

Cambridge and County folk museum



welcome

Welcome to the Cambridge & County Folk Museum, a thriving museum providing an insight into the history and way of life of Cambridgeshire people. The Museum holds an impressive collection of over 20,000 objects, some dating back to the 1650s, including paintings, diaries, kitchen implements, Fenland tools, a significant regional folklore collection, children's toys and items linked to the University. The collection is extremely eclectic and past curators had favourite areas they enjoyed developing, such as spittoons, straw plaits and jelly moulds. All the objects have one thing in common: they have all been used or made within Cambridgeshire, with a large proportion from the city of Cambridge itself.

Following a successful redevelopment in 2005, the Museum has flourished and now delivers an exciting range of exhibitions, events, reminiscence sessions and education for both schools and life-long learners. The Museum prides itself in offering a unique and enriching experience for both local visitors and those from across the world.



The Museum opening, 1936, with Ernest Saville Peck and Cyril Fox (front row, second and third from right)

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How the Museum Started

The idea of creating a museum devoted to the social and cultural history of Cambridge was first mooted in October 1933, when an exhibition of local bygones proved hugely popular. A provisional committee was formed under the chairmanship of Ernest Saville Peck, a prominent local pharmacist, founding member of the Cambridge Rotary Club and an avid collector of local artefacts. The committee prepared a constitution to set up the Cambridge & District Folk

Museum and rented the vacant premises of the White Horse Inn at the foot of Castle Hill.

The Museum opened on 3rd November 1936 with its primary objective 'to interest the ordinary citizen in aspects of local social life which are disappearing in Cambridgeshire under changing conditions'. In his opening speech, Sir Cyril Fox commented: 'I am inclined to think that in the University of Cambridge there is more exact knowledge of the social anthropology of,

let us say, Papua than of Pampisford' [a village near Cambridge].

Both town and University figures were united behind the concept and creation of this pioneering social history museum. Prominent local figures involved in its launch included Sir Sydney Cockerel, Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum (1908–37), Louis Clarke, Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum (1937–46), Lord Fairhaven of Anglesey Abbey, Maud Darwin and Florence Ada Keynes, mother of economist John Maynard Keynes.



Cambridge – a brief history

From its Roman and Anglo-Saxon origins, Cambridge became a thriving medieval port and burgeoning University town

Cambridge is named after the 'Great Bridge', the original river crossing established by the Romans, on Magdalene Street a few yards from the Museum. Their army camp and settlement was called 'Duroliponte' – 'town by the boggy river'. This was renamed 'Grantacaestir' by the Anglo-Saxons, meaning 'Roman fort by the muddy river', which soon became 'Grantabrycge', indicating the growing importance of the bridge crossing. By 1300, 'Granta' had been dropped for 'Cambrigge', and by 1600 the town finally became known as 'Cambridge'.



Medieval Cambridge

In medieval times Cambridge was a thriving market town and inland port, defended by its Norman castle and the King's Ditch, which ran from Mill Pool to Jesus Green. The area beside the river was bustling and lively, with 31 inns and pubs in Bridge Street, Quayside and Magdalene Street all serving the busy river trade. Fish, eels and sedge were brought by boat from the Fens. Wine, salt, timber and iron were imported from abroad, while wheat and barley were brought in from the rich surrounding farm land. The University was in its infancy and the river was the town's focal point, with a string of hythes or quaysides along its banks. Between 1280 and 1500, ten University colleges were founded, many built on land that once supported the river hythes. By 1500 only two of the old quays survived, the Mill Pool in the south that supplied grain to nearby King's Mill and Quayside near the Great Bridge.

LEFT: Cambridge coat of arms, taken from the old gaol on Castle Street

OPPOSITE: (top) Kettle's Yard from Northampton Street, painting by Mary Greene; (middle) the White Horse Inn, 1901; (bottom) the Spotted Cow, Northampton Street

Castle End

When the Fens were drained in the 17th century river trade declined and the final blow was struck when the railway arrived in 1845. The White Horse Inn, one of the river traders' haunts, was lucky to survive the downturn – only six of the 31 pubs stayed in business. Castle End, as the area was known, was a working-class community whose residents lived in overcrowded yards and courts. The largest of these was Kettle's Yard which in 1851 ran from Honey Hill to Castle Street and contained 26 houses and 115 people. Castle End's slums were cleared away in the 20th century and the Museum is one of the few buildings in the area to survive relatively unaltered.

The White Horse Inn

The Museum occupies nos 2 and 3 Castle Street, the old premises of the White Horse Inn, a timber-framed building with a wattle and daub construction. On 3rd July 1646, the building was first granted an inn licence by the University Vice-Chancellor, Thomas Hill. We know from inventories made in 1657 and 1668 that the White Horse had ten or 11 rooms, a yard surfaced with 'pebbles and paving' with stabling for 20 horses, a pump and a stone trough. For almost 300 years, the White Horse remained an inn, until it finally closed its doors in 1934, re-opening two years later as the Cambridge and District Folk Museum.



The Bar

The bar was the busiest and most public room in the inn, a place where drink and food were served – and the liquor had to be locked away at night...

