

**Large
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First people – Archaeology Gallery

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Peterborough's first people

Showcasing some 500 finds mainly from archaeological excavations in Peterborough, this gallery tells a unique and remarkable story, shedding light on technological advances and important historical events whilst revealing the everyday lives of the people of Peterborough from Prehistory to the Medieval period.

Case 1

Panel 1

What lies beneath our feet?

Clues about the past can be found buried beneath the ground.

Layers of soil containing objects that have been lost, thrown away, or buried by people in the past build up over the centuries. The remains of buildings, roads, ditches and pits can be found below our feet.

Archaeologists excavate these soil layers and buried remains carefully to build up a picture of what life was like long ago.

Panel 2

How do archaeologists know where to dig?

Aerial photographs can highlight buried remains.

Scatters of pottery, flint or metal objects in a field often indicate something interesting under the surface. There are also some good scientific methods – geophysical survey techniques use magnetism, electrical resistance or radar to look beneath the soil.

Is archaeology really just about digging?

Archaeologists also look at old buildings and earthworks too. There is also scientific work to be carried out on artefacts, plants, soils, and bones. And of course, archaeologists develop various theories to help explain the past.

Stratigraphy display labels

Wall foundation

Buried wall foundations are dry areas. This stops crops from growing tall. Old walls buried in fields can appear light in colour when viewed from the air.

Post Medieval - About 300 years ago to the present day.

Medieval - About 700 years ago.

Romans - About 1,800 years ago.

Iron Age - About 2,500 years ago.

Bronze Age - About 3,500 years ago.

Neolithic - About 5,000 years ago.

Case 2

How can we piece together Peterborough's past?

Panel 1

People have been interested in Peterborough's past for a very long time. Edmund Artis, a local antiquarian, excavated many Roman sites in the Nene Valley over 180 years ago.

During the 1960's and 1970's new building works and quarrying for sand and gravel destroyed many

archaeological sites. Organisations such as the Nene Valley Archaeological Trust and people such as Dr Francis Pryor worked hard to record and understand sites before they were lost forever.

Archaeological investigations now take place all year round and many new discoveries about our past are made every year.

Panel 2

Who carries out the archaeological work?

Several archaeological teams now work in this area. Some are based in universities, some belong to County Councils and some are private companies.

Who pays?

Developers hire archaeologists to help them meet planning requirements. Today if a developer wishes to build they must record the archaeology on the site first.

Are all excavations carried out for developers?

Most of them, but not all. Some excavations are for research and training such as those conducted at Flag Fen.

Case 3

The First People

The Old Stone Age ('Palaeolithic' – at least 500,000BC to 10,000BC) The Middle Stone Age ('Mesolithic' – 10,000BC to 4,000BC)

Caption 1

A Temporary camp of early Neolithic hunter-gatherers. Scatters from stone tools and tool making debris are found today in the fens and along the river valleys.

Panel 1

The first people lived in a world very different to our own. There were no towns, villages or farms. People did not live in fixed dwellings. Instead small family groups roamed the landscape hunting animals and gathering plants, berries, nuts and roots. They followed wandering

herds of wild animals adapting their lives to the changing seasons.

We do not know exactly when the first people came to Peterborough, but we do know that there were people living in East Anglia well over 500,000 years ago.

Panel 2

What did they look like?

At least three types of ancient humans lived in Britain. The first two of these had protruding faces and were more heavily built than us. A new type of human arrived around 40,000 years ago – us!

What did they leave behind?

The most common finds from the early period (Old Stone Age) are stone hand axes. Different types of stone tools, such as blades and spearheads were made by people in the later period (Middle Stone Age). Many Stone Age tools have been found around Peterborough.

Panel 3

Peterborough Ware Neolithic Pottery

Peterborough gives its name to a style of later Neolithic pottery that was first found here. It is now known that Peterborough type pots were made all over England.

Peterborough Ware pottery is decorated with pitted designs made using twisted cord, bird bones, sticks and fingernails.

Farmers and Settlers

The New Stone Age ('Neolithic' – 4,500BC to 2,200BC)

Caption 2

Artist's Impression of a Neolithic farmer herding his animals across the causewayed enclosure at Northborough.

Panel 4

The New Stone Age was a time of great change as people began to control the world around them. Hunting and gathering were still very important to these people.

They grew crops and raised herds of animals which meant that for the first time they also began to live in one place.

People began to make clay pots which were baked in fires. They were used to serve food and drink and were also left as offerings to accompany their dead. As part of their rituals they built monuments which marked their land.

Stone and flint axes were still a vital tool in the New Stone Age. They were used to hunt and cut crops

Panel 5

What did New Stone Age people leave in Peterborough?

There are no large stone monuments like Stonehenge in Peterborough, but many other important sites have been discovered. The remains of henges (rings of timbers enclosed by banks and ditches), causewayed enclosures (massive rings of ditches and banks) and burial sites have been excavated by archaeologists.

What can be seen today?

Only slight traces of buried sites can be seen on the ground, but the remains often show up very well on aerial photographs.

A Prehistoric Revolution

The Bronze Age (2,500BC – 700BC)

Caption 3

The art of making a bronze axe requires knowledge and skill. The metal is heated up using a fire, kept very hot with bellows. The molten metal can then be poured into a mould.

Panel 6

Bronze Age people learned how to extract copper, tin and gold from rock ores. Copper and tin could be mixed to make bronze. They made increasing use of these new metals to produce weapons, tools and jewellery.

Around Peterborough the fens were getting wetter.

People paddled boats down the slow flowing rivers and built wooden track ways across the marshes.

Herds of cattle and flocks of sheep grazed along the fen edge during the drier seasons. Drove ways (roads used for moving 'droving' livestock from one place to another), fields, houses and shelters were also built on this drier fen edge.

Panel 7

Can any Bronze Age sites be seen today?

There is a fascinating and unique site at Flag Fen in Peterborough. The huge timber post alignment found there is one of the most important prehistoric archaeological sites in Europe. You can also see reconstructions of Bronze Age houses at Flag Fen.

What did Bronze Age people leave behind?

There are very many low burial mounds (Barrows) from this period in the Peterborough area, and many Bronze tools and weapons have also been discovered locally.

Panel 8

Why were offerings placed into the water?

We think Prehistoric people believed that rivers and lakes were the home of spirits, or windows into the next worlds – where the ancestors went after death.

Why were offerings made?

We know that prehistoric people went to certain stretches of water (e.g. Flag Fen) to leave offerings. We believe that people left offerings to please their ancestors or the Gods. Perhaps they asked for a good harvest, or gave thanks for a birth or cursed a neighbour.

Gifts to the Water Spirits?

Flag Fen

Caption 4

Artist's impression of a ritual sword deposition

Panel 9

In 1989 a large collection of weapons, tools and jewellery was excavated from the site where the power station on Fengate was about to be built. Archaeologists found that they had been placed in the marsh next to the Flag Fen post alignment during the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age.

More Iron Age objects including swords, a ladle and iron 'Currency Bars' were found in the river bed near Orton Longueville. Perhaps these were placed there as part of a ritual.

