



PRESS RELEASE

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400 years of Somerset Slipware Ceramics go on Display at Somerset Rural Life Museum in Glastonbury

Decorative and functional ceramics from the last 400 years are on display at a new exhibition at Somerset Rural Life Museum in Glastonbury. The exhibition runs from 22 June to 9 November.

‘Somerset Slipware: The Art of the Potter’ explores how slipware ceramics developed in the county from the late 1600s onward. Early production of slipware focused on Donyatt in south Somerset and on pottery for everyday use. Among the more unusual ceramic items on display is a bacon toaster from 1761 and an 18th-century urinal. Vessels for drinking Somerset cider feature too, including the famous puzzle jugs and fuddling cups.

Curator Bethan Murray said: “Donyatt was a site of pottery production for 800 years until the early 1900s. Traditional techniques were passed from generation to generation. Between 1662 and 1910 more than 70 potters are recorded.”

The exhibition also features Elton Ware and Fishley Holland Ware which was produced in Clevedon in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Elton Ware designs were often inspired by the natural world and Fishley Holland Ware is known for its bright colours and

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experimental shapes. Wesuma Ware, produced at the family-run Weston-super-Mare factory during the early 1900s, is also displayed.

Bethan added: “A mixture of coloured clay and water, called ‘slip’, has for centuries been used to decorate pottery. Slipware ceramics may seem rustic, but their creation requires great skill. It is highly collectable.”

‘The Art of the Potter’ is just one of the ways in which visitors to Somerset Rural Life Museum can discover more about the heritage of slipware ceramics. Over the summer the Museum is delighted to be working with Somerset Art Works to bring an artist in residence to the Museum. Emilie Taylor will be producing an installation that responds to traditional Somerset slipware collections. Emilie’s work will be displayed in the Abbey Barn for Somerset Art Weeks in the autumn.

Somerset Rural Life Museum is part of The South West Heritage Trust, an independent charity that protects and celebrates Somerset and Devon’s rich heritage.

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For further information please contact Beth Jerrett, PR & Communications Lead Officer, beth.jerrett@swheritage.org.uk or 01823 347418.

Image/s: *Photographs are granted for one time use in conjunction with this press release only, and photographers must be credited.*

Photo Captions:

- Curator Bethan Murray with some of the ceramics on display in the exhibition.
- A puzzle jug made by the Donyatt Pottery.

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Notes to editors

1. The South West Heritage Trust

The South West Heritage Trust is an independent charity committed to protecting and celebrating Somerset and Devon's rich heritage. As well as the widely-praised Museum of Somerset and the redeveloped Somerset Rural Life Museum, in Glastonbury, the Trust manages state-of-the-art facilities in Taunton and Exeter to care for the extraordinary archive collections of the two counties. The Trust also provides essential advice about the historic environment and manages historic sites. Individuals and businesses are invited to support the charity through its Supporters' scheme. Visit swheritage.org.uk #SWHTdiscovery

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