The public house as we know it today is really an invention of the 18th century. Before there were alehouses, which sold beer brewed on the premises, and inns – larger, more salubrious establishments which offered food and drink, stabling for horses and a variety of dining and meeting rooms. At the White Horse Inn, customers would buy drinks from the enclosed glass bar or be served seated by the large fire. Before the kitchen was added in the 18th century, meals would be cooked in the large 16th-century inglenook fireplace, using the elaborate chimney crane to swing pots across and up and down. It was dangerous work: contemporaries describe how women singed their skirts or burnt themselves over the naked

flames. The 18th-century basket spit in the fireplace was used to rotate large pieces of meat by means of a weighted jack. Meat would only be eaten by wealthier patrons; poorer people would be offered more basic foodstuffs such as a hunk of bread or potato stew.

Painted Inn Signs

On display are two inn signs dating from around the 1830s: *The Man Loaded with Mischief* and *The John Gilpin*, both by Richard Hopkins Leach (1794-1851). Richard was the son of Cambridge college servants who also kept several inns, including *The Pickerel* in Magdalene Street. He trained as an engraver in London and returned to Cambridge in 1817 with his wife Isa. As



ABOVE: *The Man Loaded with Mischief* inn sign

a pub sign painter, he was paid 15s per side, a good income bearing in mind that in the 19th century there were 11 pubs in Castle Street alone. As the *Cambridge Chronicle* reported in his obituary: 'Evidence of the talents of Mr Leach in his profession may be seen outside almost every hostelry in Cambridge and its vicinity'.

The Snug

Increasing social division in the late 19th century led to a new room being created – the Snug, also called the Smoke Room. This was a small, private room where a higher price was paid for beer and nobody could look in and see the drinkers. It was used by well-off patrons and those who preferred not to be seen using the public bar. Ladies would often enjoy a private drink in the Snug at a time when it was frowned upon for them to be in a pub. Prostitutes found them very useful as well!



QUEEN MARY'S VISIT

In the glass panels of the bar an inscription records HM Queen Mary's visit to the Museum in August 1938. Queen Mary, recently widowed after the death of her husband George V (1865-1936), was an avid collector of objects and works of art. The Museum exhibits which excited her particular interest were toys and spelling books similar to those she herself played with as a child. To commemorate her visit, she donated an unusual marquetry tea-caddy in the shape of a chapel.



TOP: the 'chapel' tea-caddy

BOTTOM: Queen Mary's visit to the Museum, 1938



ABOVE: 19th-century Bryant & May's safety match box

LEFT: original interior fittings in the bar

The Kitchen

The kitchen was the hub of the busy inn, where large-scale cooking was done over the open fire, and the sink cupboard was a hiding place for spiders...

The present-day kitchen was an 18th-century addition to the building – originally the kitchen, sink house and larder were probably at the rear of the yard. The kitchen contained all the equipment for cooking over an open fire, such as spits, hanging chains, forks and tongs as well as plates, dishes and jugs. Candlesticks, a warming pan, pewter chamber pots, table linen and other items for guests' convenience were also stored here.

The census of 1851 shows that the inn had five lodgers in rented rooms on the top two floors. As well as cooking for them, the landlady would spend one day a week washing linen – using a washing tub, dolly and mangle – and another drying, ironing and pressing.



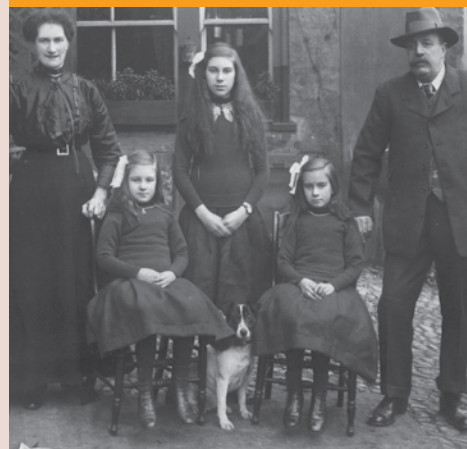
ABOVE: 20th-century household goods and tins including a bag of blue to keep the laundry white

Domestic Revolution

The Victorians' enthusiasm for gadgetry was occasionally carried to impractical lengths – the Museum's complicated apple corer is just one example of this. However, improvements in technology helped transform domestic life during the 19th and early 20th centuries: the carpet beater was replaced by the vacuum cleaner, and the open fire by the gas stove. During the 1930s domestic refrigerators became more popular, though these were so expensive that by 1939 only 200,000 British homes had one, and most people continued to buy their perishable goods on a daily basis.

THE DUDLEY-HAYS

Willoughby Dudley-Hay and his wife Sarah were among the longest-serving landlords of the White Horse Inn. They started married life there in 1901, and their three children were born there. Sarah was reputed to be an excellent cook. Her daughter remembers her preparing piles of vegetables for the farmers who brought their carts into Cambridge from the outlying villages, and stopped for refreshments at the inn. Sarah's daughter also remembers how she hated to do the washing-up as the sink cupboard was dark, gloomy and full of spiders. After her husband's death in 1933, Sarah continued as landlady for a further year, when the inn was purchased by the Council.



