



Swindon Museum and Art Gallery

Collections Development Policy



Name of museum: *Swindon Museum and Gallery*

Name of governing body: *Swindon Borough Council*

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: 11th April 2016

The policy was approved by the Lead Member for Culture, using their delegated powers.

The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. It will also be reviewed in response to changes to related policies or laws.

Date at which this policy is due for review: *March 2021*

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.

In autumn 2015, this policy was shared with the following organisations and individuals as part of our consultation process.

- STEAM: Museum of the Great Western Railway
- Lydiard House and Park
- The Museum of Computing, Swindon
- Richard Jefferies Museum Trust
- Local Studies, Swindon Central Library
- County Archaeologist, Wiltshire Council
- Liz Smith-Gibbons, Conservation Officer, Swindon Borough Council
- Wiltshire Heritage Museum, Devizes
- Chippenham Museum
- Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum
- Local Studies, Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre
- Oxfordshire Museums Service
- The Corinium Museum, Cirencester

1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:

1.1. The museum's statement of purpose is:

To promote, showcase, enhance, celebrate and safeguard Swindon Museum and Art Gallery's important collections to inspire our visitors now and in the 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

Swindon Museum opened in 1920 in Victoria Hall on Regent's Circus. The idea for a town museum had started in 1912 when the geologist Charles Gore offered the town his collection. The building was used for war work in the First World War so opening the museum to the public was delayed. Charles Gore became the museum's first curator and his collection of geological and archaeological specimens formed the initial collections. Similar collections were given by William Morris, the founder of the Swindon Advertiser, and Alderman J Powell who donated a collection of decorative art and pictures.

In 1930 the museum moved to its current location at Apsley House on Bath Road in Swindon's Old Town.

Since the 1960s, Swindon Museum and Art Gallery has acted as the repository for archaeology excavated within the geographical area of Swindon. The town has expanded rapidly in this time and the museum holds large and important archives, as well as significant finds acquired through the Treasure process or through donation.

The museum has also developed large collections of social history including photographic collections, which have been gifted to the museum or acquired through purchase.

An art collection was first proposed in the 1930s by Lord Methuen. It formally began in 1943 following the gift of 21 works of modern British art by local collector H.J.P Bomford. This was supplemented with a number of purchases and gifts of modern British art. From the late 1940s the collection toured galleries in the UK and was shown in the Arts Centre or within the old reference library in Swindon's town hall.

In 1964, an extension was added to the museum at Apsley House providing designated gallery and storage space for the growing art collection.

Between the 1960s and early 2000s, collecting of art was guided by recommendations from Tate curator Richard Morphet. Morphet worked closely with the Chief Librarian (Howard Joliffe) and Head of Arts and Recreation Services (Denys Hodson) to expand the collection to around 500 works of modern British art, representing most major figures, schools and periods.

SM&AG holds an important collection of studio ceramics collection. This collection was established in 1965 as a reference collection for the Swindon Education Committee. The collection

was transferred to SM&AG in the 1970s. It has since developed through loans, gifts and purchases.

Throughout the museum's history, there have been periods of unfocused or uncontrolled collecting. This means SM&AG holds a large collection of objects, some of which have little relevance to the museum, its users or the local area. To address this, SM&AG commissioned a Collections Significance Review in 2014 to obtain a high-level summary of the collections and identify objective criteria to govern future collecting and rationalisation.

The agreed significance criteria are:

- Provenance
- Local relevance
- Exploitability: research, learning, commercial, display
- Condition
- Visual and sensory impact
- Rarity

The Significance Review has led to a number of immediate improvements, including a new system of collections categorisation which is reflected in this policy. In the past, descriptors and names assigned to collections were unclear and did not represent the totality of the collections held by SM&AG.

The museum and art collections are displayed at Apsley House in Old Town. The museum stores or displays collections at Apsley House and at four off-site locations:

- Whitehall Farm Archaeology Store
- Hillmead Large Object Store
- The Richard Jefferies Birthplace Museum
- The Railway Cottage

Before 2015, SM&AG collections were also stored at Waterside, the Civic Offices, Lydiard Park and the Agricultural Store. A number of large archaeological archives remain with commercial archaeology firms.

