

## York Museums Trust Performance Report: October 2014 – April 2015

### Executive Summary

In the last Scrutiny report we announced the opening of the new exhibition *1914: When the world changed forever*. It has been very popular with visitors and volunteers. The community gallery has been really popular with community groups for example, the Quakers and the Quilters putting on their own exhibitions and engaging with visitors.

The York Art Gallery project is nearing completion and is looking really good. The collections are almost all back from storage and either are on display or in the new store. The displays are nearly completed. We are in the middle of preparing for the openings and the press coverage.

We have had to phase our plans for the extension of Museum Gardens because of rising costs so the Yorkshire Flowers Garden will be in Phase 2. The Edible Woodland will be complete hopefully by the opening of the gallery on 1 August but the area directly behind the gallery will be delayed until September because of issues with the toxicity of the soil. This has delayed the project and has resulted in an increase in costs.

Staff Numbers at the end of April were: 72 full time, 45 part time, 55 casual totalling 172.

### Analysis of Performance

#### a) *Stabilising visitor figures*

##### Admissions Summary

October 2014 - March 2015

	2014-15	2013-14		2012-13	
<b>Visitor Numbers</b>					
York Castle Museum	118911	119226	-0%	124031	-4%
Yorkshire Museum	43195	51035	15%	41226	+5%
	<b>162106</b>	<b>170261</b>	<b>-5%</b>	<b>165257</b>	<b>-2%</b>

## ***b) Delivering new income streams***

We will be launching the new YMT Card that will help make us more sustainable and resilient over the coming years. The cut in Council funding from £1.5m to £600k from 2012 to 2015 has made us rethink the business model in order for us to survive and thrive.

The YMT Card will give free entry to York Castle Museum, York Art Gallery and the Yorkshire Museum in York Museum Gardens for a year.

The YMT Card will cost £20 with direct debit or £22 with other means of payment such as cash and cheque.

The benefits of YMT Card are:

- Free entry to York Castle Museum, Yorkshire Museum & Gardens and York Art Gallery for a year
- Come back for free as many times as you like during the year
- No queueing during busy times with fast track entry
- 10% off in our cafes and shops
- Receive the YMT e-newsletter
- Take part or be the first to see new exhibitions with our members' previews and other special events (charges may apply for some events)

The YMT Card saves £5 compared to buying individual day tickets for the three YMT charging venues.

'Kids Go Free' (up to 16 years) to all YMT sites so the YMT Card gives remarkable value to families.

We are introducing an Access YMT Card for young people (aged 17-24) and people entitled to most forms of welfare benefit at half the standard price, so a £22 YMT Card would cost just £11 (or £10 by direct debit).

This will mean we will be charging for York Art Gallery when we reopen in August.

Because of the elections we have not been able to discuss fully the implications for the York Card but we hope that this will be resolved quickly by the new administration.

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

When we reopen York Art Gallery on 1 August we are concentrating on showing the richness of the permanent collections. The three ground floor galleries will be focusing on the Lycett Green collection. This collection has been the subject of a research programme in partnership with the National Gallery.

The exhibition of the Views of York will also be on the ground floor.

Upstairs in the Burton Gallery will be an broad ranging display from the collection showing a range of paintings. This display is largely directed to families and children.

Mark Hearld, the well known York Based artist, has curated an exhibition called *The Lumber Room* which draws from the collections across YMT including Yorkshire Museum and Castle Museum and includes his own new work.

The new Centre of Ceramic Art (CoCA) occupies the two new galleries on the first floor and shows over 2000 works from the extensive collection of British Studio Ceramics.

The exhibition *Road to Waterloo* opened at the Castle Museum in May. It is based around panoramic Wallpaper which was purchased by Dr Kirk in the 1930's. Made in 1829 it depicts the French army in Italy. Over the winter it has been carefully conserved and much information ascertained about the history of the wall paper. Also in the exhibition is the jacket owned by Private Grimes of Thornton Grimes who guarded Napoleon whilst he was in exile at St Helena. There are armour and swords retrieved from the battlefield.

The famous William Smith geological map of the UK has also been restored and is on view at the Yorkshire Museum.

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

We have had a good six months. Please note that York Art Gallery has been out of action regarding school groups because of the capital programme.

The educational figures for the period October 2014 – April 2015 are as follows:

#### **Formal Learning**

The change in the school curriculum resulted in the introduction of new sessions at the Yorkshire Museum in Sept 2014. Of these four sessions, Prehistoric Progress has been by far the most popular, followed by Life in Anglo Saxon York. Teachers have told us that there is a lack of resources for teachers about the subject of Pre-History. Our existing Roman offer continues to encourage a high number of booked, taught sessions, particularly Legionaries Life.