The Dudley-Hays with Pat the dog
Courtesy of Mrs C M Green



ABOVE: jelly and flummery moulds

Jelly Mould Collection

Jellies and other gelatine-based foods like aspics and creams are no longer fashionable but in the past they were often the crowning glories of the table. *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management* of 1861 lists over 60 jellies, creams and blancmanges that were served up in middle-class Victorian homes. Moulds transformed the shape of jellies, but were also used to create elaborate pies, ice-creams and flummery (blancmange). Many of the copper jelly moulds on display came from the kitchens of Magdalene College. Copper moulds were favoured until the early 19th century, but they were expensive and had to be lined to avoid verdigris poisoning, so earthenware or glass became popular instead.



ABOVE: 1950s' enamel coffee and tea pots

The Guest Room

A variety of interesting and colourful characters visited the inn throughout its 300-year history and are celebrated in the guest room

When the White Horse Inn first opened in 1646, its licence described it as having 'convenient Chambers and other Rooms, bedding and furniture to lodge thirty men'. It is surprising that so many people could be accommodated in such a relatively small building, however it was very common for travellers to share rooms, and even beds, with strangers. Etiquette books of the time provided advice on how to handle these situations, as did Samuel Pepys in his *Diary*:

If in your journey you be constrained to take up quarters in the same chamber with the qualify'd person, you must give him leave to undress and go to bed first; and when he has done, you are to strip and go to bed after him, and to lie so as to give him no disturbance all night.

Although grandly titled 'The Guest Room', this 18th-century extension to the original building would have continued the tradition of guests and lodgers sharing. Although records show the inn had furnishings such as textiles, curtains and pictures, it was not until much later into the 18th century that expectations of privacy and comfort began to rise.

Cambridge Eccentrics

Cambridge and its surrounding area have a heritage of remarkable local personalities and eccentrics, and portraits of some of them can be seen here. Elizabeth Woodcock from the village of Impington survived eight days trapped in deep snow, and the formidable-looking businessman Thomas Hobson was the originator of the phrase 'Hobson's choice' (see the Yard, pp24-25). Jacob Butler, an 18th-century barrister and graduate of the University known as 'The Squire',



ABOVE: Elizabeth Woodcock



ABOVE: 18th-century portrait of Thomas Hobson

BELOW: Jacob Butler, 'The Squire'

was instantly recognisable because of his massive physique: he was six feet four inches tall and very broad. He was famously litigious, regularly bringing lawsuits to fight for his rights and increase his land holdings and income. In later life, Butler had a huge oak coffin made – big enough for several people to fit inside. Many visitors came to see it and share a glass of wine with the man for whom it was destined.



WIG POWDERING CLOSET

Wigs were stored and powdered in the closet to the right of the fireplace.

The fashion for men's powdered wigs was very much in vogue until the 1770s, and bedrooms and guest rooms often had a space where people could re-powder their wigs with finely-ground starch, scented with essence of lavender or flower water. When wigs and powdered hairpieces fell out of fashion towards the end of the 18th century (a trend probably hastened by the introduction of a tax on hair powder in 1795), these small closets were often turned into chamber pot repositories. This dual role explains why toilets were traditionally referred to as 'powder rooms' and the euphemistic term 'powdering one's nose' was traditionally used by polite ladies when excusing themselves from mixed company.



The wig closet/chamber pot repository

The Dining Room

This large, open room with impressive fireplace surround was used as the inn's meeting hall and function room

As towns grew in size and prosperity, inns often added rooms where business could be discussed away from the bustling marketplace. The dining room would have been used by customers from the thriving river trade and later from the nearby cattle market on Pound Hill – indeed this was originally called the ‘market dining room’. In later years, the dining room was also used as a space to put on concerts and other entertainments.



Stourbridge Fair

Above the unusual circular fireplace hangs a large metal ‘steelyard’ (weighing beam, see image this page, right), the last to be used at Stourbridge Fair. This medieval fair was the largest in Europe – in 1724, writer Daniel Defoe called it ‘the greatest fair in Britain, and perhaps even the world’. It originated in 1199 when King John granted a charter allowing lepers the right to hold a three-day fair on the Feast of Holy Cross (14th September), though by 1589 was running from 24th August to 29th September. The fair attracted merchants and visitors from Britain and overseas, selling and buying goods including silk, wool, garlic, hops and cheese. Many of these commodities live on in the names of the surrounding streets

– Garlic Row, Oyster Row, Mercers Row and Cheddars Lane. The fair’s location, with the river allowing barges to travel up the Cam from the Wash and near an important road leading to Newmarket, made it very accessible and the White Horse and other inns in the town would be packed with tradesmen and visitors. During the late 18th and 19th centuries, the fair declined in popularity, and it ceased trading in 1933.

Mayor’s Seat

The imposing upholstered leather Mayor’s chair formerly resided in the Guildhall, and represents over 800 years of mayoralty in the City. The Folk Museum shares strong links with the mayors of Cambridge. Historically, many of its trustees have fulfilled that role, one



of the most notable being Florence Ada Keynes, mother of the economist John Maynard Keynes. Florence was the first female councillor in Cambridge and a founding member of the Museum.

