of garden guides.

Staff Numbers at 31 December 2012 were: 7 Temporary; 101 Permanent; 68 Casual, totalling 176.

Trustees agreed our new Forward Plan 2012-18 which is available on the YMT website.

YMT is now part of the National Museum Directors Conference, a body that includes the Nationals and Major Partners Museums. The Chief Executive has joined the board of ICOM UK which is part of an influential worldwide group, after finishing her role as Regional Chair and membership on the National Council of Arts Council England after 8 years.

Analysis of Performance

a) Stabilising visitor figures

It was a challenging summer, as it was for many attractions throughout the country, attributed to the effect of the Olympic Games and the bad weather experienced through the holiday period. Since the start of 2013, figures have improved and we had a very good February half term.

Total Visitors: 9 months from April to December 2012
(excluding conference visitors)

	Actual	Last year	% Change
Castle Museum	227,538	240,186	-5%
York Art Gallery	132,525	187,316	-29%
York St Mary's	40,975	39,932	+3%
Yorkshire Museum	70,319	71,610	-2%
Grand Total	471,357	539,044	-13%

The drop in visitors to York Art Gallery compared to the same period last year is due to the exceptional visitor figures we achieved during 2011 for the hugely successful David Hockney and William Etty exhibitions.

One area that we do not count visitors on a regular basis is the number of people enjoying the Museum Gardens which at the last count we believe are somewhere in the region of over 1.3million per annum.

b) Delivering new income streams

The most significant news is the Arts Council Major Partner Museum award of £3.5m for 2012-15. YMT's Trading Subsidiary Company shows a strong performance and we are forecasting that retail, catering and venue hire will deliver a profit of £188,000 this financial year, largely because of our very successful wedding venue, the Hospitium. This income feeds back in to support the Charity under a tax-free Gift Aid arrangement.

Fundraising

Over the reporting period we have been successful in securing funds for the following:

York Art Gallery Development

- Arts Council England, £3.5m
- Garfield Weston Foundation, £250,000
- The Foyle Foundation, £150,000
- Sir Siegmund Warburg's Voluntary Settlement, £100,000
- Feoffees of St Michael's Spurriergate, £50,000
- Shepherd Building Group, exclusive sponsorship of the York Art Gallery Development, £50,000

York Mystery Plays

- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Mystery Plays, £20,000
- Feoffees of St Michael's Spurriergate, Mystery Plays, £15,000
- The Holbeck Charitable Trust, Mystery Plays, £4,550

Other

- Arts Council England, Museum Development Funding for Yorkshire and the Humber 2012-15, £800,000
- V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the Headley Trust, funding towards the purchase of a gold C15th finger ring found in Naburn, £2,500 each
- Richard III Society and an anonymous donor, funding towards the purchase of a medieval boar badge associated with Richard III, £2,000 each.
- Arts and Humanities Research Council, funding for a digitally based installation looking at the ivory bangle lady, £50,000
- Arts Council England Managed Funds, funding towards the setting up of a subject specialist network for Studio Ceramics, £4,400
- Friends of York Gallery, contribution to the purchase of *Passage* and *Paradise Lost* by Stephen Dixon, £2,396

c) New exhibitions and interpretative service

Gordon Baldwin: Objects for a Landscape continued at York Art Gallery until June and attracted 62,166 visitors before starting its UK tour. *Art and Music* was an exhibition selected from the permanent collection. This was accompanied by a lively programme of events and activities including lunchtime concerts in the gallery and was on show until the closure of the gallery in December, attracting 88,091 visitors. In the Little Gallery had on show information on the gallery development plans that included a window into the 'Secret Gallery' space and an opportunity for visitor feedback on the plans.

York St Mary's, our dedicated contemporary art space this year featured Laura Belém's *The Temple of a Thousand Bells*. This installation was composed of a thousand small glass bells that floated above the church nave and attracted 40,794 visitors to the church, the highest yet for an exhibition there.

Continuing investment in our sites is vital so that we gain new visitors and so that visitors return. This year we extended Kirkgate, the famous Victorian street creating 13 new shop displays and 2 new snickets/back streets, looking at the less glamorous side of Victorian life. This was partly funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. We also landscaped and extended the Riverside area at the rear of the museum, creating a delightful area with flowers, a riverside walk displaying much more of the medieval castle walls, and the working Raindale Mill.

