

Trowbridge Museum Collections Development Policy

**Governing Body: Trowbridge Town Council Museum
and
Tourism Committee**

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1. Trowbridge Museum's Statement of purpose:

“Trowbridge Museum aims to offer a dynamic and engaging experience giving users the opportunity to discover the region's rich textile and social heritage.”

2. An overview of current collections

- Trowbridge Museum is governed and owned by Trowbridge Town Council through the Museum and Tourism Sub-Committee which reports to and is subordinate to Trowbridge Town Council.
- The Museum holds a significant collection of textile machinery, woollen cloth samples, tools and material related to the “West of England” woollen cloth industry, dating from the Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. It also houses a substantial collection of artefacts which tell the story of Trowbridge and the surrounding parishes (see map on p8), including items from trade and industry, examples of numismatics and fine and decorative arts, from a similar time period.
- The Museum holds a wide-ranging collection of objects and ephemera which demonstrate the social and cultural history of the people of Trowbridge and its parishes, and has substantial amounts of material relating to well-known citizens such as Sir Isaac Pitman, the inventor of Phonography, and the poet George Crabbe.
- The Museum holds the finds from Trowbridge Castle, Staverton Roman settlement, a clay pipe kiln and archives from other smaller excavations within the collecting area. The finds from these sites range in date from the Early Bronze Age to the Victorian period.

Over the years, many generous donors have contributed their collections to Trowbridge Museum. These include-

- The Garlick Collection of topographical prints and drawings given to the town of Trowbridge by Herbert Garlick in 1932. One of the most significant items in this collection is the Queen Caroline banner, believed to be unique.
- The Lansdown Collection of printed ephemera.
- The Taylor Collection of objects from a Trowbridge draper's shop, including hats, clothing, haberdashery items and fabrics.
- The Whitaker Collection of social, educational and domestic artefacts from the Georgian and Victorian eras, donated by Marjorie Reeves.

- The Crabbe Collection of fossils, minerals and herbaria collected by the poet George Crabbe, Rector of Trowbridge from 1814-1832.
- The Isaac Pitman Collection of personal items and books relating to the inventor of Phonography and a popular system of shorthand.
- The Morrison Collection of domestic items, costume, lace, textile handicrafts and accessories from the Georgian period to the 1940s.
- The Museum also holds significant numbers of items from Usher's Brewery, Bowyers Meat Company, Aplin's Chemist Shop and the Nestlé company.

3. Themes and priorities for future collecting

Acquisition Policy Statement

Trowbridge Museum and Art Gallery will accept acquisitions on the basis of their capacity to illustrate the economic, political, social and cultural history of the Museum Collecting Area and its people, dating back to earliest times. The Collecting Area map (see page 8) defines the region within which the Museum will acquire material.

The Museum aims to enhance its collections relating to the West of England woollen cloth industry with a view to expanding and improving its offer to visitors.

- Acquisition will depend on the ability of the Museum to provide adequate storage, conservation, access and display facilities as well as documentation in accordance with SPECTRUM standards. Materials will otherwise, wherever possible, be re-directed to other suitable museums or Record Offices with the appropriate specialised facilities.
- The Museum will actively promote, with other related institutions, a coherent policy for collection within the region.
- The Museum will not seek to collect specialised items where there is suitable local provision already in existence.
- In the case of unwanted offers, the Museum will suggest other appropriate organisations the donor could approach.
- The Museum will, in exceptional cases, acquire material from outside its collecting area where there is no Arts Council Accredited Museum and where that material might otherwise be lost. The Museum will consider favourably the transfer of such material to any appropriate museum which may in future be established in that area.

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- Acquisition outside the current policy will only be made after proper consideration by the Governing Body of the Museum.
- The Museum will seek at all times to acquire items outright by gift, purchase or bequest. Only in extraordinary circumstances will loans be accepted into the Collection. The exception to this will be the short-term loans customarily sought for temporary exhibitions.
- Loans will be reviewed every ten years and the donor will be asked if they wish to gift the item, agree to lend it for a further ten years, or retrieve the item and cancel the current loan agreement. The exception to this is the Spinning Jenny from the Science Museum, the loan of which will be reviewed every three years.
- The Museum will aim to acquire copyright and other rights in items it wishes to add to the Collection.
- The Trowbridge Museum Education and Learning Policy will be governed by this Collecting Policy. However, the Education Project may acquire suitable duplicate or generic items for use in its provision of educational experiences for learners. This is referred to as the **Handling Collection** and has not been accessioned (although inventories have been made by Education Staff/volunteers). Donors are made aware at the point of contact how their gifts will be utilised.

