

## York Museums Trust Performance Report: April 2014 – September 2014

### Executive Summary

YMT opened the new exhibition *1914: When the world changed forever* at the Castle Museum on 28 June 2014. It has been very popular with visitors. This was funded largely by the Heritage Lottery Fund. YMT have also led on a publication listing all the 1914 related events across the county. This was done in association with the Imperial War Museum in London.

The York Art Gallery project is now proceeding well after a structural problem with the gable end wall. This has resulted in delay to the hand over date by Simpsons of York. We are now working towards an opening date in summer 2015. The gallery is looking marvellous with the mezzanine gallery in place and the new Upper South gallery in situ. Both these galleries will be the home of CoCA, the new Centre of Ceramic Art.

YMT have also submitted planning permission for the new gardens that will connect the historic Museum Gardens with the area behind York Art Gallery. We are planning to have two of the garden areas open to the public in time for the opening of the gallery.

Other major events include the Museums at Night event on 15 May with Grayson Perry who gave a public interview in the Tempest Anderson Hall. The afternoon included an enjoyable bear hunt for visitors in the Museum Gardens and Yorkshire Museum with numerous bears made by students from York College.

Since the last report to Scrutiny we have successfully applied for funding from the Arts Council Major Partners Museum funding (£1,230,000 per year to 2018) and the Museums Development Yorkshire, who are part of YMT, has successfully applied for three year funding from 2015-18 at £315,000 each year. This means we can continue working to help smaller and medium sized accredited museums across Yorkshire and Humberside in a variety of ways. We see this work as a vital tool to increase YMT's profile and influence in the region and beyond.

Whilst York Art Gallery is closed we have continued to display as much of the collection elsewhere as possible. Our regional touring exhibition

**Masterstrokes: Great Paintings from York Art Gallery** has now been on display over the last 6 months to Scarborough, Barnsley and it is due to be shown at the Mercer Gallery in Harrogate as its final venue. We also continue to have a few works on display at Fairfax House and also the National Gallery and at Tate Britain.

Staff Numbers at the end of September were: 71 full time, 40 part time, 51 casual totalling 162.

## Analysis of Performance

### a) Stabilising visitor figures

The York Castle Museum did very well over the reporting period; the decrease in numbers at the Yorkshire Museum is due to the Richard III exhibition last year which attracted a lot of media coverage.

Total Visitors: 6 months from April 2014  
to September 2014  
(excluding venue hire visitors)

	Actual	Last year	% Change
York Castle Museum	148,736	142,894	+ 4%
York St Mary's	19,588	19,982	-2%
Yorkshire Museum	48,289	60,229	-20%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>216,613</b>	<b>223,105</b>	<b>-3%</b>

### b) Delivering new income streams

We have been working on researching a new initiative of a YMT Membership scheme that will help make us more sustainable and resilient over the years. Given that we will have a lot less funding from the City of York Council in 2015 we are also rethinking our business model in order to survive and thrive. The change will be moving from a museum service to becoming a museum business. YMT has strived, since we began in 2002, to create new and varied income streams and the success of our Trading Subsidiary is testament to this. It continues to show a strong performance and in the financial year of 2013/14, retail,

catering and venue hire delivered a profit of over £223,000. This income feeds back in to support the Charity under a tax-free Gift Aid arrangement.

This financial year has begun very well, with profit on these activities up by 18% in the first six months. York Art Gallery will present further opportunities to increase retail and catering income.

The support we receive from the Arts Council England has become more and more significant as the support from the City of York Council declines. So we are pleased and relieved that the Arts Council has awarded YMT funding until 2018 although the amount may change from 2016 - 18 due to the outcome of the government elections and the Comprehensive Spending Review. The application process for Major Partner Museum funding was competitive across England. There are now 21 MPM's in this second round compared with 16 MPM's in the first allocation. Applications were judged in accordance to the Arts Council's five goals. YMT was deemed to be 'strong' in four of the goals and 'outstanding' in the goal judging sustainability and resilience.

