

4 PAGE
PULL OUT

NORWICH CASTLE

THE PEOPLE'S PALACE



FESTIVALS & CELEBRATIONS

EDITION TWO



CELEBRATING OUR HISTORY

This is the second of our special pull outs produced in partnership with Norfolk Museums Service. At a time when you cannot enjoy visiting Norwich Castle, the museum's team are bringing history, art and archaeology to you, and this week our theme is celebrations and festivals.

In 1121, King Henry I celebrated Christmas at a feast in the great hall of Norwich Castle. The original medieval room was destroyed centuries ago during the time Norwich Castle was a prison. However, with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Norfolk Museums are embarking on a project that will recreate the 12th century hall in all its magnificence.

For each of these pull outs, we are featuring an aspect of medieval life that was as much fun then as it is today. So, here is an entertaining insight into medieval celebrations and festivals.



A CITY OF CHURCHES

Norwich may be a very quiet city at the moment due to the lockdown, but city-wide festivals are something which many have enjoyed throughout the year – and it was no different in the middle ages!

The area of Tombland was originally the lively heart of the city, used regularly for festivals and celebrations. Though the name 'Tombland' suggests the space would have been tightly packed, it actually means 'open space'. Perfect for getting everyone together and celebrating.

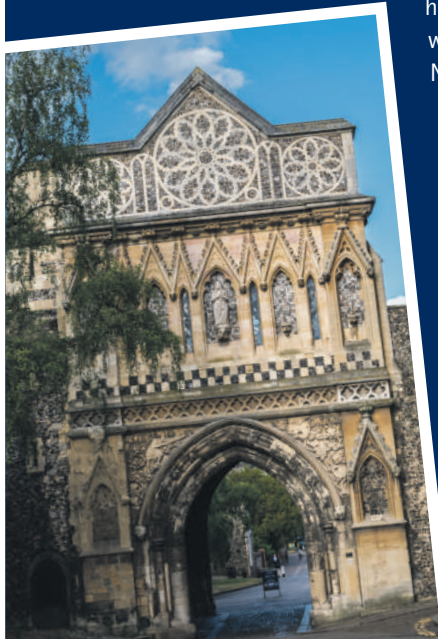
Located right beside Norwich Cathedral, in 1272 the monks were so fed up with the noise they decided to go out and confront the revellers. The confrontation became a brawl and resulted in townsfolk being killed in the fray. One thing soon led to another as people took up arms and started to demolish the entrance gate to the cathedral. In response, the prior's men defended the gatehouse with ruthless efficiency, using crossbows to kill anyone who approached.

Following these events, the Pope excommunicated the people of Norwich, stripping them of any participation in the sacraments and services of the Christian Church. This is the first and only time in history that an English city was singled out and excommunicated.

Being excommunicated seemed to have a sobering effect on the people of the city, and they rebuilt the gate which had been damaged in the earlier rioting. Furthermore, they were so keen to get back in the Pope's good books, they began to pay for churches to be built all over the city. Medieval Norwich

had 57 churches and remains the city with the most amount of churches North of the Alps.

In 1275, a patent was given to the prior to add entrances to the cathedral so that the clergy wouldn't need to use the entrance by the festival ground. As a result, the church constructed Bishops Gate and Bishops Bridge. Finally, in 1276, the Pope granted absolution and allowed the population of Norwich to enter back into the Christian Faith and everything returned to normal.



The Ethelbert Gate to Norwich Cathedral (Getty Images AndresGarciaM)



SIX STRANGE SAINTS

Theoktiste and her granddaughters (Madrid Skylitzes)

We've all heard of the jolly Saint Nicholas who brings presents on December 25 each year, but we wanted to shine the spotlight on six of the strangest Saints of the Middle Ages.



ST BALTHASAR
The Patron Saint of Card Players
Feast day January 6
It was believed that one of the three kings that visited the child Jesus was Balthasar, who came from Egypt.

The Egyptians were known as great card players and tricksters, so Saint Balthasar is the Patron Saint of Card Players.

