

# Museums – not stuffy but fun!

**Go on an archaeological dig, see a blacksmith making beautiful items or discover a wonderland of glistening shells. You can do all this and much more, mostly for free, in East Herts' museums.**

There's a wealth of tradition to be found as well as lots of hands on activities and exciting programmes for children during school holidays.

In the past 10 years East Herts Council has helped the museums attract nearly £2.5million from the Heritage Lottery Fund to transform them into modern, fun and educational places that are fully accessible too. The council has itself given nearly £3million to the museums and Rhodes Arts Complex.

**With so much going on, what better time to visit a museum in our district.**

Joseph Morris examines a fossil at Hertford Museum's Fantastic Fossils and Marvellous Minerals event.

## Bishop's Stortford Museum and Rhodes Arts Complex

Here you can find out about Bishop's Stortford's most famous son – Victorian empire builder Cecil Rhodes.

Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, was named after him and you'll discover a diverse collection, telling stories of 19th century Southern Africa and the intertwined history of Bishop's Stortford, Sawbridgeworth and surrounding villages. Why not come and check out the museum's modern galleries with interactive displays?

East Herts Council invested more than £2 million in Rhodes from 2002-05 to turn it into a venue fit for the 21st century.

The gallery has a changing programme — at the moment it's showing "Colour in the Landscape" by Julian Boulter. He's a natural landscape artist portraying some of the UK's most beautiful views. Until April 4.

The arts complex has a regular programme of theatre, music and comedy so come along and be entertained.

1-3 South Road, Bishop's Stortford  
Tel: 01279 651746  
[www.rhodesbishopsstortford.org.uk](http://www.rhodesbishopsstortford.org.uk)

**Open:** Mon-Fri 10am-5pm, last entry 4pm  
Saturday: 10am-4pm, last entry 3pm

**Admission:** Free



## Datchworth Museum

This small, village museum is housed in what was formerly the blacksmith's workshop. The bulk of the collection is from the earliest part of the 19th century, up to and including the last war. There are also some prehistoric, Roman and mediaeval artefacts, the majority of which were donated by Datchworth residents.

9a Datchworth Green, Datchworth  
March-Nov, third Sunday each month,  
2pm-4.30pm  
Telephone: 01438 813477

**Admission:** Free

Donations welcome.



## Much Hadham Forge Museum

For those who enjoy a hands on experience, blacksmith Richard Maynard makes beautiful items, both useful and decorative, in the fully functioning workshop, giving visitors a real flavour of 17th century village life. Visit his website at [www.richmaynard.carbonmade.com](http://www.richmaynard.carbonmade.com) to see some great examples.

For the art connoisseur, there are 16th century wall paintings. There's never been a better time to visit as the Forge has recently had a cash injection of £342,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The enhanced museum is set to reopen to the public on April 4 and will include a new local history gallery, a temporary exhibition programme and a café.



Richard Maynard

High Street, Much Hadham  
Tel: 01279 843301

**Open:** Apr-Dec  
Fri-Sun and Bank Holiday Mons  
11am - 5pm, dusk in winter months.

**Admission:** £3.50 adults, £1.50 children and £2.50 concessions, Family ticket £7.

## Hertford Museum

This gem of a museum in the centre of Hertford has been awarded £985,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund making an exciting new refurbishment possible. Before it could apply for the grant, the museum had to raise £90,000 itself — half of which came from East Herts Council. We've since provided a further £55,000.

Work began this March and the museum will reopen with a fresh new look in Spring 2010. You'll be able to find out all about the history of the county town of Hertfordshire with new and exciting displays to inspire all ages.

To get your children and their school interested, there'll be a new learning officer on hand to guide them in the right direction, and with such a rich heritage there's plenty to discover.

The museum is closed while the work is going on and in the meantime, there are lots of events and activities taking place at venues around Hertford. These include tours of the town, behind the scenes tours and children's activities in school holidays.

18 Bull Plain, Hertford  
Tel: 01992 582686  
[www.hertfordmuseum.org](http://www.hertfordmuseum.org)

**Closed for redevelopment.**  
Check the website for details of activities and events during the closure.

## Ware Museum

You can soak up the wartime atmosphere in a World War Two bunker at Ware Museum and get a fascinating insight into the history of this mediaeval town, from prehistoric up to

World War Two.

The bunker has an interactive area where young visitors can learn about the blitz, dress up in clothes of the era and feel what it was like to be an evacuee. Visitors can hear recordings from people who

lived through the war.

And if your kids have ever dreamed of going on an archaeological dig, they'll find one at the museum.

The museum is volunteer run and has a changing programme of exhibitions and children's activities during school holidays.

The Priory Lodge, 89 High Street  
Tel: 01920 487848  
[www.waremuseum.org.uk](http://www.waremuseum.org.uk)

**Open:** Apr-Sep, Tues, Thurs, Sat,  
11am-5pm, Sun 2-5pm  
Oct-Mar, Tues, Thu, Sat, 11am-4pm,  
Sun 2pm-4pm

**Admission:** Free



## Scott's Grotto

One of the district's most unusual attractions... this underground grotto was built of six intricate chambers, adorned with thousands of flints, fossils, minerals and shells. It was built in the 1760s by John Scott, a Quaker poet. The grotto is surrounded by a picturesque garden with an 18th century summerhouse.

Replacement shells were gathered from as far afield as Japan when East Herts Council

and The Ware Society restored the grotto in 1990.  
Scotts Road, Ware  
[www.eastherts.gov.uk/grotto](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/grotto)  
Tel: 01920 464131

**Open:** Apr-Sep, Sats and  
Bank Holiday Mons  
2pm-4.30pm

**Admission:** Free  
Suggested donation £1

