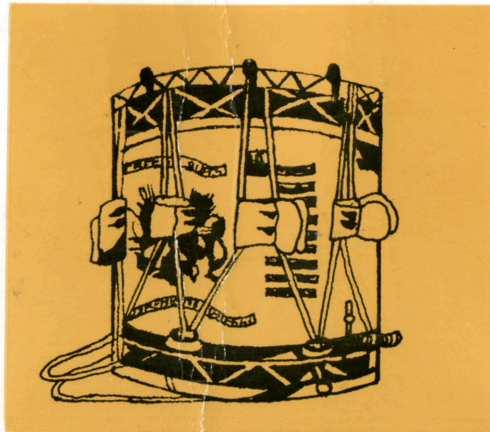
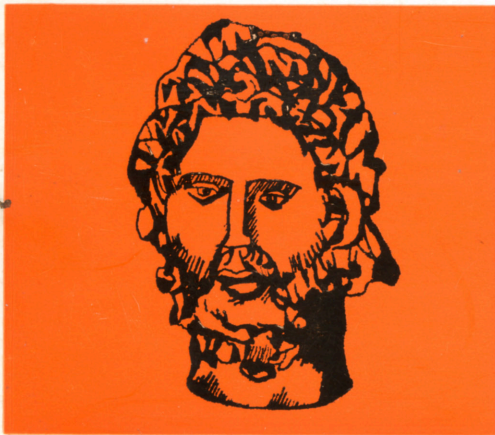
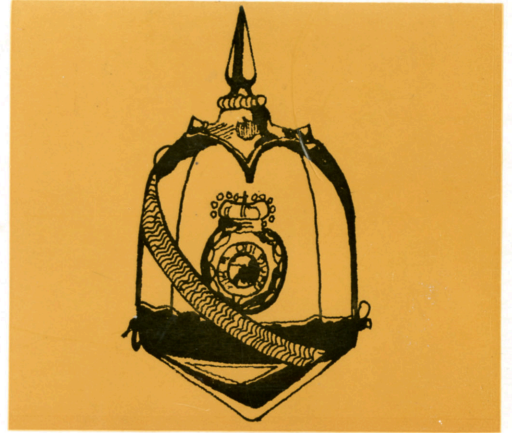
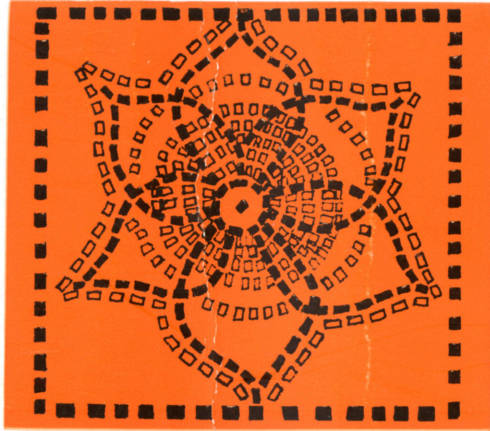
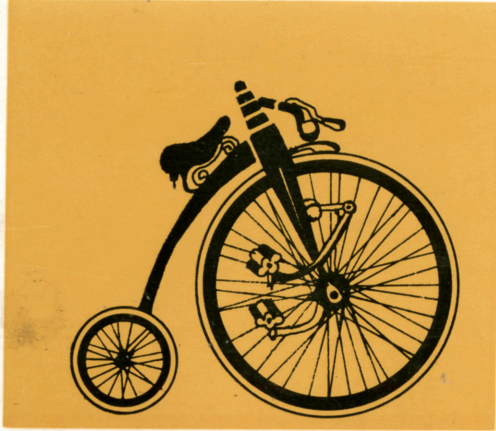


A GUIDE TO THE CANTERBURY MUSEUMS



ROYAL MUSEUM

The Canterbury Historical Society for the Cultivation of Useful Knowledge was founded in 1769 and used to meet on Tuesday evenings in the Guildhall Tavern. By 1825 it was felt by its members that the society had fallen into a declining state, possibly owing to the choice of venue, and it was refounded as the Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution. At the same time it was decided that the society should found a museum 'as the most desirable means of diffusing information on various subjects connected with general knowledge', and a building with a handsome classical facade was erected in Guildhall Street. From the collections housed in this building, the present museum has grown. In 1846, the museum was offered for sale to the city and the purchase was completed by 1847. The museum continued to be housed in Guildhall Street until in 1895, a bequest of £11,000 was received from Dr. J. G. Beane to build an Institute for Working Men. Dr. Beane who was born in Canterbury, had emigrated to Australia and had there acquired a considerable fortune and reputation as a surgeon. By permission of the Charity Commissioners, the Beane bequest was spent on a building to house the museum and free library, and the present Beane Institute was built in the High Street on the site of the Greyhound Tavern. The Beane Institute is distinguished by its remarkable half-timbered elevation which is a splendid example of late 19th century Tudor/Gothic. It was opened to the public in 1899, and by consent of Queen Victoria, the museum received the title of the Royal Museum. Today, the museum is housed on the first

floor and consists of a large gallery whose displays illustrate local history and archaeology from the Old Stone Age to the 19th century; the Lushington Room devoted mainly to natural history; a small gallery containing the china collection, and the Slater Art Gallery that was added in 1934. In 1960, the museum's displays were reorganised on modern lines.

Prehistoric Collections

During the Pleistocene geological period that lasted for about a million years and ended about 11,000 B.C., the climate varied between very cold periods called Glaciations when much of Britain was covered by ice, and Interglacial periods when the climate was at least as warm as it is now. The earliest Palaeolithic or Old Stone Age finds from east Kent date from the Great Interglacial in the middle of the Pleistocene. They belong to a culture known as the Acheulian from the type site at St. Acheul in France, and mainly occur in river gravels, though some surface finds are also known. They chiefly consist of the flint tools known as hand axes; the flakes that were produced in making them, and specially struck flakes of the type known as Clactonian. The largest group in the collections comes from gravel pits at Sturry where the Pleistocene gravels of the Stour were worked. Besides ordinary, pointed, middle-Acheulian hand axes, the group includes ovates, trimming flakes and some Clactonian flakes. Various hand axes found in Canterbury also presumably come from the Stour