

COMMUNITY

Missing museum artifact back behind glass

*Security upgrades
in the works after
2,500-year-old stone
disappeared*

BY MIKE ADLER
STAFF WRITER

The Markham Museum birdstone, an ancient artifact stolen from its display case last week, was recovered on Tuesday by a six-year-old boy.

Andrew Norton, a Markham lad making his first museum visit, spotted the dark, rare carving only a few feet from where it had gone missing.

"Right under there," Andrew said, pointing to a Plexiglas pocket near the floor holding a booklet of photographs describing a second-floor display.

The boy spotted the 11-centimetre object in the pocket the moment his

grandfather, Everson Norton, removed the booklet.

"He took it out and then I saw it and he couldn't reach it so I caught it," said Andrew, who starts Grade 1 next month at St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School in Markham.

The birdstone - likely 2,500 to 3,500 years old - had been removed from a small Plexiglas box attached to the "Native Presence" display nearby.

Since such artifacts are quite valuable to collectors, museum staff had thought there was little chance it would

be returned.

Curator Joanne Reynolds now believes it was a child or teenager who pried open the case but then lost interest in the artifact and dropped it.

Despite Andrew's unexpected find, she added, the museum will go ahead with plans to improve on its security.

"We learned a valuable lesson."

For Andrew, however, the best part of the museum visit was not the second floor but The Acadia, a retired train car for dignitaries on display on the museum grounds.

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Andrew Norton, 6, with the birdstone he recovered at the Markham Museum. The rare stone was reported missing to York Regional Police last week.

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