



mansfieldmuseum
Mansfield District Council
Creating a District where People can Succeed

Collections Development Policy

Museum: Mansfield Museum

Governing Body: Mansfield District Council

Date approved by governing body: 08.01.13

Date at which policy due for review: March 2017

1. Museum's statement of purpose.

Mansfield Museum seeks to collect and interpret items that celebrate the history of Mansfield District and is committed to encouraging participation in cultural activities by local communities and visitors, for the benefit and enjoyment of all.

2. An overview of existing collections.

In 1903, William Edward Baily, a Victorian collector of natural history objects, offered his collections to Mansfield with a building in which to house them. The Town Council accepted his generous offer and the Baily Museum opened to the public on 6 July 1904. Over the next thirty years the Museum continued to acquire new collections, including the collections of local naturalist Joseph Whitaker and local artist Albert Sorby Buxton.

The Museum has continued to collect mainly through public donations and now holds collections of around 15,000 items from all periods of time that have a link to the geographic area governed by Mansfield District Council. These include objects that have their origin elsewhere but that still have a strong connection to the District, for example via the life and activity of a local resident. These items can be summarised by the following list of core and supporting collections.

The Museum's early history has left it with an important natural history collection that includes objects of local and national significance. The collections of fine and decorative art are smaller and of considerable local significance, but of less importance outside the Mansfield area. Collecting in the later part of the Twentieth Century was focussed on social history material and this collection now forms around half of the Museum's collections and is of considerable local significance. Similarly there is a large and well used collection of photographs of the local area.

The photographic collection has recently been enhanced by the addition of the negatives from the local paper, The Chad. These have great local significance.

The Museum currently holds the 'archives' of The Old Mansfield Society under a long term loan agreement which will be reviewed every five years. This includes photographs and paper records pertaining to the Town which have been collected by the Society.

Access is restricted to members of the Society and any members of the public requiring information from them are requested to contact the Society for access.

The Museum also holds archaeological material belonging to the Sherwood Archaeological Society under a long term loan agreement. The Museum will continue to house the collections of the Sherwood Archaeological Society under the terms of the loan agreement, which is reviewed every five years. The Society is responsible for access to this material and for the costs of storage materials required to keep it according to current best practice.

2.1 Core Collections

Natural History.

- Whitaker Collection of birds and animals.
- Webb Collection of birds.
- Foreign birds.
- Birds' eggs.
- Butterflies and Moths.

Porcelain.

- Porcelain relating to William Billingsley.
- Manners Collection of Lustreware.
- Tagg Collection of Ceramics.

Fine Art.

- Watercolours by A.S. Buxton.
- Watercolours by Seddon-Tyrer.
- Collection of prints, paintings and drawings.

Social History.

Collection of items, including archival material, for:

- domestic and personal life.
- trade and industry.
- leisure and social life.
- local government and amenities.

Photography.

- Collection of photographs of the local area.
- Collection of negatives of the local area.

The Museum also keeps small quantities of:

- Firearms, held in accordance with relevant legislation.
- Coins.
- Archaeology.
- Costume.
- Geology.
- Palaeontology.

2.2 Supporting Collections

These collections are not accessioned although they generally have Entry Forms which state that they are to be used in Education sessions or in Memory Loans Boxes.

Handling and Loans Collection

- Duplicate or un-provenanced items that have been identified as suitable for use by schools, groups etc.
- Copies and replicas.

Library

- Working collection of books, pamphlets and periodicals relating to the collections and the area (not including items of inherent historical value)
- History files containing copies of information, articles and notes relating to collections.

3. Themes and priorities for future collecting.

The Museum restricts its collecting to the following categories.

Period of time and/or geographical area to which collecting relates

Mansfield District Council Area

I. Social History.

The Museum collects objects, including photographs pertaining to the life of the people in the town. These are:-

- a) household and personal items.
- b) items related to local trade and industry.
- c) items related to social and leisure industry.
- d) items relating to local government and amenities.

In most cases archival material is referred to the Nottinghamshire Archives in Nottingham which already has much of the material relating to Mansfield District Council. Where the material is not wanted by the Archives and it falls within the scope of this policy the Museum will accession it into the collections.

II. Ceramics.

The Museum will collect items of porcelain/pottery with associations with the area. The famous porcelain decorator William Billingsley lived in Mansfield for a short period of his life and therefore examples of his work, from any factory he worked at, will be collected. Other ceramic objects related to the town, such as commemorative mugs or plates, will also be collected.