ST DROGO
The Patron Saint of Unattractive People
Feast day April 16

During Drogo's pilgrimage to Rome, he caught a terrible disease which distorted his body. Seeing this, the local townsfolk built him a cell and kept him out of sight for 40 years until he eventually died!

ST GILES
The Patron Saint of Breastfeeding
Feast day September 1
St Giles was a dedicated hermit, living in solitude for years with only a deer as his companion. So the story goes, St Giles lived on a vegetarian diet and drank milk from the deer.



Images: Detail from Adoration of the Magi showing St Balthasar by Girolamo da Santacroce (Walters Art Museum), St Giles (The National Gallery), St Julian the Hospitaller by Taddeo Gaddi (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

ST JULIAN THE HOSPITALLER
The Patron Saint of Murderers
Feast day February 12

Julian was cursed at birth to kill his own parents. When he eventually found out about this, he decided to run away so that it would never happen. While he was working at a hospital for the sick and needy, his parents arrived, and poor Julian was tricked into murdering them!



ST MEDARD OF PICARDY
The Patron Saint of Weather
Feast day June 8

According to the legend, Medard was lucky enough to be sheltered from rain by an eagle which hovered over him and protected him from bad weather. Supposedly, the weather on his feast day will continue for another 40 days.

ST THEOKTISTE
Patron Saint of Isolation
Feast day November 9
Theoktiste of Lesbos was unlucky enough to be captured by pirates from one of the nearby Greek Islands. She eventually managed to escape and lived on a remote island by herself for 35 years!



CHECK OUT OUR INSTAGRAM PAGE @NORWICHCASTLE

GET INVOLVED

WE'D LOVE TO SEE YOUR MEDIEVAL MAKES!
Post your paper bunting or your Snap dragon colouring on Twitter and Instagram using #NCPeoplesPalace and we'll share our favourites!





Norwich Castle Royal Palace Reborn



THE CASTLE'S ROYAL PAST

Norwich Castle Keep was designed by the Normans to be a royal palace rather than a fortification. The focal point of the Keep would have been the splendour of the Great Hall – with richly embroidered wall hangings and expensive furniture this space would have been dressed to impress!

The Great Hall was the location for the Christmas feast of 1121 in honour of Henry I, the son of William the Conqueror in whose reign the Keep was finally completed. This is the only recorded occasion when the Castle was visited by the King, but it would have been a spectacular occasion, with the best that medieval cuisine could provide such as boar, pork, beef, venison, lamb, swan – and even peacock!

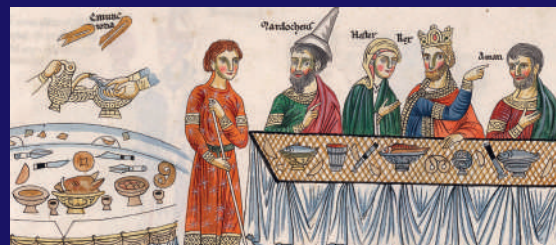
It is this royal past that the Castle Keep project will reveal once more. By recreating the original Norman room layout, visitors will once again be able to experience the sights and sounds of the Castle's medieval heyday. The Great Hall will be presented with accurate period settings, informed by the latest research. Its walls will be hung with colourful banners and the tables decorated with beautiful woven runners – thanks to our amazing

tapestry volunteers who have been hard at work stitching away – even during lockdown!

While the Keep was built as a symbol of royal power, it was also a place where business was conducted, events took place, and feasts were prepared, where courtiers slept and musicians played. The Royal Palace Reborn project will continue this tradition of bustling activity, ensuring a warm welcome for everyone while opening up all five levels of the Keep for the first time in its 900 year history – from basement to battlements. Now that's a cause for celebration!



This rare glass roundel depicting a feasting king is just one of the fascinating medieval objects which are available for adoption at www.adoptanobject.co.uk



Detail from 'The feast of King Assureus and Esther, Hortus deliciarum' (Bibliothèque nationale de France)

KEEP IN TOUCH:

museums.norfolk.gov.uk

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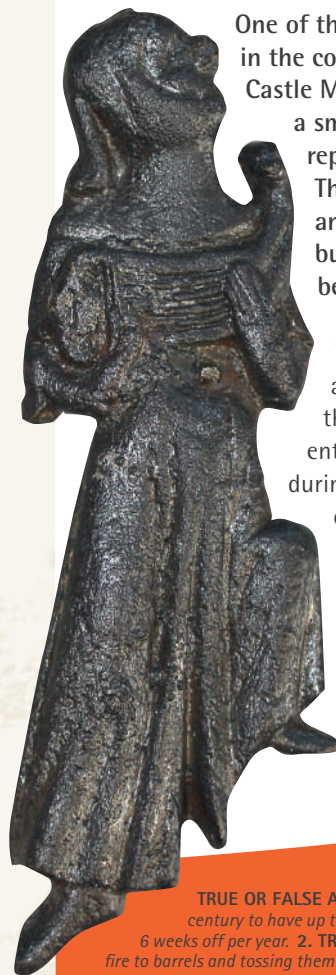
WORD SEARCH

FIND THE 18 MEDIEVAL WORDS

PAGEANT	ROYALTY	FESTIVAL
BUNTING	BLESSING	DANCING
FEASTING	FLAGS	ENTERTAINMENT
TROUBADOURS	HARVEST	MAYPOLE
MINSTRELS	CROWDS	CULTURE
JESTERS	PLAYS	SAINTS

X E J I J C F D C S X X F M K
W S B C Q U I E O P Y H S A E
R G U V R L M S A S L U R Y N
P H N Y T T I C H S L B E P T
L F T F R U N B A F T Y K O E
A C I E O R S L R L F I Z L R
Y R N S U E T E V A S F N E T
S O G T B F R S E G S O X G A
D W R I A A E S S S N Z N L I
A D O V D U L I T A M W S D N
N S Y A O W S N K N I Q S Q M
C W A L U B F G W C B N V D E
I H L G R L P A G E A N T I N
N B T F S H H M I U A G R S T
G J Y N M J E S T E R S O M D

MEDIEVAL GITTERN PLAYER



One of the many fascinating objects in the collections at the Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery is a small cast lead alloy figure representing a musician. The object has lost its paint and some of its sharp relief, but key details can still be identified.

The figure is shown holding a gittern, a forerunner of the guitar popular with court entertainers and minstrels during the 13th and 14th centuries. A characteristic feature of this instrument is a curved neck, sometimes ending with a decorative carving, often an animal head. He also holds a quill plectrum, the instrument used to pluck the strings.

The instrument and long flowing robes with deep hood indicate that the object was made in the early 14th century, and the upward inclination of the head suggests that it might have been part of a decorative set that included other figures and perhaps other features, such as a secular hall, a church or a natural landscape.

In medieval iconography, musicians are often shown playing in honour of the Virgin Mary and Child, or some ruler or secular lord.

The isolated figure was found during work on the Thetford bypass and brought to the museum in 1988. Perhaps our elegant musician served an important decorative and narrative role on a casket or chest from the Benedictine priory of Thetford, or from a secular and knightly home in Norfolk.

It is a rare and delightful object, a tantalising glimpse of the material culture of our 14th century ancestors.



Gittern being played during a knighting ceremony (Bibliothèque Nationale)

TRUE OR FALSE ANSWERS: 1. **TRUE:** It wasn't uncommon for a peasant from the 13th century to have up to 26 weeks off a year! In contrast, the average worker today gets less than 6 weeks off per year. 2. **TRUE:** Across Europe peasants would celebrate midsummer evening by setting fire to barrels and tossing them down a hill. Health and safety wasn't quite as strict as it is now. 3. **FALSE:** Feasts, fairs, and celebrations could be held without having to get permission from nobility. Usually villages, towns and cities had dedicated spaces for holding such large scale events. 4. **FALSE:** 'Dancing' until you died was known as St. Vitus's Dance and was actually a disease which caused the nervous system to constantly spasm, giving the impression of dancing. 5. **TRUE:** During celebrations the Lord of Misrule was responsible for making sure people always had something to laugh at.

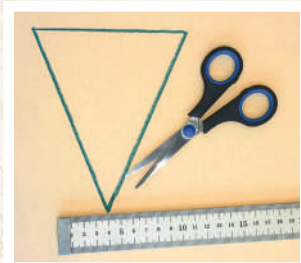
GET THE KIDS INVOLVED!

MEDIEVAL PAPER BUNTING

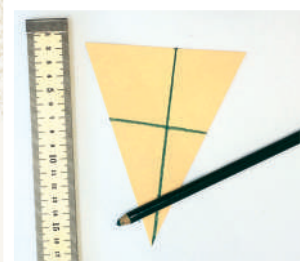
A celebration isn't complete without bunting!
Follow our step-by-step guide and make
your own medieval bunting

YOU WILL NEED:

Paper or thin card Scissors and a ruler
A hole punch Colouring pencils
String or ribbon Sticky tape



1. Draw a triangle on the paper then cut this out. Using this first triangle as a template, draw and cut out more paper triangles to make your bunting flags.



2. Draw bold geometric shapes on each of the flags using a ruler and colour them in – see our examples for inspiration!



3. Use a hole punch (or the scissors if you don't have one) to create holes in the top two corners of each flag.

4. Thread the string through the holes in the flags. If the flags keep slipping along the string, pop some sticky tape on the back to hold them in place.

5. Hang up your medieval bunting in pride of place and start the celebrations!

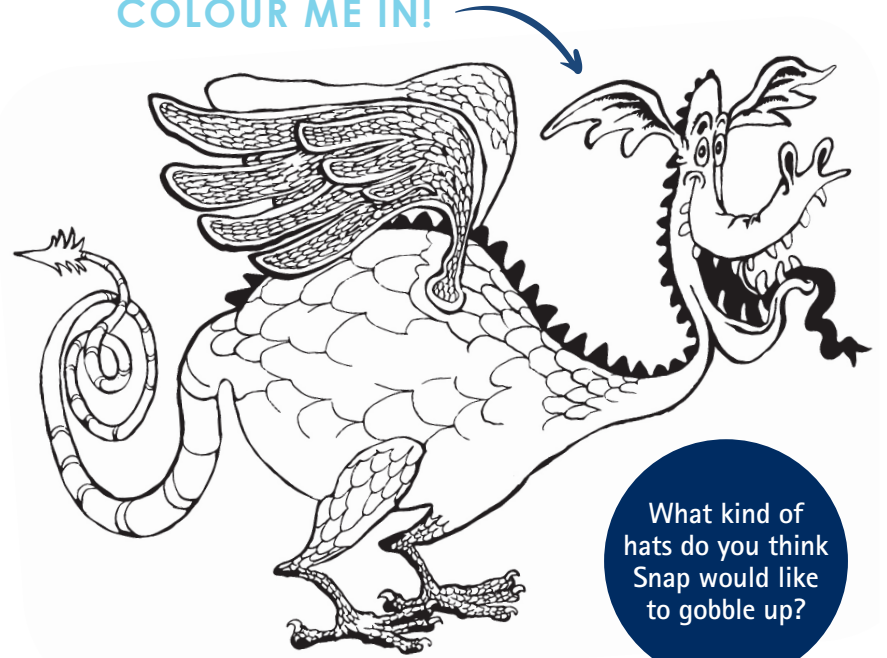


*Please ask an adult for help when using scissors.

SNAP THE DRAGON

Snap would join the parades through the streets of Norwich and gobble up people's hats! To get it back they would have to pay Snap a penny!

COLOUR ME IN!



What kind of hats do you think Snap would like to gobble up?

TRUE OR FALSE

TICK THE BOXES BELOW

- | | TRUE | FALSE |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. We work more in the 21st century than medieval peasants did in the 13th century | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Midsummer was celebrated by throwing burning barrels down a hill | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. You had to have the permission of the nobility to hold a feast, fair or celebration | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Some peasants danced so much at festivals that they died | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. On New Year's Day people would elect a 'Lord of Misrule' to cause trouble | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

We gratefully acknowledge the support of



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