

**Aberdeenshire**

COUNCIL



Education, Learning & Leisure

**ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL  
MUSEUMS SERVICE**

**COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT  
POLICY**

**2015-2020**

**May 2015**

Name of museum: **Aberdeenshire Museums Service**

Name of governing body: **Aberdeenshire Council**

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: **TBD**

Date at which this policy is due for review: **May 2020**

**Museums Galleries Scotland will be notified of any changes to the Collections Development Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.**

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## ***1. Relationship to other relevant policies and plans of the organisation.***

### **1.1. Aberdeenshire Museums Service's purpose is:**

To enhance the quality of life of Aberdeenshire people and visitors to Aberdeenshire, by providing and enabling inspiring and challenging learning experiences that support the delivery of Lifelong Learning through the collection, preservation, interpretation of, and community engagement with real objects in the museum service's collections.

To achieve this, the museum service will:

- Provide Aberdeenshire with a quality museum service that promotes and enhances the cultural life of Aberdeenshire.
- Maintain Aberdeenshire Council's museums to Accreditation standards.
- Abide by the Museums Association's *Code of Ethics for Museums*, the Standing Conference on Archives and Museums' *Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom*, and the Institute of Conservation's *Professional Guidelines*.
- Maintain, develop, research and conserve collections held in trust for future generations by Aberdeenshire Council.
- Support the delivery of Lifelong Learning.
- Provide a service that is community-, visitor- and tourist-orientated, accessible and available to all through displays, activities, promotions and new technology.
- Support engagement as well as observation.

- Develop facilities for their social and educational value, reflecting and building upon the cultural diversity and identity of the Aberdeenshire.
  - Manage the museum service efficiently and effectively, ensuring staff develop their full potential.
  - Participate in the formulation and delivery of Aberdeenshire Council policies directed at the preservation and enhancement of tangible heritage, environment and the creation of sustainable communities.
  - Develop partnerships at local, regional and national level, with organisations and individuals that will aid service delivery and support communities.
- 1.2** Aberdeenshire Museums Service will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.
- 1.3 By definition, Aberdeenshire Museums Service has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. Aberdeenshire Museums Service therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before any 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 Aberdeenshire Museums Service 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 Aberdeenshire Council 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 Aberdeenshire Museums Service can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- 1.7 Aberdeenshire Museums Service will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.
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## 2. *History of the collections*

The collections in the care of Aberdeenshire Council are an amalgam of several independent collections, the earliest dating back to 1828 in the case of the collection once resident in Banff Museum. Consisting of some of the finest archaeological objects in Scotland, including the Iron Age Deskford Carnyx and the Gaulcross Hoard of Pictish silver, the collection was complemented by donations of arms and armour from the Duke of Fife and the natural history collection of noted Scottish naturalist Thomas Edward, who was also the curator of Banff Museum

Adam Arbutnot, a merchant from Peterhead, began collecting archaeology, numismatics and objects from world cultures in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and James Kerr of Inverurie was an avid collector of archaeology and ephemera.

Aberdeenshire Museums Service also holds a collection of agricultural material purchased in 1994 by Banff & Buchan District Council from Adamston, Huntly, and collected by the late Hew McCall-Smith. This was supplemented by the purchase and relocation of Hareshowe Croft in 1990, to form the core collection located at Aden Country Park, Aberdeenshire. The collection was awarded **Recognised Collection of National Significance** status in 2008 (See C.1)

The enthusiasm of Aberdeenshire collectors has resulted in an eclectic and diverse collection that encompasses the length and breadth of the history of north-east Scotland, including farming, fishing, whaling, archaeology and the county's unique contribution to cultural and economic development world-wide.

In 1975, all museums were transferred to local authority control, and in 1996 became the responsibility of Aberdeenshire Council. Since 2004 all reserve collections have been relocated to Aberdeenshire Museums Headquarters in Mintlaw, allowing ease of access by staff and communities alike.

All of the collections have been available to the communities in which they were collected since their creation, and have long been appreciated and accessed by those communities, an ethos which Aberdeenshire Museums Service is committed to uphold.

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## 3. *Collections – an overview*

### A. *Fine and Applied Art*

For ease of consideration the Art collection has been divided into sub-headings:-

- a) Fine Art – includes paintings (oils and water-colours), drawings (pencil, ink, charcoal and pastel) and prints.
- b) Applied Art – includes sculpture, silver, glass, ceramics, furniture, horology, metalwork and some miscellaneous domestic and religious material.

## **A.1 Fine Art**

The core of the Fine Art collection largely comprises the former burgh collections. While there are four pre-19th-century portraits, the greatest concentration is on 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Scottish painting, particularly portraits, maritime paintings and a few landscapes, and some contemporary 20<sup>th</sup>- and early 21<sup>st</sup>-century material by Aberdeenshire artists.

