



MUSEUM
ACCREDITATION

Accreditation Scheme for Museums
and Galleries in the United Kingdom

Warwickshire Museum Collections Development Policy 2020 - 2025

Name of Museum:

Warwickshire Museum

Name of Governing Body:

Warwickshire County Council

Date on which this Policy was approved by Warwickshire County Council Cabinet:

Day/month/2020

Policy review procedure:

The Museum Collections Development Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time and at least once every five years

Date at which this policy is due for review:

Day/month/2025

Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to the Collections Development Policy and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

1

Relationship to other relevant policies/ plans of the organisation:

1.1 The Museum's statement of purpose is:

To collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and associated information on the county of Warwickshire for the benefit of the wider community, present and future

1.2 The Governing Body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency

1.3 By definition, the Museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The Governing Body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the Museum's collection

1.4 Acquisitions outside the current stated Policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances

1.5 The Museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using Spectrum primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements

1.6 The Museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the Governing Body or responsible officer is satisfied that the Museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question

1.7 The Museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons

2. History of the Collections

The Warwickshire Natural History and Archaeological Society (WNHAS) was established in 1836 and began collecting archaeological and natural science material shortly afterwards. The Collection was originally worldwide in its scope and provenance and is now referred to as 'the historical collection'. The mission of WNHAS was essentially to 'bring the world to Warwickshire'.

The Collection was transferred to the Warwickshire Museum when it was created by Warwickshire County Council in 1932. Since then collecting has focused on objects and specimens with Warwickshire provenance, association, connections or relevance. Nowadays the focus is on 'bringing Warwickshire to the world', through our county-focused collecting policy, and wide-ranging interpretation media.

One of the more notable members of the WNHAS was Reverend Peter Bellinger Brodie, honorary curator for the society during the latter part of the nineteenth century, who amassed nationally and internationally significant collections of Warwickshire fossils. These include fossils from the local Triassic and Jurassic rocks, the latter including a near complete fossil plesiosaur skeleton from the village of Wilmcote, and Triassic reptiles and amphibians from Warwick. The late 20th century saw the addition of the Truslove Collection of minerals, the geological collections of North Warwickshire College, Leamington Museum and Art Gallery and that of Mr David Hughes.

Another important collection acquired during this time was the Perry Herbarium of wild plants. Among the historic archaeological collections, a small but interesting assemblage of Ancient Egyptian artefacts and remains were brought together by various society members, and an important bequest of stone tools was donated by Reverend J.M. Mello in 1914. Among significant individual objects there is also a well-known Giant Irish Deer skeleton which was acquired in 1866.

During the 1930s the natural history collections were further strengthened by significant contributions to the herbarium by local naturalists. The most notable additions to the taxidermy collection were the cased birds and mammals, with equipment and historical information connected with the local taxidermy firm of Spicer. Most of the foreign zoology material was transferred to the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum (Coventry) in 2003.

The main growth in the archaeology collections came in the mid-1960s with an increase in road and housing development that brought significant Roman assemblages from the kiln sites of Mancetter and the extra-mural excavations at Alcester. The numismatic collections include coins from the early English mint at Warwick and the Newdigate collection of Classical Greek and Roman coins acquired in 1958.

A small ethnography collection was transferred to other museums in the 1970s.

The founding WNHAS collections included very little that would be described today as 'social' history. Much of the collecting of objects and narratives from more recent local history (including costume and textiles) began towards the middle of the 20th century. Jocelyn Morris, curator from 1948 to 1977 influenced a number of key acquisitions at this time. Significant additions include the Hans Frei lute (16th century); the Nicholas Paris guns (17th- 18th century) and the Sheldon Tapestry map of Warwickshire (16th century), purchased in 1961. In addition, in 1987, Warwickshire Museum acquired a large collection of dolls and toys from Joy Robinson and Peggy Nesbitt.

Roman Alcester Heritage Museum

In 2004, the Roman Alcester Heritage Museum was opened in Alcester at Globe House, with a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It is administered by the Alcester Heritage Trust, under a bipartite agreement with Warwickshire County Council. Objects from the Warwickshire Museum collections (mainly Roman but including prehistoric and early medieval in date) are displayed there on renewable loan agreements.

3 An overview of current collections

The focus of current collection is on the county of Warwickshire, its inhabitants and landscapes, and the stories they tell. Although some of the early WNHAS material strictly does not comply with present-day collecting criteria it is still used for interpretation and learning activities, and helps tell the story of the Museum's past.

