

Kettering Hockey Club look to the past at Local Treasures exhibition

Team meet Kettering's Roman Hockey Player at Manor House Museum

Players from Kettering Hockey Club visited Kettering's Manor House Museum's this week to see a precious archaeological artefact of a Roman hockey player, believed to be from 43AD-410 AD. The object, which was discovered in Kettering, is currently on loan from the British Museum as part of the Local Treasures exhibition.

Kettering Hockey Club brought along players from a selection of teams to show them how the sport has featured in local history. The club has recently won Kettering Borough and Northamptonshire's Club of the Year as well as England Hockey's National Club of the Year for their success on and off the pitch.

The Kettering Hockey Player is an intriguing figure depicted on a mould, which was used to apply decoration to pottery. It is the only known example from Roman Britain and forms part of the collection at the British Museum.

The Local Treasures exhibition, which runs until 12th January 2019, also displays a 1500-year-old necklace and a mysterious mirror that were originally discovered in Desborough. Alongside these three world-class objects are over 100 items from the Manor House Museum's own collection.

This exciting project is possible due to a successful bid to the Weston Loan Programme with Art Fund which resulted in a grant of £20,000. Created by the Garfield Weston Foundation and Art Fund, this fund supports the sharing of art and objects that are held in national collections with wider audiences.

Barry Coe, Vice Chairman of Kettering Hockey Club, said: *"Kettering HC are delighted to be able to help highlight the work of Manor House Museum and especially see how a Roman artefact can be linked with modern day activities. This was a great opportunity for our members, young and not so young, to visit Manor House Museum and see the great collection of works on display there."*

Cllr Scott Edwards, Kettering Borough Council's Portfolio Holder for Community and Leisure, said: *"This exhibition has been a major success, and I'd urge anyone who hasn't seen it yet to make sure they don't miss out. The British Museum loans are terrific. I was also really impressed by the items from our own collection – my congratulations to staff and volunteers who have made this happen and have inspired pride in Kettering's rich history. I would also like to thank the Garfield Weston Foundation and Art Fund for their support."*

Notes to Editors

Kettering's Manor House Museum closes on Saturday 22nd December at 4.30pm and reopens at 10am on Wednesday 2nd January 2019.

The Kettering Hockey Player

Mr Robert Loveday, the building inspector to the borough of Kettering, gave the mould to the British Museum. It was found in 1938, during building excavations on the estate now known as Walnut Crescent. Discovered among a thick deposit of burnt material and pottery sherds it has been suggested that it was perhaps part of the waste from a pottery kiln.

Made of clay, the mould is shaped to fit the curve of a pot and would have been used to apply a design to a larger piece of pottery. This method known as applied relief was popular in the making of Samian ware.

The figure in the mould appears to be playing some form of a game, involving a curved stick much like a modern-day hockey stick or golf club. Three balls are illustrated: one held in the player's left hand, another in the crook of their left arm and the third one flying through the air. There are also theories that it may be a Roman god.

Ball-playing was popular among the Romans and they enjoyed a variety of games including paganica, a form of golf, played with a bent stick and a feather stuffed leather ball. There was also field hockey, which actually predates the Romans and was played by the Egyptians as far back as 2500 BC.

In spite of this there are no images from Rome which depict hockey and references to it are scarce. The Kettering hockey player is not made from precious materials and it isn't an example of the finest craftsmanship. It isn't treasure in the traditional sense but it is unique for the small but important role it plays in telling the story of our past.

Kettering Hockey Club

Kettering Hockey Club's home is Kettering Sports Club, just off Northampton Road. We are the largest section of Kettering's biggest multi sports club where members can also play cricket, tennis, archery, rifle shooting and junior football. We have about 300 members ranging from 4 - 82!

You can find more about Kettering Hockey Club at www.ketteringhockeyclub.co.uk