

Talking about it is not something I do regularly. I don't speak about the collection in this way.

ALARM BEING DISARMED

I always wonder what he was like...Aside from all the things that he had.

DOORS BEING UNLOCKED

I always want to think that he was a nice person...and that he was a kind person....because I know that he worked...he was in charge of a community of people...but I suppose I've never know really...I'd like to think that anyway.

The idea of being in a museum on your own...is a really exciting one actually. It certainly makes me feel kind of giddy. It makes me excited about what my job is. It's also not the normal experience you'd have as a curator...

FOOTSTEPS

My name is Ciara Phipps and I'm a curatorial manager for Southend Museum service....my job normally doesn't entail so much...caretaking....we're really aware that we're guardians of this collection.

DOOR OPENING AND SHUTTING/FOOTSTEPS

The collection sings almost...in the space. And you can feel it. And you get that sense from when you walk through the door...you're led up to...almost, you're reaching the peak, this burial mound that is kind of this burial chamber at the end. And you're rewarded with this incredible array of artefacts that are really, really stunning...and really, really...kind of...powerful.

They weren't prepared for what they would find. I think they were as shocked as we were to see what they discovered....The lead archaeologist kind of hit the jackpot really with where he buried his trowel.

KEYS UNLOCKING

The prince is normally in the dark...It's normally pitch black in here until we turn the lights on...So it's very much as though it's still a burial chamber.

LIGHTS BEING SWITCHED ON. FOOTSTEPS

It's really dark. It's really low lit. The walls are black. The floors is black. There's a really beautiful glistening ethereal light. It's quite cloudlike.

The body was placed in a certain direction and we've kept that in this space...so we've got the crosses on one end- the crosses that were placed over his eyes. They're gold foil so they're so delicate. The arms of the cross have been folded in from the impact of the earth....We've got some really tiny gold coins....and...it was thought that one was in the hand of the Prince on his chest and the one was in his other hand down by his side. And they're quite worn down.

We've got his belt buckle in the middle and at the end of the showcase we've got his shoe buckles. You get a real sense that this was a person.

When we were physically putting the collection on display, it was a really odd experience to say the least. It was just the two of us really late on a Saturday night. Southend had just won a match so all the football fans were walking home or going to the pub or going wherever they were going. And we

could hear these incredible football chants in the background. And then we were really delicately, really quietly, really softly, placing these incredible objects in their new burial space almost. We were kind of thrust into contemporary life but we were handling material that was 1400 years old.

FOOTSTEPS

We've got some really gorgeous glass vessels and two of them are green- They're a kind of pale muted forest-y green. Then you've got two that are really vibrantly blue...and you can see the makers hand and you can see that human personal touch in those glass vessels which is something that I really, really love. It's almost like the fingerprint has been left by the last person who touched that glass vessel. But it's so rare that I would speak about these objects as though they can make me feel something and a certain way.....and they really do. It really makes me stop....and take a breath...

One of my favourite objects are these beautiful whalebone gaming pieces and a pair or antler dice. You could play with them now...you could physically pick one up and...roll the dice! Obviously we would never do that! The thought of it even makes me nervous and terrified.

There was a period of about 1400 years when no-one touched these objects.

I do remember very distinctly, after we've spent the whole evening putting it on display...I opened the showcase again to straighten up this piece of painted wood. I've touched the last piece of material that's gone into that showcase...and the fact that that was my hand is both....I suppose....terrifying at times but also so exciting to know that I've had a physical involvement in this collection in the way that so few people have.

KEYS LOCKING/ LIGHTS SWITCHING OFF

We definitely talk to objects in a way that people might not think we do...they mean a great deal to us so we definitely speak to them in the way that might kind of personalise them.

Because we do think about the Prince as though he is a person...and he is a person...he was a person...but we think about it in the way that he's almost still here in some ways. So we have funny rituals that we undertake everyday...

Closing the space down...turning off the lights...make sure that everything is safe and sound and say 'night Prince!', 'night Princey!'

DOOR SHUTTING

It's almost like we are putting the Prince to bed.

ALARM SETTING