

NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Notes of the meeting held on 7 October 2010

Present:

Norfolk Joint Museums and
Archaeology Committee

Mrs H T Nelson (Chairman for this
meeting)

Norfolk County Council

Mr J Ward

Borough Council of King's Lynn and
West Norfolk

Mrs E Nockolds

Broadland District Council

Mr J W Bracey

Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society
Mr R Bellinger

English Heritage

Mr W Fletcher

University of East Anglia

Ms S Spooner

**1 South Norfolk Council Offices, the Pennoyer Centre, Pulham St Mary and
Forngett St Mary Church**

The October 2010 meeting of the Advisory Committee was held at South Norfolk Council's offices, but was unfortunately inquorate because there were insufficient County and District Council Members present. In the circumstances, Members agreed that they should hold this meeting and that they should present a report of its proceedings to the next meeting of the Norfolk Joint Museums and Archaeology Committee. In the absence of the Chairman, Mr B Collins, whom had given his apologies for the meeting, it was also agreed that the current Vice-Chairman Mrs H Nelson should take the Chair.

(Mrs Nelson in the Chair)

Mrs Nelson placed on record Members' thanks to South Norfolk Council for hosting the meeting and also to Alison Yardley, Heritage and Landscape Officer, Historic Environment Service, Sheila King, Project Officer for the Pennoyer Centre, and Graham Prior, a local businessman whom had led efforts to restore Forngett St Mary Church, for conducting the tours of these buildings that preceded the meeting.

Members had been informed during the morning tours, and noted as part of the meeting for reporting to the Joint Committee, that the Pennoyer Centre was a Grade II listed building and former village school which closed in 1988. Members had been shown at the rear of the building a medieval Hat Makers' Guild chapel that was originally attached to the village church. Members were informed that after years of deterioration, the building had recently been the subject of an extensive heritage conservation programme and had now reopened to provide a range of facilities to the local area. At Forngett St Mary Members had been shown

a Grade I listed church that became redundant in 1988. After 30 years of deterioration, Graham Prior, a local businessman living in Fornsett St Mary, had recently led efforts to rescue St Mary's. Members were informed that a local Friends organisation, established by Graham, had over 100 Members. During the tour, Members of the Advisory Committee had expressed the view that to form such an organisation was a significant achievement in itself. Members were also impressed by the very high standard of restoration work undertaken by the Friends.

2 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mr B J Collins, Mr R G Kybird, Mr J R Shrimplin, Mr H C Cordeaux, Miss E J Collishaw, Dr C Kemp, Mr E N Stanton and Dr J S Johnson.

3 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were also no declarations of interest.

5 Half-Yearly Report on the work of the Historic Environment Service (formerly Norfolk Landscape Archaeology)

The annexed report by the Historic Environment Manager (County Archaeologist) was received.

Mr David Gurney, Historic Environment Manager (County Archaeologist) said that as part of the County Council's Organisational Review, Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service) was combined with the Heritage Team in the Heritage and Landscape Section of Environment, Transport and Development (ETD) to form a new Historic Environment Service (HES) in ETD from 1 September 2010. Members noted that as part of the County Council's Strategic Review the future of the Historic Environment Service was being looked into, including the scope for further joint working and collaboration with other agencies and organisations, including the District Councils and Historic Environment Trusts.

In summarising the work of the HES, Mr Gurney said that HES had continued to work with the County and District Councils to protect and manage the Historic Environment (Archaeology, Landscapes and Buildings) to maintain and enhance the Norfolk Historic Environment Record, to maintain the Norfolk Buildings at risk register, to identify and record finds, to deal with enquiries and to engage in outreach. He went on to say that planning consultations were up by more than 50%, with a slight increase in the number of briefs issued. Staff had given detailed consideration to over 500 planning applications, issued 203 briefs for archaeological projects, created 1,142 new Historic Environment Records (NHER), enhanced 2, 530 existing NHER records, identified and recorded 17,298 portable antiquities and dealt with 80 cases of Treasure. Some significant enhancement

work to existing records had also been undertaken, focusing in particular on event records relating to metal-detecting and source records relating to published and unpublished records. The dry weather in summer of 2010 had produced an unusually large number of crop marks across the county. Many of these had been captured on camera by a local area photographer, Mike Page, who had very generously submitted many of his photographs to HES for accession in the Norfolk Photo Library. Mr Gurney said that Andrew Rogerson, Senior Landscape Archaeologist, had produced an advice card on illegal metal detecting (“nighthawking”) for use by the public and the police, and copies of this were handed out in the meeting.

Laid on the table were copies of a book in the series of *Norfolk, Heritage and biodiversity Walks* covering walks in and around Great Yarmouth. It was noted that another book in the series covering walks in and around King’s Lynn had recently been published and that a further book about walks around Fakenham and Wells-next-the-Sea was in preparation.

Mr Gurney agreed to let Mr Bracey have details of whom he could contact for information about the archaeology of former RAF airbases in Norfolk, and in particular that at Rackheath.

Resolved –

That the report be noted.

6 Half-Yearly Report of NAU Archaeology –

The annexed report by the by the Manager of NAU Archaeology was received.

Ms Jayne Bown, Manager of NAU Archaeology, said that during the period covered by the report NAU Archaeology had continued to undertake the majority of its work in Norfolk. NAU Archaeology had been invited to bid for 183 projects (124 of these were Norfolk-based) and undertook 105 projects, along with the post-excavation stages of on-going projects. NAU Archaeology also produced 88 different reports, of which 64 were reports on Norfolk sites. These included the two volume report on excavations of Norwich Castle undertaken in the 1990’s, which had been published in the East Anglian Archaeology series. NAU Archaeology had also been commissioned to undertake seven finds projects for other archaeological organisations.