Objects on display

Palaeolithic and Mesolithic Objects (500,000BC to 4,000BC)

1. Palaeolithic flint hammer stone found at Water Newton
2. Palaeolithic flint handaxe found in gravel beds at Orton Waterville
3. Palaeolithic flint handaxe from an unknown location

4. Small Palaeolithic flint handaxe found at Woodston
5. Palaeolithic flint blade with faceted butt. Found at Woodston
6. Mesolithic flint chisel. Found at Wood Walton Fen
7. Palaeolithic flint handaxe found at Fengate
8. Palaeolithic flint core found at Woodston. Smaller pieces of flint were struck from this core to make tools
9. Palaeolithic flint handaxe found at Woodston
10. Three replica arrows. The first arrow is Mesolithic, with pieces of flint added along the shaft to make barbs. The second is Neolithic. The flint has been carefully chipped to produce a leaf shape. The first is Bronze Age. This style is known as a 'barbed and tanged arrowhead'

Neolithic and Early Bronze Age objects (4,000BC to 1,500BC)

1. Two Neolithic deer antlers decorated with cross-cross incisions. Found at a 'henge' monument at Maxey

2. Neolithic ox rib decorated with cross-cross incisions.
Found at a 'henge' monument at Maxey. Were the ox rib and antlers decorated for ritual use or for from other purpose?
3. Neolithic stone hammer head from an unknown location
4. Neolithic flint axe head found in gravel beds at Fengate
5. Neolithic polished flint axe head found with an antler I gravel beds at Eye
6. Neolithic 'Peterborough Ware' Mortlake style bowl found at Fengate
7. Early Bronze Age beaker found with a human burial at Ramsey St Mary's. Decorated with fingernail impressions
8. Early Bronze Age bell-shaped beaker with crosshatched decoration below rim and herringbone decoration around the body. Found at Stanground
9. Neolithic flint sickle blade found at Wansford. Was it used for harvesting cereal crops?

10. Late Neolithic pebble mace head found at
Crowland
11. Early Bronze Age stone battle axe from Mildenhall
12. Neolithic polished stone axe head from an
unknown location
13. Neolithic polished stone axe head found at
Whittlesey
14. Late Neolithic pebble mace head found at
Warmington
15. Neolithic polished stone axe head from an
unknown location
16. Neolithic stone axe head from Ponders Bridge,
Peterborough
17. Late Neolithic stone mace head made of Cornish
Greenstone. Found between Polesbrook and Ashton
18. Early Bronze Age stone boat-shaped battle-axe.
Unknown location
19. Neolithic polished stone axe head found near
Peterborough
20. Neolithic polished stone axe head from Park Road,
Peterborough

21. Replica of a Neolithic chipped flint axe in a wooden haft
22. Two Neolithic deer antler pickaxes from Fengate.
Notice the wear from frequent use

Bronze Age objects (2,500BC to 700BC)

1. Small Early Bronze Age food vessel. Found with a human burial at Old Fletton
2. Early/Middle Bronze Age food vessel. Found at Whittlesey Road
3. Early/Middle Bronze Age bowl, decorated with punch marks on upper body. Found at King's Dyke, Whittlesey
4. Collections of leaf-shaped and barbed and tanged arrow heads
5. Late Bronze Age cauldron-shaped pot found at Fletton. Regular, incised decoration with cross-cross pattern on shoulder
6. Bronze Age flint disc-shaped knife from Farcet Fen
7. Early Bronze Age collared cremation urn found at Castor

8. Middle Bronze Age bronze quoit-headed pin found at Maxey
9. Late Bronze Age carved wooden bowl made from Alder, found at Eye Quarry. It would have been oval in shape.
10. Early Bronze Age collared cremation urn, used for burying the cremated remains of the dead. Found at Newark (Peterborough) pits
11. Middle/Late Bronze Age cast palstave axe found near Whittlesey Mere
12. Early Bronze Age flanged axe found in Whittlesey Mere
13. Bronze Age haft-flanged axe head of unusual type, found at Orton Longueville
14. Middle Bronze Age bronze rapier found near Pond's Bridge
15. Early Bronze Age food vessel found with a human burial at Old Fletton
16. Early Iron Age handmade bowl found at Fletton. Decorated with geometric designs. About 2,800 years old.

Late Iron Age swords and Spear (800BC to 43AD)

These two Late Iron Age swords that date from 400BC to 43AD were found in the River Nene at Orton Meadows during gravel extraction in 1980. They were found with various other iron objects. Some may have been chance losses but the swords are likely to have been deliberate deposits.

1. The sword was found inside its scabbard, from which it has now been removed. The scabbard beside it here is a replica of the original
2. This sword was also still inside its scabbard but only the top part of the scabbard now survives
3. Large Late Iron Age spear head from an unknown location

Bronze Age Weaponry (2,500BC to 700BC)

4. Middle/Late Bronze Age spear head found at Castor
5. Middle/Late Bronze Age socketed spear head with leaf-shaped blade found at Fengate

6. Middle Bronze Age bronze socket-looped spearhead found at Wittering
7. Bronze Age Bone imitation spearhead found at Whittlesey. This was perhaps used in rituals or worn as a symbol of rank and power
8. Bronze Age cast, socketed axe head of unknown location
9. Late Bronze Age bag-shaped socketed axe found at Whittlesey
10. Bronze Age socketed axe from an unknown location
11. Late Bronze Age sword from an unknown location
12. Late Bronze Age sword from an unknown location.
The sword was deliberately bent and broken
13. Middle Bronze Age dagger from an unknown location

Stone Age Murder?

Panel 1

Britain's oldest murder victim?

These skeletons are of a man and woman (both aged about 25 - 30 years), along with a child of around 8 - 12 years old. The skeleton of a baby was also found, but it was too fragile to preserve here. They were found at Fengate in Peterborough.

A leaf-shaped flint arrowhead can be seen between the ribs of the man, where the plastic arrow is pointing.

Was he murdered along with the rest of his family? Why are the skeletons of the woman and child mixed up? Were they buried somewhere else first and moved to this grave later?

These are the earliest human remains to have been excavated in the Peterborough area. They date to the Neolithic period, 5,000 – 6,000 years ago.

Image caption

Many rituals were carried out during a Neolithic funeral. It appears to have been customary for a meal to be cooked and eaten by the graveside as this interpretation by Victor Ambrus shows.

Barnack Burial

Panel 1

I was the head of a very important family 4,000 years ago. We lived near a place that you call Barnack.

When I died, my stone bracelet was passed to my brother as the new head of the family. He had a special replacement made for me with pieces of gold.

My family buried me with the new bracelet and a pendant made by my daughter. I also had a beaker so I could drink with the other ancestors.

They built a mound over me and in the following years, other members of my family were also buried there.

I was eventually forgotten, and my burial place became a ploughed field. When people came to dig for gravel,

archaeologists rediscovered me and brought me here to keep me safe.

Case 4

Iron Age Peterborough

800BC to 43AD

Panel 1

Most people in the Iron Age lived on farming settlements made up of a small group of families belonging to a tribe.

Britain was not a single nation but a collection of different tribes and kingdoms. Peterborough and its surrounding areas were at the edge of the territories between the Catuvellauni, Corieltauvi and Icenii tribes.

There were many ordinary farmsteads at places such as Fengate, Orton Longueville and Werrington. Several settlements had a higher status and may have been the head of sub-tribes, possibly at Westwood, Ashton, Borough Fen and Stonea.

At Fengate, archaeological evidence shows that people were successful farmers – producing crops and livestock as well as exploiting the fen edge for fish, birds, reeds (for thatching), peat (for burning), and extracting salt for trade.

When the Romans arrived, most of the population continued their Iron Age way of life. Gradually over time, they would have adopted the Roman ways of living. For example, they initially carried on living in roundhouses, but later built rectangular houses. People had to pay the Roman taxes which meant they needed to make big profits from the land and natural resources.

Object description

Iron Age Sword and Scabbard

This is a very fine example dating from the 1st century BC. Found at Orton Longueville, it had been deposited in a river as an offering. The sword would have belonged to an important person such as a king.

Objects on display

1. Wheel-made pot, Iron Age, Fengate
2. Wheel-made bowl, Iron Age, Fengate
3. Wheel-made jar, Iron Age, Fengate
4. Etruscan Bucket, Iron Age, found locally and made in Italy
5. Wheel-made cup, Iron Age, Fengate
6. Latch-lifter, Iron Age, Orton Meadows
7. Hand-made jar, Iron Age, Fengate
8. Spear head, Iron Age, Orton Meadows
9. Ladle, Iron Age, Orton Meadows
10. Swan neck sunflower brooch, Iron Age, Fengate
11. Ring-headed pin, Iron Age, Ferry Meadows
12. Bow brooch, Iron Age, Castor
13. Brooch, Early Iron Age, imported from Europe
14.
 - a. Small Bracelet, Iron Age, found in a grave at Castor
 - b. Large Bracelet, Iron Age, found in a grave at Castor
15. Weaving Comb, Iron Age, Nassington

16. Loom weight, Iron Age, Fengate

Diorama caption

(Located opposite the Iron Age Peterborough case)

Iron Age people lived in roundhouses, made of wooden posts, mud walls and a thatched or turf roof.

