

Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service: Case Study

Museum: Cromer Museum Project: The Olive Edis Collection

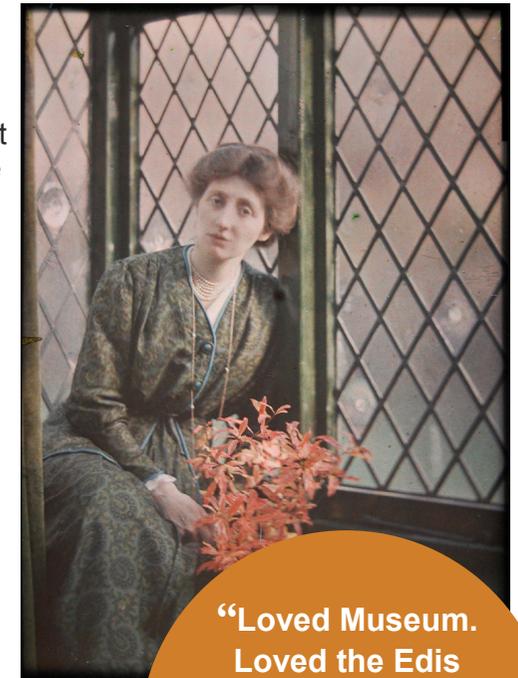
Why we did it: Olive Edis was a photographer who worked between the years of 1905 and 1955. Her portrait subjects ranged from fishermen of North Norfolk to Prime Ministers and British Royalty. The breadth of her interest across such a broad spectrum of British society makes her work of international importance. In 2008 Cromer Museum was offered a large collection of over 2,000 images made up of prints, glass plate negatives and autochromes (the first commercially available colour process) from her studios in Sheringham, Cromer, Farnham and London. The challenge was then how best to make this fantastic collection as widely accessible as possible.

What we delivered: Cromer Museum raised £40,000 of funding which not only paid for the collection itself but also a two year image digitisation project, storage in archivally stable boxes, a display within the Museum and a teacher's pack. Over the last four years the curator has held numerous group discussions promoting the work of Olive Edis and the role Cromer Museum has played in preserving the collection. The museum has actively organised and delivered workshops based around her work. The collection has received further donations which includes an Edis patented diascope (an autochrome viewer) from Scotland and an Edis print from California, and receives constant enquiries from the public.

Who benefited: This internationally renowned collection has been kept in North Norfolk, where much of it was created, when there was a very real possibility that it could be purchased and taken out of the country. The curator talks over the last four years have regularly been attended by groups of 40-50 and occasionally as many as 250. The visitor book has regular positive feedback, often commenting that the Edis collection is the highlight of a visit. Thousands of people now know about her work through the output of the museum.

What happened next: Continued donations and enquiries show that Cromer Museum is being acknowledged as a centre for Olive Edis related items. Her work will feature prominently in the 2013 Masterpiece Exhibition at the Sainsbury Centre, Norwich. The Museum will continue to promote her work through displays, talks, social media and online.

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“Loved Museum.
Loved the Edis
photographs – as
good as Frank
Sutcliffe at Whitby.
War photo fantastic.”
Visitor comment

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."

For more information contact:

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