SELF GUIDED TOUR to MUSEUM OF CAMBRIDGE

The Entrance Corridor

Before entering the bar, visitors pass through the corridor where a photograph shows the last landlord of the White Horse Inn, **Willoughby Dudley Hay**, with his wife **Sarah** and their daughters **Winifred, Dorothy and Irene**.

The Hay family were among the longest-serving landlords of the inn. Willoughby and Sarah married in 1901 and began their married life here. All three daughters were born in the building. Sarah was known as an excellent cook, and her daughter later recalled helping prepare vegetables brought in by farmers who arrived from surrounding villages by cart and stopped for food and drink.

Domestic life and business were inseparable. Sarah's daughter remembered hating the washing-up because the sink cupboard was dark, gloomy and full of spiders. After Willoughby's death in 1933, Sarah continued as landlady for a further year. The inn was then bought by Cambridge Borough Council, beginning its transformation into the Museum of Cambridge.

This image marks the transition from working public house to museum and reminds us that this building was once a family home as well as a place of trade.

The Bar

The bar is the oldest part of the building and dates from the 17th century, when it was known as the White Horse Inn. It was here that cooking, heating and social life were centred before the kitchen was added in the 18th century. The objects displayed in this room reflect food preparation, drinking, trade and leisure in early modern Cambridge.

Inglenook Fireplace - 17th century

This large inglenook fireplace is original to the White Horse Inn. It provided both heat and cooking facilities. Before a separate kitchen existed, all meals were prepared here. Its size reflects the need to cook for travellers, lodgers and farm workers who stopped at the inn.

Chimney Crane - 17th /18th century

The chimney crane swung over the fire and allowed pots to be raised or lowered to control cooking temperature. Hooks and adjustable arms held different vessels. This was the **first object accessioned into the museum**, making it symbolically the beginning of the museum's collection.

Salamander - 19th century

A salamander is a heavy metal plate with a handle shaped like a diamond. It was heated in the fire and held over food to brown or melt the top of dishes. Its name comes from the mythical creature believed to live in fire.

Toaster - c.1800

This iron toaster held several slices of bread or scones on spikes and was placed in front of the open fire. Toasting was slow and required constant attention, unlike later enclosed toasters.

Roasting Jack (Spit Engine) - 18th century

This clockwork machine used descending weights to turn a spit automatically. Before its invention, meat was turned by hand. Roasting jacks were among the earliest mechanical kitchen devices and show how technology entered cooking long before electricity.

Basket Spit

Unlike ordinary spits, meat rested inside this cradle without being pierced. It was turned by a mechanism beside the hearth, allowing even cooking and preserving juices.

Punt Gun c.1730

This massive gun was mounted on a punt and used for shooting large numbers of waterfowl on rivers and marshes, particularly the Thames and Fens. A single shot could kill an entire flock. Birds were sold to city markets and the trade became so destructive that punt guns were later banned. It reflects the exploitation of natural resources for urban demand.

Candle Box - 18th century

Hung on the wall, this stored household candles. Candles were expensive, and keeping them dry and secure was important.

Knife Box

Before stainless steel, knives rusted easily. Storing them in a warm place near the hearth kept them dry and usable.

Tobacco and Smoking Display

The first recorded English smoker was seen in Bristol in 1556. Tobacco arrived through European trade with the Americas and later from British plantations in Virginia after 1612.

By 1666, large cargoes of tobacco were arriving in England. Pipes were common until cigarettes, first made in the USA in 1870, gradually replaced them. During the First World War, cigarettes became part of soldiers' rations. On display is a **Princess Mary Gift Fund cigarette tin**, sent to troops in 1914. By Christmas of that year, 400,000 such tins had been distributed.

Inn Sign: The Man Loaded with Mischief
19th century, Richard Hopkins Leach

This painted inn sign came from 34 Magdalen Road, which closed in 1921. It depicts a man weighed down by a quarrelsome wife and animals. The reverse shows an earlier scene of domestic conflict.

The image reflects popular sayings about marriage and was inspired by earlier work by William Hogarth. It connects Cambridge sign painting with national satire and moral storytelling.

Stained Glass Windows

One window came from the home of **Jacob Chapman**, a blacksmith, and dates from about 1880. Another was made by **Thomas Crane Eastwell** for his brother Morris in the early 20th century. These panels show how decorative glass entered ordinary homes, not just churches.

Watercolours by Margaret Wadsworth - 1902

These depict Falcon Court and the Restless Inn at Petty Cury. They were copied from earlier images and record places now lost. Her father was a mineral water manufacturer, linking art with local trade.

Grandfather Clock - early 19th century

This eight-day clock belonged to **Harry Pluck**, landlord of the Three Pigeons pub at 7 Cambridge Place. Made by Fletcher and Hitzman, it shows how timekeeping regulated pub life and work routines.

Charles Rowell's Belt - 1881

Charles Rowell (1853–1909) was one of the most famous athletes of the Victorian age. He competed in the sport of **pedestrianism**, a form of professional long-distance walking and running that was enormously popular in the 19th century. Pedestrian races were held in specially built arenas and could last six days at a time.

Spectators placed heavy bets, newspapers reported daily distances, and successful walkers became national celebrities.

Rowell specialised in endurance races, where competitors had to cover the greatest possible distance within six days, choosing whether to walk or run. His talent was spotted by Sir John Astley, who created the **Astley Belt races** in 1878. The winner received a silver belt and £500, plus a share of the gate takings. Any man who won three races in succession could keep the belt permanently.