Part of the Late Iron Age village at Fengate, excavated in 1975 to 1976. Model scale 1/.32.

Case 5

Roman Invasion

43AD

Panel 1

Following earlier attempts at conquest, the Roman army invaded Britain in 43AD.

They gradually took hold of the country with a mixture of military force and negotiation with Iron Age tribal leaders. The Roman army kept its grip on this region by building forts at strategic locations, such as Longthorpe

Fortress by the Nene River crossing and Stonea Camp in the Fens.

The Roman Empire's principal purpose was to exploit the resources of each province for the benefit of its citizens. This was achieved through a complex system of forts and towns, new types of farmsteads and systems of land and water management, as well as a network of connecting roads.

Panel 2

The fortress at Longthorpe is associated with the Roman Ninth Legion (Hispania). Discovered in 1961 from the air, parts of the 27 acre fortress were excavated shortly afterwards. Archaeological remains date from about 43AD to 44AD.

It is the most complete vexillation (half legion) fortress yet excavated anywhere in the Roman Empire.

Image caption

Reconstruction of Longthorpe Fortress which today lies underneath the golf course near Ferry Meadows Park.

Diorama description

Model of the north gateway at Longthorpe Fortress.

Object description

Stamp of the Ninth Legion

The local Roman army stationed at Longthorpe Fortress were probably the Ninth Legion as this tile stamp shows. The roof tile was found at Barnack.

Panel 3

In 60AD there was a major revolt against Roman rule by the Iceni Tribe, led by Boudicca. Troops from Longthorpe tried to stop her attacking more towns after the fall of Colchester. However, the troops were massacred after an ambush and returned to a downsized Longthorpe Fortress. Boudicca was later defeated by the main Roman army in Staffordshire.

Diorama description

Model of a Roman Legionary Cohort

Roman soldiers were organised into centuries of 80 men commanded by a Centurion. Six centuries came

together to form a cohort and ten cohorts formed a Roman Legion. The Romans also had auxiliary units from the countries they conquered.

Objects on display

1. Helmet cheek piece from Longthorpe with modern reconstruction
2. Roman horseshoe (hippo sandal)
3. Replica Roman sandals (pair)
4. Sparta sword with bone handle used by the cavalry
5. Roman body armour pieces (Lorica Segmentata)
6. Roman body armour pieces (Lorica Segmentata)
7. Roman body armour pieces (Lorica Segmentata)
8. Roman body armour pieces (Lorica Segmentata)
9. Metal edge from Horseman's shield
10. Shield fragment
11. Small iron spear head
12. Ballista bolt shot from crossbow-like machine
13. Bone grip for soldier's "Gladius" sword
14. Iron spear head

15. Iron head from a "Pilum" (throwing spear)
16. Three Roman coins showing the head of the Emperor Claudius
17. Shield replica
18. Horse harness loop
19. Plate with hinged loops, covered in silver-sheet
20. Thin plate from horse harness
21. Heart shaped pendant horse harness decoration
22. Hinged fitting with narrow strap
23. Decoration from soldier's apron
24. Solid disc from horse harness or soldier's belt
25. Plate from military belt
26. Decoration from soldier's apron
27. Decoration from soldier's apron
28. Solid disc from horse harness or soldier's belt

Roads and Communication

Panel 1

The Roman army quickly built a network of roads that were surfaced with stone in order to speed up the movement of troops and supplies across the country.

The road system and waterways were important for the army, government and trade. Major Roman roads in the Peterborough area included Ermine Street (London to York) and the Fen Causeway that ran from Durobrivae across the fenlands. The purpose of Car Dyke is uncertain – perhaps it was dug to mark the boundary of a vast imperial estate in the fens.

Object description

Milestones were markers to indicate distances between places.

This one was found on Ermine Street, near Durobrivae and is dated to after 271AD.

This inscription translates as, 'Imperator Caesar Marcus Pia(vo)nus Victori(nus) the noble Pius Felix (Invictus) Augustus high priest (holder of) Tribunician power'.

Edmund Artis

1789 – 1847

Panel 1

During the 1820s and beyond, local antiquarian Edmund Artis made many discoveries, uncovering evidence of Roman settlement in the area.

He revealed one of Roman Britain's most important pottery industries, and also excavated remains of the Castor Palace, several villas and Durobrivae.

As House Steward at Milton Hall, Artis was given the opportunity to carry out archaeological digs using the workforce from the estate each year. The poet John Clare wrote fondly of him and his discoveries – and Artis modelled a clay bust of his friend.

Artis illustrated his discoveries with beautiful sketches of artefacts, excavations and plans of buildings which were

published in 1828 as a book, *The Durobrivae of Antoninus*. This is a unique record of Roman sites and is still an important reference book for archaeologists today.

Image caption 1

Excavation of Roman baths with Castor church in the background. Plate from '*The Durobrivae of Antoninus*'.

Image caption 2

A plate from '*The Durobrivae of Antoninus*' showing Artis supervising his labourers excavating a Roman kiln in 'Normanton field castor'.

Object description 1

Torso Statue

This is a fragment of a larger statue – probably a Roman God. It was found locally near Wansford and is sculpted from Barnack Stone.

Object description 2

Column base

This column base found at Chesterton is made from Barnack Stone. Columns were usually made from three pieces and used for important buildings.

The Castor Palace

Panel 1

The remains of a very large Roman building at Castor were found by Edmund Artis nearly 200 years ago.

The romans had cut back the hillside to form terraces, making the three-storey building and its grounds even more striking. The palace was built to impress – perhaps the owner was a Roman governor, in charge of the Imperial Fens and trading at Durobrivae. It is one of the largest Roman buildings found in Roman Britain.

Today, in the area of the village church, you can experience the hilltop view and still see some of the Roman stonework.

Image caption

Reconstruction of the Castor Palace – Dr Stephen Upex

Model description

This is a model of a large villa found at St Kyneburgha's church in Castor. It was built in the late 3rd century AD (275-300 AD) at the end of a large courtyard. This included many other buildings such as a bathhouse (not shown on the model). Many of the rooms contained mosaics and were heated by warm air that passed under the floor and through the walls. It was probably home to an important official in Roman Britain, perhaps a military commander or government official.

Wealthy lifestyle

Panel 1

The wealthier Romans such as government officials or retired army officers lived in villas. Some of the Britons who had been part of the Iron Age aristocracy also became landowners in the Roman style.

Villas were large country houses built in the centre of a large estate, with orchards and fields of wheat, sheep and cattle. Labour was provided by slaves. Estates also offered hunting – deer were popular choice of prey

along with wild boar. The buildings had dining rooms, kitchens, bedrooms, bathrooms, courtyards and gardens. They even had central heating. Warm air from a furnace passed along channels under the floor and then up a flue behind the walls. Walls were covered with paintings and mosaics decorated the floors. Shrines and statues were put around the house and garden to act as protection from harm.

Most people wore tunics but the wealthier Romans had togas made of fine fabrics. Women had hair pinned up into fashionable hairstyles and wore makeup and jewellery. Both men and women wore rings of gold, silver and bronze – many were set with precious stones.

Image caption

Cross section illustration of Roman villa – Luigi Galante

Object description 1

Castor Column

Found at Castor Palace, this column may have been used as a plinth for a statue.

Object description 2

The Orton Hall Mosaic

This mosaic was made by craftsmen who worked at the Roman town of Durobrivae around 350AD.