The Yorkshire Museum has taken on a freelancer to help create an online teaching resource to be used in the classroom. The project, inspired by the British Museum's "Teaching History in 100 objects" will cover Stone Age to Iron Age and involve ten objects from YMT and will include objects from five regional museums. We hope this will be ready to launch in September 2015.

Taught sessions have remained steady at the Castle Museum but numbers of WW1 sessions have greatly diminished, as expected, after the first anniversary commemorations. New sessions including Suffragettes, Electricity and Queen Victoria's Empire have been introduced, and bookings for current workshops have shown that the theme of Crime and Punishment has become popular with KS2 pupils. Special Needs groups are now catered for at the Castle with two specially adapted workshops and two bespoke tours available.

Twelve primary Schools and a total of 1483 pupils took part in an art project in preparation for the York Art Gallery opening. Pupils took Lowry's painting of Clifford's Tower as inspiration to create their own artwork to express their ideas about what it is like to live in York today.

At the last meeting Scrutiny asked for a list of all schools we have worked with in this period. The schools are listed below.

All Saints RC School  
Applefields School - Burnholme  
Archbishop of York's CofE Voluntary Controlled Junior School,  
Bishopthorpe  
Badger Hill Primary School  
Clifton Green Primary School  
Clifton School and Nursery  
Clifton with Rawcliffe Infant Site  
Copmanthorpe Primary School  
Canon Lee  
Elvington p/s  
Fishergate Primary School  
Huntington Primary School Now an Acc  
Joseph Rowntree School  
Knavesmire Primary School  
Lord Deramore's Primary School  
New Earswick Primary School  
Osbalwick Primary School  
Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Roman Catholic Primary School  
Park Grove Primary School  
Poppleton Ousebank Primary School  
Poppleton Road Primary School  
Rawcliffe Bridge Primary School  
Robert Wilkinson Primary School Now an Acc  
Scarcroft Primary School  
Skelton Primary School  
St Georges Primary School  
St Lawrence's C of E School  
St Mary's Prep School  
St Oswalds CE Primary School  
St Paul's C of E Primary School  
St Wilfreds Primary  
Stockton on the Forest p/s  
Tang Hall Primary School  
Wheldrake with Thorganby Church of England Primary School  
Wigginton Primary School  
Woodthorpe Primary School  
Yearsley Grove Primary School

	<b>YCM</b>		<b>YM</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	2014	<b>2015</b>	2014	<b>2015</b>	2014	<b>2015</b>
Pupils from York Schools	1176	<b>1889</b>	829	<b>1699</b>	2005	<b>3588</b>
Pupils from non York Schools	9705	<b>6319</b>	2443	<b>5591</b>	12148	<b>11910</b>
Pupils taking part in taught session	3278	<b>5368</b>	2979	<b>9631</b>	6257	<b>14999</b>
York pupils taking part outreach activities/projects	1500	<b>1670</b>	165	<b>1500</b>	1665	<b>3170</b>
HE and FE student visits	1996	<b>456</b>	80	<b>316</b>	2076	<b>772</b>

### **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, new exhibitions as well as anniversaries. The Bedale Hoard at the Yorkshire Museum was on display for the first time during February Half Term which also linked to the York Viking Festival. Trails were sold to over 1000 visitors.

Activities took place at the Castle Museum in order to link to a new exhibition and an anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo throughout May half term. Hands on and participatory activities continue to be very well received, in particular, taking part in a suffragette march in Half Term.

YMT once again plan to work with York Minster and York Explore on an arts project throughout the summer aimed at 11/12 year olds achieving their Discovery Arts Award.

### **Family Learning**

The Museum Monkeys programme for under 5s and their carers continues to be popular, with 580 children and 581 adults attending between October 2014 and May 2015.

In December the Castle Museum launched a new event, A Victorian Christmas. This proved to be extremely popular with some outstanding feedback. A total of 20 sessions saw a 237 adults and 179 children enjoy the experience.

Planning is underway for the second Researchers at Night event as part of Yornight which will take place this 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 being five chargeable curator's talks, two science and three on Archaeology.

### **Genesis**

YMT provides creative opportunities for 14-24 year olds to engage with heritage and cultural and to work with the museum's collections. The Yorkshire Museum ran a special outreach project in partnership with NYBEP (North Yorkshire Business Education Partnership) under the Genesis umbrella. This engaged around 1000 young people from local schools and colleges. The Griffins Nest Challenge will result in a smart phone app and trail around the gardens from a group of Archbishop Holgate students.

