

TREASURES
at
Kendal Museum



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Kendal Museum today

I am privileged to be the curator of Kendal Museum and my mission statement is

{ 'To share our heritage collections and site, pioneering occupational teaching and community engagement'

Kendal Museum is a visitor attraction and a teaching museum, managed by Kendal College.

It is an accredited museum of Arts Council England, recognised to be a sustainable, focussed and trusted organisation offering all of our visitors a great experience.

Significant collections of Natural History, Archaeology and Social History are held on site.

The museum holds treasures collected over three centuries dating from prehistory; each item was collected for a reason in its time. Societies, fashions, values and knowledge continue to change and we continue to marvel with today's sensibilities.

Together with the museum team, I continue to collect, conserve and seek to communicate about, this heritage. Our mission statement underlies all of our museum practice today:

- we collect; Tudor silver-gilt dress hook. Found locally
- we conserve; the re-articulation of the Helsfell Wolf. Originally excavated in 1880 from a local cave
- we communicate; Arts Award working with schools!

Advances in technology mean that through digitisation we can now share collections that are too fragile to be handled. Our successful Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid of 2014 has meant that over a two year period we have shared three such major collections and engaged the community in our work.

With many thanks to HLF and all of our supporters

Carol Davies AMA
Museum Curator Manager

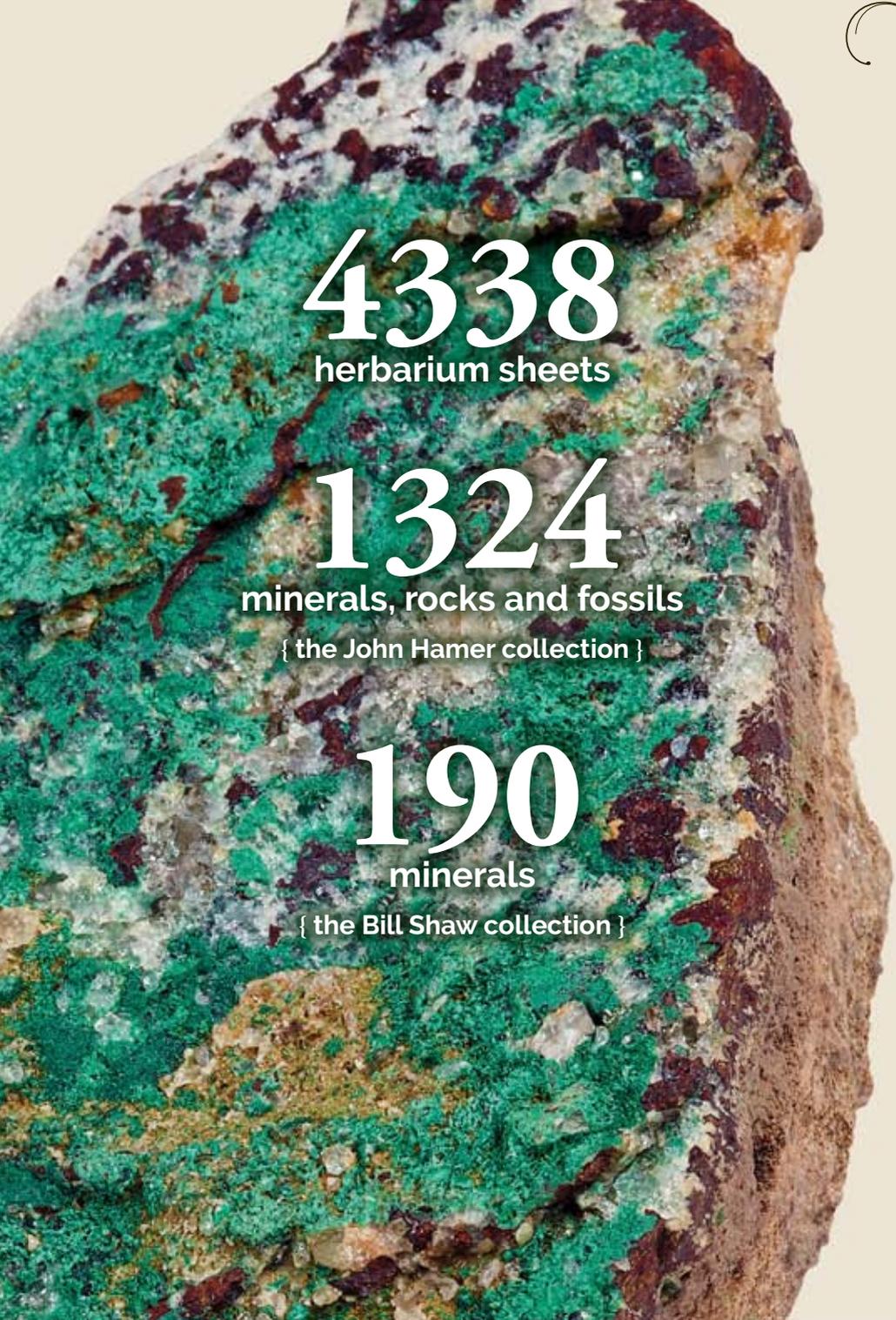
Helsfell wolf
KMB1983.346



Tudor silver-gilt
dress hook
KMA2015.27



Arts Award



4338

herbarium sheets

1324

minerals, rocks and fossils

{ the John Hamer collection }

190

minerals

{ the Bill Shaw collection }

Looking Through a Lens:

Preserving and presenting the past through digitisation 2014-16

Kendal Museum has completed a two-year HLF-funded project to make three key collections available to the public using pioneering digital technology.

Our digital imaging scientists Tony Riley and George Platt have captured over 5000 images from the John Hamer and Bill Shaw mineral collections, and from the 19th century Martindale collection of pressed plants.

These collections have never been on public display as a whole, because they are too fragile and cannot be handled.

"The studio was set up to digitise three stunning collections and share their hidden beauty with the community. It is an exciting and pioneering project for Kendal Museum: working with Kendal College, our dedicated team has realised our vision for museum practice in the 21st century"

Carol Davies AMA