Our two major capital developments are ongoing: £8m York Art Gallery Development has secured £7m (£2m of which was a bequest from a York man). This development will see an extra 60% of exhibition space and the creation of the Centre for British Studio Ceramics. The new space will allow us to show larger and more ambitious exhibitions. The development will also create much improved learning spaces, toilets and café areas. The gallery will reopen in spring 2015.

We will also extend and further connect the Museum Gardens creating new entrances and pathways as well as new gardens.

Changing Spaces is our planned major development at the Castle Museum, creating new exhibition spaces and better learning facilities including a lift making the site much more accessible. The first exhibition will be the major exhibition *1914* exploring the impact of World War I on society.

Around 8,000 bulbs have been planted in the Museum Gardens, mostly for spring interest. Flood tolerant plants were planted along the woodland path and we won a silver gilt prize in the Yorkshire in Bloom annual competition in July.

We held 2 Contemporary Art Walks, in July and October, and over 100 people attended, visiting York St Mary's, York Art Gallery and other art venues in the city.

d) Create an education strategy

Headline educational figures for the period are as follows:

	YCM		YM		YAG		Total	
	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012
Children from York schools	2,354	1,227	1,382	880	1,052	370	4,788	2,477
Children from non-York schools	12,555	11,594	2,086	2,715	1,395	744	16,036	15,053
HE and FE student visits	691	768	111	113	165	24	967	905

Formal Learning

The figures for York Schools reflect the building work that disrupted our offer to schools but with the extended Kirkgate we will expect an increase. However schools are finding it more difficult to make visits in this economic climate so it is important that we introduce new and relevant workshops such as 'Who Were You?', a forensic workshop for Science Week which 120 children took part in. Other workshops included 'Ancient Greeks', 'A Legionary's Life', 'Telescopes', 'Florence Nightingale' and 'Victorian Medicine'. Sessions on Dinosaurs, Romans and Vikings have been reworked to create more differentiation between KS1 and KS2. All the workshops are based on handling objects, providing resources not available to schools and ensuring they meet the needs of a thematic curriculum.

Several schools also booked the Victorian Day, which for an extra £10 provides the school with costumes for the pupils, Victorian replica toys for break times, itineraries for themed days and photocopied resources.

A Sculptural Ceramics Symposium organised in partnership with the University of York took place at Kings Manor and attracted 60 delegates.

Informal Learning

New Castle Museum studio sessions were developed to fit with the research and development of the 1914 project. These included 'Camouflage' and 'Weapons of War'.

A brand new programme called Museum Monkeys for Under 5's started in June. Saturday sessions were also introduced to reach working parents unable to attend during the week.

Adult Learning

YMT's Book Club discussed *Headlong* by Michael Frayn, *Life Class* by Pat Barker, *Tulip Fever* by Deborah Moggach and *Little Dorrit* by Charles Dickens. Attendees discuss the book and handle some relevant items from the collection.

City of York Council's Adult & Community Education's Wednesday afternoon drawing & painting workshops have worked extremely well, with a mix of participants, some of whom have additional support needs. Some of the work produced by the group was included in the Inspirations Exhibition at York Explore during Adult Learner's Week.

Sessions held over the period included 'Pre-history Through an Eggshell' talk with John Stewart from the University of York, 'The Geology Behind York's Buildings' with Stuart Ogilvy, 'The Making of the City' with Natalie McCaul, 'A Thousand Years of Gardening' with Peter Goodchild and the 'Archaeology of York Castle'.

Curators' talks focused on York's Mystery Plays, St William of York, ancient animal bone from the Teesdale Cave, Magic in Roman Britain, Harvey Brookes Antiquarian and Architect and one on the Lamplough Collection. Audiences have been really strong for these talks.

Territories

Territories is YMT's community arts programme, and included the first of a series of sessions for pupils from Burnholme Community College who require additional support. These sessions have been developed in partnership with CYC Traveller & Ethnic Minority Support Services.