Rowell first won the belt in America in 1879, covering around 500 miles. After losing it briefly, he went on to win the next three races in a row and secured the belt outright in 1881. In total, he is estimated to have earned the modern equivalent of millions of pounds from racing.

Rowell grew up at the Bleeding Heart pub in Chesterton, which was run by his family. His career shows how a working-class man from Cambridge could achieve international celebrity through sport.

Despite his huge earnings, Rowell did not remain wealthy. After retiring from racing, he returned to Cambridge and struggled financially. At some point the famous silver belt was pawned in a local shop. It was later recognised for what it was and rescued for the Museum of Cambridge.

The belt therefore tells a double story: of extraordinary fame and physical achievement, and of how sporting glory could fade quickly without long-term security. It also reflects a forgotten world in which walking was a professional sport and endurance athletes filled theatres and arenas long before modern football or athletics dominated public attention.

Lighting Cabinet

Before gas lighting arrived in the mid-19th century, homes were lit with candles and oil lamps.

• Beeswax candles were expensive

• Tallow candles smelled and smoked
• Oil often came from fish or whales

Rush lights — dipped in tallow — gave only minimal illumination and were used by the poorest households.

Bar Servery - 19th century

This rare wooden bar servery once served drinks. Bottles inside came from local inns and breweries. Scratched names on the glass include the Loveday family (former landlords), a porter from Magdalene College, and a mistaken inscription commemorating Queen Mary's visit in 1937.

Bottles and Beer

Stoneware jugs became common in the late 18th century, followed by glass bottles. Earlier bottles tend to have the brewer's name inside the glaze; later ones use printed labels.

Codd Bottle - 1875

Invented by Hiram Codd, this bottle sealed using a marble forced into a rubber ring by the pressure of carbonated drink. Boys often smashed them to retrieve the marble, explaining why many are found buried in gardens today.

The Snug

The snug was created in the 19th century as a small private room for wealthier customers who were willing to pay more for their drinks in exchange for comfort and privacy away from the noise of the main bar. It reflects changing social habits in public houses, where class and respectability were expressed through separate spaces.

Pest Traps

The display of pest traps shows how households tried to control insects and rodents before chemical sprays and modern hygiene.

• A **glass fly trap** from the 19th century lured flies inside where they became trapped.
• A **Demon beetle trap** from 1955 reflects later commercial pest control.
• A **patent mouse trap** shows mechanical ingenuity applied to a daily nuisance.

There is also a **wickerwork bed bug trap** made for the museum by Professor Oakey in 1925. He described himself as one of the last journeyman basket makers who remembered making these traps for sale. The trap would be placed in beds to lure insects into its woven structure.

These objects show how pests were a constant problem in inns and houses, and how practical craft skills were used to fight them.

Cleaning Equipment

The collection of early cleaning equipment illustrates changing approaches to hygiene.

• A **carpet beater** was used outdoors to remove dust from heavy carpets.
• A **carpet sweeper** from about 1925 used rotating brushes and is decorated with patriotic symbols celebrating Empire Day, 24 May.
• Early **vacuum cleaners** show the transition from manual labour to electric machines.
• A surprisingly modern-looking **Hoover from 1936** demonstrates how domestic technology advanced quickly once electricity became widespread.

Harvey's Folding Vacuum Cleaner - c.1908

This large pre-electric vacuum cleaner required two or three people to operate it. One person pumped the bellows to create suction, another used the nozzle, and sometimes a third pushed the machine. It was sold by Macintosh & Son, a Cambridge ironmongery business, and bears their dealer's plate. It was used at Gonville and Caius College, showing how colleges adopted labour-saving devices before most private homes.

Television and Radio

The display of broadcast technology shows how leisure entered the home.

• A **Pye television** from the early 1950s reflects the boom in TV ownership after the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953.
• A **Sony portable television** from 1965 belonged to the Browne family of King Street and was used on caravan holidays.
• A **Pye "Sunburst" radio** from the 1930s shows the role of Cambridge industry in electronics.

These objects reveal how shared public entertainment moved into private domestic spaces.

Pye Ltd – Cambridge Electronics Company

Pye Ltd was founded in Cambridge in 1896 by William George Pye as a scientific instrument maker. It later moved into radio manufacturing in the 1920s and became one of Britain's leading electronics firms.

During the Second World War, Pye played an important role in producing radar and military communication equipment. After the war, it became famous for making radios and televisions that were sold across Britain and the Commonwealth.

At its peak, Pye employed thousands of local people, especially at its factories in Newmarket Road and Coldham's Lane. Many Cambridge families had at least one member who worked for the company.

The presence of Pye televisions and radios in this room connects national technological change with local industry. These sets are not just consumer goods but evidence of Cambridge's role in modern electronics and wartime science.

Coffee Stand - c.1850

This embroidered coffee stand is made of Berlin wool work decorated with beads. The design shows coffee pot, cup and jug, indicating it was used when serving coffee.

Berlin wool work patterns were printed in Germany and exported across Europe. Strong colours and bead decoration suggest a date in the 1850s or 1860s. The stand represents polite social rituals and the importance of serving refreshments attractively.

Wedding Cake Ornament - late 18th century

This small bride-and-groom ornament is moulded from marzipan and once stood on a wedding cake. It was donated by Dr Price of Christ's College. Though we do not know which couple it represented, it shows how weddings were marked with decorative symbolism and edible art.

Horn Cup

This drinking vessel is made from polished cow horn. Horn cups were common before cheap glass became available and link everyday drinking with traditional materials.

Commemorative China

This case contains plates and cups made to celebrate public events, including Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. It also includes crockery from the Castle End Mission, founded in 1884 to educate working men in a poor district of Cambridge. These objects connect domestic life with charity and civic pride.