Curator Manager of Kendal Museum

These images are available to the public at kendalmuseum.digital





Preserve 2014-2015

In the first year of the project, over 5000 specimens from Kendal Museum's mineral and herbarium collections were digitised.

Mineral collections

Kendal Museum has a large, comprehensive and unique collection of minerals from the Lake District and the North of England.

Bill Shaw (1909 - 1978) and John Hamer (1916 - 2002) separately collected minerals during the 1940s and 1950s. With many of the mines no longer accessible, together these collections represent the rich heritage of the mining industry in Cumbria.

Martindale herbarium

One hundred and fifty years ago the Lake District was a world centre for botanical research. Joseph Anthony Martindale (1837 - 1914) was passionate about natural history; he explored the Lake District, studying and collecting many species, now held in the Martindale herbarium.

Botanical collecting took place in a sociable network, based on academic and similar collecting interests. Martindale formed lasting friendships with three other botanists in Lakeland, establishing the 'Three-Legged Society'.

The collection documents the botanical biodiversity of the Lake District from the early nineteenth century. The collection is significant today and is used to investigate how populations have changed over time in response to habitat loss or climate change.



Digital imaging studio set up at Kendal Museum, September 2014.

- This process freezes the object's appearance in time to a 'preservation' quality, ensuring that the images are an accurate archive to pass on to future generations.

Metamorfoze

- The herbarium was digitised following the Metamorfoze standard; the national programme for the preservation of paper heritage; set out by the National Library and Archives of the Netherlands.
- As part of HLF funding a consultant was hired to assist the Image Preservation Studio. Colin White, the former head of photography at the National Gallery, London, helped the studio to set up equipment and develop our understanding of the daily start-up process required to achieve the standard.



"It should not be underestimated the achievement of pushing the (relatively) budget photographic equipment at the Kendal Museum to its practical limits and undertaking to match guidelines designed for equipment of far higher specification. It is a credit to the museum to undertake to use a system many large institutions find daunting and hard to implement."

Colin White

Conservation

- Storage and documentation of the collections was improved with help from dedicated students and volunteers.

Present 2015-2016

With an abundance of images available, the second year of the project focussed on sharing the collections in different ways to engage with the community.