The Museum will collect the following from the region defined as the Collecting Area:-

Archaeology

- Finds from excavations, watching briefs and field surveys as well as casual finds from the Parish of Trowbridge
- Finds from the adjoining parishes (see map on page 8) which are economically, historically and geographically linked with the town of Trowbridge
- The Museum will consult with archaeology specialists in other Wiltshire Museums where necessary.

Fine and decorative arts

- Paintings, drawings, sculpture, photographs and prints relating to local people, scenes and artists past and present
- Posters and other items of printed ephemera

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- Furniture and furnishings and other movable objects including ornamental wares in ceramics, glass, woodwork, metal work and other materials will be collected if locally made or with some local association

Trade and Industry

Materials relating to local industries. The following are of particular note:-

- The Trowbridge “West of England” woollen cloth industry including technology, tools, products, designs and samples
- The Trowbridge brewing industry
- The Trowbridge food industry
- The Trowbridge mattress-making industry
- Items relating to the manufacture of parts for Spitfires during the Second World War

Local History

Materials relating to:-

- the commercial, retail and administrative development of the town
- the development of local transport networks

Documents

It is accepted that precise definition is difficult in this field. Many documents are museum objects in their own right.

- Letters, documents and bill-heads relating to the Museum’s collecting area will be acquired. However, business and family archives will be referred to the appropriate County Records Office.

Numismatics

- Locally found coinage
- Tokens from local trades-people
- Tickets, passes and tokens from local industries and institutions
- Local commemorative medals
- Local bank notes and cheques

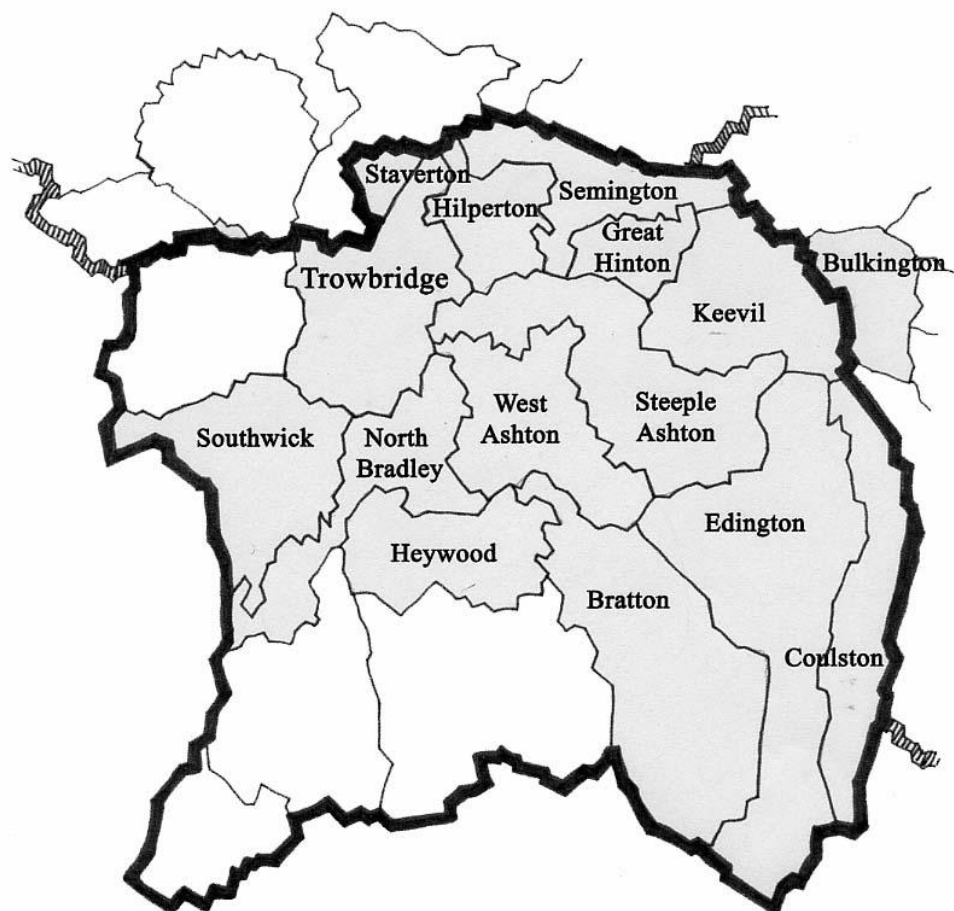
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- Locally found coin hoards. Where these are very large, representative samples may be acquired