III. Archaeology.

The Museum currently holds a small amount of its own archaeological material together with material belonging to the Sherwood Archaeological Society, which is held under a long term loan agreement. The Museum will continue to house the collections of the

Sherwood Archaeological Society under the terms of the loan agreement, which is reviewed every five years.

There is currently no trained Archaeologist on the Museum staff, and without the relevant expertise, it is the Museum's policy not to actively collect new archaeological material. The only exception to this would be in the case of significant local finds, unearthed in the process of an official dig carried out by a recognised group of professional archaeologists. These items would be accepted in to the Museum's collections, subject to the following terms:

'The Museum will not acquire by purchase objects in any case where the Curator or Portfolio Holder for Economic Regeneration has reasonable cause to believe that the circumstances of their recovery involved the recent unscientific or intentional destruction or damage of ancient monuments or other known archaeological sites, or involved a failure to disclose the finds to the owner or occupier of the land or the proper authorities in case of a possible Treasure Trove.'

IV. **Fine Art**

The Museum has a fine collection of watercolours by Albert Sorby Buxton. The majority of these were given to the Museum by Mrs. Buxton in 1938, and since then the collection has been added to by the kind donations of local individuals and occasional purchases from the Museum's acquisition fund. The collection currently numbers around two hundred, of which the majority are on permanent display. The Museum will continue to add to this collection by this important local figure. Paintings by Seddon-Tyrer, another well-known local artist, will also be collected.

The Museum also has a varied collection of other paintings some of which are relevant to the town while others are not. It is the Museum's policy only to collect works that are either by local artists or of local scenes/personalities.

V. **Digital Material**

The Museum will actively collect digital images and sound recordings. This area of collecting will grow in the future and new means of storing the material will need to be employed. A specific policy for the collection of digital material will be drawn up in consultation with other local interested bodies including the Nottinghamshire Archives and other local Museums. The material will be accessioned according to the Museum's Documentation Procedures.

4. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

The Museum has a long-term purpose and possesses permanent collections in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body accepts the principle that, except for sound curatorial reasons, there is a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the Museum's collection. Disposals would however be considered where the following criteria apply:

- Items have been damaged or have deteriorated beyond the Museum's ability to repair them
- Items are discovered to pose a threat to health and safety
- Items have been identified as spoliated during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period
- Items have been subject to a request for repatriation or restitution

Where disposal is being considered this will be carried out in accordance with the disposal procedures, outlined below in clauses 13 (a) to 13 (o). The Museum will also be guided by the MA code of Ethics and Museums Associations 'Disposal Toolkit', 2008.

5. Limitations on collecting

The Museum recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

6. Collecting policies of other museums

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 specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

Specific reference is made to the following museums and archives:

Chesterfield Museums
Newark Museums
Nottingham City Museums
Nottinghamshire Archives

7. Policy review procedure

This Collections Development Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is noted above.

Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to this policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

8. Acquisitions not covered by the policy

Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the Museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

9. Acquisition procedures

a. The Museum will exercise 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.

b. In particular, 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).

c. 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 DCMS in 2005.

d. 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.

e. The Museum will not acquire archaeological antiquities (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. 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 as defined by the Treasure Act 1996.

f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 9a, 9b, 9c, or 9e will only be because the museum is either:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin; or
- acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgement of experts in the field concerned has not been illicitly traded; or
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin; or
- in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970.

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.

g. The Museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

10. Spoliation

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.

11. Repatriation and Restitution

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 13a-13d, 13g and 13 o below will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

12. Management of archives

As the Museum holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002).

13. Disposal procedures

Disposal preliminaries

- a. The governing body will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.
- b. By definition, the Museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the Museum's collection.
- c. The Museum will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.
- d. 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.

Motivations for disposal and method of disposal

- e. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs 13g -13s will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.
- f. The Museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

The disposal decision-making process

- g. 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 the 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. External 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.

Responsibility for disposal decision-making

- h. 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 of the collection acting alone.

Use of proceeds of sale

- i. Any monies received by the Museum's governing body from the disposal of items will be applied 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 these cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from Arts Council England.
- j. The proceeds of a sale will be ring-fenced so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard.

Disposal by gift or sale

k. Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. 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.

l. If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.

m. 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.

Disposal by exchange

n. The Museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

Documenting disposal

o. 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.