Some examples are:

Getting creative

- Photography workshop with digital imaging scientist George Platt
- Art workshop organised by museum and gallery skills students

Sharing our experiences

- Natural Sciences Collections Association conference
- Collections Trust 'Digital Isn't Different' conference
- Cumbria Learning Networks: Museum photography volunteer training

Expert knowledge

- Lecture by Ian Hodkinson: Local naturalists and the early Kendal Museum plant collections
- Lecture by Michael Dewey: The mining industries of Cumbria
- The Three-Legged Society publication by Ian Hodkinson and Allan Steward

*Lilium Martagon L.
Shores of Alltwater
Northward side
June 22. 1905
J.A. Marten's legit.*

*"For the time I was here,
I was suspended in wonder"*
Visitors' book

The museum comes to you

- Launch of kendalmuseum.digital website
- Seed planting in the local shopping centre
- Creative art sessions for people with dementia, in local residential homes
- Travelling exhibition

Family fun and learning

- Arts Award Discover and Explore with local primary school children
- Young Archaeologists' Club: Natural elements in archaeology
- Be a miner: family activity day

New exciting exhibits

- Modern art installation: A Weird Aperture and Weird Echoes of Water, 2015, a digital video by Kate Morrell, commissioned by Legion TV
- Redisplay of the Hamer mineral collection by volunteers
- Museum and gallery skills student project, mini exhibitions informing the public about the digitisation project



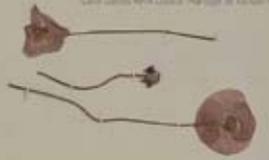
The Museum comes to you

Digitisation on tour; spectacular and vibrant images toured the North West throughout 2015 and 2016 showcasing our project.

KMG2012.1.36

"The Studio was set up to digitise three stunning collections and share their hidden beauty with the community. It is an exciting and pioneering project for Kew's Museum, working with Kew's College, our dedicated team has realised our vision for museum practice in the 21st Century."

Carol Davies, AHA, Curator Manager of Kew's Museum



Kew's Museum has completed a project to make three key collections available to the public using pioneering digital technology. Our Digital Imaging Scientists Tony Riley and George Platt have captured over 5,000 images. These are available to the public on www.kewherbarium.org.uk/digital

These collections have never been on public display as a whole, because they are too fragile and cannot be handled.

The John Hervey and Bill Shaw mineral collections and the 19th Century MacDougal collection of pressed plants are now digitised. This image freezes the object's appearance in time to a 'preservation' quality ensuring that the images are an accurate archive to pass onto future generations.



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Handwritten botanical notes in cursive script.



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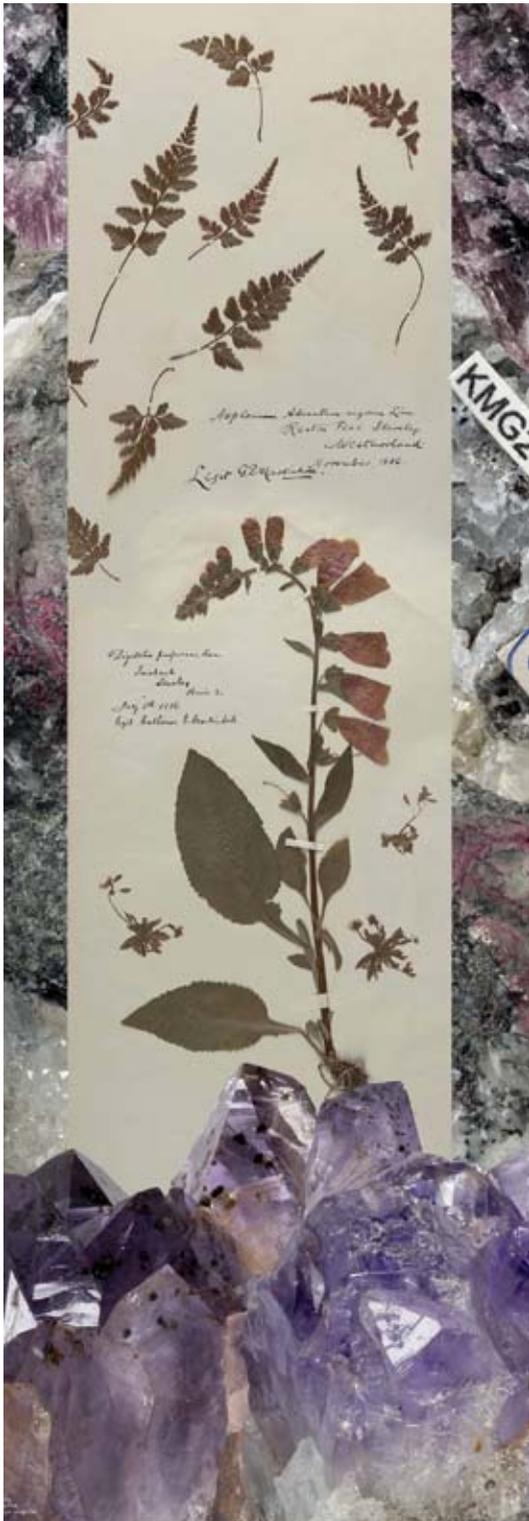
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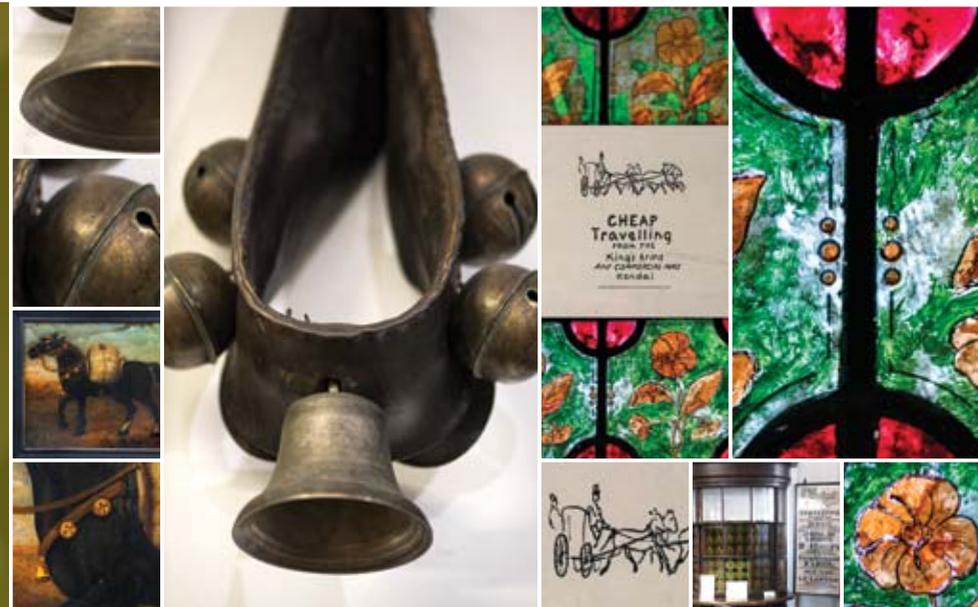