It was discovered near Water Newton in 1860 and re-laid at Orton Longueville Hall. In 1992 it was re-laid here when it was donated to Peterborough Museum.

Case 6

Objects on display

1. Strainer, from Sibson
2. Samian dish, tableware from France
3. Serving dish, from Water Newton
4. Part of a Ladle, repaired in Roman times and from Ashton
5. Small cup, colour-coated ware
6. Large and small bronze spoons, forks were yet to be invented
7. Decorated cup, impressed grape design
8. Iron knife blade, from Barnack

9. Bone knife handles, from Ashton and Longthorpe
10. Samian Ware plate, only the wealthy could afford
Samian
11. Mortarium, used to grind spices and herbs for
sauces
12. Mortarium, from Orton Longueville
13. Storage jar lid, from Stibbington
14. Storage jar lid, To keep contents fresh
15. Cheese Press, made at Longthorpe kilns
16. Whetstone part, from a well in Ashton
17. Samian Ware cup, this type of pottery was made
in moulds
18. Storage jar, from Barnack
19. Cooking pot, from Sibson, used over a fire to cook
food
20. Large flagon, used to store wine, oil or beer
21. Storage jar, found at Fletton
22. Parts of a wooden bucket, preserved in a well at
Ashton
23. Flagon, found at Fletton

Case 7

Objects on display

1. – 8. Bronze brooches and buckles, these were used for fixing clothing and were made in many decorative styles including various animals
9. – 14. Hair pins, these are made of bronze and bone and were commonly used to fix intricate hair styles like the one seen on one of the bone pins
15. – 16. Tweezer and nail cleaner set, often pinned to clothing in these toiletry sets were worn to show status
17. Nail cleaner, this was found at Ferry Meadows and shows an engraved peacock
18. – 25. Jewellery, bracelets, rings and necklaces were worn by both men and women to show wealth. The silver snake ring was a symbol of good luck
26. Intaglio, this carved gemstone was used as a seal and was set into the ring of an important person. It

shows Cupid, god of love, riding a chariot and is made of red jasper

27. – 34. Face spouts, these faces give us an insight into what people looked like in Roman Peterborough. They were found at Castor and were made by local potters as part of flagons. Each one is unique – modelled on a particular individual rather than an imagined face. We therefore know more about the people who lived here 2,000 years ago – as no other portraits survive from the Peterborough area

35. Decorated Samian bowl, found at Longthorpe and imported from France, this type of pottery was expensive to buy

36. Fine glass indented cup, incredibly, this glass has survived 2,000 years and was found by archaeologists locally

These bronze objects were found by Edmund Artis. They represent items belonging to wealthy Roman people.

37. Ink well and lid

38. Round furniture fitting
39. Handle
40. Door fitting with keyhole
41. Drop handle
42. Funnel
43. Lion face finger cymbal

Case 8

Objects on display

1. Gladiator pot, found at Water Newton, Shows two gladiators fighting a wild beast
2. Hunt cup, desirable in Roman times, this type of ware depicted hunting scenes with dogs, hares and deer
3. Hunt cup pottery fragment, from Fletton, showing a hare from a hunting scene
4. Hunter depicted on pottery fragment, detailed painted scenes were common
5. Erotic beaker, found at Horsey Toll, Probably buried as part of a fertility ceremony

6. Beaker with scales, the decoration is achieved with applied clay scales
7. Barbotine beaker, found at Water Newton, the white slip was applied like icing on a cake
8. Beakers with swirling patterns in relief, these patterns show abstracted designs
9. Beakers with swirling patterns in relief, these patterns show abstracted designs
10. Beaker with painted design, white slip painted on a dark background
11. Mortarium fragment, painted with the inscription 'Sennanius Durobrivis Vrit' Translates as Sennanius fired this at Durobrivae
12. Painted plate, found at Stibbington
13. Painted Large jar, found at Maxey

Case 9

Objects on display

1. Castor Box, found at Normangate Field, Castor.
Serving dish with lid to keep food fresh
2. Large flagon, used to serve wine or beer

3. Cremation urn, found at Castor, the face represents the deceased person
4. Face spouts
5. Face spouts, these faces of ladies were modelled and painted. They were originally part of the top of a flagon
6. Imitation Samian dish, Nene Valley kilns copied the French Samian style pottery to compete for sales
7. Small jars
8. Small jars, the darker one is 'colour-coated ware' and the other is 'grey ware'
9. – 11. Small cups, various styles of drinking vessels
12. Small folded beakers
13. Small folded beakers , the indents make the beakers easier to hold
14. Small flagon, found at Fletton
15. – 21. Folded beakers, various styles of folded beakers found in the Peterborough area.

Roman Food

Panel 1

The main meal was eaten in the evening and would include three courses – banquets were special occasions for wealthy people.

Most farm workers would have a simple meal of bread and meat. Soldiers would eat local seasonal produce and imported foodstuffs such as olives, wine and fish sauce. Salt was essential for everyone as it enabled food to be preserved. The fens were the main source for salt extraction.

The most basic crops were spelt wheat and barley which could be made into bread and gruel. Principal meats were beef, mutton and pork. Wild game, fish, oysters and dormice were also eaten.

New vegetables were introduced by the Romans including beans, peas, onions, leeks, carrots, parsnips, cucumbers, radishes and cabbages. Herbs were also introduced such as parsley, thyme, marjoram, garlic and

mint. A Roman Mortarium would be used in most houses to grind and mix ingredients for sauces.

Nene Valley Pottery

Panel 1

Peterborough is well-known for its pottery industry during the Roman times.

Natural clay deposits and fuel for kilns made the Nene Valley an ideal location. The pottery industry developed near Durobrivae with large scale production beginning about 120AD and lasting for nearly 300 years. Major kiln areas have been found in Stibbington, Sibson, Stanground, Stilton and Yaxley.

The first types of vessels made were 'grey ware' that came in a range of basic kitchen and tablewares. By 150AD a new slip technology meant that 'colour-coated ware' could be produced and the emphasis was more on the production of fine tableware such as beakers, bowls, flagons and cups.

The industry developed to keep pace with the demands of a growing population and the finer wares were also exported to London, Leicester, Lincoln and York

Image caption

Cross section of a kiln oven – Dr Stephen Upex

Panel 2

The establishment of the Nene Valley Pottery industry may have developed from the early military depot at Longthorpe.

Cooking, Eating and Drinking

Interactive panel

These fragments of pottery in the tray were originally parts of the pottery that were used in a Roman kitchen.

But how were they used? And how do we know?

Follow steps 1, 2 and 3 above to discover what these fragments tell us about Roman life.

Panel 3

Discover what archaeology tells us about Roman life (Activity)

1. Step 1) Match the fragments in the tray to the complete pieces illustrated below
2. Step 2) What does the design and texture of the pieces tell you about how they would have been used?

Can you spot similar pottery in the gallery?

Match the pottery to their use (Activity)

3. Step 3) What was it used for?

Flap 1. A beaker for drinking

Flap 2. Castor ware for storing food

Flap 3. Mortarium for crushing herbs

Flap 4. Coarse ware for cooking

Roman Coinage

Panel 1

The obverse is the side of the coin bearing the head of the ruler, Emperor or the principle design. The Emperor was the sovereign ruler of the Roman Empire.

The Reverse is the opposite side of the coin bearing a god, personification or symbol. Personifications were virtues and ideas represented by pictures of people.

Use the magnifying glass to look carefully at the coins on display in the gallery. What images can you see?

Case 10

Objects on display

Roman Coins

From the late 1st century BC to the mid 4th century AD, the Romans produced coins of different values in different metals. Each coin type can be identified by its Emperor, metal, size and weight. Roman coins do not

carry a date but can be assigned one by the Emperor depicted.