3.1 Archaeological Collections

The collections are especially strong in Palaeolithic, Roman, Early Saxon and Medieval material. As the Museum is the main repository for archaeological archives in the county (with the exception of Rugby town and specific parishes) a significant proportion of new acquisitions are through developer-funded excavations. These projects often bring a paper (and digital) record, along with a small number of artefacts retained for future reference/ research.

The important Roman sites of Alcester, Mancetter and Coleshill are well represented within the museum's collections (c.12,000 objects) and investigations continue in these archaeologically sensitive areas.

The Palaeolithic collection is of international importance with finds from the sites at Waverley Wood and Wood Farm quarries (c.50 artefacts) and donations from Mr R B Waite of stone implements from northern Warwickshire (c.40 objects).

The Anglo-Saxon collections include material from three main cemetery site excavations at Stretton-on-Fosse (c.50 objects), Wasperton (c.200 objects) and Bidford-on-Avon (c.150 objects). Excavations on Medieval urban and rural sites combined with chance finds have produced a large collection of approximately 10,000

artefacts. The introduction of the new Treasure Act in 1997 has led to a small but significant number of objects of gold and silver being acquired for the museum's collections.

3.2 Numismatics

Today the numismatics collection comprises over 10,000 coins and is among the larger collections in West Midland museums. Warwickshire Museum continues to collect coins from excavated sites and where funds are available, important coin hoards identified through the 1996 Treasure Act. In 2011, the Museum was able to acquire the first South Warwickshire Roman hoard of 1146 republican and early imperial silver denarii. A second hoard of 440 denarii from the same site was discovered during excavations, and this has also been acquired for the collections.

3.3 Natural History

The Botany collections consist of a very fine herbarium now containing about 40,000 specimens mainly of flowering plants and fungi, including voucher collections and many 'first county records'. This includes material transferred from the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum in 2003.

Zoology specimens now number close to 32,000 in total. Nearly 1000 are vertebrate items, mounted animals, nests, eggs and skeletons. The rest is invertebrates, comprising mainly pinned insect collections made by local entomologists, but also some British shells, a growing economic reference collection of pest species and a small spirit collection. Apart from Lepidoptera, the insect collection is generally limited.

3.4 Geological Collections

The early collections form the bulk of the present-day collection but collecting continues in all areas. In recent decades, notable additions include the fossil collection of Mr Peter Blake, and local dinosaur remains transferred from the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

The collections total about 15,000 specimens made up of approximately 9,000 fossils, 4,000 minerals, 1,000 rocks and a small number of man-made materials (furnace products, e.g. 'slag'). In scientific terms, the main strengths of the collections lie in Triassic vertebrate fossils and Lower Jurassic fossils in general.

3.5 Photographic Collections

The collection comprises photographic images in several forms; 35 mm slides and larger transparencies, black and white prints, colour prints, negative film, glass negatives and digitally stored images. A substantial part of the non-digital collection, including the glass negatives and earlier prints, was transferred to the care of the County Record Office in 2003/2004.

3.6 Costume & Textiles

This includes approximately 5000 items of women's costume, menswear, children's clothes, accessories, and textiles such as samplers and quilts – all within the date range 1600 to the present day. It is one of the region's more significant collections and includes the Sheldon Tapestry Map of Warwickshire c1588.

3.7 Dolls and Toys

Within the collection there are approximately 1700 items of dolls, toys and games dating from the late 18th century to the present day. As well as the Joy Robinson collection, purchased in 1987, the Museum also acquired the Cyril Hobbins collection in 2008. Other additions have come mainly from donations from members of the public. It is of regional, and possibly national, significance.

3.8 Social History

This is now an extensive collection comprising approximately 11,300 items which are sub-divided into the four categories of Community Life, Domestic & Family Life, Personal Life and Working Life. Most fall within the main date range of 1850-1950.

3.9 Paintings, Drawings and Prints

The Museum owns a small collection of paintings, prints and drawings – the most notable being portraits by Allan Ramsay, and the remainder being of local people and scenes.

3.10 Musical instruments

There are a small number of musical instruments of national/international significance, including a lute by Hans Frei and a harpsichord by Herman Tabel.

4

Themes and priorities for future collecting

4.1 Archaeology

Future archaeological acquisitions will be governed in the main by external factors, such as the continuance of developer-funded fieldwork and the donation of finds by landowners. It is therefore not possible to collect actively in a significant way.