Glass Floor Stand

This case contains:

- A **spoon warmer** (c.1860)
- A **cream jug** (c.1840)
- **Glasses and toddy sticks**
- A **glass rolling pin**

• A **tea caddy shaped like a chapel**, donated by Queen Mary during her visit to the museum

The objects show how drinks and desserts were prepared and served in polite households.

The Kitchen

The present kitchen was added to the building in the 18th century. Before this, all cooking took place in the bar area, using the large open hearth. The addition of a separate kitchen reflects changing ideas about cleanliness, organisation and comfort in inns and households.

The kitchen also served as a laundry space. The landlady of the White Horse Inn would spend one day each week washing linen and another day drying and ironing it. According to family memory, the sink cupboard was dark, gloomy and full of spiders. The census of 1851 records five lodgers staying in the inn, so the kitchen supported both family life and commercial hospitality.

Pie, Jelly and Pudding Moulds - 19th century

The wall cabinet contains raised pie moulds, copper jelly moulds and pudding moulds. These moulds shaped food into decorative forms, showing how even simple meals were presented attractively. Jelly moulds became popular in the 18th and 19th centuries as sugar and gelatine became more affordable. Their elaborate designs reflect pride in domestic skill and hospitality.

Washing Machines and Laundry Equipment

Daisy Washing Machine

This wooden machine worked by moving a handle backwards and forwards to rotate internal wooden ribs. Clothes had to be soaked first and then agitated by hand. The printed instructions on the side show how technology tried to standardise hard physical labour.

Automatic Clothes Washer

Made in Accrington around 1900, this machine heated water using a gas ring underneath. Laundry was agitated by moving a handle, and a mangle attached to the back squeezed out water. It represents an early attempt to mechanise domestic labour while still relying on human effort.

Washing Tubs, Dolly Pegs and Washboard

Before machines were common, washing was done in tubs using a dolly peg to stir hot water. Stubborn dirt was scrubbed on washboards. These objects show how exhausting weekly washing was, especially for large households or inns.

Coffee Percolator and Electric Kettles - 1920s–1930s

The wall display includes a coffee percolator from about 1926 and early electric kettles from the 1930s. At this time, electric kettles were luxury items, and most people still boiled water over open flames. Copper kettles were preferred because they conducted heat well. These objects mark the gradual shift from fire-based cooking to electric appliances.

Saucepans and Milk Measures

Iron saucepans were used rather than copper until the introduction of cooking ranges in the 18th century, because copper could melt over open flames.

Milk measures were used by the milkman to pour milk from large churns into customers' own jugs. Each measure was stamped by local authorities to guarantee honest quantities, showing how everyday food was regulated to prevent cheating.

Electrolux Refrigerator - c.1927

This refrigerator represents a major change in domestic life. Before fridges, people shopped daily for fresh food. By 1939, only about 200,000 British households owned one. Widespread fridge ownership did not arrive until the 1950s. The fridge allowed food to be stored safely and reduced dependence on daily markets, changing shopping habits and diets.

College Kitchen Equipment

Food Processor

This hand-powered processor from about 1900 worked by turning a handle that rotated the bowl and raised and lowered a blade. It shows early attempts to save time in large kitchens.

Ice Cream Maker

A hand-powered ice cream maker from about 1910 churned cream, sugar and flavouring as it froze, preventing ice crystals forming. It shows how luxury foods were produced without electricity.

Apple Peeler

Made by S. Nye & Company, this machine peeled and cored apples in one movement. It was used in the kitchens of Clare College, linking the room to institutional food production.

Irons and Heating

Flat Irons

These solid irons were heated on fires and used in pairs so one could be reheated while the other cooled.

Box Irons

These had hollow interiors for hot metal blocks, charcoal or later methylated spirits.

Boot or Shoe Beer Warmer

Filled with ale or cider and heated in the fire, this device warmed drinks in winter. When mixed with rum or brandy, the drink became “flip,” associated with sailors and festive drinking.

Crimping Machine - 19th century

Used by dressmakers to make ruffles and bows, this machine had hollow rollers heated by hot metal bars. It shows how clothing decoration required specialised tools.

Tally Iron - 19th century

“Tally” comes from the Italian *taglia*. This iron smoothed ribbons and bows. The rod was heated and placed inside a metal sleeve to retain warmth. Like the crimping machine, it links kitchen heat with clothing production.

The Guest Room

This room, like the kitchen beneath it, is an 18th-century addition to the original 17th-century building and was probably used by wealthier travellers staying at the White Horse Inn. Guests often shared rooms and sometimes beds with strangers. When the inn first opened, it could lodge around 30 people, so even with extra rooms added later, privacy was limited.

The corner closet was used for powdering wigs, allowing excess powder to be shaken out of the window. The displays in this room relate to the lives of Cambridge people and to notable individuals connected with the town.

Old Castle Hotel Sign - c.1830s, Richard Hopkins Leach

This pub sign shows a castle scene inspired by the Old Castle Hotel, now the Castle pub on St Andrew’s Street. The gate resembles the entrance to Christ’s College, reflecting how Cambridge inns borrowed the visual language of colleges to appear respectable.

The scene shows soldiers and a ship in the background and relates to fears of invasion during the Napoleonic Wars. Between 1797 and 1815 Britain expected a French landing at any moment, and Cambridge, linked by river and road to the Wash and London, was part of national defence planning. Inns were centres of news, recruitment and patriotic display.

