

The Story of Medicine in Battle



The Waterloo Teeth

As is true of all places, the practise of medicine in the town of Battle took many forms over the ages and Battle Abbey played a central role in the provision of medicine in the medieval settlement. After the dissolution, we know of one doctor at least - Edmund Langdon - in the early 17th Century. By the 1850s, Battle was a particularly unhealthy place to live. The Cresy Report depicts a town with open sewers, where cholera, typhoid and malaria are rife. It's this period in the town's history that the Museum's special exhibition highlights.

The sometimes-gruesome tale of early medicine is illustrated by the leech jar, the Waterloo teeth and muscle rub used for both people and horses! And a small bottle illustrates the story of a quack doctor who would visit Battle to pull teeth and sell his elixir! The exhibition also features a collection of items from the Emeleus pharmacy, founded in Battle in the early years of the 20th Century.

And last but not least, learn the story of a well-loved Battle doctor who not only had a general practice but was also the doctor for the Union Workhouse. Dr Kendall, who would treat the poor for free, was so admired that his patients gave him a truly remarkable retirement present. All of this is mapped against a timeline of medical advances to see what impact they had on local medicine (if any).