

Behind the Scenes Collections Store Tour Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse



Behind the Scenes Collections Store Tour

Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse looks after over 55, 000 objects. We keep all of our collections that aren't on display safely in stores. Which store would you like to open?

- [Store 1 Furniture and Paintings](#)
- [Store 2 Small Objects](#)
- [Store 3 Textiles](#)
- [Store 4 Large Objects](#)
- [Library](#)
- [Finish my tour](#)

Store 1

What would you like to find out about?

- [Furniture](#)
- [Paintings](#)
- [Woodworm](#)



Store 2

What would you like to find out about?

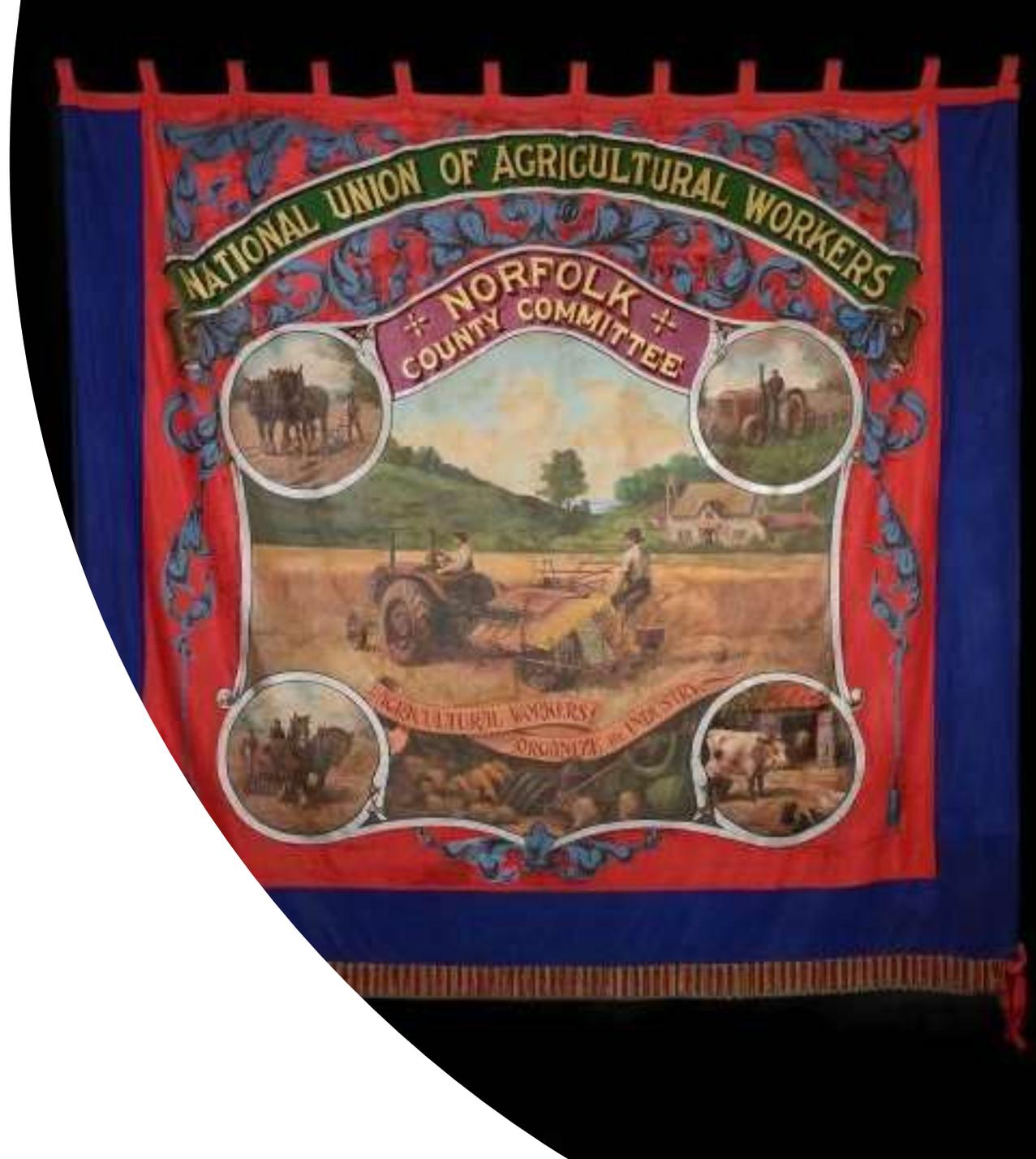
- [Rag rugs](#)
- [Workhouse boot](#)
- [Open a box](#)
- [Barcodes](#)



Store 3

What would you like to find out about?