Carved Tobacconist's Figures

This carved figure once stood outside a tobacco shop in Sidney Street. The label originally described the left figure as an African slave and the right as a Turk. By the 17th century, Europeans associated tobacco with Africa and the Americas, but shop signs presented the trade as exotic and glamorous rather than violent and exploitative.

These images disguised the reality that tobacco was produced by enslaved labour on colonial plantations. They suggest legitimate trade with foreign rulers rather than forced labour, helping customers consume tobacco without confronting its human cost. The figure therefore reflects how colonial exploitation was visually softened for British audiences.

Bible Box - 17th century

This small wooden box was used to store and transport a Bible. Books were expensive, and Bibles were often shared within families or communities. Blank pages were used to record births, marriages and deaths, making them both religious and family records.

Oak Chest - 17th century, William Roper

This large oak chest is an early piece of Cambridge furniture sold by cabinetmaker William Roper of King's Parade. It was later owned by William Custance, a Cambridge builder and surveyor. It shows how local craft trades supplied domestic furniture and reused older items for resale.

Cork Model of James Burleigh's Wagon

James Burleigh was a Cambridge carrier who offered to evacuate people from eastern England during the threat of Napoleonic invasion. Burleigh Street is named after him. The model shows oxen pulling one of his wagons and represents how transport networks were central to both trade and emergency planning.

Pembroke Table c. 1836–44, Henry Turner

This mahogany table was made or sold by Henry Turner of Bridge Street. Turner mixed cabinetmaking with other trades and was banned from entertaining undergraduates after inviting them to play billiards. The table reflects how furniture makers lived precariously between respectable craft and moral suspicion.

Olivetti Typewriter

Used in Mr Somers' ceramics shop on Alexandra Street from 1926 to 1976, this machine represents the arrival of modern office technology in small businesses. It cost as much as a high-end computer would today, showing how expensive early machinery was.

Standard Measures and Gentleman's Pocket

This case contains town measures from 1646 and items carried by a gentleman: a pocket watch, sovereign case and visiting card holder. Together they show regulation of trade and the performance of social respectability.

Writing and Sealing Objects

Letter writers, quill pens, seals and inkwells reflect the importance of handwritten correspondence and formal documentation before telephones and emails.

Elizabeth Woodcock

In 1799 Elizabeth Woodcock was thrown from her horse in a snowstorm and buried under a drift for eight days before being rescued alive. Her survival became a national news story and a memorial was put up in her village

Jacob Butler

Jacob Butler, known as "the Squire", was a wealthy and litigious Cambridge barrister. He was six foot four inches tall and obsessed with legal disputes. Toward the end of his life he commissioned a huge oak coffin and invited visitors to see it.

Bow-fronted Japanned Cabinet - 1740s, Elizabeth Hobbs

This cabinet belonged to Elizabeth Hobbs, who lived from 1699 to 1803. It is an example of japanning, an English imitation of Asian lacquerwork inspired by East India Company trade. It reflects how global commerce influenced domestic taste.

Longcase Clock from Linton, Cambridgeshire

This clock represents rural craftsmanship and timekeeping in domestic life.

Portrait of Thomas Hobson - 17th century

Thomas Hobson was a Cambridge carrier who transported people, goods and mail between Cambridge and London. He enforced strict rotation of horses, giving rise to the phrase “Hobson’s choice”. Hobson funded public works, including water supply and housing for the poor. His bequest helped establish the Spinning House, originally intended as a workhouse for the destitute rather than a prison. Over time it became a place where women accused of immoral behaviour with students were confined by university authorities.

The Dining Room

This is the largest room in the former inn and was probably used for dinner parties and meetings between businessmen connected with the river trade and cattle market nearby. In later years it became a space for entertainments and meetings, including gatherings of the Town and Gown Cycle Club. When required, it could also be used as sleeping quarters. The objects displayed here relate to the University and the town of Cambridge and to the everyday lives of people who lived and worked here over the last 300 years.

Degree Morning, Cambridge After Robert Farren, 1863

This picture is a copy of a composite painting showing more than 100 university dignitaries gathered outside the Senate House on Degree Morning. The original painting is held at Trinity College. The image emphasises ceremony, hierarchy and academic power, presenting the University as a closed and orderly world distinct from the town around it.

The Mayor's Chair - 18th century

This imposing chair was used by successive Mayors of Cambridge. Made with a mahogany frame and hand-stitched leather seat and back, it symbolised civic authority and dignity. Its height and throne-like appearance expressed power, yet the Mayor's authority was always subordinate to the Vice-Chancellor of the University. In disputes between town and gown, the Vice-Chancellor usually prevailed, showing how civic leadership in Cambridge existed under academic dominance.

Muffin Man's Headpiece - 19th century

This padded headpiece was worn by Mr Crask, a muffin seller who balanced his tray on his head and rang a bell to announce his arrival in the streets of Cambridge. It represents street trading and food distribution before shops and bakeries became widespread.

Blue Glass Salt Containers - early 19th century

These containers were made from bottle glass. Salt was heavily taxed during the Napoleonic Wars and stored in sealed containers. Sailors often gave such objects as love tokens, and they were sometimes hung near fireplaces, gaining an almost magical significance as objects of protection and value.

Butter Basket - 19th century

This basket was used to store butter sold in long strips rather than blocks. In Cambridge, butter portions were regulated by the University as part of its control over food standards and pricing in the town. Butter was moulded into standard lengths so that buyers could see they were receiving a fair measure. The basket reflects

food storage before refrigeration and shows how academic authority reached into daily domestic life.

Aquatic Skittle Pin - 1896

Used in games of aquatic skittles between 1896 and 1899, this pin reflects a short-lived sporting fashion. It was donated by Lieutenant Colonel Cupid, whose father was believed to have invented the game.