Since the museum's inception, the collections held by SM&AG have been overseen by a number of staff members working in different roles and to different job titles. To ensure the sustainability of the approach laid out in this policy and related documents, it will use the term 'Collections Staff'. This will refer to the person or most senior person with specific responsibility for the collections at SM&AG. Their Job Description should contain specific reference to collections management and they should have appropriate training and skills to carry out this responsibility. In the case of long term staff absence or vacancies within the Collections Staff, the museum should cease acquisition and consult their Museum Development Officer for advice.

3. An overview of current collections

The Swindon Collection of Modern British Art

The Swindon Collection of Modern British Art comprises approximately 500 works of art and 200 studio ceramics. These have been made between 1880 and 2015 by British artists. The art collection includes 2 dimensional and 3 dimensional materials. It does not include film, large sculpture or installation.

- Paintings and two dimensional works
- Studio Ceramics
- Sculpture
- Artist archives, books and correspondence

Archaeology

The archaeology collections consist of artefacts and related soil samples recovered from the ground, dating from the Palaeolithic to AD1700. They contain small, bulk finds and reports (including photographs, day books, index cards, published and unpublished reports). The collection includes finds and archives from within our current collecting area, material from the county of Wiltshire and small amounts of material from outside Wiltshire and from outside the UK.

This collection includes large archives deposited from archaeological units and archaeological companies. It also includes material found by individuals and gifted to the museum or acquired through the Treasure process. This is the process by which objects legitimately found by detectorists and archaeological clubs are recorded through the Portable Antiquity Scheme and made available to museums for purchase or donation.

The largest objects in the collection are Roman stone sarcophagi, which are currently in storage.

This collection also includes a small Egyptian collection comprising a mummy, mummified hands, pre-dynastic ceramics and some worked flints.

Social History

This varied collection includes material relating to everyday life in Swindon and elsewhere. It contains several large photography collections, comprising prints, negatives and slides. There are large collections of crested china and locally produced bottles. There are large amounts of material associated with Swindon companies including Garrard, Morse's, McIlroys, Pressed Steel and others. This collection also includes the Local Art collection – paintings, drawings and prints showing scenes of Swindon and the surrounding area, or by artists from Swindon and the surrounding area. This specific collection has also traditionally included non-local pre-1900 art.

The main areas and specific subsets of the social history collection are listed below. There are objects within the social history collection that fall outside these headings, but are still considered part of the social history collection.

Numismatics

This collection comprises modern and historic coins, bank notes and other monetary items. Its main subsets are:

- British coins and bank notes
- Non British coins and bank notes

Medals and tokens

This collection includes military and civic medals, tokens and badges, mostly with local provenance and relevance

Photography

This large collection comprises photographic prints, calling and cabinet cards, negatives (including plate glass negatives), Magic Lantern slides, slides, and mixed photograph and postcard collections. It includes mounted material and duplicate material. It also contains the following named subset collections:

- Woodfield Collection of plate glass negatives (c.1900-1920, with prints)
- Fred Stevens postcard collection (c.1900-1985, photographs and postcards, local and national subjects)
- Albert Beaney collection (1950-60s, slides and prints, including some duplicate prints)
- Eric Alman slide collection (Various dates, local scenes, includes duplicate material)
- The Swindon Camera Club Photographic Collections (1960s-1980s, including mounted prints by John Evans, Denis Bird and Bill Dean photograph collection)
- Harris Collections (plate glass negatives, local and national scenes)
- Museum postcard collection

Costume and textiles

This collection includes a variety of costume including agricultural smocks, Christening gowns and uniforms. There is a large and unaccessioned collection of shoes acquired from a local show store which forms a subset of this collection.

Local art

This collection includes a large number of 19th century paintings showing Swindon and donated by 'Raggy' Powell, or paintings by artists from Swindon and the surrounding area., The collection also includes historic prints and paintings without a Swindon connection by artists including William Hogarth and John Collier, donated by local collectors.

Maps and plans

Many framed, including printed and hand drawn maps and charts.

Ceramics and glassware

This includes large collections of local ginger beer bottles, ceramic beer bottles and demi johns, and a large collection of local and non-local crested china.

