

**U DX6                      Items donated by Thomas Sheppard of Hull                      c.1660-1932**

**Biographical Background:**

Thomas Sheppard was born on the 2nd October 1876 in South Ferriby, North Lincolnshire. One of ten children, both of his parents were teachers, he was a regular visitor to the museum of the Literary and Philosophical Society. Sheppard seems to have developed an interest in geology at an early age. His uncle, Thomas Havercroft was a local collector and taught Sheppard all he knew about collecting. In later years Havercroft helped begin the Municipal Museum's archaeology collection.

Sheppard was only educated to elementary level and spent his last year as a pupil teacher. At the age of thirteen he became a clerk with the North Eastern Railway and later worked in the company's Dock Offices. Sheppard's work for the North Eastern Railway entitled him to free rail travel throughout East Yorkshire, giving him the opportunity to visit sites of geological interest across the region.

As an eighteen year old Sheppard wrote a series of newspaper articles, subsequently re-published in 1903 under the title, 'Geological Rambles in East Yorkshire'. Sheppard also attended courses at the Natural History Museum in London and gained certificates in a wide range of natural history subjects.

Sheppard was a member of numerous scientific societies and clubs and it is through these that he met John Robert Mortimer, a Driffield antiquary, who introduced Sheppard to prehistoric archaeology. Sheppard spent many afternoons at Mortimer's Museum in Driffield and in 1900 he produced 'Catalogue of the Mortimer Museum at Driffield'.

During the late 1890's the future of Hull Literary and Philosophical Society's Museum was in jeopardy. Responsibility for the collections was eventually transferred to Hull Corporation in 1900 and Sheppard wrote to the Council urging them to appoint a curator.

Despite being only twenty-four years old and with little museum experience he was appointed curator on 15th January 1901 with a salary of one hundred and fifty pounds a year. Talking about his appointment Sheppard said "I was instructed to come to the museum at ten o' clock each morning, smoke my cigar...leave at four o'clock and if anybody wanted any information to give it to them, and if any gifts were made, to accept, but I had to incur no expense".

However, it was made clear to Sheppard that the only reason the museum was there was to gain an art gallery. The first thing that Sheppard did was to close the museum for eighteen months and had it totally refurbished. He abolished admission charges when the museum re-opened on 2nd June 1902 and thereafter the museum never had fewer than 2000 visitors per week. He opened the museum two evenings a week between April and October and in 1908 opened the museum on Sunday afternoons.

During the next forty years Sheppard devoted his life to Hull's museums (he was awarded the title of Director of Museums in 1926) and by the time he retired in 1941 he was responsible for the opening of eight different museums

A workaholic, alcoholic with a weak heart, Sheppard's health declined during the 1930's. His retirement in 1941 was marred by the destruction of many of his museums and collections during the bombings of the Second World War. Sheppard died at his home on the 18th February in 1945.

**Custodial history:**

Donated by Thomas Sheppard, Hull, 10 Nov 1932 and 9 Jun 1939

**Description:**

Miscellaneous items donated by Thomas Sheppard including an incomplete manuscript of 'Analecta Eboracensia' by (Sir) Thomas Widdrington (c1660) and notes and sketches relating to armorial badges published in 1932 as 'Winestead and its Lords'.

**Extent:** 3 items

**Related material:**

Papers of Colonel Rupert Alec-Smith and Family of Winestead [Ref U DAS]

**Access conditions:**

Access will be granted to any accredited reader

U DX6/1	Notebook of place names in Driffield parish List of place names in the parish, with an early book plate for the University College of Hull 1 volume	1891
U DX6/2	Manuscript of first half of 'Analecta Eboracensia' by (Sir) Thomas Widdrington. 'Analecta eboracensia; some remaynes of the ancient city of York' was edited by Rev Caesar Caine and published in 1897 1 item	c.1660
U DX6/3	Manuscript notes of Rev. Norman Miller, used in writing 'Winestead and its Lords' (published 1932) with notes and sketches of armorial badges. Also includes printed handbill 'The real character of Bully Johnston' (clerk at Winestead, Holderness); article on 'The Leager: Winestead' by Rev Miller published in 1898 and reprinted from Transactions of the Antiquarian Society and an article on 'St German's Winestead' by Temple Moore. 1 file	1894-c1932