

Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service: Case Study

Museum: Across the service Project: Loans from the collections

Why we did it: The loan of items from the NMAS' collections to other museums and institutions means many more people can enjoy some of the wonderful objects we hold in trust. It also encourages the reciprocal loan of artefacts which in turn enrich our own exhibitions and displays.

What we delivered: NMAS loaned 142 objects to 23 institutions or projects in the twelve-month period from April 2011 to March 2012, including to local, national and international institutions.

Local loans help to enhance displays in other museums in Norfolk and beyond, such as the two-year loan of twenty four Anglo-Saxon dress and personal accessories to Swaffham Museum in Norfolk. The objects were all excavated at the Paddocks Anglo Saxon cemetery site in Swaffham and are now being appreciated by visitors for whom they have particular significance.

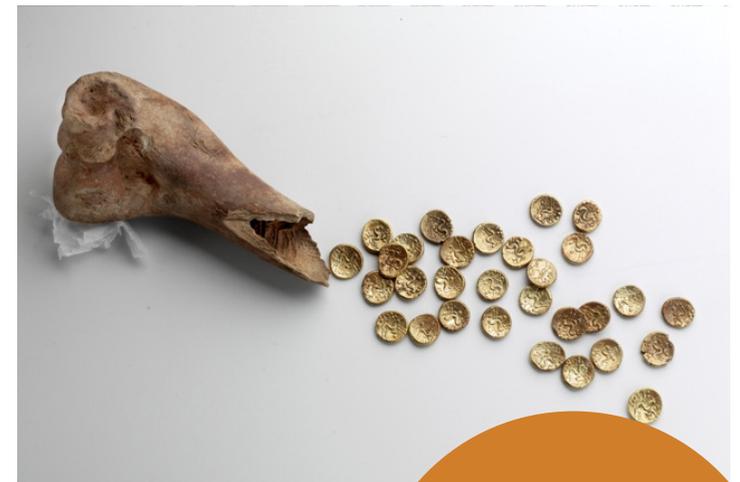
Exhibition-specific loans enable objects to be considered in new ways and help raise the profile of NMAS' collections to a wider audience. One such exhibition was *Gold: Power and Allure* at Goldsmiths' Hall in London, which coincided with the Diamond Jubilee and the London Olympics. The Norwich Castle objects joined objects on loan from HM The Queen and national museums. Closer to home, the Sedgeford Hoard of Iceni gold coins found in a cow bone (see image) was loaned to the Fitzwilliam Museum for the *Treasures Under Your Feet* exhibition about remarkable recent discoveries in the region.

International loans included objects from the Norman period from the archaeology collections which were loaned to Falaise Castle, Calvados, Normandy, one of our partners in the cross-channel *Norman Connections* project.

Who benefited: Our loaned items were seen by over 60,000 visitors during this period, helping to raise the museum service's profile and awareness of Norfolk as a heritage destination. In addition, loan items are often conserved prior to being loaned, while new research generated by loans and exhibitions enables NMAS to increase and share knowledge about collections.

What happened next: NMAS collections continue to be in demand around the country, and indeed the world: in 2013 NMAS facilitated the ambitious loan of a beautiful tapestry designed by Edward Burne-Jones to the prestigious Pushkin Museum in Russia where it will be enjoyed by an international audience.

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“The number of loan requests we receive demonstrates the national and international standing of our collections.”
NMAS Registrar

The Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service (NMAS) is a multi-award winning service comprising **ten museums and a study centre**. The Service aims to inform and inspire people's interest in the cultural and natural heritage of Norfolk, and address relevant contemporary issues by:

- **Collecting, preserving and interpreting material evidence of the past**
- **Stimulating creativity, inspiration and enjoyment**
Providing an enjoyable way to learn throughout life
- **Engaging with the widest possible audience**
- **Enriching people's lives and creating a sense of place and identity**
- **Enabling people to understand and value other cultures**

It is a high performing service. In 2010/11 **380,000** visits were made to the museums, and **43,000** schoolchildren participated in formal learning events.

The Norfolk Museums Service was established in 1974 when the County and District Councils in Norfolk agreed to delegate their museum powers to a Joint Committee to manage museums through a county-wide Museums

Service. The museums in each district are managed by local Area Museum Managers who liaise closely with each District and ensure that the museums support local strategies and initiatives.

NMAS is one of only 16 Major Partner Museums receiving substantial revenue funding from Arts Council England in order to achieve ACE's vision for museums:

"A museums sector that is delivering inspiring public programmes using high quality collections to reach more and more people, especially children and young people. The sector is innovative; it shares best practice and is embedded in communities and responsive to audience needs. It is made up of strong, sustainable organisations with a highly skilled and diverse workforce; it is excellently led."

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