

OBJECT OF THE MONTH FEBRUARY 2023

THE HEPINGTON BELL



A monument to the folly of too much collecting?

We begin our 2023 season with a fascinating object currently on loan to the museum.

The Heppington Bell is cast entirely from ancient Roman bronze and silver coins. The coins belonged to 18th century Kentish antiquarian and clergyman, Bryan Faussett and is made from duplicate coins and illegible pieces from his collection of over 5000 coins. Made in 1766 and weighing 70kg the Latin inscription on the bell reads: *'Hear what Roman antiquity says to you through Roman bronze'*.

The bell was found and retrieved for the museum by Christopher Gibbs, a distinguished antiquarian and brother of our past President Elizabeth Fleming. He gave it to her saying “it ought to be returned to Kent, the place of its birth.”

Visit the museum to view the bell and learn more about the story of Bryan Faussett. Alongside coins and pottery, his collection also included over 400 brooches and jewels, some of which are now held in the World Museum in Liverpool. He also researched all the churches in his local area, noting all their monuments and artefacts, including the bells. He was an expert in heraldry and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. Descendants of the Faussett family still live in the Eden Valley.



