

## Collections blog

### Collections Documentation Assistant – A Belated Introduction



Posted by Penelope Lovesy at 01/07/2021 13:44:33



Hi everyone! Apologies for the late introduction. My name is Joe and I recently joined the museum's collections team as Documentation Assistant. I'll be working on a range of projects over the next year and a half, with the goal of making sure that collection items have good quality records, are well cared for and, importantly, that we know where they are!

Before coming to Poole, I worked for the National Trust at a small property in Oxfordshire called Nuffield Place. Nuffield Place is the former home of William Morris (not that one!), the founder of Morris Motors. Coming straight from a historic house to a museum has been an interesting change. On the plus side I won't miss the endless hoovering but unfortunately there will be far fewer chances to mooch cake from the tea-room...

In terms of collections there are some similarities. I feel like Lady Nuffield's many, many expansive dinner services and tea sets have prepared me for working with Poole Pottery! But in other areas I have a lot to learn. The Nuffields were not great art lovers, so Poole's fantastic collection of fine art is a new challenge for me. I'll be working hard to make sure I'm not confusing my watercolours with my ink washes, or pastels with pointillism!

Since starting at the end of January I've been working on a few different areas of the collection with the aim of improving their documentation and storage (the clue was in the job title I guess!). Going through the museum's photograph collection has helped my understanding of Poole geography and revealed that we have plenty more photographs to catalogue. Tidying the

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ceramics store has yielded us an excellent selection of empty boxes for re-use and many kilograms of silica gel has been added to boxes of archaeological material to control humidity levels. A particular highlight has been working with Gary to carefully check the condition of any human remains in the collection and looking for ways to store them more respectfully.

Over the next few weeks, myself and a new volunteer will be working on cataloguing as much of the archaeological material from the Swash Channel Wreck material in the stores as we can. For each object we'll check its condition, photograph it, cross reference it with its find number before giving it a unique museum catalogue number and finally labelling it with its brand-new number!

Working this closely with a maritime archaeology collection is a real dream come true and there is a wide range of material including some incredible finds that haven't yet been on public display. Personal objects such as pewter flagons, ships equipment like lead sounding weights and even animal bones and leather have all survived hundreds of years on the seabed. You can see explore more about many of these remarkable artefacts at the BU Maritime Archaeology website [here](#) and check out some fantastic 3D models they've produced for the best finds.

It's hard to believe it's already coming up to 6 months since I started. The time has been flying by and it's fantastic to finally see people back in the museum - this has really felt like the missing piece over the last few months. It feels like an exciting time to be joining the museum with the proposed redevelopment coming up and I can't wait to play my part however I can!

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