Paper documents

This comprises a large and varied collection of accounts, accessioned archives, correspondence, publicity material, postcards and other paper collections. It also includes some accession museum documentation, such as old files of press clippings, staff diaries and publicity material. Notable subsets are;

- Mary Slade Collection (approx. 500+ WWI POW postcards, account books and other paperwork)
- Post office archive (accessioned archive for the Swindon post office)

Industrial and commercial

A varied collection of material from Swindon shops and factories, including the following major subset:

- Garrard Collection (turntables, clocks, parts and accessories, publicity material)

Domestic

A varied collection of domestic and personal items, including small furnishings and appliances, with limited local significance or rarity.

Schools, unions, societies and organisations

A collection including banners, plaques, trophies and other material.

Books

A large collection of historic books and reference texts, many duplicates, both accessioned and unaccessioned.

Printing blocks

A small collection of early 20th century engraved printing plates, many of local scenes or works of art in our collection.

Earth and Natural World

SM&AG has extensive geological, natural history and botanical collections, as well as some important palaeontology collections. The majority comprises named collections collated and donated by named individuals, material acquired to furnish a natural history gallery in the 1950s and 1960s, and objects acquired to support the 1970s-80s schools loans service.

This collection category includes local, natural and international material, largely acquired by individual collectors. However, this category also includes a number of named collections with local significance and provenance, such as the Higginbotham Mollusca of Wiltshire and the Todd Herbarium.

The collection includes historic glass slides documenting aspects of the geology and palaeontology collection.

Geology

This includes local, British and international geological samples, including rocks and minerals. Significant subsets include:

- personal historic collections compiled by Charles Gore
- personal historic collections compiled by William Morris
- specimens acquired to support the schools loan service

Palaeontology

Including local pliosaur and plesiosaur bones, and many local and non-local fossils.

Natural history

A varied collection including many non-local taxidermied items acquired to support the school loans service, boxed collections of butterflies and other insects, boxed collections of shells and a large number of bird eggs. It also includes the following important subsets

- Higginbotham Mollusca (a complete record of all Wiltshire molluscs with collection notes)
- The gharial (a large stuffed and preserved gharial, sometimes known as 'the crocodile' or 'Swindon croc' acquired by Swindon Museum in 1935)

Botany

This comprises a single, large, named collection

- Todd Herbarium (approximately 2000 pressed plant specimens from Wiltshire and elsewhere in the UK, with related notes and correspondence)

The Victoria Hall Historic Collections

These collections comprise a diverse set of material collected before 1960 by Charles Gore, William Morris and others. It includes distinct collections assembled by local collectors, but with otherwise limited rarity or local relevance.

World Cultures

A collection of musical instruments, weapons and decorative arts from Africa, South East Asia, Australasia and South America, many acquired by Charles Gore or for the schools loans service, but including the following named collections:

- Winslow Collection of musical instruments
- Longland Collection of African objects

Seal and Gem Impressions

A collection of more than 200 seal, medal and gem impressions in wax and plaster, acquired before 1940.

Firearms

A collection of deactivated long and hand guns, including rifles, muskets and revolvers.

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

The Swindon Collection of Modern British Art

Modern British Art

SM&AG will continue to acquire significant examples of modern and contemporary art by British artists.

Significance encompasses artistic quality, uniqueness, influence, and cultural and social impact. Objects will be sought and favoured which demonstrate a link to a work or works already in our ownership. A link could be a shared subject, style, media or personal connection between the makers of the work.

Objects must be produced by British artists (artists born in Britain or who have trained or spent a considerable part of their working life in Britain). Works should not date before 1890. For living artists, artists should already have their work in at least one public and/or museum collection and have a track record of being exhibited in the UK or abroad.

Additional advice may be sought from Richard Morphet, curators at the Victoria Art Gallery, Bristol Museum and Art Gallery and other experts to determine the artistic significance.

Preference will be given to 2 dimensional works including paintings, drawings, photography and editioned works or prints.

SM&AG is not in a position to collect installation or large scale three dimensional works until the relocation plans are further developed.

SM&AG's priorities for collection to this category are:

- Works by major modern British artists not in our collection, such as David Hockney, Stanley Spencer, Francis Bacon, Dora Carrington, Matthew Smith, Peter Doig, Barbara Hepworth and Peter Lanyon.
- Works by major contemporary British artists not in our collection, such as Bridget Riley, Jenny Savile, Chris Offili, Tracy Emin, and Humphrey Ocean.
- Works demonstrating underrepresented movements in modern British art, such as the Kitchen Sink Paintings, the Scottish Colourists, Young British Art or Op Art.
- Works demonstrating major contemporary trends in British art
- Small to medium examples of modern sculpture, including maquettes and prototypes
- Individual examples of modern British art photography by artists including Martin Parr, Wolfgang Tillmans and Sam Taylor-Wood

Studio Ceramics

SM&AG will continue to collect modern and contemporary studio ceramics by British makers or makers who have spent part of their careers in Britain.