### **Territories**

Territories projects aim to provide creative learning opportunities and access to the collections, as well encourage participants to visit the museum. As York Art Gallery is due to reopen in 2015 the

Territories programme has been wound down but will be re-launched in January 2016.

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

We have worked with 243 volunteers from 1 October 2014 to 31 March 2015, who have contributed 6778 hours during this period. This is a 38% increase in hours from the same period in 2013/14. We have run 149 individual volunteer training sessions in subjects such as object handling, customer care, and bespoke activity training.

The Hands on Here! project continues to be our largest project across both the Castle Museum and Yorkshire Museum, with volunteers on gallery daily, delivering object based activities to visitors across the full range of collections.

A programme of volunteer talks, based on the new WWI exhibition, is proving very successful, with several volunteers delivering visitor talks each week on a variety of subjects relating to the exhibition. These are proving popular with visitors and volunteers alike and we are expanding the range of subjects covered.

The YMT Volunteer Team continues to be an exemplar for good practice across the region, and further afield, particularly in relation to the quality of training that we provide to our visitor facing volunteers. We have hosted several regional and national museum teams, who are looking to model their own volunteer programmes on ours. Within the reporting period, this has included Sheffield Museums, Bradford Museums, Hull Museums and NMSI Group based in London.

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

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

York Castle Museum:

- 99% of visitors were either satisfied or very satisfied with their visit
- 98% 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
- 91% would visit again

Also of interest are visitor comments on Tripadvisor where York Castle Museum comes second (up from fifth) out of all attractions in York, the highest rated charging attraction, and the Museum Gardens eighth (up from eleventh).

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

#### **Digital**

The Wikipedia project was extended by 12 months and now has a regional remit working with museums across Yorkshire. It is integrated the work into the Museum Development Yorkshire team and they are using it to engage with partners across the county. Promoting open licensing and content liberation are at the heart of this project. There are hundreds of items from YMT's collection now on Commons and we have received more than 400,000 views of that content in the past month. Our partners have had similar results by releasing imagery under open licences. Our ambition is to extend this project in August this year once again and work with more partners in the coming year.

The online collection is under continued development as we make it more responsive, robust and reach more audiences. Our openly licensed images have been downloaded by hundreds of users. The use of these images include academic publications, sector research, institutional display (exhibitions at other museums), blogs, social media and amateur historian research (plus many more).

We have begun our standardisation of image capture at YMT and have already photographed thousands of artworks.

Digital volunteers are helping digitise large swathes of our numismatics collection and we plan to extend our digital capacity in the coming year with a dedicated documentation studio with capacity for voluntary support.

To see an example of how productive releasing content online can be:

YMT Collection: <http://bit.ly/1S4ag4f>

Wikipedia article created by a volunteer from scratch two days ago: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Wrestlers\\_%28painting%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Wrestlers_%28painting%29)

## **Curatorial**

The purchase of a new store, adjacent to the existing YMT store, will have great impact on the documentation of the whole collection. A feasibility study is currently taking place with the intention of moving the contents of all the rented stores to the one site. This will particularly impact on the Social History collections which take up 75% of the current stores. Assessments are taking place on some areas of the collection such as the horse drawn carriage collection. This is the largest storage project YMT has ever undertaken and provides the opportunity to properly assess and manage the collections and improving documentation across all collections.

As part of the process of Accreditation, the Castle Museum produced a documentation backlog plan. This is now being implemented and key members of the curatorial team are meeting quarterly to set realistic short term targets and to monitor completion. The plan will be further developed to include the developing storage project. Accreditation was applied for last year and we should hear very soon whether it has been successful.

Ongoing documentation projects include:

- Rationalisation of archaeological animal bone
- Waterloo period objects to support the current Waterloo exhibition at the Castle Museum
- Costume collections to support the forthcoming *Shaping the Body Exhibition*

There is the aspiration to include more volunteers in the documentation process.

New Acquisitions include:

- 10<sup>th</sup> century gold finger ring, silver gilt brooch all purchased through the Portable Antiquities Scheme.
- Part of the Govesy installation by Karen Thompson

- Elf 1& 2 –contemporary ceramic by Christie Brown
- Ephemera from the local Galtres Festival
- Tax disc
- Land Army collection
- Lava from Vesuvius collected by the Yorkshire Philosophical Society.

**Dr Janet Barnes CBE**

**York Museums Trust**

**10 June 2015**

Abbreviations

CoCA	Centre of Ceramic Art
HE	Higher Education
FE	Further Education
NYBEP	North Yorkshire Business Education Partnership
YCM	York Castle Museum
YM	Yorkshire Museum
YMT	York Museums Trust