- [Rolled textiles](#)
- [What is in the wardrobe?](#)
- [Measuring temperature and humidity](#)
- [Open a textile box](#)



Store 4

What would you like to find out about?

- [Woodworm](#)
- [Bats](#)
- [Tools](#)



Library

What would you like to find out about?

- [printed ephemera](#)
- [photographs](#)
- [computer database](#)
- [banners](#)
- [map](#)





Furniture

The museum collects vernacular (everyday) furniture and has lots of workhouse and school items as well as a significant number of local Mendlesham chairs like the one pictured.

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Paintings

Our painting collection is focused on naive art that records Norfolk's rural life. This painting by an unknown artist shows a linen manufacturer's cart.

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Woodworm

Woodworm (or furniture beetle) has been a problem before in Store 1. We store objects standing on black foam so we can spot tell tale frass (woodworm poo) and treat objects before they are eaten. We freeze wooden objects to kill the worm and their eggs.

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Rag rugs

Rag rugs are made from small scraps of old material. This example includes lots of suit fabric and would have been very hard wearing.

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Workhouse boot

This leather boot was found beneath the schoolroom floor in 2019 during repairs. We think it was put there when the floor was replaced in the 1860s, perhaps to bring good luck. This is quite a posh lady's boot - maybe it belonged to the school mistress?

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Open a box

A box keeps museum objects safe. They are packed securely in acid free tissue and packed so they can be seen in layers. The boxes themselves are also acid-free cardboard with brass staples so they can't damage the fragile, old objects. Smaller objects can then be placed in seal-able bags so they don't get lost in the box.

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Barcodes

We use barcodes just like supermarkets do to identify boxes and also shelf locations. If we ever have to move a box we can use the scanner to beep the box barcode and then the new shelf location and it can then automatically update the computer database.

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Rolled textiles

Large flat textiles like this banner are stored rolled like sausages in Tyvec (an inert material used in roofs) around a plastic drainpipe. The oil painted silk is very delicate. The oil in the paint often destroys the delicate silk fabric over time. They are very heavy and difficult to display.

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What's in the wardrobe?

In the wardrobe we store clothes that are too bulky to fit into boxes, including our significant collection of agricultural workers' smocks.