Priority will be given to contemporary ceramics, figurative ceramics, and experimental techniques and materials.

SM&AG will also prioritise acquiring ceramics made at potteries within the borough of Swindon and neighbouring areas (in consultation with museums collecting in those areas) such as items made at the Ramsbury and Cricklade potteries. It will also prioritise collecting from ceramicists working in the south west.

The Museum Collections

Swindon Museum and Art Gallery will continue to actively collect items which relates (through production, discovery or use) to our geographic collecting area. This area covers the entire Borough of Swindon and includes the following areas:

- Inglesham
- Hannington
- Castle Eaton
- Blunsdon St. Andrew
- Highworth
- Stanton Fitzwarren
- South Marston
- Stratton St. Margaret
- Covingham
- Swindon
- Wroughton
- Chiseldon
- Liddington
- Wanborough
- Bishopstone
- Haydon Wick

Collection specific priorities are detailed below, however in all cases consideration will be given to both the object significance criteria and the capability of SM&AG to store and safeguard the object.

Archaeology

Commercial archaeological archives

SM&AG accepts complete archaeological archives (finds and related paper, photographic and digital information) excavated within our collecting area. SM&AG should be informed by the archaeology company in advance of any investigative work taking place at which point an accession number will be issued. SM&AG will accept deposition of the archive upon completion of written reports and signing off of the site by the Planning Archaeologist.

In cases where a site archive crosses collecting boundaries it should be agreed in advance which museum will take the resulting archive. SM&AG will not accept split site archives except in exceptional circumstances.

SM&AG charges a box fee for commercial archaeological archives and will provide copies of the document 'Guidelines for the deposition of archaeological archives' and will require depositors

follow the conditions laid out in the document (including future revisions). These guidelines are provided to commercial archaeology companies and are currently being updated.

SM&AG will acquire and accession finds, reports and material relating to specific archives together. Information created later (such as academic papers or the results of subsequent research) should be collected as part of the museum's Object Files.

For individuals/non-commercial organisations:

Archives from non-commercial excavations (e.g. local archaeological groups) occurring within our collecting area may be accepted by SM&AG. In these cases SM&AG would expect to be involved in the planning discussions around the excavations and the same criteria will be applied as for commercial organisations. Box fees may be flexible in these cases, however SM&AG would expect these to form part of any funding applications made by the project.

In some circumstances SM&AG will consider accepting individual finds from our geographical collecting area. These finds should be registered with the Portable Antiquities Scheme and comply with the legal stipulations set out in section 12 of this document. All finds of this nature will be assessed against our significance criteria. Due to limited collecting budgets and the scale of our existing archaeology collection, we will give special priority to collecting underrepresented areas, historical periods and types of material. We will prioritise collecting:

- Material of exceptional local or national rarity or importance
- Objects from villages within Swindon Borough
- Post roman objects and specifically medieval objects

These priorities may reviewed in response to future research and documentation.

Social History

SM&AG collects social history objects with strong connections to the people, organisations, industries (not including the Great Western Railway), culture and pastimes of Swindon and the villages and rural areas within the geographical Borough of Swindon.

This section will be reviewed as we improve our knowledge of the existing social history collections. Collecting will be guided by the Significance Criteria, as well as specific criteria listed below which reflect the strengths and weaknesses in our existing collections.

- Provenance
- Local relevance
- Exploitability
- Condition
- Visual and sensory impact
- Rarity

Numismatics

This collection subset is closed to future collecting and is potential area for future review and rationalisation.

Medals and tokens

This collection should be carefully checked before acquiring any similar material to prevent duplication. This collection is closed to military medals which do not have local significance. Acquired material should be in good or very good condition. Material linked to a named individual from or connected to the Swindon area should be prioritised.

Photography

This collection should be carefully checked for duplication of material, especially of postcards and reprinted Victorian/early 20th century photography.