Ms Bown went on to outline some of the major Norfolk projects of the last six months, which included an archaeological watching brief conducted at the Britvic Soft Drinks in Norwich, ahead of an electricity supply cable being laid down across the River Wensum. She said that while no new artefacts had been recovered, the project had demonstrated the survival of a similar geological context, i.e. peat overlaying river terrace sands and gravels, as was present at the nearby site of Carrow Road, where prehistoric flint work had survived in situ.

Ms Bown said that the Norfolk projects also included an archaeological excavation at St Stephen’s Church, Norwich, in advance of underpinning works to the eastern

gable wall. The excavation had recovered the remains of 52 individuals which were retained by the church for re-burial. Undisturbed natural deposits of five periods of human activity were identified at the site.

An archaeological watching brief was conducted during cleaning, dredging and restoration works of the moat at Caister Castle. The oldest artefact recovered was a tobacco pipe of mid to late 17th century date.

An archaeological evaluation was conducted in the garden of 29 Belstead Road, Caister-on-Sea while work was being undertaken in advance of the construction of a new house. The archaeological evaluation had provided evidence to show that the garden was located in an area of the Roman civilian settlement south of the Roman Saxon Shore Fort and as such was in an area of high archaeological potential.

Members were pleased to hear of a community archaeological project instigated by Acle High School and supported by NAU Archaeology. A large range of artefacts had been recovered by pupils from the High School and local volunteers.

Resolved –

That the report be noted

7 Half-yearly report of the Archaeology Department, Norwich Museum and Art Gallery

The annexed report by the Head of Museums and Archaeology was received.

In the Absence of Dr John Davies, Chief Curator and Keeper of Archaeology, who had given his apologies for the meeting, the report was introduced by Dr Tim Pestell, Curator of Archaeology.

Dr Pestell said that, during the last six months, the Archaeology Department had made significant progress in the field of collections management through continued reorganisation of the stores and holdings at the Shirehall. The Department had also made good progress with the *Collecting Cultures Scheme*, aimed at enabling the enhancement of the archaeological collections and displays. This project, worth £220,000 in total, remained a major part of the Department's work programme through to 2013.

Dr Pestell said that the Department continued to fulfil the requirement to consider all cases of Treasure found within the county and report it under the terms of the Treasure Act. He said that although there had been a decline in the numbers of cases compared to previous years, (39 cases compared to 47 cases for the same period in 2009), Norfolk had maintained its position as the county yielding the most Treasure cases in the British Isles. The Department remained committed to acquiring the most significant of these finds.

It was noted that improvements to existing galleries displays at the Castle were currently being designed and undertaken. The main focus of the Department in terms of display work had been the Phase 1 (of 4 phases) re-display of the Castle Keep. This new exhibition in the basement of the Castle Keep chronicled the

history of Norwich Castle as the County Gaol, and was well worth a visit. It was reported that the new display had received very positive reviews, and that the project had enabled a number of items in the collection to be re-assessed and identified. Extensive research into the human stories behind the items had also taken place.

Dr Pestell went on to outline some of the work which had continued on the Egyptian Collection. He said that the documentation of the collection, that involved listing all of the artefacts, together with all the information relating to them, was largely complete. He pointed out that the conservation of the Egyptian shroud, which was inscribed with hieroglyphics, was an ongoing project with the British Museum. This was currently in the planning stage, ensuring that everything would be ready for 2011, when it was due to be taken to the British Museum to begin the process of unrolling it and carrying out a series of scientific tests.

The Advisory Committee noted that the NMAS was leading the Norfolk contribution to the British Museum/BBC 'History of the World' project. Work was currently underway to promote a final five objects which highlighted important stages in the history of Norfolk. This would be promoted through a series of BBC Radio outside broadcasts and events from museums throughout the county, to be held in the October 2010 half-term period.

Members were also pleased to note that the Department had hosted the prestigious annual conference of the joint *British and Royal Numismatic Society* at Norwich Castle in July 2010.

Resolved –

That the report be noted.

In reply to questions, Mr R Bellinger gave a brief outline of the work of the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society. He said that Members of the Society had been invited to join in a programme of excursions to a range of archaeological sites throughout the county. The Society had also been running guided tours of the Roman Town at Caistor St Edmund throughout the summer, and these were provided free to members of the public as well as members of the Society.

In reply to questions, Mr Gurney pointed out that the Norfolk Archaeological Trust owned Burgh Castle and most of the surrounding farmland. With the assistance of English Heritage, who had responsibility for the care of the walls of the fort, the Norfolk Archaeological Trust had made a number of site improvements, including the construction of a new car park, and the installation of new site interpretation panels. Both the Trust and English Heritage were aware of the importance of ensuring the tranquil beauty of the site was not disturbed by site improvements.

Mr W Fletcher, English Heritage, said that English Heritage had asked for comments on a draft guidance note on the interpretation of the policies in PPS 5 and on English Heritage guidance on the setting of heritage assets. He also drew Members attention to the appointment of the former Chief Inspector of Kent Police as the new Heritage Crime Initiative Policy Advisor for English Heritage. Mr Fletcher went on to point out that Langley Abbey, just off the A146 between Norwich and Lowestoft, had been restored, thanks to the support of English

Heritage, Natural England and the site owners. The site was open to the public at set times, when it was possible to take part in a guided tour.

Ms S Spooner, UEA, referred to the work that the UEA and partner organisations such as the County Council and English Nature had put into the Norfolk Veteran Trees Survey. She said that undergraduate students at the UEA had assisted with this survey. Where possible when a veteran tree was found a note was taken about any nearby interesting trees, as well as important areas of biodiversity for use in any future survey.

The meeting concluded at 3.45 pm.

Chairman



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