Coronation Dinner

The illustration of Queen Victoria’s coronation dinner on 28th June 1838 records a truly astounding event. Held in the open air on Parker’s Piece, attended by 15,000 people and watched by 25,000 more, the event was planned by a committee of two members from every parish with the aim of ‘feeding and entertaining the poorer classes’, and was put together in less than three weeks. The quantities involved were enormous: 1,608 puddings, 1,029 joints of meat, 99 barrels of beer, 125 gallons of pickles... The meat was cooked in College kitchens and to ensure that the ‘best and cheapest mode’ of producing the finest tasting pudding was selected, committee members took part in ‘trial pudding’ tastings. Entertainments included jumping in sacks, biscuit bolting, wheelbarrow races and dipping for eels.



ABOVE: (top) Queen Victoria's coronation dinner, 1838; (below) Mr Craske, Cambridge's muffin man

Fens

The swampy, inhospitable Fen landscape supported a unique traditional way of life that was devastated by large-scale drainage in the 17th century

Cambridge sits at the southern end of the great Fenland plain, an area of flat landscape and large skies. Today it is very productive agricultural land with fertile black peat soils, but for most of its history it was a marshy and inhospitable place. Those who tried to make a living there struggled to hold back the waters that threatened and often flooded the area. The Fen population lived in isolated settlements on slightly raised clay 'islands', surviving on an economy of fishing, fowling, reed-cutting and willow-coppicing.

Draining the Fens

In the 17th century, there was a large scale drainage of the Fens. Francis Russell the 4th Earl of Bedford gained a royal charter to turn the 'wastelands' into summer grazing land and hired the Dutch engineer Vermuyden. The reclamation of the Fens met with intense opposition

from locals, whose traditional way of life was disrupted. The dissenters became known as the 'Fen Tigers' because of their aggression towards the Fen drainers, attacking tools and workers alike. Powte's Complaint is a famous 17th-century protest poem written in their support (a powte is a parasitic jawless fish):

*Come, brethren of the water, and let us
all assemble,
To treat upon this matter, which makes
us quake and tremble;
For we shall rue it, if't be true, that
Fens be undertaken
And where we feed in Fen and Reed,
they'll feed both Beef and Bacon.*

The swampy Fens gradually became usable land although constant work was needed to keep the waterways clear, and many workers were employed to dig drains and ditches. The reclaimed land supported a mixed economy of agriculture and horticulture plus a few traditional

industries such as reed and sedge cutting for thatch, and eel catching using woven willow eel traps, known as 'grigs'.

Fen Dialect

The Fen dialect is a curious mix of Norfolk and Lincolnshire accents, with hints of Cockney and an Australian twang. It has some unique phrases:

A hen's noseful	A small amount
Blee	Waterlogged
Cut on the sosh	Not cut straight, not done properly
Daggerly	Damp
Dockey bag	Food bag for a morning meal break
Dudder	Shiver
Hulk	To gut a rabbit or hare
Quizzey	Nosey



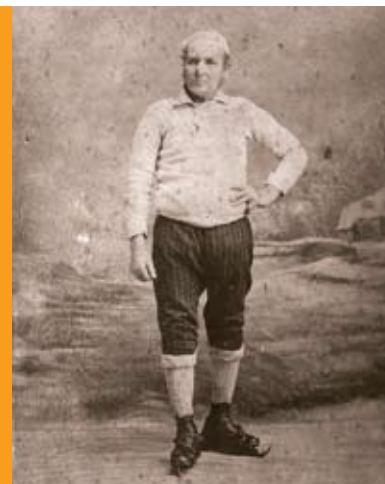
ABOVE: Fenland room display of tools and traps

BELOW: Fenland ice skates



FEN SKATING

During cold winters, the easiest way to get around the Fens was to skate. People used sheep bones strapped to their shoes and, later, pattens or runners made from iron were fixed on to wooden shoe soles. There were many local skating competitions with pigs, bacon, winter clothes and money as prizes. William 'Turkey' Smart was one of the greatest Fen skaters. Born in 1829, he was a clayman by trade, developing tremendous muscular power in his lower body. He was the supreme Fen skating champion for more than ten years and continued racing until he was 62.



William 'Turkey' Smart



ABOVE: 19th-century eel grig (trap) made from willow

LEFT: making an eel grig



Folklore Collection

The Museum's unusual collection of local folklore artefacts were used to 'cure' disease, ward off witches and help the path of courtship run smoothly

Folklore – the objects, stories, popular beliefs, customs, rituals and songs attached to a place – gives us a window into the vanished traditions and habits of the people who lived there. Cambridgeshire was particularly lucky in having Enid Porter, Museum curator from 1947 to 1976, who made it her life's work to record the folklore of the county.

Fen Cures & Remedies

Along with carrying a potato in one's pocket, mole paws were said to cure rheumatism which was very prevalent in the damp conditions of the Fens.

Hedgehog jaws were carried to ward off toothache. Men would rub the grease from a boiled hedgehog on their heads as a cure for baldness and the hedgehog's cooking water was used to dose anyone suffering from whooping cough.