1. Coin hoard. This hoard was discovered in the Peterborough area in 2011. It consists of 214 bronze coins that mostly date to about 350 AD and show the Emperor Magnentius. Many of the coins have the Chi-Rho symbol on the reverse side
2. Solidus gold coin. This coin is a solidus, the only gold coin type of the Late Roman Empire. It was introduced by Constantine the great and was used throughout what became the Byzantine Empire until the 10th century AD. Finds of solidi in Britain are rare
3. Denarius silver coins. These coins are denarii, probably the most common coin type in the Roman currency system. The denarius is a silver coin
4. Barbarous radiates. These are barbarous radiates, contemporary forgeries of Roman coins dating to the 3rd century AD. Some copies are almost as good as the originals whereas others are crude and barely recognisable. Barbarous radiates were

produced in large numbers and probably acted as small change

5. Early As coin. These coins are asses. The as is a bronze or copper coin. Asses fell out of use in the early 3rd century AD
6. Sestertius brass coins. These coins are sestertii. A sestertius is a brass coin. Sestertii also fell out of use in the 3rd century AD
7. Small barbarous radiates. These coins are a mixture of issues, characteristic of Late Roman coin hoard
8. Radiates. They are called radiates because of the distinctive crown of sun rays that the Emperor is wearing. They are made from a mixture of copper alloy and silver
9. Silver stater Iron Age coins. These two coins are silver staters dating to the 1st century BC. They were made and used by the Coritani tribe who lived in the area
10. Coin mould found by Edmund Artis in 1820s

Panel 2

What does a coin of today tell us?

It's the same for Roman coins. Imagine you are a coin maker in roman times.

Design a coin (Activity)

1. Who is the Emperor of the time? Select an Emperor and complete for the obverse side
2. What belief or message do you want to be represented on your coin? Choose a picture and complete for the reverse side

Panel 3

Roman Coin Values

This table shows how much each coin was worth.

For example: 1 denarius = 16 asses

(Table on next page)

Denarius	Sestertius	Dupondius	As	Semis	Quadrans
1	4	8	16	32	64
	1	2	4	8	16
		1	2	4	8
			1	2	4
				1	2

What could you get for your money?

1. Cost of a slave boy: 600 denarii
2. Annual pay of Roman Legionary: 300 denarii
3. Loaf of bread: 2 asses
4. Half litre of wine: 1 as

Design a coin

(Flip card activity)

Claudius

Full name Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus

Germanicus

Claudius reigned from 41 – 54AD. He was born in Gaul (France) which made him the first Roman Emperor to be born outside Italy. Claudius' reign saw an expansion of the empire, including the conquest of Britain.

The Emperor was the sovereign ruler of the Roman Empire.

The obverse is the side of a coin bearing the head of the ruling Emperor of the principal design.

Hadrian

Full name Publius Aelius Hadrianus

He was a Roman Emperor and born in AD76. Hadrian reigned from 117AD until 138AD from when these coins were issued.

What famous wall did he build to protect Britannia from pierce northern tribes?

Hadrian loved Greek culture and was the first emperor to sport a beard.

The Emperor was the sovereign ruler of the Roman Empire.

The obverse is the side of a coin bearing the head of the ruling Emperor or the principal design.

Magnentius

Full name Flavius Magnus Magnentius

He reigned from 350 to 353Ad when this coin was issued. Magnentius was of barbarian (regarded as 'uncivilised') origin and joined the Roman army before rebelling and proclaiming himself an emperor in 350.

Unfortunately, his reign was short lived due to being over ambitious – his soldiers deserting him after a number of lost battles in his fight to take over the whole empire.

The Emperor was the sovereign ruler of the Roman Empire.

The obverse is the side of a coin bearing the head of the ruling Emperor or the principal design.

Ceres

A personification that appeared on the reverse side of coins produced between the 1st century BC and the 2nd century AD. Ceres is shown here holding ears of corn downwards in her right hand. This is a symbol of her role as the goddess of agriculture and fertility. Ceres is wearing a crown made of corn-ears and is carrying a torch (a reference to her search through the underworld for her daughter Proserpina).

If Ceres was shown on the reverse, which one of the three emperors would have been shown on the obverse side? Claudius, Hadrian or Magnentius?

Personifications were virtues and ideas represented by pictures of people.

The reverse is the opposite side of the coin bearing a god, personification or symbol.

Hilaritas

The female personification of Rejoicing

Here she is shown with her clothes draped and holds a long palm-branch in her right hand. In her other hand is a cornucopia (a cone shaped object) filled with fruit.

Hilaritas made some appearances on the reverse side of coins from the time of Hadrian until the late 3rd century AD.

If you were designing something new for Hilaritas to hold, what would you choose? Remember that she symbolised Rejoicing.

Personifications were virtues and ideas represented by pictures of people.

The reverse is the opposite side of the coin bearing a god, personification or symbol.

The Chi-Rho Symbol

This is on the reverse side of a Roman coin that was issued in 353AD by Magnentius

Chi and Rho are the first two letters (CP_ of 'Christ' in Greek and was the first symbol of Christianity to be used. The Chi-Rho is also shown with the Greek letters Alpha (A) and Omega (lower case w), the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.

At a time when there were lots of battles between emperors for the whole empire, the Chi-Rho symbolised a 'safeguard in all battles' Did it safeguard Magnentius into victory?

Personifications were virtues and ideas represented by pictures of people.

The reverse is the opposite side of the coin bearing a god, personification or symbol.

Durobrivae

Panel 1

Durobrivae was an exceptional town in Roman Britain due to its position within the province to link important places and its natural resources for creating wealth.

The area of its territory was vast – as far south along the Nene as Titchmarsh and Sawtry to the west.

Durobrivae also provided political control for the Fens and the salt trade. The town developed where the River Nene crossed Ermine Street, and was the main link between London and the North.

By 300AD it had grown into a walled commercial town with large suburbs full of workshops producing and trading a variety of goods. The main industries were pottery and metal working. Nearby at Castor, there were several luxurious villas and an Imperial Palace overlooking the town.

Aerial photographs show us what the buildings were like inside the walls of Durobrivae. There appears to be

shops, houses, an amphitheatre, forum and temple complex. The discovery of the Water Newton Treasure indicates that an early Christian church may have been positioned here too.

Image caption

The town of Durobrivae during the 4th century AD.

Roman Legionary Activity

Panel 1

The roman army was so well-trained that 'their exercises were unbloody battles, and their battles bloody exercises.' – From Joesphus, 1st century AD

Panel 2

Roman soldiers were expected to march 25 miles a day, carrying armour and kit weighing 70lbs (32KG), then still fight a battle.

Panel 3

Become a Roman soldier!

Try on the helmet or feel the weight of the marching pack. Please replace the helmet after use.

Roman beliefs

Panel 1

Gods, Magic and Health

Everyone in Roman Britain believed there were many gods inhabiting the earth, air, sky and water, in this world and the next, who influenced every aspect of life and death. People believed that they could engage the gods to influence the world in their favour – by throwing a coin into a spring, buying a cult statue or worshipping at a temple.

Superstition was everywhere, because the natural world seemed mysterious and scary as many things were misunderstood. There was a lack of scientific knowledge to explain disease, death or disasters like flooding or when crops would fail.

Before the Romans arrived, Iron Age people worshipped their own gods and after the conquest, existing beliefs

were simply blended with the new Roman gods. At first Christianity was not tolerated by the Roman state, but eventually it was officially recognised as the principal religion after 312AD.

Panel 2

People worshipped in shrines at home, work and whilst travelling. They also liked to wear good luck charms.

Image caption

Horseman statue representing the god Mars.

Object description

The Upton Lead Coffin

This coffin contained the remains of a nine year old boy and dates to the 3rd century. It was discovered inside a larger stone coffin near Upton. The boy must have been from a very wealthy family who sent him off to the afterlife with much care and attention.

Object description

The Chi-Rho symbol shows it was part of a Christian ceremony – probably baptism. The tank was found

crushed up inside a well in the Roman town at Ashton and dates to the 4th century.

