

## ANCIENT HOUSE MUSEUM, CLARE - Denise Cioffi

**Opening Times:** The Museum plans to reopen in May once restrictions are lifted and the new opening hours will be Saturdays and Bank Holidays: 11.30am-5pm; Sundays: 2-5pm. Visiting will be by appointment only and this can be arranged either by:  
email: [info@clare-ancient-house-museum.co.uk](mailto:info@clare-ancient-house-museum.co.uk)  
or telephone: 01787 277249.



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**Admission:** £1 per adult (16 and over); under 16 free.

**Website:** [www.clare-ancient-house-museum.co.uk](http://www.clare-ancient-house-museum.co.uk)

**Travel Time:** From Newmarket by car approximately 35 minutes.

**Parking:** There is free on-street parking. Clare Country Park: £1 for one hour; £2.00 for stays longer than one hour.

**General Information:** The Ancient House Museum is found in Clare, Suffolk's smallest town. It is housed in a Grade 1 listed building situated overlooking the church. The more decorated frontage dates from 1473 while the west wing, on the High Street, is believed to date from 14th century and is especially important for its decorative pargeting (raised plaster decoration). It is first recorded in a will in 1502.



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The building has served many purposes over time: a mediaeval shop, a workhouse, a bake house, a priest's house, and in the 1990s a Landmark Trust holiday cottage. It was given to Clare in 1938 by a local business man, Charles Byford. The museum was opened in 1979 and is run by volunteers and its Trustees. With grants and Heritage Lottery funding, together with the help of the District Council, it was totally redesigned and reopened in 1999.

A wide range of artefacts are on display from the Iron Age to the present day in '*The Story of Clare*', which tells of the mediaeval rich Norman family of De Clare, who built and owned the Castle, and the 20<sup>th</sup> century life of Doris Gregory, who lived in Clare and kindly donated many artefacts.

Elizabeth de Burgh, Lady of Clare, was a cousin of Edward II. Her mother was Joan of Acre. She was widowed three times by the age of 26 and was East Anglia's most powerful and wealthiest woman. On display is her Seal which



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In 2007 the exhibition featured the Clare Reliquary Cross, a famous mediaeval artefact found in the grounds of Clare Castle in 1866 during the construction of the railway. It is now in the British Museum, as it is part of the Royal Collection. It is thought to have belonged to Cecily Neville, Duchess of York, as she owned Clare Castle. She was mother to Edward IV and Richard III.

**Photo:** British Museum  
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