Collections from scientific excavations: Material will be acquired from properly controlled scientific archaeological excavations and fieldwork carried out by Archaeology Warwickshire or from other bodies carrying out field projects within the county. All such bodies should be aware of and abide by the Museum's Conditions for the Acceptance of Archaeological Archives and Guidelines for their Presentation, which include criteria for the selection and

retention of finds. In 2011, Warwickshire Museum introduced a charge for the deposition of archaeological archives, which contributes towards the long-term curation of the archives. It is intended that arrangements will be made for digital data to be deposited with the Archaeological Data Service (ADS).

Warwickshire Museum is the designated museum for the deposition of archaeological archives for the County. However, there is currently an agreement that Rugby Art Gallery and Museum will collect archaeological material from the town of Rugby and immediately surrounding parishes, as outlined in their acquisitions and disposal policy. Also, Warwick District Council has an interest in collecting further material from Kenilworth Abbey if it enhances their present collection.

Acquiring casual finds: Casual archaeological finds from the county will be acquired by gift, bequest, transfer or purchase. Private or historic collections of material may be considered if they have particular local relevance.

There are a number of criteria that will be adhered to when considering acquiring casual finds:

- The rarity and completeness of the object
- The existing knowledge of the period
- The existing knowledge of the site
- The potential use of the material for research and display
- Findspot information

The introduction of the Treasure Act procedures in 1997, and subsequent amendments and additions, has meant more objects deemed as Treasure have been offered to the Museum for acquisition. Suitability for the collection and the ability to raise the ex gratia payment (full market value of the item(s)) are the main factors in the decision whether or not to acquire material.

The Portable Antiquities Scheme, in which the Warwickshire Museum has been participating since 1997, has led to significant numbers of casual finds being reported, many through contact with metal detectorists. Wherever possible and appropriate, the Museum will seek to acquire by purchase or donation any objects which add significance to the collections, particularly Bronze and Iron Age metalwork and Medieval small finds, as well as to build on existing significant collections like that of Anglo-Saxon jewellery.

4.2 Numismatics

The Museum will continue to collect coins and tokens which were either found or used in Warwickshire. Efforts will be made specifically to acquire coins from the Warwick mint whenever they become available and if funding allows.

As with the archaeological collections, coins will be reported to the Museum through the Treasure Act and the Portable Antiquities Scheme, some of which the Museum may wish to acquire. Wherever possible and within stated collecting criteria the Museum will seek to obtain by purchase or donation individual coins and hoards which

fill gaps in the collections, particularly those of Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon date, and which build on existing significant collections.

4.3 Natural History

The present botany policy is to continue collecting Warwickshire flowering plants, ferns, mosses, liverworts, lichens, stoneworts and fungi as voucher material for county biodiversity. Fruits, seeds, timbers, economic and other associated material are to be included where representative of county biodiversity, and/or of human historical interest or display potential. Warwickshire Museum has been traditionally seen as the main repository for botanical material within the Coventry and Warwickshire sub-region, due to its good storage facilities and strong connection with local botanists and the Botanical Society of the British Isles. This role will continue.

The present zoology policy is to collect, where appropriate, examples of Warwickshire animals in all stages of life history and both sexes for reference, display and as voucher material. This also includes nests, bones, feeding remains, plant galls and associated material.

The Spicer taxidermy collection will be developed as opportunity arises. The Herbert Museum and Art Gallery, Coventry has traditionally been seen as the main repository for non-Lepidoptera insect material due to its good storage facilities and library. Warwickshire Museum will continue to support this arrangement for as long as it remains appropriate to do so.

For both botany and zoology, any supporting material such as letters, lists, diaries, notebooks and photographs will be collected too. Liaison will take place with the County Record Office as appropriate. Specimens of lower scientific value or quality and those lacking data will be considered for adding to the handling collection.

Photographic slides will continue to be added to the Natural History Slide Collection only where of sufficient quality and relevance, and where appropriate conditions of usage are attached. The museum will also acquire copyright and/or a clear audit trail of ownership and reproduction conditions.

4.4 Geology

Future collecting will concentrate upon well-documented rock, fossil and mineral specimens from Warwickshire that are not represented in the present collections, of better quality than existing holdings, or to preserve hitherto unrepresented features of geological or palaeontological significance. Collections of non-local material made by a collector with strong local connections may be considered, subject to the restrictions referred to earlier in this document. Non-local items may be acquired occasionally for comparative or handling purposes.