### **c) New exhibitions and interpretative service**

Due to the closure of York Art Gallery, York St Mary's has become York Art Gallery's contemporary art space. Earlier in the year we reported on the second ***Aesthetica Art Prize***. This exhibition showcases excellence in contemporary art and features shortlisted artists in the categories of Photographic & Digital Art, Three Dimensional Design & Sculpture, Painting & Drawing and Video, Installation & Performance. Aesthetica is a York based organisation that publishes a magazine and organises the short film festival in York. This was followed by *Finding the Value* an exhibition that displayed new work by five commissioned artists who created new work from some items of the Madsen bequest.

The main new exhibition is *1914: When the World Changed Forever* at the Castle Museum.

### **d) Create an education strategy**

Headline educational figures for the period April – September are as follows:

## Formal Learning

The focus on work for this period has been in preparing a brand new programme of primary school workshops which meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum. Numbers of pupils taking part in taught

	YCM		YM		Total	
	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014
Pupils from York schools	993	<b>1,176</b>	806	<b>829</b>	1,799	<b>2,005</b>
Pupils from non-York schools	10,386	<b>9,705</b>	2,643	<b>2,443</b>	13,029	<b>12,148</b>
School Pupils taking part in a taught session	2,742	<b>3,278</b>	2,550	<b>2,979</b>	5,292	<b>6,257</b>
York Pupils taking part in outreach activities or projects	-	<b>1500</b>	-	<b>165</b>	-	<b>1,665</b>
HE and FE student visits	705	<b>1,996</b>	239	<b>80</b>	785	<b>2,076</b>
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sessions continued to increase at both museums towards the end of the 2013/14 academic year. With the introduction of new sessions such as *Prehistoric Progress*, *Life in Anglo Saxon York* and the *Life of Charles Darwin* the Yorkshire Museum there has been a significant increase in booked taught sessions at the start of the 2014/15 term at the Yorkshire Museum. The majority of pupils visiting the Yorkshire Museum also take part in a taught session with museum staff.

In partnership with NYBEP (North Yorkshire Business Education Partnership) and with funding from the Yorkshire Philosophical Society and Institute of Engineering and Technology (IET) the Yorkshire Museum ran a special STEM outreach project *The Pyramid Challenge* with York Primary Schools with 165 pupils taking part.

Numbers of school pupils visiting the York Castle Museum have remained stable despite Victorians not being a specified subject on the Primary history curriculum. The opening of the First World War exhibition has resulted in a high level of demand from schools for both self led visits and the new taught sessions *Total War* and *Child of the Great War*.

### **Informal Learning**

The museums have provided additional events and activities over the school holiday periods aimed at visitors and family audiences. These have been linked to significant objects going on display for the first time, in the case of the *Dinosaur Detectives* summer trail at the Yorkshire Museum, and for new exhibitions, particularly linking to the anniversary of the outbreak of war at York Castle Museum. Hands on and participatory activities have been very well received, particularly children taking part in drill with the museum's First World War Recruitment Officer.

The Learning staff also attended the Great Yorkshire Show and engaged with over 7,500 members of the public. YMT worked with York Minster and York Explore on an arts project throughout the summer aimed 11/12 year olds achieving their Discovery Arts Award.

### **Family Learning**

The Museum Monkeys programme of sessions for Under 5's and their carers continues to be very popular. In May the Yorkshire Museum won the *Connect Ten-Museums at Night* competition for Grayson Perry to visit and take part in a special *Meet the Museum Bears* family event, which was attended by over 800 people.

On 25<sup>th</sup> September a special event in partnership with the University of York was held on the international Researcher's Night, celebrating and promoting careers in Research. The museum's free *In the Museum Night Garden* event was themed around 'Underground York' and was attended by approx 1500 people. This event will be repeated next September.

## **Adult Learning**

YMT continues to be part of York's Community Learning Partnership; taking part in the Adult Learning Festival in June and sponsoring an award at the York Adult Learning Awards. Four volunteers working on projects at YMT won the Learning Projects award at this year's ceremony. In addition to learning projects taking place the events project has continued and links in with City wide festivals such as the Festival of Ideas and run special events linked to the museum collections. Notable events this year from the museum's programme were the *In Focus on Shakespeare's First Folio* and *Grayson Perry in Conversation*.