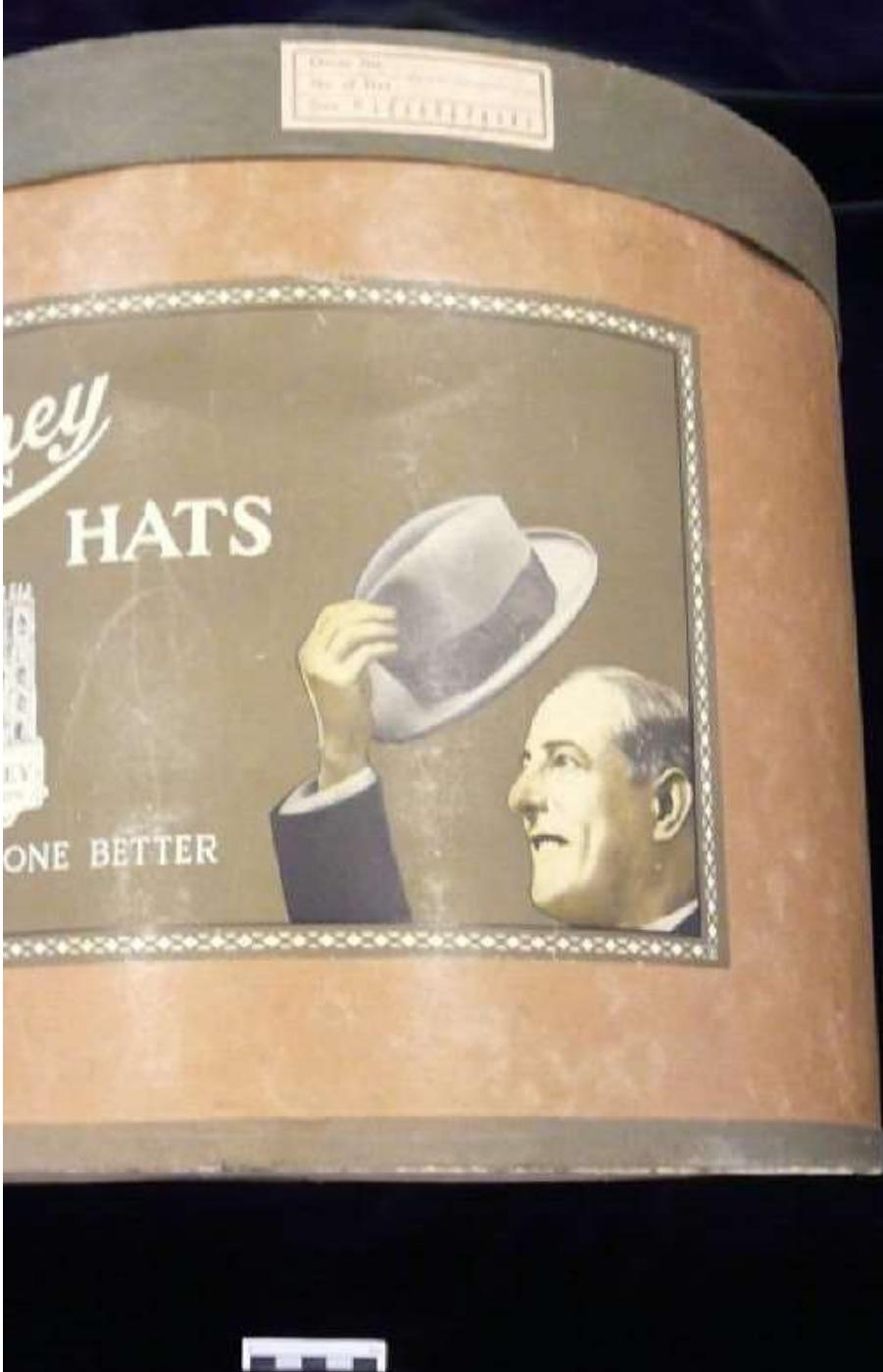
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Measuring temperature and humidity

We measure the temperature and humidity in all our stores. If the humidity gets too high it encourages mould growth. If temperature fluctuates too rapidly it can damage fragile objects.

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Opening a textile box

Some objects come with their own boxes. This black silk bowler hat came to the museum in its' original box. Although the hat was made in London it was sold in Norwich and worn in Norfolk.

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Bats

We have lots of bats at Gressenhall. They roost in the roofs and also in Store 4. They particularly like hanging from the smoke detector. We know because we find their droppings underneath it. As long as we clean the store regularly they don't do any damage.

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Tools

We have a large number of tools in the collection that do not fit into boxes. Where possible we store these mounted on the wall in Store 4 to keep them safe and prevent any damage from stacking them on shelves. It also means we can see them easily.

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Printed ephemera

Printed ephemera is what we call all printed material in the collection, e.g. menus, leaflets, pamphlets, postcards. We store them in filing cabinets ordered by theme and the year they entered the museum collection.

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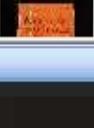
Photographs

There are a range of photographs in the collection. Small originals are kept in the filing cabinets. Larger original photographs go in plan chests.

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ation: Object records. File: Gressenhall collections]

