

We are open!

Years of hard work finally paid off and Saxmundham Museum opened to the public for the first time at 10.00am on Friday 16 April. We were particularly delighted to receive our first visitor at 10.02, followed by a steady stream of others.

The official opening ceremony had been performed the previous evening by Peter Purves, who drew the curtains on a commemorative plaque in our small replica of Saxmundham's former cinema, The Playhouse. In the speech of welcome, Richard Crisp announced that we had a grant to complete our Courtyard and Cinema Display.

All our rooms are open and we have many more items than we can display at present. Some of these will be used at special exhibitions in the future or be rotated with items currently on show.

Opening hours

We are open on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10.00am to 4.00pm, until 29 September. Admission is free.

The entrance

The first exhibit to catch the eye is our train set in the window, running past a model of Saxmundham Station as it used to be. Once through the front door of the museum you will find our shop, wall displays and a corner display featuring the recording of the radio show "Have a Go" with Wilfred Pickles, made in Saxmundham in December 1957.

The Green Room

This is our largest display area, featuring accounts of local personalities from the past, such as Henry Bright the painter, Thomas Thurlow the sculptor and John Shipp, the adventurous real-life model for the 'Sharpe' stories, which starred Sean Bean in the television series.

Also in this first room is a time-line produced by pupils of Saxmundham Middle School and an audio-visual feature created by pupils of Kelsale School, on changes to Kelsale and Saxmundham over the years.

An impressive scale model of Saxmundham windmill is a major feature of this room.

The Cinema

In this small replica of The Playhouse, once situated in Church Street, there is a video playing a film of old Saxmundham. Some old projection equipment is on display. We are very grateful to representatives of Leiston Film Theatre for their help with the cinema. and to Mr Henry Foster, who was the manager for many years.

The Shops

Beyond the cinema is the Courtyard. Here are four recreated shops of the past including H. B. Crisp (printers and stationers), Bill Clements (gentlemen's outfitters) and G. Easey and Son (saddlers). Children from Saxmundham Primary School have produced rubbings of old tools, which are displayed here, and there is a diorama of Saxmundham High Street in about 1850.

The Costume Room

This was created by Pat Sears, who presented a very impressive display of cross-stitch here last year, and contains dolls in period costume as well as dresses and suits owned by Barbara Cartland, for whom Pat was dressmaker.

Help!

We need more stewards. If you can help out for three hours, once or twice a month, please contact Penny Ling on 01728 603402

And of course we are always very pleased to receive donations and other offers of help.