

Media release
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NEW GALLERY DEDICATED TO COLLECTIONS CARE NOW OPEN AT THE BOWES MUSEUM.

A newly refurbished gallery dedicated to collections care has just opened at The Bowes Museum in response to visitor feedback expressing a desire for more "behind-the-scenes" access and insights into "object conservation."

Staff have worked diligently to bring this new gallery space to life, revealing the efforts and wider challenges of preserving the growing collection. Visitors to the County Durham museum can expect to see a selection of larger, rarely-seen items from the collection, ranging from unique furniture pieces to rare architectural fragments previously kept in storage.

This unique space will provide a new lens into museum processes, allowing visitors to see how objects are stored and learn about how they are cared for. Occasionally, curators and volunteers will be cleaning and conserving items in this space, preparing them for future displays and upcoming exhibitions. Visitors can observe the tools and techniques used and interact with staff to ask questions.

This project builds on the Museum's mission to improve access to its Designated collection, following the success of the *Curiosity Project*, funded by DCMS Wolfson, The Foyle Foundation and Friends of The Bowes Museum. Four new gallery spaces and collections stores were introduced with input from over 100 community members in April 2024 and with the addition of this new space, over 10% of the Museum's collection of over 58,000 objects are accessible for public viewing.

"As a charity, our visitors' support through admission, membership, and donations is vital to preserving the Designated collection, with around 19% of our income dedicated to the care of these objects," explained Vicky Sturrs, Director of Programming and Collections.

"The new gallery will greatly enhance access to the collection, making it more accessible for visitors to discover, learn and connect with items on display."

Talks and live demonstrations on conservation and best practice for collections care and handling will be held in this space as part of the Museum's events programming, providing new, inspiring experiences for visitors. You can keep updated with upcoming activity on the website: <https://thebowesmuseum.org.uk/exhibitions/objects-on-the-move/>.

The new second-floor gallery space is now open at The Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle, where visitors can learn how objects being stored, moved and cared for.

-ENDS-

Note to editors and picture desks:

Download a selection of high-resolution images of the new [Collections Care gallery](#), including photographs of Joe Kinsey, Collections Coordinator and Alia Cruz, Learning Manager cleaning a Doll's Bed dating back to 1885 made from Walnut in Ryhope, Sunderland. Please credit ©The Bowes Museum, County Durham. Claire Collinson Photography.

The Bowes Museum is a charity managing a Grade 1 listed accredited Museum and Grade 2 listed parkland in Barnard Castle. Founded by Joséphine & John Bowes 150+ years ago, this purpose-built Museum brings together an extraordinary, Designated collection of European fine and decorative art as a cultural resource for the people of Northern England, where today we celebrate artists, designers and makers.

The Bowes Museum receives funding from Durham County Council and, as a National Portfolio Organisation, receives support from Arts Council England. Arts Council England is the national development body for arts and culture across England, working to enrich people's lives. www.artscouncil.org.uk

The Bowes Museum is a member of the Discover Durham partnership of attractions, whose commitment is to promote Durham as an exciting and vibrant group travel destination and to provide the travel trade with a professional and knowledgeable service. discoverdurham.co.uk

Admission to The Bowes Museum is £16.00 for local members (residents of County Durham and Darlington), £18.00 for members (residents elsewhere), £19.00 for a day ticket, £20.90 for a day ticket including gift aid. Under 18s, full time students and carers are free.

As a registered charity (number 1079639) The Bowes Museum needs to generate more than half of its income each year to care for the historic collection, buildings and parkland. Your donations are vital to that work. Visit <https://thebowesmuseum.org.uk/support/> for more information.



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