Agrostis flexilis var. *flexilis*
Kew's Herbarium
18th Century
L. J. Martindale

Lythrum flos mariae
L. J. Martindale
18th Century
L. J. Martindale

A Guide to the Galleries & Collections:

Three centuries of collections, exploration and discovery. A unique Victorian legacy to treasure.



Local History

Pack horse bell collar

KMS1979.283

Bell collar as worn by the 'Belle Mare'. This was an experienced packhorse that led the trains of working ponies, carrying bolts of cloth and wool on the trade routes to and from Kendal in the 1700s.

The present museum building was a former Northern County Wool Warehouse, acquired in 1913 to house the museum collections.

1757 portrait of Kendal packhorseman Robert Tebay. This shows the Belle Mare, laden with a bolt of cloth and wearing this set of bells. The bells each had different sounds, to indicate the route for the following string of ponies.

King's Arms hotel Wainwright label

KMS1979.164

Alfred Wainwright, honorary curator of Kendal Museum from 1945 to 1974 hand-wrote meticulous labels for the museum artefacts.

Above is a transcription from a poster advertising 'cheap travelling from the King's Arms in Kendal' against the decorated glass of the ticket office window.

The King's Arms, Kendal's best known coaching inn (18th - 19th century), has not survived as a building. Famous for its hospitality and coach services, including the Royal Mail coaches, only the coach booking office and poster are preserved.

The coming of the railways to the Lake District in the 19th century, brought about the demise of the King's Arms.

kendalmuseum.digital

Archaeology

Cumbria's rich heritage: from Neolithic and Roman relics to expeditions of discovery during the Victorian era.

Kentmere Viking boat

KMS1987.817

Dug-out type boat made of ash, excavated from the bed of Kentmere Tarn in 1959.

The Vikings were a seafaring people from Scandinavia who were traders, explorers and warriors during the late 8th to early 11th centuries.

The Vikings had conquered almost the whole of England during the 9th century.

A volunteer-led project raised funds for this boat to be radio carbon dated through Oxford Archaeology North in 2015. Viking date was confirmed to the 10th – 12th century thus confirming Viking settlement and activity at this tarn near to Kendal.

