

## THE ART OF STORAGE

STACKED ON THEIR SIDES AND LEANING AGAINST ONE ANOTHER LIKE DOMINOES, ARTWORKS IN A COLLECTION INTENDED FOR LOAN TO SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT CAMBRIDGESHIRE WERE CLEARLY NOT BEING STORED UNDER IDEAL CONDITIONS.

To remedy this, Cambridgeshire County Council decided that they should all be moved to an existing storage location that was being used to house musical instruments.

The need for the instruments and the artwork to share the same site gave rise to two issues – first, the existing storage equipment at the site would need to be completely replaced, and second very effective use would have to be made of the available space if both collections were to be accommodated comfortably.

With these requirements in mind, the Council approached System Store Solutions and two other companies to tender for the new storage equipment.

“The difference between the responses was very illuminating,” said Stuart Elsom, Principal Business Support Manager for Cambridgeshire County Council. “One of the companies wanted a £400 fee to investigate our requirements, whether or not we decided to order from them. Another couldn’t supply storage systems that were capable of

being moved to another site, should that prove necessary at some time in the future.”

“The only company that could do everything we wanted, and do it at a reasonable price, was System Store Solutions,” he continued. “There was also another big difference. System Store Solutions was by far the most enthusiastic and helpful of the potential suppliers we approached.”

To house the musical instruments, mobile shelving was proposed, as this would provide the maximum amount of storage capacity in the minimum of space, without in any way impairing accessibility.

For the artwork, deciding on the best combination of storage facilities was a more difficult task, so the Council decided to call on the expertise and experience of System Store Solutions. The company visited the old storage site and examined the artworks in detail. On the basis of its findings, it offered three proposals, which the Council evaluated prior to selecting which optimally met its needs.



The system finally supplied comprises a carefully formulated mix of pull-out picture racking for large framed items and pigeon-hole shelving for smaller framed items. A mobile access ladder is also provided to assist in the safe handling of large framed prints, and also to allow the top shelves in the mobile racking to be used, so that no space was wasted. Additionally, mobile workstations were supplied to permit flexible working.

“The whole of the installation process went extremely smoothly,” said Stuart Elsom, “and System Store Solutions confirmed itself as being a very pleasant and easy company to deal with. That didn’t stop us, however, from being a little on tenterhooks when we came

to move the artwork to the new storage. Of course, we needn’t have worried – it was a perfect fit, proving that System Store Solutions had analysed our needs with complete accuracy.”

With its new storage facilities for artwork, Cambridgeshire County Council can now provide an even better service for schools in the county. The schools simply use a secure area of the County Council website to choose the artwork they wish to borrow from the hundreds of items shown in thumbnail form, and then submit their requests. Thanks to the efficiency of the new storage system, the required items can quickly be located and despatched.



## NO BUILDING NEEDED!



When St Edmundsbury Borough Council put the storage requirements for its West Stow Anglo Saxon Village out to tender, one aspect of the enquiry stood out in particular – the building in which the storage equipment was to be installed didn’t exist! All the potential suppliers had to work with was a set of architectural CAD drawings and a list of requirements.

“We put this challenge to several storage companies,” said Alan Baxter, Heritage Manager for St Edmundsbury, “but it soon became clear that the company most comfortable with working this way was System Store Solutions. Right from the outset, the company was very convincing in its grasp of our requirements, and it was able to put forward very attractive suggestions about how those requirements could be satisfied.”

After a competitive tendering process, System Store Solutions was selected as the vendor for the project and,

from that point on, the company worked in close conjunction with Alan Baxter to fine tune the design of the storage systems as work on the building progressed.

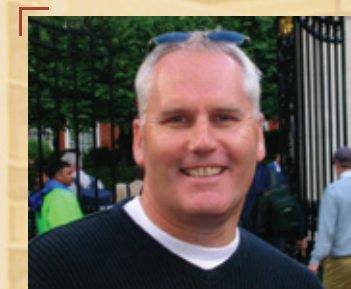
It wasn’t all plain sailing. At one stage, for example, it was discovered that essential ductwork within the building would impinge on space that had been expected to be available for storage.

“System Store Solutions took this and all of the other last-minute modifications completely in its stride,” said Alan Baxter. “In every case, the company agreed with us the best way the changes could be accommodated without impacting the capacity or convenience of the storage systems, and then simply got on with the job. We couldn’t have wished for more flexibility.”