2016.4

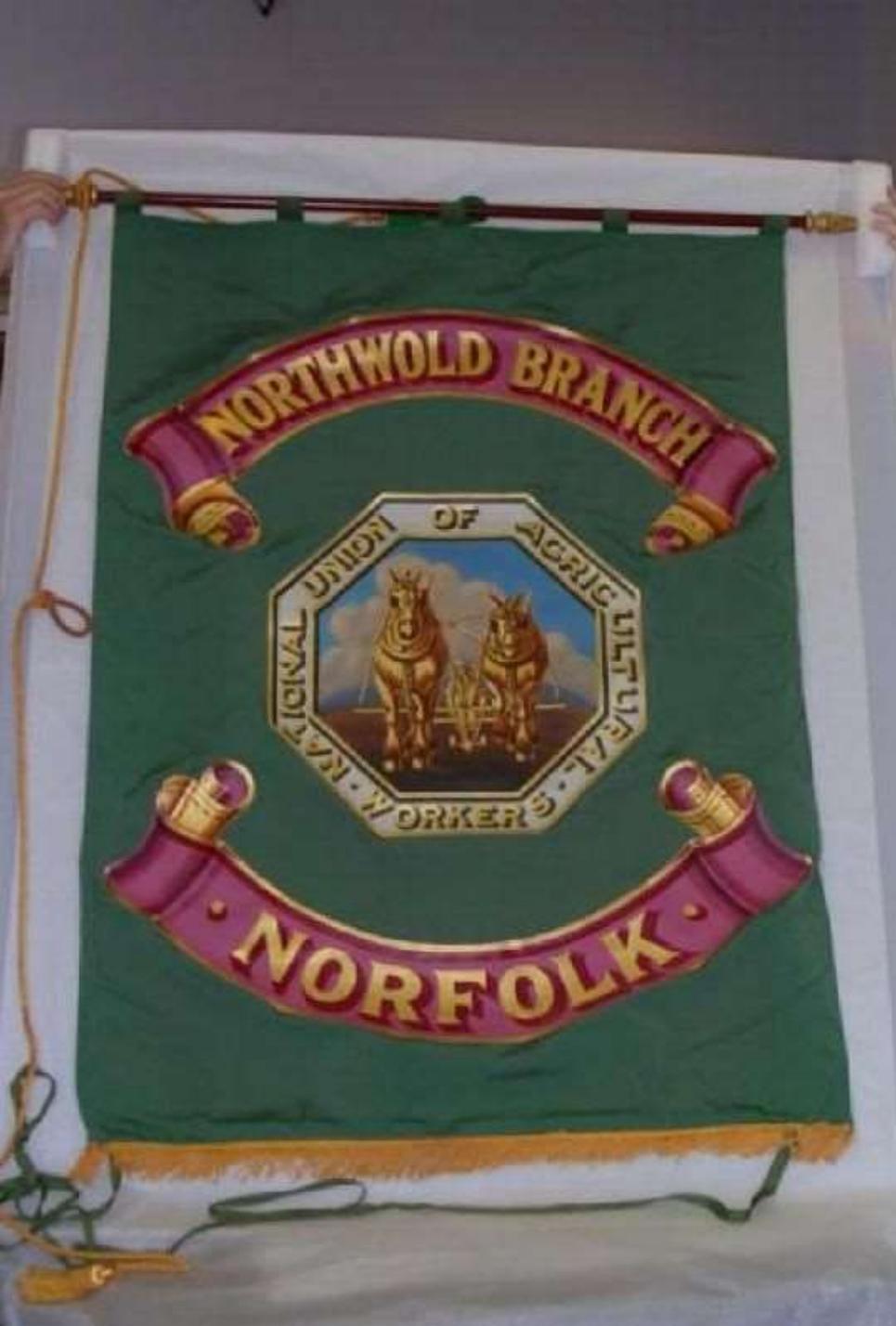
Brief Description	Image
Map of Mitford and Launditch Union dating	
Dark fabric badge 'The Year of the Scout 1907' presented to donor's son Alex Yates when he was in Swaffham cubs and Beetley cubs.	
Map from a tree, still with bark on round the edges. It has been stamped with the scout symbol. It was presented to donor's son Alex Yates when he was in Swaffham cubs and Beetley cubs.	
'Swaffham and Rural District Norfolk Official Guide'. Includes fold-out map. Published in 1967 by the Wayland Rural District Council.	
'Official Guide to Wells-next-the-Sea'. Includes fold-out map. Published in the late 1960s by the Wells-next-the-Sea Rural District Council.	
'Official Guide to Swaffham Rural District'. Includes fold-out map. Published in the 1960s by the Swaffham Rural District Council.	
'Official Guide to Holt and District'. Includes fold-out map. Published in the 1960s by the Holt and District Rural District Council.	
'Swaffham and Rural District Norfolk Official Guide to Docketing Rural District'. Includes fold-out map. Published in the 1960s by the Swaffham Rural District Council.	

SUBSET: Index Search: Word search = "map"

Computer database

The MODEs database is used to keep all the details of the objects in the collection. It is a powerful search tool that researchers and visitors can use by appointment.

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Banners

Some smaller banners are kept in the library. These small banners can be lifted by one person. They are stored flat in purpose made boxes.

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Map

This map was originally used in the workhouse Board Room by the Guardians. It shows all the parishes that sent their poor to Gressenhall Workhouse.

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