Workshops were held in partnership with artist Vanessa Langford of Magnetic Arts, for adults with mental health issues. Working with the Art Gallery guides, the group chose works on paper for the community chest on the theme of *Wonderland* to tie in to Illuminating York.

Creative Personalities (a client-led group for adults with a personality disorder) returned to the gallery for 10 workshops. A new group was also established for couples where one partner is suffering from dementia. Other workshops included those held for people with complex disabilities and their carers, and creative writing sessions for clients of York MIND.

Precious Cargo/Genesis

The medieval Precious Cargo project came to a conclusion with an impressive fashion show in partnership with York College. The show took place in the medieval exhibition, amongst the abbey ruins. Another successful partnership with the Young Actors from York Theatre Royal culminated in specifically written and produced drama performances in the exhibition, entitled 'My Shoes are Pointer than Yours'.

Precious Cargo is now named 'Genesis' and once again will be programme of creative and innovative projects working with Young People exploring the science collections in animation and music.

The Genesis module on the BA Fashion course at York College is now in its third year. This time the project will draw inspiration from the natural science collection and delivers a message as part of a wider campaign about sustainability, recycling, and general environmental issues.

e) Increase use and involvement by residents

York Mystery Plays that we produced with York Theatre Royal and Riding Lights Theatre Company was a huge success, with 1,700 volunteers contributing to the production. Nearly two years in the making, 33,000 people saw this spectacular performance. The impact on the Museum Gardens was severe but we are working hard to restore the gardens.

We currently have 271 active volunteers on our books as at the end of December, totalling over 9,000 contributed hours across all of the sites. Volunteers support the Castle Studios programme and help catalogue the art and social history collections and research for the 1914 project collections. Our volunteer team for York Observatory has almost doubled in size which has enabled us to open on most Fridays as well as our regular Thursday and Saturdays. Volunteers are also working on the Yorkshire Museum library, to make an attractive and workable space whilst they continue with the tasks of cataloguing and refurbishment of the books.

Our Museum Gardens 'BioBlitz' was a huge success, with almost 200 species of animal and plant recorded in the Museum Gardens over a 24 hour period. Despite the wet weather many families and visitors took part.

Behind the scenes tours have been given to amongst others the Yorkshire Philosophical Society, staff of Alcuin College, and the Poppleton Local History Society.

f) *Achieve high visitor satisfaction*

Visitor surveys carried out in summer 2012 by Spirul Research showed that at:

York Castle Museum:

- 99% of visitors were either satisfied or very satisfied with their visit
- 97% would recommend the museum to others
- 96% would visit again

At Yorkshire Museum:

- 97% of visitors were either satisfied or very satisfied with their visit
- 97% would recommend the museum to others
- 89% would visit again

At York Art Gallery:

- 97% of visitors were either satisfied or very satisfied with their visit
- 99% would recommend the gallery to others
- 95% would visit again

g) *Ensure the cataloguing of the collection*

The Registrar has continued to 'clean up' information on the Adlib database including being able to search by date for objects relating to World War I and for collections which have recently either come off display or gone on display. Paper and Adlib records for collections of birds eggs has included an audit of the paper records to ensure that they have been added to Adlib and is extending the information by ensuring that place names are recorded consistently and correctly to aid searching. Images have also been added to records.

Improvements have been made to records relating to firearms which were requested by the Firearms Licensing office as part of our renewal of the 5 year licence.

We have now completed repackaging our large type and figured fossil collection to modern standards, helping to ensure preservation and ahead of its digitisation.

We have also started work on the documentation of the Lamplough-Lidster Collection (Bronze Age material) and an audit of the Strong room collections to better catalogue, locate as well as repack material.

We have started to plan our archaeological rationalisation project and to sort through the bulk archaeology collections stored at Birch Park and geology records continue to be added on Adlib.

We have also assisted the Scrutiny Committee's work in looking at our acquisitions and disposal policy prior to this being revised for national accreditation.

Acquisitions over the period have included: two collages by artist John Stezaker; two salt-glazed stoneware bottles by Ruth King; two works on paper by Keith Vaughan; St. Barbara medieval gold ring; silver-gilt medieval boar badge; Roman coin hoard found at Plompton, North Yorkshire.

Janet Barnes
Chief Executive
York Museums Trust
March 2013