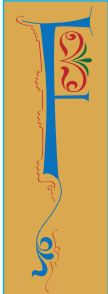




The Museum of Leathercraft: Hidden treasures revealed



For nearly forty years, Northampton in the United Kingdom has been sitting on buried treasure—that is treasure of the leather kind.

The Museum of Leathercraft, founded by the Leathergoods and Saddlers Manufacturers Association in 1946, has been held in store by Northampton Borough Council since 1977. It is unique in its purpose, to serve as the only museum dedicated to a global study and appreciation of the leather industry.

In May 2014, through the combined efforts of its trustees, the Worshipful Company of Leathersellers and the Heritage Lottery Fund, the museum received a £200,000 grant to breathe new life into it.

The project - 'The Museum of Leathercraft Goes Public' - is being supported for four years and serves as the foundation from which this internationally important collection will once again receive global recognition. With over 6,000 objects dating from 400,000BC (early tools to scrape hides) to the present, and a resource library of over 3,000 volumes, the challenge is a significant one that charts the evolution of

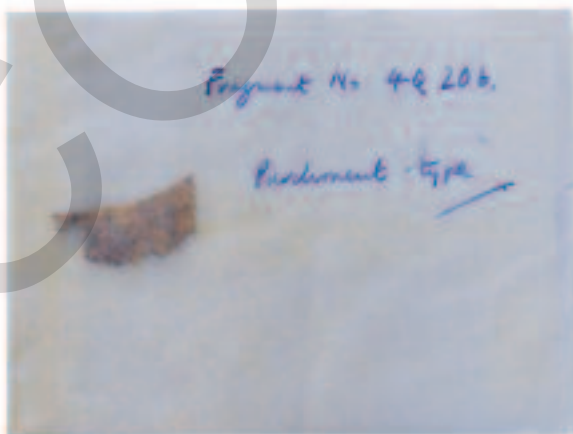
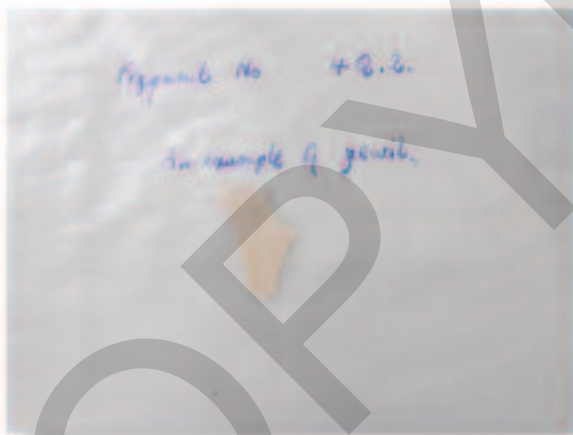
leathercraft from the dawn of modern man.

Philip Warner, museum curator, has been appointed to oversee this exciting project. At a recent private viewing of the work in progress, he said:

"I am delighted to be part of this challenge, the richness, vision and eclecticism of the Museum's founders is breathtaking. To serve as part of the team to bring them once more into public view is a real pleasure. The next step is to firmly establish the Museum as the global destination for the study and appreciation of this unique manufacture.

"We already have established links with China and Japan and are extremely well connected to the English leather industry. All the hard work has been done for me," he continued, "and I get to show off the wonderful treasures and ultimately find a long term home where all can view them. This project is just the beginning of the much bigger challenge to ensure the public and industry alike can learn and delight in our treasures."

Some of the many fine items from viewing the work in progress - some that have not been seen for 40 years - are shown in this article.



Fragments of the 'Dead Sea Scrolls' Qumran, Israel 408 BC – 318 AD.



Toby Jug,
English folk
art mid-19th
Century.



Above and right: Illuminated manuscript bound in brown tooled leather, Low countries c1500.



Left: Newton's terrestrial miniature 2" diameter globe, English 1812. In tooled and gilt red morocco leather case.



Below: Shield or Buckler of oak, covered with sheets of hide tooled in high relief. With coat of arms of the 'Malvezzi' family on reverse. Florentine early 16th Century.

NB: Images not to scale.



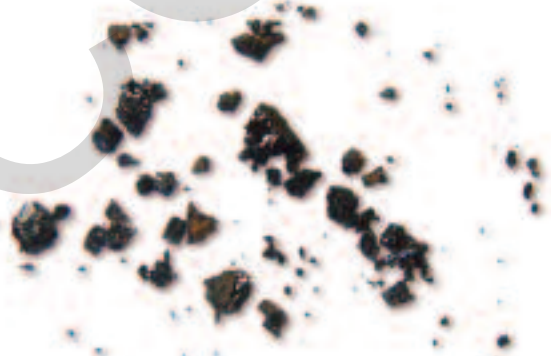
Above: Brown piece of leather. Listed as being a portion of a cap, from Thebes, in the catalogue of the Hilton-Price Collection. Of Nubian type. Around c1500 BC.

Fan of paper covered with calf skin painted in a neo-classical design. Ivory sticks with gilt and painted decoration. French late 18th Century.



Above: Quilted side-saddle made for Queen Victoria by Gordon & Co. First used by her on 18th August 1856.

Above: Leather panel, gilded and stamped decoration, possibly North African, 18th Century.



Fragments of carbonised leather embossed with the headdress of the Goddess 'Mut'. From the tomb of Tu-anh-Amun. Egyptian, c1353 BC.



Below: Shoe (portion) – of red goatskin with traces of gold ornamentation. Egyptian, Ptolemaic period (300-30 BC).