

Case 10

Toys and Games Throughout the Ages

Play – ‘Adults tend to dismiss it as silly or childish, but having fun may be fundamental to the survival of our species. Play is not a luxury but a necessity.’ (Kay Redfield Jamieson, National Geographic, January 2024.)

‘The opposite of play is not work; it’s depression. The adult-play deficit is becoming a public health crisis.’ (Stuart Brown, psychiatrist and play researcher, National Geographic, 2024.)

Play is a natural and enjoyable way for children to learn, practice and master skills from birth to teenage years. Through play, children gain confidence as they learn about their environment and themselves.

1. Commemorative Puzzle

Sliding puzzle from 1953 to commemorate the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.
ELGNM: 2001.33.18

2. Metal Figures

The four metal figures are from World War I. Two are sailors, one is a soldier and the other an artillery soldier.
ELGNM: 1994.56.1

3. Clay doll

Moulded clay doll from late 19th to early 20th century.
ELGNM: 1982.6

4. Matchbox kitchen

This early 20th Century National Art of Matchbox kitchen was made by Erzgebirge in Germany.
ELGNM: 2004.30.3

5. Peg Doll

Peg doll – or Dutch doll, originated in Northern Italy in the 19th Century. It is made from wood, fabric, cardboard and modelling clay. These dolls provided endless opportunity for imaginative play – telling stories, creating characters etc.
ELGNM: 1978.324

6. Knitting doll

It is thought that spool knitting began in China at the start of the 17th Century. The art allows children from the age of three to improve their concentration and fine motor skills.
ELGNM: Museum resource box

7. Clay Marbles

This type of marble was hand made in Germany and USA in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Marble players insist they are superior to glass for playing.
ELGNM: 1978.331

8. Monopoly Board

Monopoly was first published in 1935 by Parker Brothers. The game was derived in 1903 in the US from 'The Landlord's Game' by Lizzie Magie and based in Atlantic City, New Jersey. It has been licensed in 103 countries and printed in 37 different languages. The board here dates from the 1950s.

ELGNM: 2001.33.6

9. Sewing machine

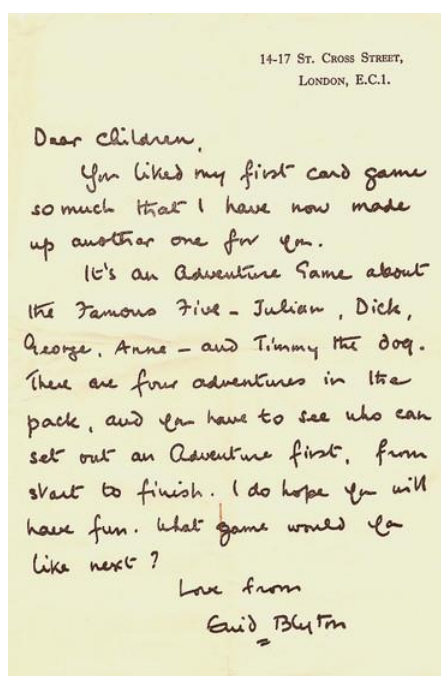
Fold away sewing machine dates from the 1950s.

On loan: Jenny Cook (Elgin Museum Volunteer)

10. Famous Five Card Game

This complete set of the Enid Blyton game was published in 1951.

ELGNM: 2006.21.4



11. Cribbage Board

Carved wood and ivory board from Sri Lanka, with floral motifs. The decorative insets have carved human faces and trees. Captain Levack, a Merchant Trader, brought it back to his home in Lossiemouth, mid 19th Century.

ELGNM: 2011.31

12. Chess Pieces

These Chinese, carved ivory chess pieces (red king and white queen) are part of a complete chess set brought home to Lossiemouth by Merchant Trader Captain Levack. These probably date from mid 19th Century.

ELGNM: 2011.29

13. Back Gammon set and book

It is one of the oldest known board games in the world. Back Gammon is thought to have originated in the Middle East over 5000 years ago.

On loan: Frances Wardhaugh (Elgin Museum Volunteer)

14. Viking Gaming Piece

This lead object with one rounded and one flat surface is embedded with a copper alloy stud. It was found on Clarkly Hill near Burghead. It would have been used to play 'Nine Men's Morris', a strategy game.

ELGNM: 2008.30.45

15. Mother of Pearl Gaming Counters

These carved counters are engraved with birds, flowers and geometric shapes. The rectangular piece has a heraldic shield in the centre and three wolves and three deer. They may have been used in Mahjong, each shape indicating a different score. They were probably brought home to Lossiemouth by Captain Levack, a Merchant Trader, from his world travels.

ELGNM: 2011.34

16. Kaleidoscope

A very early example of a kaleidoscope. The kaleidoscope was invented by David Brewster, a Scottish physicist, around 1816. Loose pieces of glass inside are reflected by mirrors and lenses set at angles to each other.

ELGNM: 1972.1

17. George Harrison – Beatle doll

This George Harrison mop-top doll in black Shea Stadium suit is missing his guitar. Dolls Applause Dark Suits (1987-88) were made by American Determined Products Inc. The dolls were produced under licence by Apple Corps Ltd, founded in 1968 by the Beatles.

On loan: Mary Shand (Elgin Museum Volunteer)



The Beatles began their first tour of 1963 at the Two Red Shoes, Elgin, on 3rd January, at £42 a night.

18. Doll's Pram

This large 1930s Triang pram with hood and sunshade belonged to the family of Mora Scott, a renowned Elgin doctor. The monkey hand puppet was found in the

pram in the museum store.

ELGNM: 2012.26.26

19. Skipping rope

Traditional skipping rope – a sport thought to go back to the 16th Century.

ELGNM: Museum resource box

20. Photo of Lewis Robertson

Born around 1857, Lewis Robertson was a Master joiner and cabinet maker who lived in Struan Cottage, The Square, Archieston.

ELGNM: 1978.13.6

21. Wooden Puzzle/Test Pieces

These beautiful wooden pieces were made by Lewis Robertson (above)

ELGNM: 1978.13.6

**There are three other toys or games on display in other parts of the museum.
Can you find them?**

**Mary Shand and Jenny Cook
(Elgin Museum Volunteers)**