

# ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL POLICY

<b>Lancaster City Museums</b>	including:	Lancaster City Museum
<b>Market Square</b>		Lancaster Maritime Museum
<b>Lancaster</b>		Lancaster Cottage Museum
<b>LA1 1HT</b>		

## **GOVERNING BODY: LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL**

**Service managed by Lancashire County Museum Service**

**Date approved by governing body:** / /2005

**Date at which policy due for review:** / /2010

### **Purpose of the Acquisition and Disposal Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to encourage public confidence in the Museum as a suitable repository and to comply with the requirements of the MLA (The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council) Accreditation Scheme in so far as it concerns the acquisition and disposal of collections. The policy also reflects the requirements of Section 58 of the County of Lancashire Act 1984 with regard to disposal.

The policy defines the present state and use of Lancaster City Museums' collections and reviews the current policy of acquisition and disposal. It ensures that material is accepted according to recognised criteria and serves as a reference document to guide curatorial decisions.

It establishes relationships with other museum bodies in the North West with regard to acquisition of material for the collections and transfer of objects.

For the purposes of this document the term 'Museum' refers to all Lancaster City Council's Museums; Lancaster City Museum, Lancaster Maritime Museum and Lancaster Cottage Museum. The Museum of the King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment is governed independently by Trustees under a Trust Deed. Its acquisition and disposal policy is, therefore, treated separately.

### **1. Existing collections, including the subjects or themes for collecting**

The Museum holds a substantial collection of approximately 353,000 objects across a range of subject areas:-

#### **Archaeology:**

Collections comprise finds from excavations and field surveys as well as casual finds from the district. Excavation archives accompany a number of these finds.

Significant excavation finds are held for Cockersand Abbey (1923-4), Vicarage Field Lancaster (1929 and 1965-74), Westfield Memorial Village (1934), the Wery Wall Lancaster (1950), Quernmore (1969-71), Mitre Yard Lancaster (1973), The Old Vicarage Lancaster (1975), sites in Church Street Lancaster (1978, 1982 and 1985), China Street Lancaster (1979), Dalton Square Lancaster (1981), Capernwray (1984), Docker Moor (1984-7), Ellel Medieval Pottery Kiln Site (1992) and Carnforth Treales Pipeline (1992).

Personal collections from local antiquaries are also prepresented eg Alice Johnson (1923) and J W Jackson – Warton Dog Holes – (1945).

## **Fine Art**

Fine Art collections primarily comprise of paintings, drawings, sketches and prints. There is also a small group of sculptures, posters and artist's photographs.

Collections fall into three main areas:-

- material depicting local topography, personalities and genre scenes, many by unknown artists
- work by local artists, past and present - significant holdings of work by James Lonsdale (1777-1839), Gideon Yates (fl 1803-38), William Woodhouse (1857-1939), Reginald Aspinwall (1858-1921) and Robert Rampling (1835-1909)
- some items related to those towns twinned with Lancaster eg prints

## **Decorative Arts**

Decorative Arts collections comprise of movable objects other than painting and sculpture eg furniture and furnishings. Although the definition is ambiguous, 'ornamental' Decorative Arts wares include ceramics, glass, metalwork and other materials such as mother of pearl, ivory etc. Three particular bequests fall within this category:-

- The Miss Whalley Bequest (1944), primarily English and Continental ceramic figures with carved ivories, jade etc.
- The Chilton Bequest (1968), primarily oriental ceramics.
- The Fell Bequest (1986), particularly late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century teawares and tableware.

More 'functional' Decorative Arts objects are covered in their respective sections of this policy – eg costume within Social History or locally produced ceramics within Crafts etc.

There are a small number of Decorative Arts items related to those towns twinned with Lancaster eg ceramics and glass.

## **Crafts**

Crafts collections reflect local crafts and skills. The collections include notable holdings of:-

- locally produced ceramics made in Burton-in-Lonsdale and Scotforth in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and by a number of contemporary potters working across the district in last years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – eg John Calver, Michael & Vicky Eden, Andy Hornby, Alvin Irving, Carol Newmarch and Karen Woof.
- furniture of local manufacture including carved oak furniture and examples of cabinetmaking by Gillows of Lancaster and their contemporaries (eg Bell & Coupland, Simpsons) alongside related cabinetmakers' tools. There is an important collection of 129 interior design drawings from Gillows, covering the first quarter for the 19<sup>th</sup> century. NB this is a companion collection to a further 175 such drawings in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
- material reflecting the local clock and watchmaking tradition with notable examples by Thomas Fayrer, Thomas Worswick and Jonas Barber
- material reflecting local stained glass workshops of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly Shrigley & Hunt and Abbott & Co

## **Trades**

The trades collections comprise artefacts representing local trades, particularly clogging, saddle making, blacksmiths and retailing. There is a notable collection of embossed/etched/labelled glass bottles and stoneware jars, bottles and flagons from local mineral water manufacturers, breweries, public houses and dairies. Small amounts of material relating to the agricultural history of the region is also represented.