Social History

Objects and supporting evidence relating to the following:-

- Material relating to the changing nature of family and domestic life as well as items connected with work, social life, sport and leisure
- Local reactions to national and international events; other local events
- Visual material in the form of original photographic prints, negatives, lantern slides, film, video, CDs and DVDs
- Costume and accessories used in or associated with the local area including occupational costume relating to local industries and garments from local ethnic minorities
- Social institutions and services will be represented in the collections. Objects and supporting evidence of the local police and fire services will be collected. Material related to the Trowbridge Town Council, its predecessors and District and County Councils where their activities fall within the Museum's collecting area and policy may be acquired.



Trowbridge Museum Collecting Area Map

4. Themes and Priorities for Rationalisation and Disposal

Trowbridge Museum accepts that it is a key function of a Museum to preserve objects in perpetuity. The Museum has a strong presumption against the disposal of any object from its permanent collection. To reduce the likelihood of disposal being necessary in the future, acquisitions must be made with reference to the Museum's Collections Development Policy.

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 or exchange.

Comprehensive guidelines on disposal in museums are available at
http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/Disposal_Toolkit.pdf
http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/Disposal_Toolkit_Appendix_4.pdf

Proformas for the above can be downloaded from-
<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-museums/accreditation-scheme/disposal-museum-collections-guidance/>.

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.

The Museum will not seek to collect:-

- Any item which is likely to be beyond the capabilities and resources of the Museum to house adequately and conserve
- Natural history and geological material. Small collections may be held for display purposes but these should not be expanded without the approval of the Museum's Governing body
- Large textile machines and items of local significance for which no suitable storage is available
- Objects in serious need of conservation where there are no realistic expectations that conservation can be completed

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

Specific reference is made to the following organisations:

Wiltshire and Swindon Records Office
Bradford-on-Avon Museum
Wiltshire Museum in Devizes
Chippenham Museum
Dewey Museum in Warminster

7. Policy review procedure

The 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 the collections development policy and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

Wiltshire's County Museums Advisory Service will be provided with copies of any new policies.

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 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

d. The Museum will not acquire any biological or geological material.

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:

acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin

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

acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin

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. As the museum holds or may 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.

10. Spoliation

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

http://www.culturalpropertyadvice.gov.uk/spoliation_reports.

11. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

The Museum's Governing Body, acting on the advice of the Museum's professional staff, 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 13o/s below will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

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'.

www.culturalpropertyadvice.gov.uk/assets/userfiles/index

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 (third edition, 2002). <http://www.archivesandmuseums.org.uk/scam/code.pdf>.

13. Disposal procedures

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.

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 or exchange.

f. The Museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

g. Whether the disposal is motivated either by curatorial or financial reasons, 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.

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.

i. 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. 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 a 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.

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.

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 exchange, 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 as a gift or sale, 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.

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.

n. The nature of disposal by exchange means that the Museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The Governing Body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.

o. In cases where the Governing Body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or unaccredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs

13a-13d and 13g-13h will be followed as will the procedures in paragraphs 13p-13s.

p. If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.

q. If the exchange is proposed with a non-accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will make an announcement in the Museums Journal and in other specialist journals where appropriate.

r. Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved in both the Museum's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the Governing Body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

o/s. 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 de-accession and disposal.

Policy updated by Katherine White, Assistant Curator,
Trowbridge Museum
The Shires Shopping Centre
Trowbridge
WILTSHIRE
BA14 8AT
Telephone 01225 751339
Fax 01225 754608
e-mail katherine.white@trowbridge.gov.uk