The mineral collection has a worldwide scope and new species, or items of high quality or great rarity may be added judiciously.

Future collecting of furnace waste products (slag, glass) will concentrate on well

documented local specimens that are not represented in the present collections.

Supporting material such as letters, lists, diaries, notebooks and photographs will also be collected, including purchasing if circumstances require and permit. Liaison will take place with the County Record Office as appropriate. Specimens of lower scientific value and/or those lacking data will be considered for adding to a handling collection.

Photographic slides will continue to be added to the Geology transparencies collection only where of sufficient quality, relevance, and where appropriate conditions of usage are attached. The museum will also acquire copyright and/or a clear audit trail of ownership and reproduction conditions, with respect to photographs and photographic slides.

4.5 Social History

The Museum will continue to collect social history items that illustrate the lives of Warwickshire people from the 16th century to the present day, including objects that may fill gaps within the existing collection. For example, the only items of furniture that will be acquired will be smaller pieces made by the Warwickshire Woodcarvers group that complement pieces that are already present.

Contemporary and active collecting will, when resources permit, be undertaken as part of community-based projects, which develop specific areas of the collection in a planned way and in partnership with local people. The use of new technologies such as digital photography and sound recording may be used to record areas of human experience which cannot be represented by objects alone.

Wherever possible, the museum will collect items with a known provenance. Supporting material such as photographs and personal stories will also be collected with each object to give it as full a context as possible.

Large and/or working objects, those in poor condition, duplicates of the current collection and those without a Warwickshire provenance will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances.

4.6 Costume and Textiles

The Museum will continue to collect historical costumes, accessories and textiles that reflect the lives of Warwickshire people from the 16th century to the present day, including objects that may fill gaps within the existing collection, for example male garments from across the period, but specifically from the late 18th to the early 19th centuries and from the late 20th to the 21st century.

Contemporary and active collecting of costume and textiles from diverse cultural communities in Warwickshire will, when resources permit, be undertaken as part of community-based projects. These will be targeted to develop specific areas of the collection in a planned way and in partnership with local people. Digital photography will be used to record objects and events which cannot be represented within the collections.

4.7 Paintings, Drawings and Prints

Neighbouring museums have good collections of paintings, prints and drawings, some of which relate to Warwickshire people and landscapes. In view of this, our own collection of prints and drawings will not be actively developed. However, occasionally, works of Warwickshire interest - particularly where these relate to objects/information already held in our collections – may be accepted.

4.8 Dolls and Toys

The Doll and Toy collection is a specialist collection of national significance. In 1987 the WMS purchased the Joy Robinson collection of dolls and toys – a private collection which had been built up over many years and displayed in Oken's House in Warwick as the 'Warwick Doll Museum'. Few of the items had a local connection. In order to develop this important collection, it may be appropriate to acquire items of a non-Warwickshire provenance.

For all disciplines the constraints on present and future collecting include size and suitability of available storage space, staffing levels and expertise, and resources. Consideration will also be made of how the item(s) can be used for display, interpretation, engagement and learning within Museum spaces and the wider county.

5

Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

5.1 The museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.

5.2 The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.

5.3 Archaeology

Themes and priorities with respect to archaeology are driven by the relevance of elements of the collections to the current collecting criteria and priorities and, to a lesser extent, pressures on storage space.

There are archives from excavations carried out before the 1990s, where the retention criteria for finds were not clearly defined – a 'collect everything' mind-set where significant quantities of unstratified and bulk material were retained and subsequently

transferred into the Museum collections. Much of this material has proven unnecessary to the future understanding and interpretation of a site, but as some sites remain unpublished and with post-excavation analysis still to be carried out, selection can only be done in consultation with specialists and as staff time allows.

The main priorities identified for rationalisation;

Animal bone from Alcester (principally excavations in the 1960s and 1970s)
Pottery (mortaria) from Mancetter-Hartshill kiln site excavations (1980s and earlier)
Medieval pottery from Warwick sites excavated in the 1960s

The main priorities for disposal;

Collections of material resulting from the rationalisation process (see above)
Accessioned objects with no provenance or a non-Warwickshire (but UK) provenance
Unaccessioned objects which do not fit in with the current collecting criteria – this does not include objects from the Egyptology or Ancient Greek collections.

5.4 Numismatics

As with the archaeology collection, relevance rather than space-saving criteria will be the driver in any future review.

