HAILES ABBEY MUSEUM ENGLISH HERITAGE PLOWDEN & SMITH LTD

EXHIBITIONS BY PLOWDEN & SMITH

Our ability to interpret ambitious design ideas into cost-effective and innovative display solutions can be found in museums and heritage sites around the world.

We work with museum curators, exhibition designers, and leading showcase manufacturers on projects that range in size from the ten new galleries at the National Museum of Scotland (Museum + Heritage Best Permanent Exhibition 2017), to mounting a single piece for an iconic luxury brand like Berry Bros. & Rudd.

Every one of our mounts is custom-made for the object using the finest

conservation-grade materials. We work with steel and stainless steel, brass, acrylic, resin, wood, glass and Corian to create mounts that display the object to best effect. Finishing, including powder-coating, patinating, brushing, polishing or spray-painting the surface, completes the look.

Pre and post-exhibition, we can provide detailed condition reports and advise on collection care and environmental monitoring. Should any object be damaged in transit, our experts are on hand to carry out high-quality restoration treatment.

Our experience displaying objects that range from tiny Roman coins to racing cars ensures that everything we mount is safe, secure and shown to best advantage.

HAILES ABBEY MUSEUM

ENGLISH HERITAGE

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WE WERE DELIGHTED WITH THE WORK OF KEVIN,

ADAM AND THE TEAM. THE MOUNTS THEY

PRODUCED REALLY COMPLEMENTED THE DESIGN.

IT WAS REALLY HELPFUL HAVING THEM ON SITE

WITH US THROUGHOUT THE INSTALLATION

PERIOD, MEANING THAT THEY COULD RESPOND TO

OUR CHANGING IDEAS

Dr Ian Leins, Curator of Archaeological Collections (West)

M entioned in The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer, Hailes Abbey was one of England's most important monasteries and a key pilgrimage site after it acquired a phial of Holy Blood in the 1270s.

One of the challenges facing a visitor to Hailes
Abbey is the fact that the site was systematically
demolished during the Suppression of the
Monasteries, meaning that little survives above
ground level, except for the cloister area. The
Museum at Hailes Abbey was built in 1928, in
part to enable visitors to appreciate the scale and
splendour of the building.

A number of the exhibits, such as a magnificent 13th Century ceiling boss, were large and heavy, typically weighing between 100kg and 300kg. We were conscious of the fact that these artefacts were not only liable to crack under their own weight if not

ADAM CHALLENGED OUR IDEAS FOR THIS

DISPLAY AND PRODUCED A REALLY

BEAUTIFUL, CLEVER BESPOKE MOUNT

Dr Ian Leins

Curator





handled correctly, but that they were going to be mounted on (and in some cases 600mm out from) a relatively unstable historic wall.

To display these elegantly and securely, we designed a series of strong but unobtrusive support shelves and weight bearing plinths, fabricated in heavy duty steel and finished in the same dark grey as the lining of the display cases allowing the mounts to seemingly disappear. We then used resin fixings going some 200mm into the wall to safely secure them.

 ${f M}$ ounting also played a crucial role in bringing

to life the museum's collection of small, everyday objects. Hailes Abbey can boast having one of the earliest surviving examples of medieval spectacles from anywhere in the world, dating to the late 14th or early 15th Century. Only a fragment of the bone spectacles frame survives and imaginative mounting was needed to give the piece immediate visual impact.

O ne of the larger displays was a 14th Century tomb canopy. The curator and museum team wanted their display to reference an example in nearby Tewekesbury Abbey, so as to give an indication of what the original tomb may have looked like.







In order to do this, we designed a multipart support frame with brackets for the individual pieces. The result was an easy to interpret display, offering an indicative view of how the canopy would have appeared in the medieval abbey.

As a mounting and installation project, Hailes
Abbey Museum used our wide skills range. Working
with large, heavy stone fragments and crumbly
stucco figures showed our breadth of experience
and the extent of our investment in tools and
equipment to successfully complete these
contrasting challenges.







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