Tillyard Chair - 1860s

This embroidered chair was made for the Tillyard family. It has a Gothic-style oak frame and a Berlin wool work back. The cushion bears the motto “May you be happy,” suggesting it may have been a wedding gift. It represents decorative domestic craft and middle-class values of comfort and sentiment.

Mary Charlotte Greene Paintings - mid–19th century

Mary Charlotte Greene’s paintings have a strong relationship with the history and physical development of Cambridge. Her work provides an invaluable visual record of streets, inns, courts and working areas that were later demolished or radically altered, especially during the 19th and early 20th centuries as the University expanded and the town was redeveloped.

Unlike many formal academic artists, Greene focused on ordinary urban spaces: yards, alleys, shop fronts and modest buildings. These were places associated with everyday life rather than ceremony, and her paintings preserve scenes that were rarely considered worthy of artistic attention at the time.

Her work is particularly important because it documents parts of Cambridge that disappeared when whole streets were cleared to make way for new college buildings, widened roads and improved drainage. Through her paintings, we can still see how mixed residential and commercial neighbourhoods once existed close to the colleges, before university development reshaped the city centre.

Greene’s paintings therefore act as historical evidence as well as works of art. They show how Cambridge was not only a university

town but also a densely populated working city, and they remind us that institutional growth often involved the loss of long-established communities.

Purchas Chest - 1818

This brass-clamped oak chest belonged to John Purchas, who served five times as Mayor between 1817 and 1831. Several generations of the Purchas family held civic office, and the chest reflects both wealth and municipal continuity.

Cockerel Weathervane - 1856

This copper weather vane came from the chapel of **Mill Road Cemetery** and was designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott. The cemetery opened in 1848 as Cambridge's first municipal burial ground, created because overcrowded churchyards in the town had become a serious health risk. It reflects Victorian concern with public hygiene, planning and respectable burial.

The cemetery chapel, completed in 1856, was designed in a Gothic Revival style to express moral seriousness and Christian hope. The cockerel weather vane once crowned its roof, acting both as a practical wind indicator and as a Christian symbol of vigilance and resurrection.

The chapel was demolished in 1954, but the cemetery remains an important historic landscape containing the graves of many ordinary townspeople as well as notable figures. The survival of the weather vane preserves a fragment of a lost Victorian building and represents how attitudes to death, commemoration and public space changed during the 19th century.

Wooden Rainwater Head Moulds - 19th century

These moulds were used to cast rainwater heads for Trinity College buildings. The initials "WW" stand for William Whewell, Master of Trinity. Whewell coined words such as "scientist" and "catastrophism," showing the link between intellectual life and the physical shaping of the city.

Lace Pillow and Bobbins - 19th century

Donated by May Mallion of Streetly End, this pillow and its bobbins represent rural craft traditions and women's paid domestic labour.

Steelyard used at Stourbridge Fair

This weighing device was used at Stourbridge Fair, once the largest medieval fair in Europe. The fair began in 1199 and lasted for over a month each year. Goods from across Europe were traded here, and the steelyard symbolises Cambridge's role as a commercial hub as well as a university town.

Coronation Dinner Print 1838

This print shows a dinner held on Parker's Piece for 15,000 of the "deserving poor" to celebrate Queen Victoria's coronation. It records vast quantities of food and drink and shows how civic loyalty and charity were displayed through mass spectacle.

Turtle Shell 1903

Painted with the arms of Clare College, this shell commemorates a feast of benefactors. Turtle soup was a luxury dish of the period, and the shell symbolises elite dining culture.

James Ward Painting of Cambridge 1840 – View from Castle Hill

This painting shows Cambridge surrounded by open countryside before modern expansion. The viewpoint from Castle Hill, once the site of the Norman castle and later the county jail, symbolises authority and oversight. The figures in the foreground are students in gowns accompanied by local girls. These figures were not present in Ward's original sketch and were added later to animate the scene. Their presence is socially charged: in 19th-century Cambridge, women seen in the company of students could be stopped by university proctors and taken to the Spinning House, a workhouse originally founded using funds left by Thomas Hobson.

Ward was not a Cambridge resident and may have been unaware of this system of moral policing. By adding students and girls together in an open, peaceful landscape, he created an idealised

image that contrasts with the reality of strict regulation of female behaviour. The painting invites us to think about what is shown and what is hidden.

Watercolour of King's Parade
Early 19th century, John Marshall

This shows Ancient House and cottages later demolished. University expansion reshaped Cambridge by removing entire streets to make space for colleges and ceremonial buildings. The painting records a street that no longer exists and reminds us that institutional growth involved the loss of urban communities.

Cambridge in the Second World War

The Second World War transformed daily life in Cambridge. Evacuee children arrived from bombed cities and were housed in colleges and private homes. University buildings were taken over for military and scientific work, including radar and weapons research. Blackout regulations changed night-time life, and rationing reshaped food and shopping. Many households kept pigs or chickens, and allotments appeared in parks and college grounds under the "Dig for Victory" campaign.

Women entered new forms of employment, while older men joined the Home Guard. Soldiers from Britain, the Commonwealth and the United States were stationed nearby, bringing new cultures into local pubs and dance halls. The war blurred boundaries between town and gown as colleges became hospitals, barracks and training centres.

The Fen and Folklore Room

This room explores life in the Cambridgeshire Fens: a wetland landscape shaped by water, superstition, labour and endurance. For thousands of years the Fens were marsh and shallow lakes formed after the Ice Age. Settlements such as Ely, March and Whittlesey grew on raised "islands" of dry ground. Rivers and drains connected the region to the Wash and the North Sea, making the Fens both isolated and internationally linked by trade.