### **A.1.1 Oil Paintings**

This group comprises portraits (mainly of former Provosts), maritime paintings, landscapes, still life and some genre paintings. Important names in this group include Sir David Wilkie, Robert Brough, Joseph Farquharson, James Giles, George Sherwood Hunter, R. Gemmell Hutchison, Norman Macbeth, John Phillip, Sir George Reid and George Fiddes Watt. Aberdeenshire Council holds the only collection in public hands in Northern Scotland of works by the Peterhead artist James Forbes, who was the teacher of John Phillip. In recent years there has been a policy of acquiring contemporary paintings by Aberdeenshire artists.

### **A.1.2 Water-colours and Drawings**

This is a small group, the most significant of which are the 18<sup>th</sup>-century portraits by James Ferguson, and the series of water-colours of Peterhead painted in 1795 by Montague Beattie. There is a small number of contemporary water-colours and drawings by Aberdeenshire artists.

### **A.1.3 Prints**

This group falls into two distinct sections. One group is of 19<sup>th</sup>-century prints, largely landscape views, nearly all of which are of Aberdeenshire scenes. The other group is a larger collection of late 20<sup>th</sup>-century prints, mostly by contemporary North East artists.

## **A.2 Applied Art**

The Applied Art collection covers a wide variety of objects and materials, of which the silver sub-collection (especially that of Banff) is of national importance.

### **A.2.1 Silver**

This group of artefacts includes material produced in Banff, Peterhead, Ballater and Stonehaven. The collection of Banff silver is the largest in

Scotland. Although just under half of the known Banff silversmiths are represented in the collection, this includes eleven out of thirteen silversmiths for whom marks are recorded. The collection would be strengthened and improved by acquiring pieces by these two other silversmiths and by filling gaps in terms of type of article especially hollow-ware (cups, mugs, bowls, teapots, etc). There is an important series of silver prize trophies associated with the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century Volunteer movement in Aberdeenshire.

### **A.2.2 Sculpture and Ceramics**

There is a small number of sculptures and ceramic works, some of which are by contemporary Aberdeenshire artists.

### **A.2.3 Furniture and Horology**

This is a small collection, the most significant items being several 17<sup>th</sup>-century chairs and a few longcase clocks, as well as the chair of William Thom, the Inverurie poet.

### **A.2.4 Metalwork**

This group of material includes brass, copper, pewter and plated wares. It incorporates secular and religious material such as presentation gifts and trophies and community plate, mostly of local manufacture and association.

## **B. *Natural Sciences***

For ease of consideration the National Sciences Collection has been divided into sub-headings: the collection is composed of Vertebrate Zoology, Invertebrate Zoology, Botany and Geology.

### **B.1 Vertebrate Zoology**

#### **B.1.1 Taxidermy & Skeletal Material**

This collection consists largely of British birds, mammals, some reptiles and fish, with some foreign species. Much of the material represents what survives of 19<sup>th</sup>-century collections. Some 20<sup>th</sup>-century specimens have been acquired for display purposes.

#### **B.1.2 Bird's Eggs**

This is a small collection, largely of British birds, with some exotic species (e.g. Ostrich). Legislation now prohibits the collecting of eggs of British birds and it is not anticipated that this collection will expand in the future.

### **B.2 Invertebrate Zoology**

This is the largest collection in the Service comprising several thousand specimens from a number of sources. The two principal components are mollusc shells and insects.

The mollusc shell collection is largely of foreign species; much comes from historical collections, and there is an extensive and high-quality late 20<sup>th</sup> century collection. The historical collections reflect scientific collecting during the 19<sup>th</sup>-century period of "Scots abroad", while the modern collection has good accompanying data.

The insect collection derives from historical collections; no recent additions have been made to this section.

### **B.3 Botany**

The botanical collection mainly consists of a small herbarium of Arctic plants collected by Capt. Francis Rawdon Moira Crozier who was with Sir John Franklin on his last expedition, and a small miscellany of algae, plant specimens etc., collected in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There is a small collection of seeds, nuts and dried plant material collected in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **B.4 Geology**

The collections of rocks, minerals and fossils are variable in quality.

#### **B.4.1 Rocks**

The rock collection consists of a few hundred specimens from Aberdeenshire, Britain and Europe. There is patchy coverage of local rock types, though there is a representative collection of granites. It is anticipated that additions to the collection will be made in order to document local geology.

#### **B.4.2 Minerals**

This collection contains a fairly representative group of minerals, suitable for display, education and research.

#### **B.4.3 Fossils**

The Fossil collection includes representative specimens of the major fossil groups, and has important Old Red Sandstone fish material. Much of the material, however, is not of display quality (although the Old Red Sandstone fish material has been the subject of recent research work) and there is a need for specimens from other parts of Britain for comparative purposes.

## **C. Human History**

For ease of consideration the Human History Collection has been divided into the following sub-headings:

Farming  
Costume & Textiles  
Ethnography

Social History  
Archaeology  
Arms and Armour

Archives  
Numismatics  
Photography

## **C.1 Farming**

The agricultural collections of the Aberdeenshire Farming Museum are a ***Recognised Collection of National Significance*** (so designated by Museums Galleries Scotland in 2008).