Love & Courtship

Courting men used to make love tokens from harvested corn. If his lover wore it pinned to the right side of her dress, her parents disapproved of the match. But if it was pinned over her heart, he was accepted. It was thought unlucky for a local couple to marry if their surnames



ABOVE: hedgehog jaws and mole paws

OPPOSITE: a selection of witches' safeguards and cures

began with the same letter, or in the month of May – the luckiest months for marriage were March and September.

House & Home

In the 16th & 17th centuries, superstitious objects were often placed in the fabric of houses during building work to offer protection from evil spirits and witches. Animal bones, especially horse bones, were found in chimney breasts; children's shoes and salt-glazed pots in walls and hearths; and holed stones in stables, farmhouses and cowsheds. Witches' bottles were often placed in 'weak' areas of the home such as chimneys and doors, where it was thought a witch could enter. These bottles originally contained salt, a well-tried antidote to evil, and perhaps also iron items such as nails or pins, with multi-coloured silk to dazzle the witch and avert her evil eye. Witches' balls were hung near windows to entrap (by her reflection) any witch who dared come near.



ENID PORTER

Enid Porter (1909-1984) was born in Essex, but her family had lived in Cambridge since the 17th century. She studied at London University and was a teacher before becoming curator of the Folk Museum. She was a leading authority on folklore, collecting regional stories and customs: 'in carpenters' sheds, in farmyards, in public houses, in fields or listening unashamedly to snatches of conversation in trains, buses and streets...' She never used tape recorders, preferring to hand write notes or memorise people's stories 'when I felt that the sight of pencil and paper would alarm an informant and bring their flow of conversation to an abrupt halt'. Her books include *Cambridgeshire Customs & Folklore* (1969) and *Folklore of East Anglia* (1974).



Enid Porter with a corp chreadh, a 'clay body' stuck with pins to cause injury

Arts and Artisans

With its cottage industries of lace and straw plaiting and trades of millinery and drapery, Cambridgeshire has a long history of artisan craftsmanship

Lace-making

The fine wooden and bone bobbins and the examples of bobbin lace, including that on the pillow by the fireplace, highlight the intricacy involved in what was once a widespread cottage industry. The 16th and 17th centuries saw a huge proliferation of 'lace schools' in Cambridgeshire and nearby counties. The school was often no more than a room in a 'teacher's' cottage where the poorer children of a parish were taught this complex craft, in order to make and sell their own pieces. By the end of the 17th century, lace-making was a lucrative industry with children earning 20 pence a week, and adults 6 shillings and 8 pence – though trade declined with the introduction of mass-produced, machine-made lace in the 19th century.



ABOVE: straw-plaited love token

BELOW: traditional lacemaking

Straw Plait

From the beginning of the 17th century, Cambridgeshire and the nearby counties of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire were the heart of the straw-plait industry. The wheat grown locally possessed a fine bright colour, tenacity and strength – ideal for making baskets and hats. The huge demand for straw plait from the 1800s was fuelled by the fashion for straw bonnets. An astonishing 70 yards of plait was needed to make a fine lady's bonnet and during this period, the plaiting of straw gave employment to many thousands of women and young children. At its peak in the mid-19th

century, a woman could earn more from straw plaiting than a man could earn from the land – 12 shillings a week compared to an agricultural labourer's 9 or 10 shillings a week.

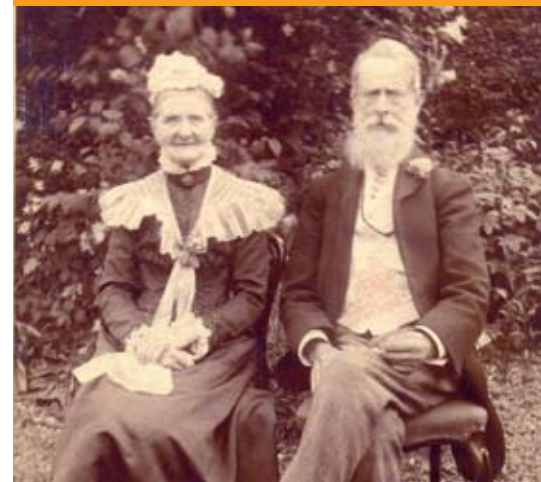
The industry was a sociable one, with women and children often plaiting on their cottage doorsteps. However, the work itself wasn't much fun, being highly repetitive and numbing to the fingers. The straw was brittle and needed to be moistened as it was worked – but using saliva (as most workers did) led to chapped lips and mouth sores. Fingers became calloused and roughened, and the bleaching and dying methods were dangerous to health. The prevalence of 'plait schools' in some villages saw children of all ages working a full day, so they had little time to learn to read or pick up other skills.