The completed storage project, which forms an essential and integral part of the education facility



## STORAGE IS KEY TO OPEN SUCCESS



The equipment a museum uses to store and exhibit its objects is vital to its success. However, implementing a good storage installation is not without its challenges. Museums often lack sufficient space and their heritage buildings often throw up further constraints. Given the need for the preservation of often very fragile objects, storage units must be tailored to meet the needs of important collections. A good storage system will ease the work of the curator and provide a better visitor experience.

Museum storage installations require more than the mere supply of the equipment. Projects must be carefully planned and curators must take note of technical storage advice available. This is where the experience of the storage consultancy becomes fundamental.

System Store Solutions Ltd is experienced in meeting the specialised needs of museum, gallery and heritage clientele. We understand that the installation isn’t just about safety. It’s also about creating the most effective environment, optimizing space available to deliver the right solution for both the museum and its visitors.

With a huge range of innovative storage and display systems, System Store has supplied art, photographic, geological, textiles, transport, historical, and armoury museums throughout the UK and Ireland.

System Store Solutions is the exclusive UK distributor of the Fami storage, workshop and transportation systems product range. Its success is founded on the expertise of its consultants and based on project management, consultation and technical advice.



## MUSEUM OF LONDON THROWS DOWN THE GAUNTLET

The Museum of London literally threw down the gauntlet when they asked System Store Solutions to design a storage system for their metal collection.

by David Price  
System Store Solutions Ltd

For among the collection was a complete suit of armour worn by the King’s Champion in 1685. The duty of the Champion was to proclaim the new King’s right to the throne and challenge anyone to deny it, hence the phrase ‘to throw down the gauntlet’. The challenge was to come up with a system to both display and protect the armour but also to provide a storage solution for the Museum’s pewter and medieval metal toy collection - the largest of its kind in the world.

System Store Solutions had previously provided dust-sealed units at one of the museum’s off-site stores and these had proved satisfactory in terms of performance and value for money. The company was, therefore, approached to develop the new storage systems required for the refurbishment of the Metal and General stores.

The nature of the artefacts meant that the storage solution had to be strong enough to carry very heavy weights, and that it had to incorporate a wide variety of drawers. In addition, the stored artefacts had to be readily visible, and doors were needed to prevent the ingress of dust. Aisle space was, however, at a premium.

Presented with these requirements, System Store Solutions developed a storage installation based on

its FSR shelving with drawer systems, all enclosed by sliding Clearview transparent doors.

The first phase of the project has been completed. According to archaeological conservator, Jill Barnard, the flexibility of the system allows the introduction of new improved storage to be added in stages, thus fitting with the budgetary constraints of the Museum. Work on the remaining phases will start shortly.



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## Contact us for a free storage consultation

To arrange for one of our experts to visit your site, contact us at:

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VISIT SYSTEM STORE SOLUTIONS ONLINE AT [WWW.SYSTEM-STORE.COM](http://WWW.SYSTEM-STORE.COM)

## SECURELY ON DISPLAY

It's a conundrum every museum faces – how to make artefacts readily available for display, while at the same time protecting them against theft, accidental or wilful damage and, in many cases, adverse environmental conditions.



To address this problem, System Store Solutions offers a comprehensive family of Secure Open Storage products, all of which have been designed with museum applications specifically in mind.

These products are already helping to organise, protect and display artefacts at prestigious museums throughout the UK, including mima (Middlesborough Museum of Modern Art), Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, and RAF Manston Spitfire and Hurricane Museum.

The extensive storage installation at mima incorporates shelving with sliding doors, open shelving for large book-form solander boxes, long span shelving for curatorial materials and plan filing cabinets with drawing boards for the storage and viewing of large flat paper items. With typical attention to detail, System Store Solutions has designed the drawing boards so that they can be easily adjusted to allow artwork to be viewed at the optimum angle.

For the secure storage of jewellery, the company has provided mima with large drawer cabinets that have individually lockable drawers. Each of the drawers accommodates two folded steel trays that make it easy to remove the jewellery rapidly in an emergency.

These storage units are complemented by art handling trolleys, trolleys for large items, cantilever racking for general storage and pigeon-hole shelving for small works of art.

Julia Palmer, mima Manager, is delighted with the museums new storage systems. "System Store Solutions met and exceeded all of our requirements for optimal use of space, flexibility of storage, product quality and deliverability within a tight timescale," she said. "In addition, the cost of the systems was very competitive, and the company provided an efficient, professional and friendly service throughout the whole design and installation process."

At mima, the Secure Open Storage products supplied are now protecting some of the museum's most prestigious collections, including its renowned British Ceramic Art collection.

For Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, System Store Solutions has supplied a controlled access drawer unit with individual electronic locking facilities for each drawer. The drawers can only be opened using a swipe card. According to Deborah Cane, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery's Collections Care Officer, this arrangement has allowed the museum to bring together the whole of the museum's jewellery collection in a single location.

"As each drawer has its own swipe card, we can selectively allow or restrict access to the collection, thereby improving security," she said. "If a researcher wants, say, to examine rings, they are issued with a swipe card for the ring drawer only – the other eleven drawers remain secure."



The new jewellery storage arrangements at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery also make it easier to view the collection, as similar types of jewellery are grouped together in the drawers. This means, for example, that someone who wants to view all of the brooches to select some for an exhibition now only has to open a single drawer. Previously they would have had to examine the contents of five drawers in two different locations.

To further enhance security, the jewellery storage system is also fitted with an audible alarm to indicate that a drawer has been left open. This guards against researchers forgetting to close drawers but can be disabled with the aid of the appropriate swipe card by those who may need to work for extended periods with drawers open.

Situated on the site of one of the very few surviving airfields that played an important part in the Battle of Britain, the RAF Manston Spitfire and Hurricane Memorial Museum houses artefacts that range from complete aircrafts to photographs, newspaper cuttings, letters and other memorabilia.

To house and protect many of the small fragile items in its collection, including in particular the paper items, the museum has just taken delivery of a lockable drawer unit with a glass topped display case.

"When we approached the company with details of our requirements, System Store Solutions was very supportive in helping us to choose the best product for our needs," said the museum's Peter Verdemato, "and the prices quoted were also very competitive. While we haven't as yet had time to make use of the new storage system, our first impressions are very favourable – it looks good, its versatile and it's exceptionally well made."

Museums of different types make widely varying demands on their Secure Open Storage systems. Whatever their requirements, however, System Store Solutions can, with its extensive product range and in-depth experience of museum applications, provide a solution that combines efficiency and effectiveness with durability and value for money.

## ARMY HERITAGE UNDER GUARD

Called in by the National Army Museum to quote for storage drawer units to accommodate its extensive collection of medals and cap badges, System Store Solutions recommended the use of its FAMI drawer cabinets.



"We were impressed with System Store Solutions, not only was the company the first to respond to our enquiry, it also offered the most detailed quote and competitive prices.

*Danu Reid,  
National Army Museum*

These combine versatility with robust construction and attractive pricing, and are an ideal complement for the museum's existing wooden storage units.

"We were impressed with System Store Solutions," said the museum's Danu Reid, "not only was the company the first to respond to our enquiry, it also offered the most detailed quote and competitive prices. It was immediately clear that the company understood our requirements and had exactly the right products to meet them."

"Also, when we needed a site visit, System Store Solutions would come

when it was convenient for us," she continued, "rather than adopting the approach of some of the other companies we looked at, who simply told us when it was convenient for them to make the visit."

The Museum was particularly pleased to find that System Store Solutions could supply drawer units that were self-anchoring and did not, therefore, need to be fixed to the walls.

Not only does this eliminate damage to the fabric of the building, it also means that the units can easily be moved to a new location, something that could be necessary as the Museum's refurbishment plan proceeds.



FAMI drawer cabinets at the National Army Museum

Another key feature was the smooth operation of the drawer fasteners, which makes it easy to open and close the drawers.

"System Store Solutions kept us regularly updated with the progress of our order," said Danu Reid, "and the unit was delivered exactly on schedule. We're very happy with the system which has a very robust construction.

In fact, we're so happy with the service and products provided by System Store Solutions that we've just placed another much larger order with the company."

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## Modern storage displays home town ancient artefacts

The picturesque Kent town of Tenterden has every reason to declare itself 'The Jewel of the Weald', with historic houses, bustling rural community and fascinating visitor attractions.

But Tenterden is also a jewel for David Price from System Store Solutions – it's his home town and holds many sentimental memories!

So when Tenterden Museum noticed a significant trend in using innovative storage solutions for display purposes, and discovered the UK's best supplier on its own doorstep, David Price was delighted to be able provide vital storage solutions.

Tenterden Museum had the need, and foresight, to use a storage system as an area where collections of local importance can be viewed by the public as well giving access to researchers. Its collections cover more than 1,000 years of local history with exhibits celebrating hop picking, farming, the Cinque Ports, the Weald and Victorian domestic life.

