

Study Visit to the Museum of London

We're part of the [Hertfordshire Association of Museums](#) and yesterday, several members met up in London for a study trip to the [Museum of London](#). Our former regional conservator, Libby Finney invited the group to her new workplace to come and have a look behind the scenes.

We met at Mortimer Wheeler House, which is where the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) and the Social History stores are based. Here we were shown around the stores by Jim Gledhill, Curator of Social and Working History. Some of the objects spotted in the store included this [typesetting machine](#) and other items relating to the 'hot metal' process of newspaper printing in London, this [Ford Cortina Mark 1](#) and a boxed Star Wars Millennium Falcon.

Next we caught the bus to Moorgate and made our way to the main Museum of London building on London Wall. After a spot of lunch, we met in the entrance, and were taken into the depths of the museum by Libby to the Costume Store. Here we were met by Beatrice Behlen, Senior Curator of Fashion and Decorative Arts. Beatrice showed us around the costume store, and explained the variety of ways the museum has improved the storage of its costume collections over the years. There are images of the shoe collection storage [here](#). After all our behind the scenes tours, and the chance to ask questions and pick up ideas for our own museums, there was the opportunity to have a look around the museum itself, and for me this was a chance to have a look at different sorts of displays, and also watch visitors and their reactions to the displays.

There was an interesting exhibition that had been put together by the Museum's Youth panel, and reinterprets what the Romans left behind. There were cases of objects set apart but next to the Roman displays, but there were also elements that were integrated with the existing displays.



comparative display

Modern objects were placed next to Roman objects to compare similarities or differences. So a Samian bowl and the iPhone were used to look at 'Must-have imports' in Roman times and now.

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The Roman glass maker's workshop

In the main Roman displays, modern objects had been placed in the middle of the Roman objects, and small green labels asked questions to make you think about how some things change through time, and how some things are similar.

I saw lots of other good ideas in the displays:



Shoes displayed in a case on the floor



walls covered in reproductions of adverts and bills from the period.

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Flints that could be handled, placed in front of a video of someone demonstrating flint knapping



evacuees cases piled up to make display cases



A telephone kiosk used as a display case



A timeline of significant events along a wall and along the rail below

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17th century Room Set

What do you think of these ideas? Perhaps you have been to other museums and saw something you particularly liked. As we think about our new museum, we want to gather as many good ideas as we can!

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