Women's Domestic Crafts

Victorian girls were encouraged to excel in arts and handicrafts in the belief that embroidery, needlework and sewing would help them to become 'cultured' young ladies. Although some women would make clothes for the poor and needy, the majority concentrated on finer work such as netting, embroidery and other decorative works which they could sell. They often made gifts and keepsakes to give to friends

JOSIAH CHATER, TAILOR & DIARIST

Nineteenth-century Cambridge boasted three times as many tailors as the average town of the age. Although relations between town and gown were often bad, trade between the two flourished. A prominent tailor of the time was Josiah Chater (1828–1908), whose detailed diaries over a 40-year period from 1844 to 1884 paint a vivid picture of life in Victorian Cambridge. In addition to personal accounts of key events such as the coronation of Queen Victoria and the arrival of the railway and trams, the diaries provide a touching insight into life closer to home. Chater writes movingly of the illnesses and early deaths of his children and the destruction caused by large fires within the cramped environment of the city. The Museum is lucky enough to have Josiah Chater's original diaries in its collection. These were edited by former curator Enid Porter and published as *Victorian Cambridge* in 1975.



Josiah Chater and his wife Agnes in 1903



and loved ones. In Cambridgeshire, the custom was to give pin cushions to women before the birth of a child. Pins would be displayed in an intricate manner, often spelling out messages such as 'welcome little stranger' or 'sweet babe'. Pins have a long-standing folklore connection in this region and many people thought they offered protection and good luck – 'See a pin pick it up/All day long you'll have good luck'. This, combined with the fact that pins were individually handmade and therefore very expensive, made the cushions a valued gift.

ABOVE: Betsey Ivers' sampler, 1854

RIGHT: pin cushion, 1831



THE GOTOBEDS

Mr and Mrs Gotobed mending nets at Roslyn (Roswell) Pits in Ely. Their unusual surname was first recorded in 1269 (as 'John Gotobedde of Barnwell, Cambridge') and perhaps originated as a nickname for someone who owned a bed, was a bedmaker or, indeed, used their bed rather too often...

{ In earlier times young children often had to work to earn their keep, but in the 19th century the idea of a nurturing childhood developed }

As Daniel Defoe noted in his 1724 *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*: 'in some districts there was not a child of five that could not earn its own bread'. Children worked from an early age doing jobs like bird scaring, stone picking or boot polishing. The lower classes considered play unnecessary and toys were generally few. It wasn't until the 19th century that laws were passed to restrict child labour and introduce compulsory schooling for five to ten year olds. Classes were often large and ruled by the cane, with many country children disappearing during harvest time.

ABOVE RIGHT: 19th-century Noah's ark

BELOW: (left) children playing outside Trumpington Mill c. 1873; (right) playing marbles



Bringing Up Baby

This room provides a sense of Victorian attitudes to rearing infants. The cot is from Newnham Grange, home of George and Maud Darwin, and presumably used by their four children, one of whom was artist and writer Gwen Raverat. The baby-minder would have been attached to the ceiling and floor with the infant secured in the round rest – so the child could move around the post, rather than roam the room as the baby-minder with wheels would allow.



ABOVE: (left) dolls' house, 1931; (middle and right) board games from c. 1830 and 1822

BELOW: teddy was bought as a Christmas present in 1908, cost 3/6d

The Attic

This 18th-century addition to the original building was formerly used as sleeping quarters. The Museum has re-interpreted the space as a nursery, using the room to display a fine collection of toys from the last 200 years. Dolls and dolls' houses were not always made as play things but rather as collectors' pieces for adults, accurate copies of the fashions and architecture of the time. Dolls were made

from many different materials with wood being the cheapest and porcelain or wax the finest. The most expensive dolls often had blown or moulded glass eyes and real hair. In the 1920s and 1930s celluloid became a popular material for doll-making but it was highly flammable and faded in light. It was replaced in 1950 by vinyl and finally plastic.

NURSERY

The concept of the nursery dates from the late 18th century. They were usually dark, cramped spaces at the top of houses into which the children of the family were squeezed. Not everyone thought this the best environment to raise children. As the 1839 book *Advice to Mothers* said: 'Gardeners are well aware of the great importance of light in the construction of their greenhouses, and yet children, who require it so much, and are of much greater importance, are cooped-up in dark rooms.' During the 19th century, houses started to be designed with light, airy nurseries, and larger Victorian houses often had day and night nurseries as well as separate school rooms.



The Yard

The yard was originally the Inn's stable, with the authentic Victorian shop window – taken from a shop in Bridge Street – added in the 1930s

Travellers stabled their horses for the night in the yard, with an ostler and stable boy on hand to look after the animals. The yard is small – larger inns would have had enough yard space to stable coach and fours. One of Cambridge's largest yards was at the Lion Hotel on Petty Cury (pulled down in the 1970s to make way for Lion Yard shopping centre). The Lion Hotel sign that hung above its entrance can be seen here.

The four impressive stone statues once formed the pinnacles of the Victorian fountain that marked the end of Hobson's Conduit in Market Hill. The Victorians removed the original fountain in 1855 and placed it at the junction of Trumpington and Lensfield Roads, where it remains today. The Victorian fountain was declared unsafe in 1953, and its statues donated to the Museum.