The fact that it was destroyed on purpose could be evidence of anti-Christian movement at that time.

Case 11

Objects on display

Water Newton Treasure replica items

Originals displayed at the British Museum

1. Silver 'Innocenta' Cup (replica)
2. Gold votive plaque (replica)
3. Large Silver votive plaque (replica)
4. Small silver votive plaque (replica)
5. Silver decorated jug (replica)
6. Cup with handles (replica)
7. Silver strainer (replica)

Pagan (non-Christian) Items

Used for ceremonies and belief systems

8. Miniature pottery wheel. Celtic symbol of the god Jupiter
9. Tazza. Used as a lamp or incense burner
10. Small candle holder
11. Large candle holder
12. Silver baby bracelet. The snake symbolised good fortune
13. Clay Venus statue (fragment). Represented the goddess of love and beauty
14. Stone phallus. To bring good luck
15. Rattle. For use during rituals
16. Jupiter depicted on pottery. Celtic version of the Roman god, protector of iron-making
17. Scalpel. Surgical instruments were thought to evoke the magic of the gods through the healer
18. Votive offerings. These miniature swords and axes were offered to the gods
19. Cockerel Brooch. The cockerel represented the god Mercury

Industry and trade

Panel 1

The natural wealth of the Nene Valley and the land that lay within the area of Durobrivae's influence was immense.

Pottery was one of several economic activities where goods were being produced for local markets and export.

The agricultural wealth of the region, with its rich soils on which large villa estates were founded, supported a dense rural population and must have made large profits. Salt extracted from the Fens was traded at Durobrivae markets. Metalworking using local iron deposits to the west of Durobrivae was also a major industry, producing tools and other useful items. Local stone from quarries such as Barnack was another important resource for buildings, statues and coffins.

In addition to these major industries, the suburbs of Durobrivae would have had a wide range of trades.

Glass workers made everything from windows to table vessels. Workshops show evidence of timber merchants, carpenters, lime-burners, tile-makers, quarry men, builders for wells and heating systems, craftsmen for mosaic floors and fresco painting. Evidence of the food industry shows milling, baking and brewing.

Panel 2

The Stone Industry

Stone pole lathes like these were used to make stone pillars out of the Barnack stone. As well as building materials, stone was also used for coffins, statues, plaster, lime and mortar.

Panel 3

Salt Production

Salt was a valuable resource in Roman times – used mainly for preserving food. Salty water flowed down tidal rivers in the fenland region. It could be boiled in containers until salty crystals appeared.

Case 12

Objects on display

1. Salt block. This example of a salt block shows the raw material ready for trade after being extracted from the Fens and local area
2. Metal workers tool set. These 3 tools were found during excavations at Ferry Meadows. The set includes a hammer, anvil and axe
3. Sibson hoard (18 iron fragments). This hoard of Iron objects was buried during the 4th century AD, Almost all the objects are broken or incomplete. They belong to objects that were used in the home, for agriculture or at a Blacksmith's forge. Blacksmiths collected scrap metal to melt down to make new objects such as tools or weapons, Was this hoard buried by a blacksmith for safekeeping or was it intended as an offering?
4. Pottery Workshop model. Pottery workshops were abundant in the Durobrivae area producing Nene Valley Ware

The end of Roman rule

Panel 1

By about 410AD Rome no longer controlled the province of Britannia.

For most people, especially in rural areas, life on the farmsteads would have continued as normal. Others may have found their world transformed, particularly by the arrival of new settlers from Northern Europe. The 'Anglo-Saxon' period of history had begun.

Durobrivae went into decline after the end of Roman rule because the need for town markets as central places within the countryside had disappeared. Without the government structure the systems of taxation were no longer needed. Villas also went into decline because market towns were not available to sell their produce. Eventually sites were abandoned rather than destroyed and the new Saxon settlers gradually arrived to farm the land.

Stone from deserted Roman buildings was gradually reused for smaller buildings or used to fill ditches to create new trackways. After a while, the landscape was gradually transformed and old places forgotten.

The early Christians seem to have been linked to late Roman officials, as they were able to take control of the salt trade and reuse parts of some important buildings. This can be seen at the Castor Palace, Ashton and Peterborough Cathedral – all sites of early monastic churches.

Anglo Saxon

Panel 1

Anglo Saxon cemeteries

Some of the earliest evidence of Anglo-Saxon occupation in this area are the 5th – 6th century cemeteries found south of the River Nene. Anglo Saxon burials have been found in Woodston, Alwalton and Nassington.

These pre-Christian burials are usually found with grave goods, the person being buried with items that were precious to them. These include jewellery and pottery for women, or weapons for men.

Alwalton Anglo-Saxon Cemetery

This cemetery was excavated in 1999 ahead of a business park development. The excavation was filmed for BBC TV's 'Meet the Ancestors'. There were at least 61 burials in the cemetery, including 28 cremations. All dated to 500-600AD. Grave 1358 contained the remains of a woman and her possessions. Forensic techniques were used to reconstruct her appearance.

Image caption

Painting of the Alwalton Woman (Artistic impression)

Panel 2

Alwalton Woman

In 1999 excavations at the Minerva Business Park, Lynch Wood, uncovered an Anglo-Saxon cemetery dating to the 5th or 6th century AD.

The jewellery and finds displayed here were from a grave of a woman who died aged about 30. Many of these finds were filmed for the BBC's 'Meet the Ancestors' TV series.

The artist's impression of what she might have looked like was originally drawn by artist Jane Brayne.

The facial reconstruction to your right was made using forensic techniques, using a cast of the woman's skull.

You are perhaps looking into the face of someone who died nearly 1,500 years ago!

Case 13

Objects on display

Alwalton Treasures

Rich burial goods found at Anglo-Saxon pagan cemeteries in Alwalton

1. Disc brooch decorated with gold leaf
2. Multi-coloured glass-bead
3. Amber bead
4. Multi-coloured glass-bead

5. Bronze buckle
6. Bronze strap end
7. Elephant ivory bag hoop. A cloth bag was attached to the hoop, which was then fixed to a belt
8. Bronze long pin with a pair of spangles set back-to-back
9. Large bronze ring, possible a belt fitting
10. Disc brooch decorated with gold leaf
11. Multi-coloured glass beads
12. Iron knight blade
13. Iron latch lifter. An early form of door key
14. Bronze sleeve clasp
15. Bronze sleeve clasp. To fasten the cuffs of a shirt or tunic
16. Melon bead. This was often used in necklaces as a form of amulet (good luck charm)
17. 3 beads found together. 1 multicoloured glass bead and 2 blue glass beads
18. Double-sided antler comb held together with 5 iron rivets

19. Double-sided antler comb. Decorated with a line of ring-and-dot motifs
20. 2 coiled silver finger rings
21. Small penannular brooch
22. Multi-coloured glass bead
23. Blue glass beads
24. Red glass beads
25. Green glass beads
26. Bronze sleeve clasp
27. Bronze triangular strap fitting
28. Bronze triangular strap fitting
29. Bronze sleeve clasp
30. Iron shears for trimming hair
31. Hone stone for sharpening blades
32. Large bronze cruciform brooch used to fasten a cloak
33. Small bronze buckle
34. Bronze small-long brooches
35. Bronze small-long brooches. These would have been worn on the shoulders of a dress
36. Bronze tweezers and ear scoop

37. Pair of girdle hangers. These would have been worn on a belt
38. Bronze saucer brooch decorated with a gold leaf, continental spiral design. Found at Woodston
39. Belt piece decorated with gold filigree. Found with the Castor hanging bowl

Panel 3

Becoming Christian

Peterborough abbey was founded by the royal family of Mercia (East Midlands) around 655AD, as part of a marriage agreement with the Christians kingdom of Northumbria to allow missionaries in this area.

The first church was built on the site of what is today Peterborough Cathedral. At this time the site was known as Medeshamstede.