SM&AG will collect both individual photographs and collections of photographs and/or negatives. Priority is given to photographs showing named local individuals, photographs showing the changing face of urban Swindon, photographs showing rural areas and villages within the borough area and photographs showing creative and commercial activities.

This collection is closed to slide collections due to space and access constraints.

The ability to digitise and/or reproduce the photographic collection must be a consideration at the time of acquisition, so care should be taken where photography is badly deteriorated or has significant copyright restrictions.

Additional care should be taken if approached with cellulose nitrate film stock, due to the hazards it poses to other collections. Such material should only be acquired if the museum is able to acquire suitable storage equipment.

Costume and textiles

Future collecting in this area will focus on costume and textiles which have been made locally. Priority will be given to mid/late 20th century locally made costume.

The collection is closed to Christening robes, agricultural smocks and military uniforms.

Local art

This collection is closed to non-local historic art. This area of the collection is a potential area for future review and rationalisation.

Additions to the local collection will be considered if they are over 50 years old, by local artists and/or have a local scene or individual as their subject. 'Local' means from within our geographical collecting area.

We will prioritise paintings, drawings and prints showing the villages and rural area, showing the changing face of urban Swindon, and/or depicting significant local people.

The ability to digitise and/or reproduce the collection must be a consideration at the time of acquisition, so care should be taken if material has significant copyright restrictions.

Maps and plans

This collection is closed to future acquisitions. Potential donors will be directed to the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre.

Ceramics and glassware

Material should only be collected if it has a strong local provenance and is not already represented in our collection. Priority should be given to items connected to named local companies. Large donations of multiple objects should be avoided in favour of acquiring a representative selection of objects.

The museum will not collect any additional local crested china.

Paper documents

Care should be taken to avoid duplicating objects already held in our collections. Photocopied material should not be collected. Archives will be directed to the Wiltshire and Swindon History centre.

The museum will prioritise individual items and small collections relating to named local individuals, local advertising material, and material relating to 20th and 21st century industries in Swindon. We will also prioritise material which reflects the changing face of Swindon, material which reflects the diverse and multicultural nature of Swindon, and material which reflects the urban and rural character of the area.

The museum aims to acquire and accession a complete run of museum and gallery events leaflets and exhibition guides.

Other museum history files may be accessioned if they are complete, in good condition and otherwise fit our significance criteria. It will otherwise manage museum history files in line with our Documentation Plan, Policy and Procedures Manual.

Industrial and commercial

We will continue to collect to acquire material for this collection, prioritising items in good condition from companies and individuals not currently represented in our collection. We will prioritise small and medium sized objects, publicity material, photographs and prototypes unless additional large object storage space can be acquired.

Domestic

We will only collect items with a very strong local provenance. Otherwise, this collection is closed and is potential target for future review and rationalisation.

Schools, unions, societies and organisations

We will continue to collect small to medium sized items for this collection in good condition.

Books

This collection is closed to future acquisitions.

Printing blocks

This collection subset is closed to future acquisitions.

Earth and Natural World

Geology

This collection is closed to future acquisition, except in exceptional circumstances, such as the material was collected by Charles Gore or William Morris. This may be reviewed in response to future research and documentation.

Palaeontology

This collection is closed to future collecting, except in the case of large, intact specimens not already represented in our collections. This may be reviewed in response to future research and documentation.

Natural history

This collection is closed to future acquisition, except in exceptional circumstances. This may be reviewed in response to future research and documentation.

Botany

This collection is closed to future acquisition, except in exceptional circumstances. This may be reviewed in response to future research and documentation.

The Victoria Hall Historic Collections

World Cultures

This is a historic collection and closed to future acquisition.

Seal and Gem Impressions

This is a historic collection and closed to future acquisition.

Firearms

This is a historic collection and closed to future acquisition.

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.

SM&AG has identified the following collection areas for review, as these collections do not fit current or previous collecting policies and do not meet our significance criteria. Rationalisation will only be considered following a thorough review of the collection, ensuring legal title and assessing significance, benefits and risks. If, following this process, the collection matches criteria for rationalisation, we will seek stakeholder advice and expert opinion before proceeding.

