



THAME MUSEUM WINS NATIONAL LOTTERY SUPPORT

Thame Museum is delighted to announce that it has received almost £30,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for an exciting project, relating to a unique collection of Elizabethan Wall Paintings on display in the museum. These were originally found in a merchant's house in the town but were installed in the museum prior to its opening in 2007. Thanks to National Lottery players, the project aims to raise the profile of the paintings, enable members of the community to find out more about their local heritage through workshop and research opportunities and provide improved interpretation for visitors. The project runs from late January to September 2017, with its completion and associated events providing a fitting celebration to mark the ten year anniversary of the official opening of Thame Museum.

Led by volunteers, Lindsey Weimers and Yvonne Maxwell, the project focuses on exploring what the Wall Paintings can tell us about social mobility and cultural change in Elizabethan Thame. A series of workshops and outreach programmes are planned to provide a better understanding of the significance of the paintings. There will be opportunities for research and training for volunteers to develop skills in conveying the story of the Wall Paintings. Improved interpretation will be developed, including the installation of interactive digital software, housed in a structure that will also enable greater accessibility to the information and artefacts on display. The completed installation will better inform visitors about the wall paintings and provide a new perspective on the social and economic developments of the period.

The Wall Paintings are significant to Thame because they help to tell us about the lifestyle and status of a merchant in the thriving Elizabethan market town of the time. The paintings decorated a private upstairs room and as such reflect the changing domestic culture underway, providing hints to the status and lifestyle of the merchant. The meaning of the images and wording they contain is elusive, and invites speculation.

Dr Kathryn Davies, Historic Buildings Consultant and Chartered Town planner, explains: *"Even if their meaning cannot be fully understood, trying to work out exactly what is being communicated in these paintings could be a valuable resource both for scholars nationally of the early modern period and for local people, especially children, because of their visual appeal, for learning about all aspects of life in early modern Thame."*

Commenting on the HLF award, David Dodds, Chairman of the Trustees said: *"We are delighted that this important project has received the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, without which it would be difficult to proceed. We are a small and relatively new museum, but with determined ambitions to record and articulate the history of our town for the*

present and future, residents and visitors. The building where the Wall Paintings were discovered, accidentally by a gas fitter, is adjacent to where Shakespeare once trod and alongside the route which Henry VIII took to Rycote Park. Our town is rich in history and this award will help us to explain it further.

"I pay tribute to the dedication and determination of the project leaders, Lindsey Weimers and Yvonne Maxwell, in progressing this important and exciting project".

Stuart McLeod, Head of HLF South East, said: *"We're delighted to support this project, which will shine a light on a significant part of the museum's collection. Thame is a quintessential English market town and, thanks to National Lottery players, the history of how trade has shaped the town and its residents throughout the ages will be made accessible through improved interpretation and great volunteer opportunities."*

NOTES TO EDITORS

ABOUT THAME MUSEUM

Thame Museum, situated in the old Magistrates Court, is a volunteer led and run organisation. It is a registered charity governed by a deed of trust. The day to day management and running of the museum is overseen by a management committee of 8 members representing the key museum functions. There are approximately 30 steward and duty managers who cover various roles in the museum during its opening times 4 days a week. The museum runs a range of activities such as temporary exhibitions, a programme of monthly talks, family events, outings and walks, and has links with local schools. Winning the funding this year is particularly significant as 2017 is the 10th anniversary of the opening of Thame Museum.

ABOUT THE HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND

Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. www.hlf.org.uk. Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #HLFsupported.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION IMAGES AND INTERVIEWS PLEASE CONTACT"

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