The Abbey thrived until 870AD when the Vikings swept through the area: "...they came to Medeshamstede, burning and breaking, and slaying abbot and monks, and all that they there found. They made such havoc

there, that a monastery, which was before rich, was now reduced to nothing". (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle)

Image caption 1

The Hedda Stone, a piece of Anglo-Saxon sculpture from Medeshamstede on display at Peterborough Cathedral.

Image caption 2

Anglo-Saxon women's graves often contained jewellery like this bronze cruciform brooch.

Panel 4

Vikings!

The Vikings raided the country many times during the 9th century and eventually gained control over much of England, including this region. Their lands become known as the 'Danelaw'.

The Saxon King, Alfred the Great, and his son King Edward the Elder fought to remove the Vikings, but it

was Alfred's grandson, King Athelstan (924-939AD) who finally gained control of England.

Very few Viking objects have been found in this area, and yet history tells us they were here! Another clue can be found in local street names such as Westgate, Cowgate, Priestgate, Cumbergate. The 'gate' part of the name means street or road and comes from the Old Norse 'gaeta'.

Panel 5

The 'Golden Borough'

Peterborough abbey was re-founded after 963AD and became known as a Burch or Burgh, which means 'fortified place' in Old English.

A town grew up around the abbey, largely to the eastern side of the modern Cathedral precincts, around the area of Bishop's Road and St John's Street today.

Within a century the abbey became very wealthy and was nicknamed Gildenburgh or the 'Golden Borough'. It had a wide influence as a centre of learning, culture and

craftsmanship. One of the few surviving versions of the history of the early English people, known as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, was written at Peterborough.

Image caption

Page from the Peterborough volume of the Anglo Saxon Chronicle.

Case 14

Objects on display

This case contains a selection of items from Anglo-Saxon burial grounds in the Peterborough area.

Anglo-Saxons either cremated their dead, or buried them in simple graves.

Until the 7th century AD, when Christianity began to replace pagan religion, most Anglo-Saxons took some possessions with them to the afterlife.

Men were buried with things such as knives, spears, shields, and (very rarely) swords.

Women were often buried with a knife, brooches, necklaces and simple keys (latch lifters)

1. Two small long brooches. From Nassington
2. Beads. From Nassington, Women would have worn these suspended between two brooches
3. Cruciform (cross-shaped) brooch. From New Fletton Gravel Pits, Peterborough
4. Pennannular brooch. From Nassington
5. Shield Grip. From Nassington
6. Shield Boss. From Woodston
7. Four Spearheads. From Woodston and Nassington
8. Cruciform (cross-shaped) brooch. From Nassington
9. Cruciform (cross-shaped) brooch. From Woodston, Peterborough
10. Cruciform (cross-shaped) brooch. From Woodston, Peterborough
11. Saucer brooch. From Woodston, Peterborough
12. Three Swastika brooches. From Nassington
13. Wrist Clasps. From Nassington
14. Saucer brooch. From Woodston, Peterborough

15. Anglo Saxon Pot. Pottery like this dates to the 5th – 7th centuries AD, Pots like this are often found in burials
16. A Victorian replica of the Alfred Jewel. The original Alfred Jewel is in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. It is associated with King Alfred the Great (871-899AD) and may have been part of a pendant or pointer used when reading (an 'aestral')
17. Silver penny of Offa, King of Mercia (about 785AD). Found at Werrington in 1980

My life the story of a Saxon Bronze Hanging Bowl

The Bronze smith made me with hammer and fire.

I was traded to my master – the Thane at Castor and I hung in his great timber hall where I witnessed many feasts, heard many tales.

The Thane's Great Hall was impressive both in size and design.

At special feasts I was brought to the great Thane's high table by my mistress, the Thane's wife – a great lady – to take the place of honour in the centre of ceremonies.

After his death, I was buried with him. I lay by my master's head for 1,500 years as he and I rotted away together.

In the year AD 1990 I was discovered during road excavations by a man with a metal detector and I ended up at the Museum.

It took a whole year for a conservator to restore and put me back together, and now I am on display here.

Medieval Peterborough

Panel 1

Hugh Candidus

Hugh Candidus was a monk at Peterborough abbey in the 12th century. He wrote an account of the Abbey's story and events in his lifetime, so becoming the city's first historian.

Between 1155AD and 1175AD a monk of Peterborough Abbey named Hugh Candidus gathered together information to compile a history of his abbey from

655AD to 1175AD. After Hugh had died, a copy of his manuscript was written into a book of characters, which was lost in a fire in Westminster in 1731. Fortunately, a transcript had been made in 1652.

Hugh Candidus' Chronicle is important as it is the earliest known work that was dedicated to the history of Peterborough. It is the most detailed account of our history during the Anglo-Saxon and early Medieval periods.

Hugh was born around 1100, and came to Peterborough Abbey as a child. During his childhood he suffered from a blood disorder, suffering with bouts of excessive haemorrhaging which earned him the nickname 'Hugo Albus' or Hugh Candidus' ['Hugh the White'] because of his pale skin. Hugh miraculously recovered and became a model student.

Hugh became the Abbey's sub-prior, a position of some importance. When abbot Martin de Bec died, Hugh was one of the twelve elders selected to choose his successor. Afterwards he accompanied the new abbot, William de Waterville, to court in order to seek King

Henry II's and the Archbishop of Canterbury's approval of the appointment. It is believed Hugh died just after the year 1175, as this is when his chronicle stopped.

Panel 2

Peterborough Abbey Destroyed

(870AD & 1070AD)

Who was Hereward?

Stories of Hereward the legendary leader of English resistance against the Normans, have been handed down from generation to generation. His name now graces schools and shopping centres, roads and radio stations. There are so many myths about Hereward that it is hard to know the truth, but we do know that he came from an important family who held land in Lincolnshire.

Why did Hereward attack Peterborough?

Some say he did it because he wanted to stop the Normans from getting their hands on the abbey's

treasures. Others say he was just a thief who took advantage of the abbey's temporary weakness.

Panel 3

The Medieval Abbey

(1070AD – 1539AD)

The abbey was founded by the royal family of Mercia (East Midlands) around 655AD. At that time the site was known as Medeshamstede, after a spring called Medeswell.

The abbey thrived until 870AD when the Vikings swept through the area: "...they came to Medeshamstede, burning and breaking, and slaying abbot and monks, and all that they there found. They made such havoc there, that a monastery, which was before rich, was now reduced to nothing". (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle)

The abbey was re-founded after 963Ad and became known as a Burch or Burgh, which means 'fortified place' in Old English.

In 1070AD the abbey was destroyed again by the Danes and a local leader called Hereward: "...they burned all the offices of the monks and the whole town, save only the church and one house...no-one can tell how many gold and silver ornaments and books they took...nevertheless they said they were doing this out of loyalty to the church".

What remains of Peterborough abbey?

The magnificent abbey church, rebuilt on a massive scale from the 12th century onwards survives as our present Cathedral. Many of the buildings and walls now within the Cathedral precincts were formerly part of the medieval abbey.

There is further information about the abbey in the Cathedral visitor centre.

Were there any other abbeys around here?

Important abbeys were also built at Thorney and Crowland. The present parish churches at both these places contain the remains of the former abbey churches.

Daily life of a Monk

According to the rules of St Benedict

- 5:45am Wake up.
- 6:00am 1st Church service – Prime.
- 6:30am Breakfast. Talking was not allowed during meals.
- 7:00am Chapter House meeting. After the Monks said mass they confessed their sins. They were then given their tasks for the day. They may also have had some time for private reading and prayer.
- 9:00am 2nd Church service – Terce, including High Mass.
- 9:30am Work. The monks worked on the abbey farms or had specialised work in the abbey (e.g. copying manuscripts in the scriptorium, looking after the sick in the infirmary).
- 12:00noon 3rd Church service – Sext.
- 1:00pm Main meal. Food was made from vegetables or fish. Meat was allowed only for monks who were ill.
- 1:30pm Sleep, reading or prayer.

