

THE REMEMBRANCE OF A MUSEUM

European Heritage Day at the NSZL



The National Széchényi Library joined the national event called European Heritage Day for the third time. The programmes organized in the library revolved around the 120th anniversary of Queen Elisabeth's death and evocation of her cult.

On 15 January 1908 the Queen Elisabeth Memorial Museum was opened in the Krisztinaváros wing of the Royal Castle of Buda (the NSZL's present building). The space made of three rooms operated as an off-site division of the Hungarian National Museum and it accomplished the role of 'national pilgrimage site'. The exhibition spaces on the 2nd floor received their visitors up until 1919. According to recent research results, it is known that during the Hungarian Soviet Republic the museum was closed, and later, due to the setup of the governor's seat here, the museum was moved to the wing above the Danube of the Buda Castle (the Hungarian National Gallery's present building). The visitors could take a look at the displayed relics here up until the siege of the Buda Castle in 1944–45. As the fight had become more and more threatening, the artefacts of the museum were stored in chests and carried to the Silver Chamber of the Krisztinaváros wing. During the siege, the chamber suffered a mine blast, many objects being destroyed by it or disappearing due to loots following the fights. The surviving artefacts were taken back to the National Museum.

On the occasions of tours of building history in the NSZL during the European Heritage Day we dedicated special emphasis to the rediscovery of the spaces of the former museum. For this occasion, Krisztina Hegedűs, head of the Cataloguing Department of Periodicals organized a mini exhibition displaying the former object of the museum now kept in the library's collection. The events regarding the Queen's death and her cult were evoked by pages of contemporaneous newspapers.

As the closure of the programme, the visitors could attend lectures about the cult of Elisabeth and the history of the museum. Art historian Dániel Bovory offered a presentation entitled *The Remembrance of Queen Elisabeth in Hungarian Fine Arts of the 1900s*, while Eszter Virág Vér delivered the lecture *The Forgotten Cult Site of the Buda Castle: The Queen Elisabeth Memorial Museum*.

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Queen Elisabeth Memorial Museum – exhibition hall
(contemporaneous postcard from
the Poster and Small Prints Collection)



Queen Elisabeth Memorial Museum – the Queen's desk
(contemporaneous postcard)