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‘Cabinet of Curiosities’ – New exhibition reveals a weird & wonderful world of hidden treasures

You may be forgiven for thinking Cumbria’s Senhouse Roman Museum is just about the Romans, but a new exhibition launching next week, **Friday 4 September**, will throw the spotlight on a diverse range of hidden historical treasures spanning the centuries.

From an ancient Egyptian figurine to fragments of a World War Two bomb discovered in West Cumbria, the new ‘Cabinets of Curiosities’ display sees Museum bosses dipping into the archives to select a variety of unusual objects from the attraction’s reserve collections.

‘Cabinets of Curiosities’ – also traditionally known as ‘wonder rooms’ – are small and often eclectic collections of rare and extraordinary objects which tell little-known stories about the wonders and oddities of the world around us.

The new exhibition at Senhouse Roman Museum will run from 4 September right through until Christmas, with a small number of additional artefacts also being revealed online.

Senhouse Roman Museum Manager, Jane Laskey, says: *“Cabinets of Curiosities can be seen at some of the most largest and most renowned Museums across the world and are synonymous with unusual objects which not only delight and surprise, but also hold up a mirror to the world as we know it! This exhibition is our take on some of the quirkiest objects we have collected over the years and we hope visitors will make some interesting discoveries.*

She adds, “It’s great timing as we are also restarting our volunteer-led guides of our Roman fort, which actually pre-dates Hadrian’s Wall. Running on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, the

tours will offer an insight into an unusually large Roman civilian settlement here in Cumbria and adds another dimension to our rich local history.”

A snapshot of the curiosities on display includes:

- An **Egyptian ‘Shabti’ (or figurine)** used in an ancient Egyptian tomb. This is part of a small Egyptian collection at Senhouse Roman Museum, discovered at a vicarage in the village of Isel near Bassenthwaite.
- **Fragments of a World War Two bomb** dropped over the Solway Firth and Maryport, which were recovered the following day and kept by a local family.
- **The Senhouse Achievement of Arms**, which was commissioned in 1726 from a single piece of red sandstone and marks the connections between the Senhouse family (who founded the Museum’s Roman collection) and other families in West Cumbria.
- **Iron nails from a Roman legionary fortress** (or Inchtuthil) built almost 2000 years ago across the border in Scotland.



The majority of the Senhouse Roman Museum is open daily from 11am to 5pm. Entry to the Museum should be [pre-booked online](#) and visitors will be allocated a timed slot to explore. Tours of the fort must also be booked in advance.

A one-way system is in place, with visitors asked to wear facemasks and respect the 2-metre social distancing rule.

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Notes to Editors:

Hi-res image attached: The Senhouse Achievement of Arms.

For media enquiries, hi-res images and interviews, please contact:
Heather Sewell, pressoffice@cumbriatourism.org / 07795 487003.

Senhouse Roman Museum has an internationally significant collection on the frontier of the Roman Empire. Dramatically sited on cliffs overlooking the Solway Firth, this award-winning museum in Maryport, Cumbria, is next to a Roman fort probably founded in the first century AD and rebuilt during the reign of the emperor Hadrian. Many of the objects on display originally come from the fort and Roman settlement around it. The museum displays the largest group of Roman military altar stones and inscriptions from any site in Britain, alongside unique examples of Romano-British religious sculpture. This collection is the oldest in the country and was begun by the Senhouse family in the 1570s.

www.senhousemuseum.co.uk / info@senhousemuseum.co.uk / 01900 816168.