## **Industrial History**

The Industrial History collections document the rise and fall of local industries with an emphasis on oilcloth, table baize and linoleum manufacture (principally at Williamsons and Storey Brothers), silk, rayon and cotton production and metalworking and heavy engineering. As constraints of space have precluded the collection of large scale machinery these collections include, rather, examples of products, photographs of premises and their workforces and company magazines and advertising. Other smaller scale industries (eg Hornsea Pottery, local breweries etc) are represented as are local service industries such as healthcare, architects (Austin & Paley) etc.

The Museum holds material pertaining to the history and development of local transport networks, including the Morecambe Bay cross-sands routes (notably between Hest Bank via Kents Bank to Ulverston); railways, trams and other forms of road transport; and the Lancaster Canal along its fullest geographical extent. These collections are cross-disciplinary from, for example, photographs and paintings to equipment, uniforms and commemorative memorabilia.

## **Documents**

It is accepted that precise definition is difficult in this field. Many documents (eg maps, tickets, ephemera, photographs etc) are museum objects in their own right. The Museum holds significant collections of maps, tickets, labels, advertising ephemera, bill heads, commemorative pamphlets and certificates.

The Museum holds an important collection of photographs, primarily topographical but with good coverage of local industrial and social history subjects. Notable holdings by talented local amateur photographers John Walker and Sam Thompson provide strong visual sources for the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Whilst local business archives and old manuscripts are redirected to appropriate Record Office repositories there are existing collections of documents pertaining to archaeological excavations, the Lancaster Canal and local Maritime history (see relevant section).

### **Maritime History**

Collections relate to the maritime history of Morecambe Bay, local rivers and the coastal areas. They include artefacts, images and documents exploring:-

- the social history of the fishing, boat and shipbuilding, commercial, merchant shipping, seafaring and seaside communities.
- maritime crafts, trade, commerce and industry including the Transatlantic slave trade, manufactured items for export to the West Indies, America and other areas, raw materials imported from those regions and evidence for their use.
- gas, oil and mineral exploitations, extraction and processing in Morecambe Bay and adjacent sea areas.
- the development of the seaside tourist industry.
- coastal defence, coast guard, fishery protection and marine rescue organisations.
- material relating to naval ships 'adopted' by Lancaster or local towns and any naval or merchant vessels bearing their name
- local boat types, notably the Morecambe Bay prawner and other variants and derivatives (including drawings, photographs and models) that have been built and/or operated elsewhere.
- Material related to the Lancaster Port Commission and its facilities around Morecambe Bay including the lighthouse at Walney and landmark at Fleetwood.

### **Military History**

Collections comprise small holdings of items relating to local Artillery Volunteers – the 5<sup>th</sup> Lancashire Garrison Artillery Volunteers, constituents and successors.

### **Numismatics**

The collections hold a significant range of items that fall within this discipline, namely:-

- pre-18<sup>th</sup> century locally-found coinage
- tokens struck for local tradesmen
- tickets, passes and tokens for local industries and institutions
- local commemorative medals for significant civic and royal events
- local bank notes and cheques
- locally-found coin hoards

## **Social History**

The collections within this discipline are, at times, difficult to define without cross reference to other parts of this policy. They include objects and supporting evidence that reflect the changing nature of family and domestic life, working life, social life and leisure. They also highlight local reactions to national and international events. For example, material relating to the Second World War home front concentrates on local services in civil defence, provision for evacuees (both children and civil servants), local life under rationing and blackout restrictions, local commemorative celebrations etc.

The collections contain significant holdings of visual material in the form of original photographic prints, negatives, lantern slides, film and video (or copies thereof) from the 1840s onwards. These tend to fall into three main areas – local topography, portraiture and events.

There is a small collection of costume and costume accessories that were made, worn in or associated with the area. It provides a reasonable sample or cross section of styles from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards whilst maintaining a local focus and identity. Supporting material also exists in the form of associated ephemera such as fashion magazines, fashion plates, shop catalogues, knitting or dress patterns and costume-related packaging.

Social institutions and services are represented in the collections. Objects and supporting evidence of the local Police Force and Fire Brigade are held covering Lancaster Police Force to 1947 and Lancaster and Morecambe Fire Brigades to 1974.

Material relating to urban and rural local Government, Health, Welfare and Education Services is also represented within the collections. Items are held relating to Lancaster, Morecambe and the district's civic life, corporate identity and the Mayoralty. There is a small group of artefacts related to those towns and villages which Lancaster and local villages are twinned.

## **2. Criteria governing future collecting policy, including the subjects or themes for collecting**

Acquisitions will be selected or accepted on the basis of their capacity to illustrate the historical, economic, social and leisure background to the area and its people from the earliest times.

Acquisitions will be conditioned by the ability of the Museum to provide adequate storage, conservation and appropriate staff. Material will otherwise be redirected to other suitable Museums or repositories with appropriate specialised facilities wherever possible.

The Museum will seek at all times to acquire outright possession of items by gift, purchase or bequest. Only in exceptional circumstances will items be accepted on loan. Loans may, however, be solicited from time to time for the purpose of temporary exhibitions.