- 3:00pm 4th Church service – None.
- 3:30pm More work, as per the morning.
- 6:00om 5th Church service – Vespers.
- 7:00pm Private Reading and Prayer.
- 9:00om 6th Church service – Compline.
- 9:30pm Got to bed.
- Midnight Wake up -7th & 8th Church services – Matins, followed by Lauds.
- 1:00am Return to bed.

Object on display

The Abbot's Prison Door

This heavy oak door came from the Abbot's prison. The prison was located near the abbey's main gate. Its vaulted rooms can still be seen in a shop below street level off of Cathedral Square.

The Abbot of Peterborough obtained the right to have a prison in the 13th century. Before then criminals were sent to the King's prisons at Northampton or Rockingham Castle.

Peterborough's first prison was finally replaced in 1839

Royal Peterborough

Lots of Kings and Queens have visited Peterborough. A special building in the Abbey, 'The King's Lodgings' was built for them to stay in.

- King Stephen visited in 1143.
- King Henry II visited in 1154. With him he had Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was later murdered on Henry's orders in Canterbury Cathedral. A chapel was dedicated in Peterborough to Becket (today the Cathedral tearooms).
- King Joh visited in 1206 and 1216.
- King Henry III visited several times.
- King Edward I visited in 1302.
- King Edward II visited several times. On one occasion he was offended by the abbot who had forgotten to buy a gift for his favourite (and lover) Piers Gaveston.
- King Henry IV once stayed for two months.
- King Charles I was imprisoned in the city for 2 nights in 1646 by Roundhead soldiers.

Case 15

Objects on display

1. Medieval Finger Ring.

The finger ring dates to the 13th or 14th century and was obviously owned by a wealthy person. It is made of gold and has a smooth sapphire set in its hexagonal bezel.

The ring was found by Mr M.Turner at Stanground in 1998 and was declared Treasure by the Coroner.

The ring was purchased with the help of the Friends of Peterborough Museum and the V&A Museum's Purchase Grant Fund.

2. Medieval Stained Glass.

Most of what is known about Medieval stained glass making comes from a 12th century monk called Theophilus, who describes the art in his text.

The windows were made by laying out coloured glass in complex patterns, which were then fitted into lead frames called "comes" and soldered together. Putty is pressed between the lead and

glass for waterproofing and then the whole panel is set in a strong iron frame.

The basic ingredients for making glass are sand and wood ash (potash) which are then melted. To colour the glass powdered metals are added whilst the glass is molten. Gold produces bright red, cobalt gives a bright blue, copper gives greens and mat red, and silver gives a yellow or gold colour. Fine details like hands and faces are painted onto the back of the glass.

3. Medieval Stained Glass. Pieces of a stained glass memorial to a member of the St. Medard family. Found at Thornhaugh. Can you put the pieces together?

Panel 4

The Medieval Town

The beginnings of modern Peterborough

Martin de Bec (abbot of Peterborough from 1132AD) re-organised the town. He created a large rectangular market place (now called Cathedral Square) to the west of the abbey. Plots of land for the townspeople were laid out along the streets radiating from the market place.

The medieval street pattern is still partly visible in the city centre today. Some other features of the town are also still recognisable/ The parish church of St John the Baptist was built at the west end of the market place in 1402AD.

The present town bridge is close to the site of the medieval town bridge (built in 1308AD) and boats are still moored close to where medieval boats would have unloaded their cargoes.

The troubled times after the Norman Conquest in 1066AD badly affected Peterborough abbey. Eventually, however, St Peter's (of) Burgh (from which we get the name Peterborough) recovered to become a powerful and rich medieval institution.

The abbey controlled most aspects of life in the town and the surrounding area. It also had a wide influence as a centre of learning, culture and craftsmanship.

One of the few surviving versions of the history of the early English people, known as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, was written at Peterborough.

Case 16

Objects on display

1. Carved Wooden Beam
2. Monument brass depicting a medieval lady, from Southover Abbey
3. Monument brass depicting two children, from Southover Abbey
4. Carved pew end from Crowland

5. Obverse and reverse of the Great Seal of Peterborough (wooden copy) Used on official documents of the period
6. Bronze signet ring
7. Carved wooden knife handle of a man holding a hawk
8. Bronze scissors with inscribed blades. Probably late 14th century
9. Double-sided bone hair comb
10. Two pilgrim badges or ampullae collected by pilgrims from shrines they visited, much like souvenirs today
11. Papal seal or bull from an official document sent to Peterborough abbey from Rome
12. Iron horse bit and bronze harness bell
13. 14th century bronze chest key
14. A section of buckles 1. Oval-framed 2. Double oval spectacle type 3. Rectangular form with pin 4. Reverse b-shaped type with pin
15. Selection of glazed medieval floor tiles known as encaustic tiles

16. Selection of bronze horse-harness mounts
17. Medieval Floor tiles
18. Bronze tap from St Leonard's leper hospital
19. Lead weights
20. Bronze wool weight showing the Royal Arms of France and England
21. Bone Skates. Bone skates have been found on sites of various dates but they are most common in the late Saxon and medieval periods, although their use is recorded into the 19th century.
They are usually made from the long bones of a horse or cow and become worn and polished through use on ice.
The skater was propelled by means of a pole, placed on the ice between the legs to push themselves along.
The two skates here were found during excavations at Bridge Street in the mid-1970s and date to the 12th century
22. Mummified rat. Found in the chimney breast of a house in Long Causeway. Probably buried as part

of a superstitious ritual to please evil spirits and stop them burning down the house

23. Dressed stone showing mason's mark. 15th – 16th century. Such marks were a symbol of quality control
24. Painted stone pilaster from the Cathedral's Lady Chapel
25. Medieval bung hole cistern
26. Two small green-glazed earthenware jugs. 13th – 14th century
27. Neck of a 'face mask' jug made at Grimston kilns near Kings Lynn
28. 14th century jug decorated with fleur de lis patterns
29. Medieval Jug found in Whittlesey Mere
30. Green-glazed jug found during the draining of Whittlesey Mere, 13th century
31. Medieval bronze cauldron found during the draining of Whittlesey Mere in the late 19th century

32. Medieval sword, 14th century. Found in the River Cam, this sword was designed for hacking and cutting rather than stabbing
33. Halbert 'Halberd' dating from the 15th century. The shaft has been snapped but would have been up to 8 feet (2.4meters) in length
34. Carved stone head of a knight in chain mail c.1250. thought to be Sir Gervase de Barnack

Object on display

Goodyer's Yard Window

This medieval window was rescued from a demolished building in Goodyear's Yard (or Goodyer's Yard) off of Bridge Street, Peterborough.

The buildings and yard on Bridge Street were crammed into narrow plots that had been laid out in medieval times.

Text below object

"...They so enriched it with lands and gold and silver and diverse things, that it was rightly called Gildenburgh

– the golden city.” (Peterborough Chronicle of Hugh Candidus

Panel 5

Under our feet

Peterborough's past today

Some traces of ancient Peterborough are easy to see. The Cathedral and its surrounding buildings are reminders of the splendour of the medieval abbey. The guildhall and St John's church have stood in the old market place for hundreds of years.

Much of the history of the city is buried out of sight under modern pavements, roads and buildings. When we walk through the city we walk upon hundreds of years of history.

New building work sometimes provides archaeologists with a chance to excavate. They try to record the unwritten story of Peterborough before it is destroyed forever.

Excavation within the city is often difficult. There are deep waterlogged remains, especially down by the river Nene. In the centre of the city and within the Cathedral precincts there are complex interwoven layers of remains that represent medieval yards, roads, building foundations, rubbish pits, ditches and cemeteries.

Image caption

Peterborough in 1610AD, 1900AD and today.

Image caption

The great tower of the impressive medieval residence at Longthorpe was built about 1300AD. Its interior is adorned with the finest surviving set of medieval domestic wall paintings in the country.