Wooden underworld: behind the scenes with



Wooden Roman combs now on display at Vindolanda Vindolanda Trust

A collection of wooden Roman artefacts has gone on display at Vindolanda, thanks to National Lottery players and some very dedicated volunteers.

Best known as the discovery place of Britain’s oldest surviving handwritten documents, Vindolanda’s oxygen-free archaeological make-up has resulted in the preservation of organic materials which usually doesn’t survive the test of time.

Now, many of those surviving artefacts are on display for the first time at the Wooden Underworld gallery.

[quote=Lesley Laws, Vindolanda volunteer] "I am a National Lottery player and to think I personally, in a small way, contributed to the creation of this gallery is so rewarding.” [/quote]

Behind the scenes

Veteran Vindolanda volunteers Pat Hirst, Lesley Laws and John Pearson share their thoughts on the National Lottery funded project and the new gallery.

Pat: “From the outset it has been educational and exciting, and to see the realisation of the planning and attention to detail within the gallery was extremely rewarding.”

Lesley: “It has been such a diverse project to be involved with, from engaging with specialists who uncover the science behind the wood, to seeing objects which volunteers have uncovered come through the conservation process and look as good as new. Remarkable for wood which is almost 2,000 years old.”

John: “As volunteers, we are in a privileged position as we get to see items in the collection which are not on public display. To see so many of these items come out of storage and be available for the public to see and enjoy is very special.”

An impossible question!

The volunteers were asked about their favourite part of the galley.

Pat “That is actually impossible to answer.”

John “You can’t single out one part of the exhibition from another because it all works together to tell you the story of the objects you are looking at. What comes across is that there are no gimmicks in the gallery, history is not dumbed down, and you leave feeling you have gained in your understanding of the past.”

Lesley “The use of technology and the presentation of the artefacts is the highlight for me. I am a National Lottery player and to think I personally in a small way contributed to the creation of this gallery is so rewarding.”

Pat added: “Vindolanda is a site that is living, a place which brings you so close to the Romans that lived here. The new gallery is such a wonderful addition to the museum and I am delighted to have been a part of making that happen. I too am a National Lottery player and this is absolutely money well spent, it is permanent exhibition for not only us but for future generations to enjoy.”

Vindolanda’s Wooden Underworld opens to the public on Friday 30 April. Find out more on the Vindolanda Trust’s website.



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Vindolanda wooden collection to go on display