

Mount making at Folkestone Museum Photo Folkestone Museum and Matt Rowe

Folkestone Museum will open its doors to the public for the first time this weekend, thanks to money raised by National Lottery players.

Based in Folkestone Town Hall, the new museum brings together the town’s diverse collections, providing a dedicated space to preserve and share Folkestone’s history for future generations.

The museum is part of the 'Folkestone’s HEART' project, which was awarded £1.95million by HLF to restore the Grade II listed Hall and create a new community hub.

The National Lottery funding will also support an events programme over the next three years to involve local people and volunteers with their rich, local heritage.

From ‘Fashionable Folkestone’ to Anglo-Saxon skeletons

The new museum focuses on five main themes, exploring the development of Folkestone and its residents through the centuries. ‘Fashionable Folkestone’ tracks the town’s journey from sleepy fishing village to thriving seaside resort, while ‘Frontline’ deals with the town’s involvement in conflict, particularly the First and Second World Wars.

The ‘Ancient’ and ‘Natural’ sections reveal local archaeological discoveries, including the remains of a Roman Villa unearthed at East Wear Bay, dinosaur bones and fossils. Visitors can also discover the history of ‘Aefre’ the Anglo-Saxon skeleton through an interactive touch screen.

‘Maritime’ documents Folkestone’s connection to the sea, recounting stories of shipwrecks, smuggling, and local fishing heritage.

For the first time in over 25 years, the Master Collection will also be on display in a new temporary exhibition. The collection is made up of engravings and drawings from Italian and Spanish Old Masters, including an unattributed chalk and charcoal drawing that may never have been displayed since the collection was formed in the 1800s.

The new museum is open six days a week with free admission. To find out more, visit the museum’s website.