From the 17th century large drainage schemes, led by engineers such as Cornelius Vermuyden, transformed the marshes into farmland. Drained land became extremely valuable, but many Fen people lost traditional livelihoods based on fishing, wildfowling and reed cutting. Resistance to drainage earned locals the nickname “Fen Tigers”.

Map of the Fens

This map shows the former extent of the wetlands and waterways running north through Ely and Wisbech to King’s Lynn and the Wash. It illustrates how Fenland life depended on boats, dykes and seasonal flooding.

Witchcraft Protection Objects

This cabinet contains objects buried in houses to protect against witches: animal bones, nails, iron bars and bottles. In the Fens, illness, livestock death and crop failure were often blamed on malicious magic.

A **witch bottle**, found at Lordship Manor in Cottenham, was hidden in a wall. Such bottles were filled with hair, nails or urine to trap harmful spirits. A **witch ball**, a blue glass sphere hung in windows, was believed to dazzle witches and stop them entering homes. A **corp queer**, a clay figure from the Folklore Society collection, represents a European version of a voodoo doll, used to cause harm through sympathetic magic.

Mantrap

This iron mantrap was set in undergrowth to catch poachers. It snapped shut on the leg and could not be opened without tools. Its presence reflects harsh rural law enforcement and the desperation of people who hunted illegally to survive.

Folklore and Custom Objects

This case contains charms and tokens: mole paws for toothache, Good Friday bread, four-leaf clovers and courtship gifts. These objects show how belief and medicine overlapped in everyday life.

Fen Skates

Fen skates, or “fen runners”, were simple blades strapped to boots. When flooded fields froze in winter, skating became both transport and sport. Fen skaters became world champions, including Turkey Smart and William “Gutta Percha” Smart.

In 1879 the National Ice Skating Association was founded in Cambridge to regulate the sport. Fen skaters were famous for speed and endurance because skating was part of daily life rather than leisure alone.

Rippingill Portable Oven

This portable paraffin oven was used on boats and in fields. It reflects Fenland mobility and working life, where meals were prepared away from home during fishing and farming.

Moses Carter, the Histon Giant

These boots and hat belonged to Moses Carter (1810–1860) of Histon. Nearly seven feet tall and weighing 23 stone, he became a local legend for his strength. He grew vegetables on Histon Moor and hauled them by handcart into Cambridge.

Moses fought for money at Stourbridge Fair and once won a bet by carrying a huge stone into Histon village, where it still lies outside the Boot pub. His story joined Fen folklore alongside giants such as Tom Hickathrift.

Basketmaker’s Tools and Eel Grigs

Willow basket tools used by J Muntier of Cottenham show traditional Fen crafts. The **eel grigs** are woven traps baited with worms and set in rivers. Eels were a vital food source and traded widely.

What Are the Fens?

The Fens were marshland that had flooded after the last Ice Age. Draining them created fertile soil known today as the “larder of England”. Villages and towns had grown up on ‘islands’ that were raised just a few feet above the surrounding level of the marshland. Drainage had started as early as Roman times but was greatly increased from the 17th century. Communities were often very

isolated and communication was mainly by water. Life could be very hard and diseases such as fen ague, linked to stagnant water, were endemic. Opium and alcohol were commonly used as medicine, and poppies were grown locally.

Seasonal customs such as Plough Monday, straw bears, May Day peat fires and harvest feasts called hawkies reflect survival in a harsh landscape shaped by water and labour.

The Art and Artisans Room

This room explores the creative skills of ordinary people in Cambridge and the surrounding villages. It shows how art and craftsmanship were part of everyday life, whether practised as paid trades or as hobbies pursued at home. The room itself once projected out over the street in a jettied upper storey, like other medieval houses nearby. In the 1930s this overhang was removed and replaced with the windows you see today.

The objects here reveal how music, clothing, decoration and household goods were made locally, often using simple tools and traditional knowledge passed down through families.

Horse Sun Bonnet

This straw-plaited bonnet was worn by a working horse to protect its eyes from flies and its head from the sun. Before tractors and lorries, horses were essential to farming, haulage and delivery work in and around Cambridge. Bonnet-making was part of the wider straw-plaiting industry and shows how craft skills supported animal welfare as well as human labour.

Hat Maker’s Workbench and Tools

This workbench belonged to one of the last private hat makers in Cambridge. Although hat-making is usually associated with Luton and Bedfordshire, it was also an important local trade here.

The top drawer folds down to form a small office with pigeonholes and a green baize writing surface. Wooden moulds were used to shape different styles of hats, including bonnets, bowlers and top

hats. Felt or straw was steamed and stretched over these moulds, then trimmed and lined by hand. The bench shows how a single craftsman combined workshop, shop counter and office in one piece of furniture, reflecting small-scale urban production rather than factory manufacture.

Straw Plaiting Display

Straw plaiting has a long history in eastern England. In the Middle Ages, harvest workers plaited straw for their own hats. By the 18th and 19th centuries, straw hats became fashionable, and plaiting became an important source of income for women and children.

Special varieties of wheat were grown for plaiting, such as Red Lammas and Golden Drop. The straw was split into narrow strips and kept damp to stop it cracking. Plaiters held the damp straw under their arm and even in their mouth, often cutting the corners of their lips so badly that scars formed.

Unlike lace-making, straw plaiting required almost no equipment and could be done while walking, sitting in a doorway or minding children. During the Napoleonic Wars, when fine Italian plait could not be imported, skilled English plaiters could earn high wages. Later, cheap imports caused the trade to decline, pushing many families back into poverty.