Collections which fit our priorities for review and possible rationalisation

- Numismatics
- Firearms and weaponry
- Pre 20th century china and glassware with no local connection or provenance and non-studio 20th century ceramics
- Unprovenanced archaeological finds and bulk archives associated with the Thamesdown Archaeology unit
- Historic, non-local art
- Archives
- Duplicated material
- Material which meets none of our significance criteria
- Material in poor, very poor or unsalvageable condition
- Material which poses a risk to staff, visitors or other collections

SM&AG will require authorisation from the lead member for Culture or from the Cabinet before commencing the disposal of accessioned objects, and will undertake consultation with communities, neighbouring museums and archives. An accurate record would be kept of any and all decisions taken. The decision would be clearly communicated internally and through appropriate external channels, such as the Museums Journal.

SM&AG understands disposal to be a process of finding an alternative and more appropriate venue or use for an object currently in its ownership, in line with the Museums Association Disposal Toolkit. Sale or destruction of an object would only be undertaken as a last resort.

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 museum(s)/organisation(s):

Museums within Swindon

The following Accredited museums are based within the same geographical collecting area as SM&AG:

STEAM: Museum of the Great Western Railway

STEAM collects material relating the GWR railway, the GWR in Swindon, New Swindon and related institutions, and to individuals who worked for or are otherwise connected to the GWR. SM&AG does not collect material from these areas. However, it will consult STEAM in regards to large collections containing elements relating to the above (such as photography collections including GWR images) and around artistic depictions of the GWR and New Swindon.

Lydiard House and Park

Lydiard House collects material relating to the house, its historic parkland and estate and the St John family. SM&AG does not collect material from any of these categories.

Richard Jefferies Birthplace Museum

The Richard Jefferies Museum Trust manages material relating to the nature writer Richard Jefferies, and to his birthplace near Coate Water, These collections are largely on loan from the Richard Jefferies Society and SM&AG.

SM&AG has previously collected material relating to Richard Jefferies but does so no longer. SM&AG loans items relating to Richard Jefferies to the Richard Jefferies Museum Trust at Coate Water and would consult the museum on agricultural or rural material from the immediate area.

The Richard Jefferies Museum Trust has expressed a desire to collect material in the future. We will update this document to reflect their collection priorities and any potential areas of overlap.

The Museum of Computing

The Museum of Computing collects material relating to the history of computing. SM&AG does not collect this material. SM&AG will consult with the Museum of Computing around material associated with Swindon-based technology and IT companies.

Regional museums

These museums are based outside our current geographical collecting area but have either shared the same geographical collecting area in the past or are located near our current collecting area.

For archaeological archives, we will consult with the following museums if proposed investigations cross pre agreed geographical collecting area boundaries. We do not accept split archives so will consult with neighbouring museums to agree recipients before any archives are accepted in principle.

- Chippenham Museum
- Wiltshire Heritage Centre, Devizes
- Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum
- Trowbridge Museum
- The Corinium Museum, Cirencester
- Oxfordshire Museums Service

We will also consult these museums for non-archaeological material relating to Wiltshire and surrounding counties which may cross previous or current geographical collecting areas.

Museums with art or other large, special collections

We recognise that the following institutions, among others, have important and comparable collections of modern British art and will consult them over any large and sensitive acquisitions:

- Pallant House, Chichester
- Tate Britain
- Southampton Art Gallery

Archives and libraries

We will consult with the following archives and libraries around archival material, plans and maps, correspondence, and paper documents and photography which duplicates material already accessioned into our collections:

- Local Studies, Swindon Central Library
- Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre

Outside the above examples, SM&AG will consult other museums and seek expert advice if offered objects which overlap with the collecting policies of other institutions.

8 Archival holdings

SM&AG currently holds some archival material but is in the process of transferring this material to the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre. We no longer acquire archival material.

9 Acquisition

9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

The acquisition of items by gift, loan, transfer or deposit will be made by Collections Staff in line with this policy and using the object entry and acquisition procedure to ensure all legal and ethical responsibilities are met.

Items acquired by purchase will require the authorisation of a senior manager. High value acquisitions will require the approval of the Lead Member for Culture.

- 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 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/CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales/Museums Galleries Scotland/Northern Ireland Museums Council (*delete as appropriate*).
- 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 Object Exit, deaccession and disposal.

Disposal by exchange

- 16.13 The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

Disposal by destruction

- 16.13 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 16.14 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.

- 16.15 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.
- 16.16 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.
- 16.17 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.