Funeral memorial stone for a centurion

KMA1979.280

Funeral memorial stone commemorating the centurion P. Aelius Bassus who lived in the 3rd century AD. He was stationed at Watercrock, an auxiliary Roman fort in Kendal.

Colonel O.H. North first excavated this fort in 1931; his finds illustrate everyday life in Roman-occupied Cumbria.

Roman forts in Cumbria served to protect the Northern frontier of the Roman Empire and it was common practice for centurions to be in temporary command of auxiliary units. The inscription, translated from Roman Latin, describes funeral practice.



Stone axe

KMA2012.10

Five Neolithic roughout axes from the Central Fells of the Lake District.

Cumbria was a centre for the manufacture of roughout axes and large collections remain. These axes were roughly shaped high in the Central Fells, then transported to lower areas to be polished. Polished axes were traded widely and have been found all over Britain and parts of continental Europe.

Unusually these five roughouts were not abandoned due to breakage, they were finished products only requiring grinding and polishing to become a finished axe. Deposited together, archaeological study reveals them to be the work of a single craftsman.

Roman face jug

KMA1979.52

This is a rare example of a Roman coarse ware face jar. This jar is incised to create a bearded face. The fragments were found at Watercrock Roman fort near Kendal.

Face pots were probably introduced into Britain by the Roman Army in the 1st century AD. The faces may have served as protection for the contents of the pots, which may have been used as burial urns after cremation or for harvested goods.

In Britain many face pots have been found at military sites.

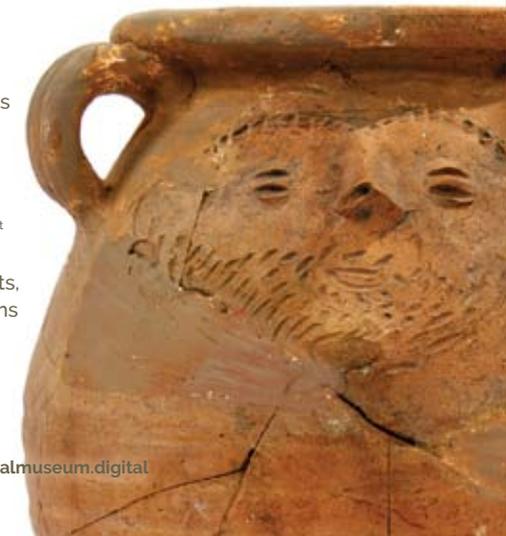
Mummified hawk

KMA1993.250

Mummified hawk offering to the ancient Egyptian god Horus. The hawk was the guardian of the King.

Mummies were collected during the 19th century in Egypt as souvenirs, with many excavations funded by Victorian wealth in the north. John Rankin, former High Sheriff of Westmorland, donated many objects including finds from the excavations of John Garstang in the early 20th century.

In 2012 research was carried out on this mummified hawk in Manchester. It was x-rayed and CT scanned at the Manchester Royal Infirmary. A sample of tissue, together with the information gathered, is held in the Ancient Egyptian Animal Bio Bank.



kendalmuseum.digital

Natural History

A worldwide collection of the rare and beautiful, uniquely preserved. Inspires and challenges conservation for today.



Dodo

KMB2016.3

A scientific reconstruction model by taxidermist Carl Church in 2013. No complete original specimen survives today.

A flightless bird living on the Indian Ocean Island of Mauritius, it became extinct as a result of human settlement in the early 17th century.

This is the classic story of rapid extinction from hunting and loss of habitat. Before the age of photography, only early drawings and written descriptions recorded its appearance. Together with the advances in modern science an accurate reconstruction can be made.



Polar bear

KMB1983.200

Standing over 2 metres tall, it is the largest and most iconic animal at the museum. It was shot by the Earl of Lonsdale, who lived in Cumbria, on his 1888 expedition to explore the Arctic.

Kendal Museum is an historic museum with a stunning collection of taxidermy, assembled during the heyday of Victorian collecting and prepared by the finest taxidermists.

Dozens of extinct and endangered animals from all over the world can be found in the museum galleries, a testimony to the fragile and ever-changing balance of nature. Today the polar bear is especially vulnerable to climate change.

Birds of paradise

KMB1985.181, KMB1985.182, KMB1985.183

Beautiful, colourful, flamboyant, eye-catching birds. There are 22 different species in the collection.

