

# Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service: Case Study

## Museum: Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery Project: *Skin*: Young people's event

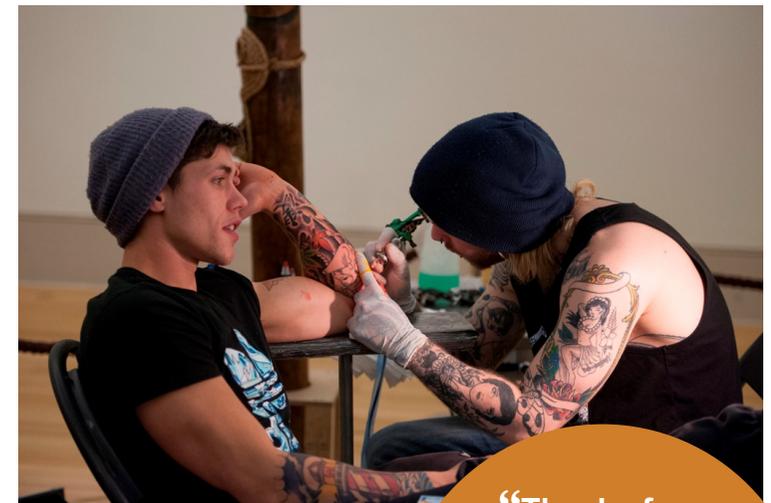
**Why we did it:** NMAS is committed to putting young people at the heart of the organisation. At Norwich Castle a young events team has been established to devise and run different events which appeal to the 16-24 age group. The aim is both to enable young people to help shape our services, and to attract an audience which is traditionally underrepresented in museum visitors.

**What we delivered:** The young people chose the theme of *Skin* to link with many aspects of the Castle's collections and to provide links with areas of interest to them. Two *Skin* events have been held so far, in 2012 and 2013. The first focused on the decorative and biological aspects of skin and included: a pop-up tattoo studio with live tattooing; taxidermy demonstrations; vintage furs from the Costume and Textile Collection and a giant operation game! The second focused on urban culture with: a demonstration of parkour (a kind of street gymnastics) in the Keep; a fashion photo shoot in the Bird Gallery; and a 'Secret Walls' street art battle between Norwich and Birmingham.

Both events have been very successful, with visitors embracing the unexpected elements. They have also succeeded in attracting a younger audience: evaluation from *Skin 1* showed 169 out of the 947 visitors were in the 16-25 year old age group, which is 17.8% of visitors. That compares with 7% of visitors being from this age group in the last 'exit' survey for Norwich Castle in 2010-2011. Young visitors to *Skin 2* said they received a warm welcome and didn't feel uncomfortable just 'hanging out' at the Castle.

**Who benefited:** Members of the young events team have learnt practical skills and are using the experience as part of their portfolio for their Silver Arts Award. The experience has also boosted their confidence with several speaking about the event at two regional conferences. *Skin* has also helped to attract young people into the Castle, changing perceptions on both sides, and showing that different events can be held without alienating traditional visitors, as many older and younger visitors also enjoyed the events—as the quote on the right demonstrates.

**What happened next:** The group is planning further youth-oriented events at the Castle. *Skin* has also helped create new partnerships with local organisations, for instance Norwich City College, who are keen to work with the Castle again. Across the museums service as a whole, young people are increasingly involved in co-creation, with youth forums established in the Western and Eastern areas, as well as in Norwich.



“Thanks for a brilliant day! It's great to see the Castle come alive, and be so inviting and interesting for young people...”

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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