Lace and Lace-Making

This glass cabinet contains a lace pillow and bobbins. Bobbin lace has been made in England since the 16th century. Early bobbins were made from bone; later ones were turned from wood and decorated with beads for weight and balance.

The bobbins helped control thread tension and movement as the lace was worked over a pinned pattern on the pillow. Cambridgeshire bobbins are especially decorative, showing that even tools could become objects of beauty.

Lace-making was often done at home by women and children and provided vital income in rural communities. Like straw plaiting, it

allowed families to combine paid work with childcare and domestic duties.

Dulcimer

This dulcimer was made by local farmer and musician George Wilmot Lawrence, who lived in Haslingfield and later Thriplow Heath. It is played by striking the strings with small cane hammers bound with wool.

Lawrence both made and played dulcimers at feasts, fairs and village dances. In her book *Cambridge Customs and Folklore*, Enid Porter recorded that music for dancing in Cambridgeshire was often provided by fiddles, concertinas and dulcimers. The instrument shows how music was part of rural social life, marking weddings, harvest feasts and fairs, and how craft and performance were closely linked.

Silhouette of John Frederick Mortlock - 1830

This silhouette shows John Frederick Mortlock, descendant of a wealthy Cambridge banking family. Mortlock believed he had been cheated out of an inheritance by his uncle. In 1842 he threatened him with a pistol and was charged with attempted murder. He was sentenced to 21 years' transportation to Australia, though he later returned to England.

Silhouettes were an affordable form of portraiture in the early 19th century, cheaper than oil paintings but still valued as personal likenesses. This example connects decorative art with dramatic personal history and shows how fashionable image-making could preserve stories of conflict and scandal.

Town Crier Portrait and Bell

The portrait shows Isaac Moule, Cambridge town crier, painted in 1833 when he was 55. Beside it is the bell he used to attract attention before reading official announcements aloud in the streets. Town criers were the main way that laws, court decisions and public notices were communicated before newspapers were

widely available. The bell and portrait together show how sound and performance were part of civic authority and how one individual became the living voice of the town.

Samplers and Berlin Wool Work

The embroidered samplers on the wall were usually made by girls as part of their education. Early samplers recorded stitches; later ones taught letters, numbers and moral lessons. They served as proof of learning and skill.

Berlin wool work, popular from the 1820s, used printed colour patterns sold across Europe. By the 1840s there were around 14,000 designs available. These decorative pictures were made by women with leisure time and show how craft shifted from necessity to pastime for the middle classes.

Concertinas

The concertinas in the glass case include an English concertina played by Joe Doggett of Oakington in the mid-19th century. The English concertina was patented by Charles Wheatstone in 1829 and became popular as a respectable parlour instrument.

Unlike the accordion, it was associated with polite domestic music-making rather than street performance. Its presence here shows how music crossed class boundaries, moving from village dances to drawing rooms.

Sewing Machines

Two sewing machines trace the development of this revolutionary invention. Before sewing machines, a man’s shirt could take 14 hours to make by hand. A dress could take 10 hours. With a machine, this was reduced to about one hour.

Domestic sewing machines freed women’s time, allowing them to take paid work or run small businesses from home. This transformed family economies and helped drive industrial growth. The sewing machine was one of the most important technologies of the 19th century, reshaping clothing, labour and daily life.

The Childhood Room

This room explores childhood, family life and education in Cambridge over the last two centuries. The Childhood Room and the room directly below it were originally part of a shop next to the White Horse Inn. Records show it was first a fishmonger's and later became a sweet shop. The displays here reveal how children were cared for, taught and entertained before modern safety standards, schooling systems and mass-produced toys.

Baby Runner - 18th century

Attached to the wall is a baby runner. A pole ran from floor to ceiling with a pivot at the top, and a wooden hoop fitted around the child's waist. This allowed a baby to move safely around the room without reaching dangerous places.

In houses heated by open fires, this device prevented children from falling into flames or pulling down cooking pots. Though it looks restrictive today, it reflects a time when domestic safety relied on physical restraint rather than supervision or childproofing.

Doll Case

At the top of the case is a doll made by Armand Marseille in Germany between about 1910 and 1920. Her head is moulded from composite material and her limbs are jointed with elastic. Her clothing is handmade, probably by her owner's mother, showing how parents added personal labour to factory-made toys.

Below is a wooden doll called **Joanna**, dating from about 1760–1780. She is one of the earliest objects in the museum's collection, donated in 1937. Her head and body are made of wood coated with gesso and painted. Her limbs are stuffed leather and her clothing is carefully made to match contemporary adult dress, including linen undergarments. Only wealthy families could afford such a toy, making her a symbol of privilege.

Also in the case is a teddy bear from 1908, bought as a Christmas present for Margo Collette for three shillings and sixpence. Early bears like this were not designed for mass durability and were often treated as treasured companions rather than rough toys.

Darwin Family Cot

This mahogany cot belonged to the Darwin family at Down House. It connects Cambridge childhood to one of Britain's most famous scientific families and shows how ideas about infant care spread among the middle classes. The cot's solid construction reflects Victorian beliefs in physical health, routine and discipline from the earliest age.

Educational Materials

The glass case of school objects includes:

- A **drawing slate** from about 1860, used instead of paper
- A **book of poems**
- An **egg-and-spoon race set** from Barnwell Abbey School
- A **slide rule**
- A **school milk bottle**

These show the shift from informal learning at home to organised schooling. Slates could be wiped clean and reused, while milk bottles reflect early attempts to improve child nutrition in the 20th century.