Donated by Dr Parker, one of the founding members of the museum. Parker was a keen naturalist, with a particular interest in birds.

Birds of paradise are now protected; they were exploited and traded for feathers during the 19th century to meet the fashion industry's demand for decorative hats. Emily Williamson formed a society in 1889 to prevent the excessive trade of feathers. Today the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds prevents further exploitation.



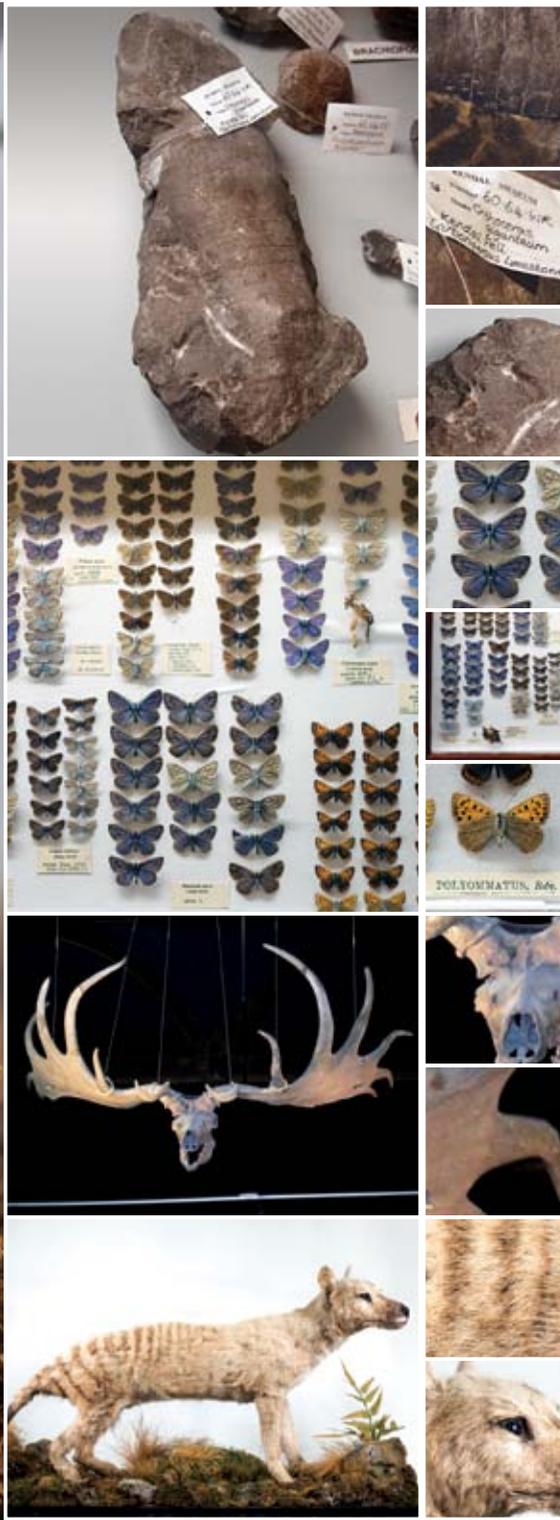
Thylacine tiger

KMB1983.328

Marsupial predator endemic to Australia, it became extinct in the wild c1930.

This already rare Thylacine was donated by Dr Parker in 1939 for the opening of an annexe extending the museum galleries. The large collection of big game hunting specimens donated by Colonel Harrison of Cumbria was displayed here.

There are many extinct and type specimens at Kendal Museum. The type is a scientific name-bearing representative for a new species. Museum collections provide a unique resource retaining DNA vital for research into evolution and taxonomy. DNA samples taken from our Thylacine are held in an international data bank.



Orthoceras giganteum (Giant squid)

60.64.WR

Giant straight-horned squid fossil found on Kendal Fell. This was a predatory animal living in the Carboniferous Period 358.9–298.9 million years ago. The modern representative of this group of extinct creatures is the present-day Nautilus.

The original cabinet of curiosities in Kendal, opened in 1796 by William Todhunter, included hundreds of minerals and fossils. The current geology displays at Kendal Museum are inspired by these foundation collections.

Scientific study of this shallow sea-living fossil evidences how climate has shaped the planet's landscape over millions of years.

Drawer of British and European butterflies and moths

KMB1985.356

Victorian practice of butterfly collecting, a personal collection displayed for its beauty and scientific interest.