At all times the Museum will take due consideration of the collecting policies of adjacent local, regional and national museums and kindred bodies such as the Lancashire Record Office to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources. For example, there is an expectation that artefacts etc illustrating aspects of childhood would not be collected without consultation with Lancashire County Museum Service.

In consultation with the Museum Education/Outreach Officer, the Museum may acquire certain duplicate material or robust items for use in open displays and/or handling session with visiting groups. Such material will not be accessioned into the Museum collections.

### **Archaeology:**

Collecting will follow the criteria of existing collections (see above). Due regard will also be given to the ability to conserve and store artefacts from underwater archaeology.

### **Fine Art**

Collecting will follow the criteria of existing collections (see above).

### **Decorative Arts**

Collecting will follow the criteria of existing collections (see above). There would be a presumption only to collect items of local production or with strong local association in this field.

### **Crafts**

Collecting will follow the criteria of existing collections (see above). Size and condition of each item must be taken into consideration.

## **Trades**

Collecting will follow the criteria of existing collections (see above). Size and condition of each item must be taken into consideration.

## **Industrial History**

Collecting will follow the criteria of existing collections (see above). Size and condition of each item must be taken into consideration.

## **Documents**

Collecting will follow the criteria of existing collections (see above).

## **Maritime History**

Collecting will follow the criteria of existing collections (see above). All these areas of interest may involve the collection and production of cine film, photograph and tape recordings as well as artefacts across a range of disciplines.

## **Military History**

Collecting will follow the criteria of existing collections (see above).

## **Numismatics**

Collecting will follow the criteria of existing collections (see above). Where very large, locally-found coin hoards are under consideration representative samples only may be acquired.

## **Social History**

Collecting will follow the criteria of existing collections (see above). Additional points depend on the nature of the material in question:-

- Aspects of childhood will only be covered in exceptional circumstances.
- Photography will be undertaken on a regular basis by Museum staff to chart contemporary changes in the local area and within the local community.
- Priority is given to filling gaps in the costume collection. Of particular interest are occupational dress (male and female); male costume (particularly daywear); late 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century costume (male and female) and examples of traditional dress from local ethnic minority communities. Examples of costume and accessories will only be accepted if in good or very good condition.
- Supporting ephemera related to the costume collections will only be considered where a local association exists.

### **3. Period of time and/or geographical area to which collecting relates**

Historically the area of collection has been that administered by the City of Lancaster (which is co-terminous with the ancient Hundred of Lonsdale, South of the Sands) and the immediately adjacent area within a radius of 10 miles. The Museum will continue to collect from this area.

The Museum will, in exceptional cases, acquire material from across the district boundaries where there is no professionally run museum and where that material might otherwise be lost. The Museum will consider favourably loans of such material to any appropriate museum which may, in future, be established in that area.

### **4. 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 inadequate staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

The Museum will not seek to acquire; ethnographic material, classical archaeology or Egyptology. The Museum will not systematically acquire; natural history, botany or geology. When considering acquiring material with any of these areas the Museum will confine itself to common specimens for illustrative use only. In doing so it will consult with colleagues within Lancashire County Museum Service and will abide by the appropriate national and international laws and conventions outlined elsewhere in this document.

### **5. 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 museum(s):

Lancashire County Museum Service  
Peter Scott Gallery, Lancaster  
Ruskin Library, Lancaster  
Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal  
Kendal Museum  
Dock Museum, Barrow in Furness  
National Football Museum, Preston  
Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston  
Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery  
Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool  
Salford Museum and Art Gallery

The Museum will actively promote, with other related institutions, a coherent joint policy for collection within the region.

## **6. Policy review procedure**

The Acquisition and Disposal 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.

The Regional Agency (MLA North West) will be notified of any changes to the Acquisition and Disposal Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

## **7. 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.

## **8. 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. The Museum will not systematically acquire; natural history, botany or geology (see section 4 above). However, 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, such as 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 (in England, Northern Ireland and Wales) or reporting finds through the Treasure Trove procedure (in Scotland).

f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 8a, 8b, 8c, or 8e 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.

## **9. 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.

## **10. 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, 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.

## **11. Management of archives**

The Museum will not actively collect documents such as deeds, business records and such other documents as are seen as the proper province of Record Offices. The Museum will seek to deposit on loan with the Lancashire Record Office, or other recognised record offices, documents which come into the Museum as part of other collections, provided that safeguards for access can be assured.

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).

## **12. Disposal procedures**

- a. By definition, the Museum has a long-term purpose and should possess (or intend to acquire) 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.
- b. The Museum will establish that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Any decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken only after due consideration.
- c. 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.
- d. Decisions to dispose of items will not be made with the principal aim of generating funds.
- e. Any monies received by the Museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions but in exceptional cases improvements relating to the care of collections may be justifiable. Advice on these cases will be sought from MLA.
- f. 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), 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.
- g. 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, exchange or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- h. 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 professional journals where appropriate.
- i. The announcement 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.
- j. 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.