5.5 Natural History

The main focus will be the taxidermy collection, where a framework will be drawn up with which to assess items. Those of a lower quality, together with damaged or unprovenanced specimens will be identified for potential disposal.

5.6 Geology

There remains a small quantity of unprovenanced rock and fossil specimens that will be assessed for potential disposal. Attention will also be given to the county's Geological Record – a database of around 1800 geological sites across the county – to see whether it might be better positioned with either the Warwickshire Geological Conservation Group or the County Ecologists in terms of access and potential use, subject to discussions with the parties involved.

5.7 Costume and Textiles

The Warwickshire Museum has a collection of some 500 dresses dating from the eighteenth century to the present day. It was known that some of these were either in poor condition, duplicated better examples or lacked a Warwickshire provenance, and so an extensive review of 82 examples from the dress collection was conducted in 2018. This made use of a Costume Collection Review Grid that was devised by the service's former Keeper of Social History working alongside the current Curator of Human History.

The result of the exercise was a shortlist of dresses for potential de-accessioning, with a limited number being retained for study use.

5.8 Social History

Over the past ten years, Social History has undertaken rationalisation and disposal as part of a planned programme of improvements to storage and documentation. These have included a number of unaccessioned agricultural items as well as a farm cart that was successfully transferred to Chedham's Yard, Wellesbourne.

A group of firearms, which entered the Museum collections via police amnesties in the 1960s and 1980s, has been identified for disposal as they have no provenance or relevance to Warwickshire. This will require further consultation with outside bodies to ensure that all legal requirements are met before disposal is undertaken.

6 Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

- 6.1 The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.

7 Collecting policies of other museums

- 7.1 The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.
- 7.2 Specific reference is made to the following museums:
- Rugby Museum and Art Gallery
 - Nuneaton Museum and Art Gallery
 - Culture Coventry
 - Leamington Spa Art Gallery and Museum
 - Birmingham Museums Trust
 - Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

8 Archival holdings

- 8.1 As the Museum holds archives in the form of photographs and printed ephemera it will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives in Museums and Galleries for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd edition

2002).

9

Acquisition

9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is that day-to-day decisions on additions to the collections are delegated to the curators of Human History and Natural Sciences, taking into account the scope of the existing collection, the conservation requirements of any new material and the acquisition guidelines as detailed in the Collections Development Policy.

The funding of any purchases requires reference to be made to the Development and Operations Manager, Heritage and Culture Warwickshire. External grant funding will be sought whenever appropriate.

9.2 The museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).

9.3 In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The Governing Body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

10

Human remains

10.1 As the museum holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005.

11

Biological and geological material

11.1 So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the

express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

12

Archaeological material

- 12.1 The museum will not acquire archaeological material (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the Governing Body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.
- 12.2 In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure (i.e. the Coroner for Treasure) as set out in the Treasure Act 1996 (as amended by the Coroners & Justice Act 2009).

13

Exceptions

- 13.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:
- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
 - acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin

In these cases, the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.

14

Spoliation

- 14.1 The Museum will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

15

The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

- 15.1 The Museum's Governing Body, acting on the advice of the Museum's professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the 'Guidance for the care of

human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The Museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

- 15.2** The disposal of human remains from museums in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums'.

16

Disposal procedures

- 16.1** All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the Spectrum primary procedures on disposal.
- 16.2** The Governing Body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.
- 16.3** When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the Museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.
- 16.4** When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, exchange, or as a last resort – destruction.
- 16.5** The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the Governing Body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. Expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the Museum will also be sought.
- 16.6** A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly

damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the Governing Body of the Museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.

- 16.7** Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- 16.8** If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museum to which it was offered as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material normally through a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.9** The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the Museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.
- 16.10** Any monies received by the Museum Governing Body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from the Arts Council England.

- 16.11** The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.
- 16.12** Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with Spectrum procedure on deaccession and disposal.

Disposal by exchange

- 16.13** The nature of disposal by exchange means that the Museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited Museum. The Governing Body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.
- 16.13.1** In cases where the Governing Body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or non-Accredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 16.1-5 will apply.
- 16.13.2** If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.
- 16.13.3** If the exchange is proposed with a non-Accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will place a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, or make an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.13.4** Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in the museum's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments

to be received. At the end of this period, the Governing Body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

Disposal by destruction

- 16.14** If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the Governing Body may decide to destroy it.
- 16.15** It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.
- 16.16** Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.
- 16.17** Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.
- 16.18** The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, eg the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