After a cash injection from a charitable grant and a recommendation from Kent County Council, Tenterden Museum chose local System Store Solutions

to provide the storage and display cabinets. The company installed two display cases with drawers under, two clear fronted storage cabinets and one drawer unit, to create easy public viewing, while at the same time providing safety and protection for the historic collection.

A noticeable benefit of the storage system is its aesthetic design. System Store Solutions provided Tenterden Museum with units that were not only functional, but also good looking. The physical appearance of the units was as important as their function, because they themselves form part of the display.

Debbie Greaves, museum manager, commented, "the storage systems have not solved all of our problems – we need to buy some more! The glass covered display units are very good and catered to our need, when funding is available we will be purchasing additional cabinets".



## SEALED TO PROTECT

**THERE ARE MANY STORAGE APPLICATIONS IN MUSEUMS WHERE ARTEFACTS NEED TO BE PROTECTED AGAINST CONTINUOUS EXPOSURE TO THE SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT, TYPICALLY TO GUARD AGAINST THE DELETERIOUS EFFECTS OF HIGH HUMIDITY.**

To provide a convenient, versatile and cost-effective way of meeting these requirements, System Store Solutions is now offering a comprehensive range of sealed sheet steel cabinets.

Designed specifically to protect against the ingress of contaminants, and manufactured in the UK to the highest standards, Clearview cabinets are fabricated from high-quality mild steel with a durable polyester coating. All joints and doors have airtight silicon seals that are held in compression to guarantee their effectiveness. Doors have two locking points to ensure that the seals are compressed uniformly.

The cabinets are normally supplied with glazed doors so that the contents are easily visible, but solid metal doors are also available

on request. To provide maximum versatility and accessibility, full-width shelves mounted on sliders are provided as standard, but other options, including half-width shelving and centre shelves can be supplied.

Installation of Clearview cabinets is made easy by the provision of pump-truck lifting points. The cabinets also feature floor levellers, and all shelf positions are fully adjustable to allow best use to be made of the storage space.

To complement the full-size double-door Clearview cabinets, System Store Solutions offers Clearview Compact museum cabinets. These are constructed from mild steel with double-skin side walls. They feature lockable doors with vision panels, and adjustable clipped shelves.



Temporary storage during a major gallery refurbishment project at the Fitzwilliam Museum

For specialised applications not covered by standard models in the Clearview range, custom-designed cabinets, which retain the full airtight sealing of the standard products, can be supplied quickly and at very competitive prices.

For more information on museum storage solutions or for a free consultation contact us on +44 (0) 1622 859522 or via e-mail [sales@systemstoresolutions.com](mailto:sales@systemstoresolutions.com)

## ISLINGTON'S PAST SECURED

Security, durability and visibility were what Islington Museum needed from the new storage systems it was to purchase as part of its recent ambitious refurbishment programme.

The systems also had to be suitable for housing a large variety of artefacts that help to tell the story of Islington's past. These include ceramics, glass, costumes and many diverse social history items in a wide range of sizes.

In line with standard local government practice, Islington Museum invited three companies to tender for the work. According to Cheryl Smith, Islington's Heritage Manager, System Store Solutions not only offered very competitive prices, but was also the most imaginative of the companies in terms of the way it proposed to use the limited space available.

"In addition, we were impressed by the flexibility of the equipment on offer from System Store Solutions," said Cheryl, "and by its high quality of construction. We very much needed an installation that not only

looked good, but would also provide dependable protection for our collections."

As supplied, Islington's new storage system comprises FSR shelving with drawers, FST shelving with drawers and sliding Clearview glazed doors, wall-mounted mesh panels for storing pictures and a mobile workstation. To guard against unauthorised access to the collections, all drawers and doors are lockable.

"Throughout the project, System Store Solutions was a very easy company to deal with," said Cheryl, "even though we inadvertently tested its flexibility to the limit! As the result of last-minute changes to the architectural plans for the storage area, we suddenly found the height available for the storage systems was a full half metre less than we had expected."



"This late change involved System Store Solutions in a lot of extra work," she continued, "but the company was both helpful and happy to accommodate our needs. Service like that is certainly not easy to find!"

Installation of the new storage systems at Islington Museum has recently been completed, with the museum reporting that the work was carried out efficiently and smoothly, with an absolute minimum of disruption.

"Our new storage systems are nothing short of fantastic," said Cheryl, "they look good, they allow us to show off artefacts to the best advantage while keeping them secure, and they're flexible enough to accommodate any foreseeable change in our requirements."

System Store Solutions not only offered very competitive prices, but was also the most imaginative of the companies