Cambridge Coat of Arms

Near the entrance a stone shield (see page 4) depicts the emblems of Cambridge. Drawn up in 1570, the coat of arms has three ships sailing under a bridge, the whole supported by two seahorses. Why would landlocked Cambridge have emblems of the sea on its shield? At that time Cambridge was a prosperous town with a thriving port, and sea-faring ships could sail down river from The Wash. But after the Fens were drained, the river level dropped and goods had to be transported by horse-pulled barges instead. The coat of arms commemorates the debt the now landlocked town of Cambridge once owed to the sea.

ABOVE: Cambridge's coat of arms

LEFT: statues from the Victorian fountain at Hobson's Conduit



Thomas Hobson

Thomas Hobson (1544-1631) was the University carrier famous for the energetic way he drove his eight-horse team to London and back delivering letters, parcels and people. He is remembered in the proverb 'Hobson's choice', meaning 'there is no real choice'. Hobson hired out horses to scholars but:

He made it an unalterable rule ... that every horse should have an equal share of rest and fatigue, and therefore would never let one out of his turn ... [it was] this [horse] or none.

He also helped finance Hobson's Conduit, a waterway built in 1610 to bring clean water from Vicar's Brook, near Long Road, into the centre of Cambridge.

Shop Window

The shop window which now forms the frontage of the Enid Porter building originally stood at 45 Bridge Street. When the area was redeveloped by St John's College in 1938, the Victorian shop front was saved by the first custodian of the Museum, Reginald Lambeth. It stood

in the yard for many years before being incorporated into the new extension in 2005.

Water Pump

The water pump, with its Headly & Manning maker's mark, originally stood on Peas Hill near Market Hill. The Headly family was one of Cambridge's major iron-founding families, with brothers James (who ran the foundry) and Edward (the 'monger' or seller) working together until Edward left after a quarrel. James then teamed up with John Manning to form Headly & Manning, which operated in Mill Road between 1852 and 1858.

ABOVE: Peas Hill in 1934 showing the old pump

BELOW: the Victorian shop window



Strange and Amazing

The Museum and its collection reveal some remarkable tales of extraordinary endurance, strength and uncanny happenings...

Champion of the World

The impressive gold and silver 'Astley Belt' was won by Chesterton-born endurance runner Charles Rowell (1852 – 1909). Endurance racing was extremely popular during the 19th century, and the Astley Belt contest was one of the sport's top events, attracting huge crowds, enthusiastic press coverage and substantial betting. On 10 March 1879, Charles Rowell entered the Astley Belt contest in New York City's Madison Square Garden. Six days and 500 gruelling miles later, he completed his final lap to win the accolade of 'Long Distance Champion of the World', \$20,000 and status as a national hero.



Histon Giant

At nearly seven feet (2.13m) in height and over 23 stone (146kg) in weight, 'Histon Giant' Moses Carter (1801 – 1860) was famous for his extraordinary feats of strength. He could carry a

'coomb' (18 stone or 114kg) sack of corn under each arm, and regularly defeated all-comers at Stourbridge Fair's boxing booth. In 1847, he won a bet to carry an immensely heavy boulder over a mile – you can still see the boulder in the garden of the Boot Inn in Histon. The



ABOVE: (top) endurance runner Charles Rowell and (bottom) his silver and gold Astley Belt

Museum has Carter's stove-pipe hat and hobnailed boots among its collection, and although the boot leather has shrunk over time, they give some indication of the size of the wearer.

Hidden Rooms & Ghosts

In the Museum there is a mysterious hidden room on the first floor landing of the rear stairway, discovered when the spiral staircase was replaced in the 1950s. A hidden chamber and metal rungs were also found within the chimney breast, and it's been suggested these spaces were used as hiding places for Royalists during the Civil War. There have been sightings of the ghost of a Civil War soldier at the top of the stairway, and unexplained footsteps were heard in the top part of the building as recently as 1996.

Tall Tales

Pub story-tellers were often rewarded for their tall tales with free beer and prizes of tin cups, medals or rosettes. The Museum's 'A Noted Liar' medal was found in the garden of Chesterton riverside pub the Pike & Eel. Who knows what strange stories it witnessed? Perhaps the legend of the headless skeleton who demanded his skull back from the squire of Whittlesford, or the story of the ghostly choir which sings on moonlit nights in Abington...



ABOVE: the rear staircase, location of the Museum's 'hidden' room



ABOVE: strongman Moses Carter's hat and boot; 'A Noted Liar' medal

Behind the Scenes

There are fascinating collections of dolls, typewriters, royal souvenirs, paintings, clothes, sewing machines and farmland tools hidden away in the Museum stores...

City Scenes

The Museum holds an interesting collection of paintings by Mary Charlotte Greene (b 1860), aunt of the novelist Graham Greene. She lived at Harston House with her brother Sir William Graham Greene, a former Cambridgeshire councillor and Secretary of the Ministry of Munitions during the First World War. Mary trained at the Royal Academy and painted many scenes of Cambridge over the years, providing an invaluable record of the inn yards and old streets of the city demolished



during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. We also hold a large collection of photographs which show Cambridge's changing streets, shops and people, giving a unique insight into the city's heritage.