## **Genesis**

YMT provides creative opportunities for 14-24 year olds to engage with heritage and cultural and to work with the museum's collections. Over 1500 York school pupils worked with staff at York Castle Museum and NYBEP to create interventions for the First World War exhibition. They pitched their ideas to a panel of judges at a special finals day and the winning teams went on to make their idea a reality working with professional animators. Special art and archaeology summer schools for young people also took place in August and were oversubscribed.

## **Territories**

The community arts programme has been taking place at York Castle Museum, while York Art Gallery is closed. Projects have been themed around the First World War and remembrance linked to the exhibition at the Museum. *Remember Me* is a project which has involved an artist working with a group with a mental health focus. We have also worked with families in three Children's Centres in the Acomb, Clifton and St Lawrences areas, with the artist being supported by care workers. Both projects aim to provide creative learning opportunities and access to the collections, as well encourage participants to visit the museum.

### ***e) Increase use and involvement by residents***

We have worked with 427 volunteers from 1 April to 30 September 2014, who have contributed 8,261 hours during this period. This is a 30% increase in hours from the same period in 2013. We have run 145 individual volunteer training sessions in subjects such as object handling, customer care, manual handling, drug awareness as well as bespoke activity training.

In addition to their regular volunteer role, we have been able to give our volunteers the opportunity to get involved with special events such as the Great Yorkshire Show, the Grayson Perry event, a Fossils Roadshow and the Scarborough Fossils Festival.

Several of our volunteers have been successful this year in receiving awards in recognition of their volunteer contributions, from both the Higher York Awards and CYC Adult Learner Awards schemes.

As our core Hands on Here! project goes from strength to strength, we are looking to extend our public offer by creating costumed volunteer roles on Kirkgate, volunteer talks on gallery and volunteer-led guided tours at the Castle Museum for visitors with mobility issues. The tours will take in all the accessible spaces and will be complemented by an object handling session and talk, using objects similar to ones on display in areas that are not accessible to the visitor.

The YMT Volunteer Team is leading on the revival of the Regional Heritage Volunteer Managers Forum, which had dwindled over the previous 18 months under the model of being led by an independent facilitator. There is a great need for a regional forum for heritage sites who work with volunteers and the YMT team already spends regular time supporting and mentoring smaller volunteer programmes across the region, so it was a natural progression to expand this support to a wider field. We are working closely with York Minster and the NRM on this, and also working with the NRM on the fledgling National Heritage Volunteering Advisory Board, which has drawn up a Charter for Heritage Volunteering.

### ***f) Achieve high visitor satisfaction***

Visitor surveys carried out in summer/autumn 2014 by Spirul Research showed that at:

York Castle Museum:

- 99% of visitors were either satisfied or very satisfied with their visit

- 99% would recommend the museum to others
- 90% would visit again

At Yorkshire Museum:

- 97% of visitors were either satisfied or very satisfied with their visit
- 95% would recommend the museum to others
- 92% would visit again

### ***g) Ensure the cataloguing of the collection***

We have developed a full digitisation strategy of the collections. The streamlining and improving of photography being the cornerstone of this new push to raise the standard of collections documentation for both internal and public access.

The new websites have some of the collections online and we have 162,885 having added 12,000 records to the database during this period as well as uploading a further 10,000+ images to the searchable online collection.

We continue to engage with regional partners, offering digital asset and content creation advice. And will soon be advising on image policy and intellectual property rights.

Our digital volunteering programme is being developed and already incorporates a programme dedicated to increasing the amount of digital images the trust makes available of its collections - improving access.

We have also written a formal image policy which will see YMT become one of the most open in the country with its images.

Digital has also been incorporated into the YMT's accreditation bid.

We were successful with our funding bid to Wikimedia UK to extend and expand the previous digital project into a regional role. We are now working to embed our digital expertise into the Museum Development Yorkshire programme of regional museums.

Janet Barnes, Chief Executive  
York Museums Trust, October 2014



## Abbreviations

CoCA - Centre of Ceramic Art

YMT – York Museums Trust

MPM - Major Partner Museum

NYBEP - North Yorkshire Business Education Partnership

IET – Institute of Engineering and Technology

STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics