

Treasures from the Earth

The touring exhibition *Treasures from the Earth* opened at Helston Museum on 3rd August, the third of its four venues in Cornwall. The exhibition showcases the archaeology of south west England through a range of artefacts found in the region. At each venue it also stars finds from local sites and the story behind them, often on show to the public for the first time.

Helston Museum has chosen to feature the excavations at Boden Vean carried out by the Meneage Archaeological Group and the Cornwall Archaeological Society in 2008. The diggers were hoping to find more pieces from a massive Trevisker ware vessel first uncovered in 2003, which has turned out to be the largest pot of this type ever found in Cornwall.

Visitors to Helston Museum can see a cut out of this pot, which stands nearly 1 metre high! Also on show are a copper alloy knife and several pieces of other massively built Trevisker ware pottery. Photos of the volunteer archaeologists at work on the site capture the range of tasks that make up an archaeological excavation. Staff from the Royal Cornwall Museum and the Portable Antiquities Scheme provided additional expertise.

‘One of the aims of the exhibition is to inspire people to get involved in local archaeology by demonstrating that it is about more than just getting cold and wet down a muddy hole,’ said exhibition manager Vicky Dawson. ‘The exhibition activities give visitors hands on experience of sorting finds, plotting sites on aerial photographs, drawing an excavated skeleton and identifying Roman coins.’

The exhibition was the idea of the curators of archaeology at the Royal Cornwall Museum, Plymouth City Museum & Art Gallery and the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter. They secured funding for it from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Renaissance in the Regions. During its year long tour of Devon in 2009 and of Somerset in 2010 it was seen by nearly 15,000 people, in nine different venues.

The move to Cornwall in February 2011 marked another chapter in the exhibition's story. Penlee House Gallery & Museum in Penzance secured the loan of the beautiful gold lunula from Gwithian from the British Museum and Lawrence House Museum in Launceston borrowed a rare 13th Century Middle Eastern enamelled glass vessel found at Launceston Castle from the Victoria & Albert Museum. These loans certainly ticked the exhibition's aim of bringing archaeological material back to its original find spot.

The exhibition is at Helston Museum until 29th November 2011. The museum is open all year, Monday to Saturday 10 to 1. During the summer holiday and autumn half term it is open until 4 in the afternoon on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. From Helston the exhibition travels to the Castle Heritage Centre in Bude.

END

For more information contact:

Vicky Dawson, project manager, *Treasures from the Earth*
01823 274525, vickym@dawsonheritage.co.uk

Helton Museum can be contacted on 01326 564027, Janet Spargo, Museum Manager
helston.museum@cornwall.gov.uk