Chivers Jam

Hidden in the archives is a collection of advertisements, receipts and photographs from the famous Histon farming family, Chivers & Sons. Stephen Chivers (d 1907) founded the family jam-making business in 1873 and by the 1930s it owned 1,500 acres of land around Histon, a few miles north of Cambridge. Large acreages of soft fruit and plums were grown for canning and jam making; cows and pigs were kept for their dung; poultry were raised, fed on home-grown wheat, and housed in the orchards, their eggs going to the



factory for lemon curd. The number of employees at Histon rose to 2,200 in the early years of the Second World War, but business declined after 1945, and in 1960 the company was taken over by Schweppes Ltd.

Clothes and Sewing

During the 1980s, the Museum collected a number of sewing machines, mostly dating from the early 20th century when clothes were expensive and new garments were often run up at home. As well as the treadle machines on display, there are several hand-operated ones in the store with intricate and beautiful designs. These include unusual brands such as Taylor Bird, Willcox & Gibb, Serata, and those made by Macintosh Ltd, the Cambridge ironmongers. The Museum also holds a small collection of clothes including christening robes, a girl's Victorian dress and beautiful accessories such as 18th-century shoes. One particular evening gown is still with its original box, posted in 1963 from Heyworths Fashions on Sidney Street, Cambridge, to its new owner at Girton College. Postage cost three shillings.

Although these collections are stored, anyone with a specific research interest can make an appointment to see them.

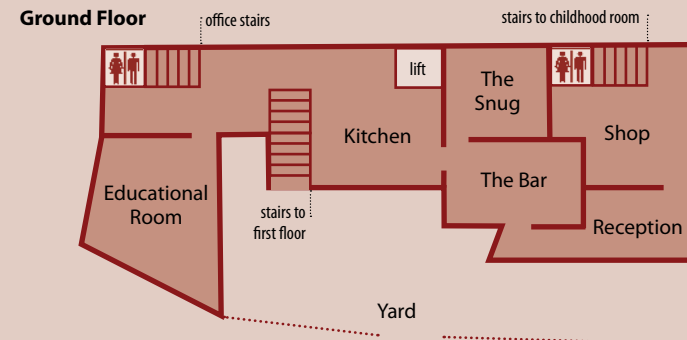
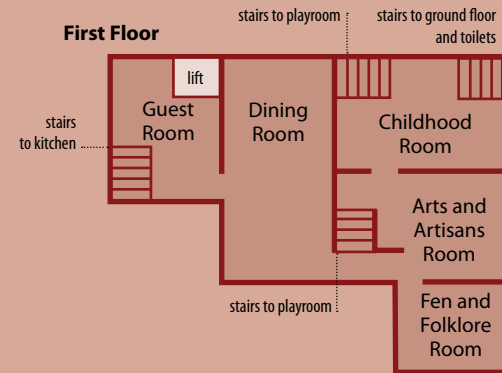
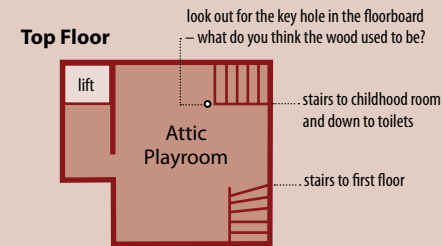
OPPOSITE: (top) hand-operated sewing machines;
(bottom) 1960s Dansette record player
ABOVE: (top) Mary Greene's painting of the White Horse Inn's yard; (right) Chivers jam advertisement



Timeline

- 1933** Cambridge Federation of Women's Institutes held 'A Pageant of Bygone Times' exhibition, and the idea of a museum of local social and cultural history was born.
- 1935** Alderman Ernest Saville Peck formed a committee to set up 'a museum for the town and county' of Cambridge.
- 1936** The Cambridge & District Folk Museum opened in the former White Horse Inn on Castle Street. Catherine Parsons donated many objects and became its first honorary curator.
- 1938** Queen Mary, widow of King George V, visited the Museum and presented it with a marquetry tea-caddy.
- 1947** Enid Porter, an expert on the history, customs and folklore of the region, became curator, developing the Museum from four rooms to eight.
- 1962** A curator's cottage was built at the back of the Museum, and the building restored, creating additional display space.
- 1969** Enid Porter's book *Cambridgeshire Customs and Folklore* was published, and remains the leading authority on the subject.
- 1976** Enid Porter retired as curator. Later curators included Richard Wilson, Tom Doig, Christine Allison, Pam Fitzgibbon and Cameron Hawke-Smith.
- 2005** After a £1 million refurbishment, the Museum reopened with the new Enid Porter building housing an education room, stores, kitchen and offices.
- 2006** The Museum was short-listed for the prestigious Gulbenkian Prize for Museums and Galleries, which recognises originality, imagination and excellence.
- 2011** The Museum celebrated its 75th Anniversary with a series of events highlighting its diverse, exciting collection.

Museum Floorplan



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The story of Cambridgeshire is more than just its buildings, streets or open spaces – it's about the everyday lives, extraordinary achievements and myths and folklore of the people who have lived there over the generations. In the nine atmospheric rooms of the 17th-century White Horse Inn, home to Cambridge & County Folk Museum, the past comes alive. This guidebook provides an insight into the Museum's fascinating collection and to the forgotten stories and history of Cambridgeshire and its people.

