

Unlocking the Collections Project

Project Overview



The museum is currently designed as reflective of a Victorian School. There is a classroom, a dormitory, and a Headmaster's Office. There is also an exhibition room, which has several enormous glass cabinets. It has been like this since the museum's inception, in 2000.



Many of the objects on display have never been accessioned into the collection, including the desks, which are on loan from another museum.



We would like to tell the unique story of the site, which was opened as a school in 1697. This would include redesigning the classroom as a 1697 classroom, with purpose-build benches. The Trustees' Room would be re-instated instead of the Headmaster's Office, and the glass cabinets in the exhibition room would be replaced with smaller cabinets, which are more suitable for our collection, which is largely made up of paper items such as the Headmaster's Log Books.



Our theme would be the stories of the boys, Masters, servants and wives who lived and worked at the school through the ages. The building actually housed three schools, which in itself tells a social history. This would be explored through the stories of three boys who came to each of the schools in 1697.

The current museum

- The classroom has a series of lift-up desks, many on loan from Ashby Museum. Some were sourced from a local car boot sale in 1999.
- Each desk is different.
- The museum is currently designed to reflect a Victorian school. This is the classroom. But the building itself is much older, and part of it still houses the free school, although the Foundation no longer has any responsibility for it, only for the upkeep of the building



The current museum

- This is Sally, our Museum Manager, working in the exhibition room. As you can see behind her, the exhibition cases are far too big for the collection they display. There is nothing in the collection that would fill these cabinets.



Aims

- Tell the unique story of the building, rather than a generalised overview that does not rely on content from the collection
- Increase audience participation by allowing space to develop a sense of ownership and investment in the project
- Renew the content of the museum, to give better access to the collection and archive



The proposed museum

The proposed museum

- Although the previous image was generated by AI, it does go some way towards explaining how the museum will be set out in future.
- The original benches are now panels in the Great Hall.
- We will commission new, smaller benches, but make sure we have interpretation panels that explain these benches are replicas
- The exhibition room currently displays a Headmaster's log book, a punishment book, and pictures of the school in times past.
- With new exhibition stands, we can display more books and documents, and even make panels closer to the height of a child so the museum becomes a little more accessible to children
- The statue in this picture would be a picture of the original, which is in the Great Hall. The picture could be projected on to the wall. It could be a film, so the "statue" could come to life and tell part of the story of the building.

Who will we work with?

- Volunteers – research, clear, clean, prepare, design, film, dress
- University students – make this project part of their coursework modules
- Community partners – research, clear, clean, prepare, design, dress. Each group (scouts, WI, etc) could take a stand in the exhibition room, and be responsible for its contents (with overview from museum staff)