



Trail: Objects of local, national or international significance at Norwich Castle

On the following pages you'll find a virtual trail around Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery, looking at objects of local, national or international significance. The trail visits a number of different galleries in the museum. Please click on the underlined blue words to take you to relevant locations.

Natural History Gallery

[Explore the Natural History Gallery at your own pace](#), or look at the highlighted objects below.

Happisburgh handaxe

[Take a look at the Happisburgh handaxe \(number 5 in the case\)](#). This beautiful ovate flint handaxe is an object of world significance. It was found on a Norfolk beach in 2000 by a local man walking his dog. It has been dated to around 500,000 years old, making it amongst the oldest tools ever found in Britain. Its discovery led to further investigations along the same beach, where evidence of much older human activity was uncovered and demonstrates that humans had been present in Britain around 200,000 years earlier than previously thought.

Polar bear

[View the polar bear display](#). This bear was shot by Sir Savile Brinton Crossley (1st Baron of Somerleyton, near Lowestoft) in the Arctic in the 1890s. It was one of 57 bears shot over six weeks.

Bengal tiger

[See the Bengal tiger](#). This tiger was shot by King George V in Nepal in 1911. A total of 39 tigers were shot during the course of the trip.

Bird Gallery

[Take a look around the Bird Gallery](#), which contains every species from Britain.

The Paston Treasure

[View The Paston Treasure](#), a spectacular painting commissioned by Sir Robert Paston, 1st Earl of Yarmouth, in the 1670s. The painting shows off Sir Robert's collection of treasures, but there is a darker message: there are reminders that we all die, regardless of riches, in the images of the snuffed-out candle, the egg timer, the broken lute, the girl's sheet music about death, the broken clock and the black mirror.

Funds were recently raised to re-gild the frame – that is, to re-cover the wood with gold leaf.

Teapot Gallery

[Have a look around the Teapot Gallery](#). Norfolk Museums Service has the largest collection of British ceramic teapots in the world – 3,000!

Special Exhibitions Gallery (if open)

[View the location of the Special Exhibitions Gallery](#) (please note: it isn't possible to enter this gallery on Google Maps). This gallery usually hosts two to three exhibitions per year, either ones led by our own collections (e.g.: Rembrandt: Lightening the Darkness in 2017-18) or touring exhibitions from other museums, such as the 2019 show Viking: Rediscover the Legend, from the British Museum.

Colman Art Galleries: British Masters/Landscape and Nature

There are two Colman Art Galleries – [visit the British Masters gallery](#) or [take a look around the Landscape and Nature gallery](#).

The galleries feature the work of the Norwich School of painters, the first regional group of artists in England. The Norwich School began at the turn of the 19th century and continued throughout the century. Its artists painted Norwich and Norfolk scenes as well as portraits.

These works were a bequest from the Colman family (of mustard fame), but there's no room to display other artworks.

Boudica and the Romans Gallery

[Explore the Boudica and the Romans gallery](#). Significant objects are spotlighted below.

Snettisham Treasure

[View the Snettisham Treasure](#). The treasure includes complete and broken gold and silver torcs (neck-rings) as well as metal ingots, coins and jewellery. These items date back to 70BC, and may have been buried as a treasury for safety. The objects are shared with the British Museum.

Billingford lamella

[Take a look at the Billingford lamella](#). A lamella was a gold sheet inscribed with a prayer or a blessing then rolled up and worn as pendant. The Billingford lamella is one of only 70 gold ones found in the entire Roman empire.

After Boudica's rebellion, the Romans built a large town, Venta Icenorum (Marketplace of the Iceni), which is now Caistor St Edmund. The Romans brought writing to Britain. They used wax tablets, which you could write on with a metal stylus.

Fitch Room

[Have a look around the Fitch Room](#). Robert Fitch was an eminent antiquarian and local geologist. In 1891, he donated his collection to the museum and gave money to build a room complete with beautiful showcases to display objects from across his collection. Items include prehistoric flints, Roman and Saxon finds, geology, antique jewellery and metal and ivory collectibles.

Anglo-Saxon and Viking Gallery

[Explore the Anglo-Saxon and Viking Gallery](#) and then take a closer look at the items showcased below.

Spong Man

[View Spong Man](#). Early Anglo-Saxons cremated their dead, and this item is a lid from an Anglo-Saxon cremation pot. It's called Spong Man, as it was found in an Anglo-Saxon crematory at Spong Hill. It's around 1,500 years old. Finding three-dimensional figures from this time is very rare. It could be a portrait of the person cremated but the proportions aren't human so it might represent a god or perhaps even be a bit of fun by the maker.

Harford Farm brooch

[Take a look at the Harford Farm brooch](#). The brooch dates from around 610-650 AD, and was found in a grave at Harford Farm in Norfolk. It shows incredible craftsmanship, and also features a runic inscription, which reads 'Luda repaired the brooch'. This is a rare example of a craftsman signing his handiwork.

Bathild seal matrix

[View the Bathild seal matrix](#). This dates from around 650-680 AD and was part of a signet ring. It was used as a seal. One side depicts a face with the words 'BALdE hILDIS', which could refer to Balhild, an Anglo-Saxon woman sold into slavery who eventually married a Frankish king. The other side has erotic imagery and may have been used for private messages to a partner. [View the other side of the Bathild seal matrix](#).

Royal Norfolk Regiment Gallery

[Have a look at the Royal Norfolk Regiment displays](#). A significant object is highlighted below.

Victoria Cross

The Victoria Cross is the highest award in our honours system, given for gallantry in the face of the enemy. This is one of the first VCs not to be awarded posthumously (after the recipient has died). It was awarded to Major David Jamieson during World War II. An image of the VC along with other medals and Major Jamieson's service revolver is below.



Egyptian Gallery

[Have a look around the Egyptian Gallery](#). Two objects are described below.

Unknown mummy

[View the mummy](#). This mummy is of an unknown woman. The coffin is not her original coffin, which we can tell because it is the wrong size for her and the coffin inscriptions are about a man.

Ankh Hor

[View Ankh Hor](#). Ankh Hor's outer coffin is made of painted wood, with images showing the weighing of the heart after death to see if a person could enter Yaru, the afterlife. It was thought that this mummy was untouched but, when it was X-rayed in 2000, lots of modern metal pins and clips were seen.

There was a fashion in the Victorian period to unwrap mummies at parties.

Norfolk Museums Service is a partnership between Norfolk County Council and Norfolk's District Councils, funded through council tax, earned income and grants.