Toy Case

This large case contains toys from different periods:

- Teasing rings
- A cane rattle
- A jack-in-the-box
- A child's high chair
- Hand puppets
- A soft toy dog known as **Cheerful Desmond**, made in the late 1920s

The toys show how play changed as materials became cheaper and manufacturing expanded. Earlier toys were often handmade or

adapted from household items. Later toys reflect commercial design and mass production.

Feeding Bottles - 19th century

This case contains baby feeding bottles. Infant mortality in the Victorian period was extremely high. Bottles were difficult to clean and were often left with babies unattended. Milk easily turned sour, and germs flourished inside long tubes and narrow necks.

These bottles demonstrate how well-intentioned technology could be dangerous when knowledge of hygiene was limited. They also show why breastfeeding campaigns and public health reforms became so important later in the century.

Noah's Ark

This carved Noah's Ark toy was used in religious households where ordinary toys were forbidden on Sundays. Children could still play while learning Bible stories about Noah, his family and the animals.

The first Noah's Ark toys were probably made in Germany in the 16th century and became popular in Britain in the 19th and 20th centuries. They show how toys were used to teach moral and religious lessons as well as to entertain.

The Courtyard

The courtyard can be visited before or after entering the museum. The Museum of Cambridge stands in Castle End, an area north of the River Cam clustered around Castle Hill. This district has long been associated with authority, religion and transport, overlooking one of the main historic river crossings into the town.

Nearby are several important historic sites:

- St Peter's Church
- St Giles' Church
- Kettle's Yard
- Ascension Parish Burial Ground

• Castle End Mission
• Castle Mound

Castle Mound marks the site of the Norman castle built by William the Conqueror soon after 1066. Originally a wooden motte-and-bailey fortress, it was rebuilt in stone under Edward I in 1283. Although the king never lived there, it became a centre of power as a vantage point, county jail and symbol of authority. A castle stood here in some form for around 800 years.

Hobson's Conduit Statues

In the courtyard stand eight stone statues rescued from the Victorian fountain that once stood on Market Hill from 1855 until 1953. This fountain marked the end of Hobson's Conduit, a water system built in 1610 to bring clean water from Vicar's Brook into Cambridge.

The conduit was funded by Thomas Hobson, the Cambridge carrier whose wealth came from transporting people and goods between Cambridge and London. The original conduit head was moved after a fire destroyed eight buildings on Market Hill in 1849, and a new and larger fountain was built.

The statues represent notable Cambridge figures:

• **Sir John de Cambridge** (MP for Cambridge, 1320–1326), whose family supported local religious institutions and colleges
• **Sir John Cheke** (1514–1557), the first Regius Professor of Greek, who reformed Greek pronunciation and became involved in religious controversy
• **Bishop Thomas Searleby** (1506–1570), son of a Cambridge town clerk and Dean of the Chapel Royal
• **Bishop Godfrey Goldsborough** (1548–1604), Bishop of Gloucester and former Cambridge student
• **Thomas Cecil, Earl of Exeter** (1542–1623), soldier and benefactor of Clare Hall
• **Orlando Gibbons** (1583–1625), composer to James I and Prince Charles, who lived on Bridge Street
• **Thomas Hobson** (1544–1631), carrier and benefactor whose

money funded water supply and poor relief
• **Bishop Jeremy Taylor** (1613–1667), son of a Cambridge barber, educated at the Perse School and Gonville and Caius, later Bishop in Ireland

These statues reflect Victorian ideas about civic pride and moral improvement, placing scholars, clergy and benefactors together as models of virtue.

Peas Hill Pump

The Peas Hill Pump was one of Cambridge's most important public water sources before modern plumbing. It stood near the junction of Peas Hill and Trumpington Street, close to the market and busy commercial area of the town.

The pump drew water from an underground spring and supplied local residents, traders and travellers. Water had to be carried home in buckets, and queues could form during dry periods. Like other pumps in Cambridge, it was vulnerable to contamination from nearby drains and cesspits, which meant outbreaks of disease were common.

By the 19th century, concerns about public health led to growing support for piped water systems such as Hobson's Conduit and later municipal waterworks. The Peas Hill Pump therefore represents an earlier stage in the history of urban water supply, when access to clean water depended on shared outdoor sources and physical labour.

It also highlights the social importance of pumps as meeting places, where news, gossip and information were exchanged alongside the practical business of collecting water.

The Shop Front

The curved shop window comes from number 45 Bridge Street and dates from the 18th century. The area was redeveloped by St John's College in 1938.

The museum's former curator, Reginald Lambert, saw the shop front being demolished and tried to save it. After being refused permission, he is said to have returned repeatedly by bicycle at night, carrying away sections piece by piece. Eventually, the whole frontage was rescued and reconstructed. It stood in the museum garden for many years before being incorporated into the new extension in 2005.

The shop front preserves the appearance of a small Georgian business and reflects the disappearance of older commercial streets during university expansion.

Objects in the Shop Window

Displayed inside the shop window are objects associated with everyday technology and communication:

- A **magic lantern** (about 1900), used for projected entertainment
- A **mantrap** of unknown date
- A **Volcanoia wash-down water closet**, an early form of flushing toilet
- A **toy train and carriages** (about 1890)
- A **calculating machine** (1960)
- A **GPO Bakelite telephone** (about 1950)
- A **cash register**
- Three **typewriters**

Together, these show how work, leisure and communication changed between the late 19th and mid-20th centuries, from mechanical calculation and manual typing to electric appliances and telephones.