Rev. A. Moss was the first President of The Kendal Literary and Scientific Society and an eminent entomologist. Collections contain specimens of every known British butterfly, including the extinct British species of large blue and large copper.

Victorian butterfly collecting was not sensitive to the conservation ideals of today. These historic collections illustrate the diversity and wealth of Cumbrian ecology.

Megaceros giganteus (Giant elk)

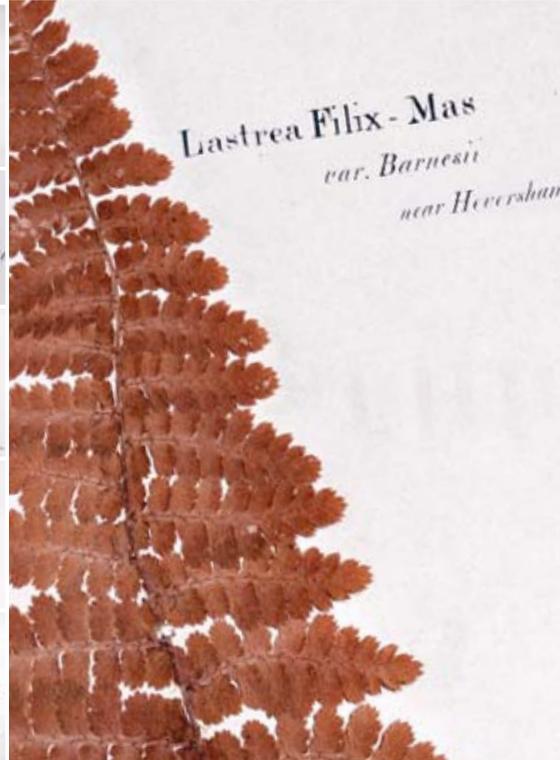
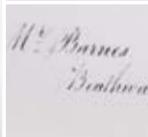
KMB1983.216

These impressive antlers, the largest of any deer species, are from the extinct Ice Age giant elk. The antlers measure 3.2 m from tip to tip. This giant deer was found at Mullagh Mast, Co. Kildare, Ireland in 1859, and donated to Kendal Museum in 1949.

In 1993 a conservation project was carried out to restore the giant elk for public display.

The giant elk became extinct after the last Ice Age, about 11,000 years ago. The animals could not survive dramatic changes in climate and they were also hunted by early man.

kendalmuseum.digital



Lastrea filix-mas barnesii (Barnes' male fern)

KMB1985.347

Named after James Martindale Barnes who collected ferns in the Lake District, 1861. He described and discovered over 200 varieties.

The first fern collections were made in the Lake District during the 1800s. Many survive today in Kendal Museum. Local botanists became experts in the study of ferns, founding the National British Fern Society in Kendal, 1891.

The herbaria at Kendal Museum have been used to investigate plants' response to climate change. The collections are a useful reference to compare the morphology of plants found today with original specimens preserved from over 100 years ago.

Lithophone

KMS2016.6

A musical instrument consisting of a number of rocks arranged to create a musical sound. The stone keys are made from Skiddaw slate. It is about 3.1 metres long and plays two scales.

The musical property of these stones is unique to this small area of Cumbria. The stones are musical because of a freak of nature; when Skiddaw was an active volcano, the lava flow was uneven because the nearby mountain Blencathra blocked its path. This meant a small area of lava became very compressed, resulting in its musical qualities.

Today the stones are extremely rare, particularly those with a deep tone.

Golden eagle

KMB1985.277

The golden eagle is the largest bird of prey that lives and breeds in the Lake District.

Our eagle, set in one of a series of modern dioramas, introduces our visitors to the diverse habitats of the Lake District, from estuary to mountain top.

Golden eagles can only be seen in a few places in the UK, including the RSPB's Haweswater reserve in Cumbria. The survival of these birds is precarious. Continued protection enables us to enjoy them living in the wild.

Harp seal

KMB1983.310

The harp seal was captured in 1868 in Morecambe Bay as recorded in the local newspaper.

Harp seals usually inhabit the North Atlantic and Arctic oceans. Thomas Gough identified and preserved this unusual specimen, although not on the museum premises. Mrs Ann Walker, sub-curator of the museum from 1837 to 1870, would not allow this!

This animal had strayed from its normal habitat, causing scientific intrigue and leading to its capture. Today this event and unusual behaviour would be recorded to add to the species knowledge, without harm to the seal.





"Treasures at Kendal Museum"

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