

Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service: Case Study

Museum: Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery

Project: *Storming the Castle*: An award-winning maths session for secondary schools

Why we did it: This project aimed to increase our engagement with secondary schools, especially in areas other than History. The sessions themselves were designed to be cross-curricular and the content engaging for students, in line with the Arts Council England goal for Young People.

What we delivered: In 1215 Norwich Castle was surrounded by rebel forces. What was best for the rebels – storm or siege? Could the King's men inside defend this attack or outlast the siege? These real life historical questions were the focus of the exciting Key Stage 3 maths event held at the Castle. Students were split into defenders or attackers and used math skills to investigate the questions that arose for each side.

Museum educators set the scene with period costume and a theatre-in-education approach to their activities, while practical workshops were led by student teachers from the University of East Anglia. These practical activities included: calculating the length ladders would need to be to scale the Castle walls, the length and width of the Castle walls, how many soldiers would be needed for defence and attack and how a scale model of the Castle could help both sides.

Who benefited: The number of students involved in this programme has risen from 587 in 2008-9 over 7 days to 1,918 students in 2011-12 over 27 days. Evaluations for the programme are good with a high proportion scoring 'excellent' in all areas, including very positive feedback from teachers: *"It made the functional day-to-day use of maths STAND OUT in a fun way"*. This event now forms part of the annual Initial Teacher Training offer, with all Secondary PGCE Maths students teaching on one of these days.

What happened next: This event has been showcased at both the Group for Education in Museums Conference (2011) and a Norfolk County Council Maths Conference. This programme was part of the observations that led to the presentation of the Sandford Award for Heritage Education to the Norwich Castle education department. Several improvements have been made to the sessions since 2012, some as a response to evaluation comments.

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"I didn't know there was so much good Maths in History!"
Student 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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