The collection is based on the original agricultural collection amassed at Adamston, Huntly by the late Hew McCall-Smith and purchased by Banff & Buchan District Council in 1984. The original collection was augmented by further acquisitions by the former North East Scotland Agricultural Heritage Centre (NESAHC), including the relocation to Aden Country Park of the Hareshowe croft in 1990. The NESAHC collections were supplemented in 1996 by the agricultural collection of North East Scotland Museums Service (NESMS).

The collection presents an extensive view of farming and country life in North East Scotland over the last two to three hundred years, with a strong focus on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The collection includes some important items such as the early wooden ox plough from the NESMS collection. The range of larger agricultural implements demonstrates the importance of the local burgh foundries to farming in Aberdeenshire.

Archives relating to this collection include some rural farming business material such as Barclay, Ross & Hutchison of Turriff. There is a good, though incomplete, run of the *Transactions of the (Royal) Highland & Agricultural Society of Scotland* from 1872 to 1968, as well as Clydesdale stud books and catalogues of important breeders and their herds of Aberdeen Angus cattle.

## **C.2 Social History**

The Social History collection covers a wide range of material including bicycles, prams, shop fittings, industrial machinery, ship models, medical, musical and scientific instruments, commemorative and ornamental items, toys and games, weights and measures, photographic and textile equipment, and everyday domestic material.

Much of the material has a specific association with Aberdeenshire, such as civic regalia and weights & measures. In particular, the maritime collections relate to the herring fishing, the whaling trade and harbour development.

## **C.3 Archaeology**

The Archaeology collection comprises material from North East Scotland, with a small collection of Egyptian and classical Greek material. The North East material is generally confined to individual items from Aberdeenshire.

In the past individual finds came to the collection mainly by donation, a few items have been allocated more recently by the Scottish Archaeological Finds Allocation Panel (SAFAP).

The collection is strongest in Neolithic and Bronze Age material, with a large collection of flints of various ages, a significant collection of beakers and cinerary urns, and an important collection of carved stone balls. The most important parts of the Archaeology collection comprise the Neolithic Ardiffery jet necklace (part of the Ardiffery/Greenbrae assemblage), the Iron Age Deskford carnyx, and the Pictish Gaulcross silver hoard (the two latter being of national importance and are on loan to National Museums Scotland). The collection needs to be strengthened in Iron Age, Roman and Viking Age material and needs to be complemented with material from the Early Historic period. The Medieval period is a slowly growing collection and has been recently augmented by a number of excavation assemblages.

#### **C.4 Arms and Armour**

This is a varied collection of British and foreign firearms, swords and daggers, shot and powder flasks and some armour. There are two significant sub-collections: (a) the arms and armour donated by the Duke of Fife; and (b) the Anderson Bey collection of North African and Afghan militaria formerly held by Rhynie School.

#### **C.5 Costume & Textiles**

This collection comprises costume, textiles and accessories. The collection comprises mainly ladies' costume (with some notable 19<sup>th</sup>-century dresses), including a fair sample for the period 1850 to 1920 and for the 1960s and 1970s. There are also several banners, most notably the banner of the Banff Hammermen.

#### **C.6 Numismatics & Par anumismatics**

The core of this collection is the Arbuthnot Coin and Medal Collection. This is a representative collection which includes Greek, Roman, English, Scottish, and British coins, and 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century commemorative medals, together with associated archive material related to its acquisition by Adam Arbuthnot. There is a more general collection which includes trade and church tokens, as well as miscellaneous material including beggars' badges.

There is a lack of bank notes in the collection. It would be beneficial to collect notes, particularly of the Aberdeenshire banks. It would also be beneficial to acquire examples of Scottish coins which are not currently represented in the collection and to bring the coinage up to date by including examples of pre-decimal and decimal coinage, and current Scottish bank notes.

The trade token collection requires some research to ensure that new acquisitions relating to Aberdeenshire do not duplicate existing material unless the existing example is in poor condition. The church tokens form a representative collection across Scotland; new acquisitions should be confined to Aberdeenshire.

The core of the commemorative medal collection is the Arbuthnot collection. There is a collection of military medals representing the Boer War, the First and Second World Wars, as well as a Waterloo Medal.

## **C.7 Photography**

This collection holds some 14,000 catalogued images, as glass negatives, original photographs, postcards and copy negatives. Over half of this material relates to the Peterhead area.

The glass negatives are primarily the Shivas collection from Peterhead and provide a record of the area between about 1860 and 1910. Original photographs and postcards provide a record up to the 1960s supplemented by copy negatives. The recently-acquired Broughall collection comprises negatives from the Peterhead area during the last two decades of the 20th century.

There are also two large accessions from the Banff area: the Bodie collection of late 19th- and early 20th-century glass plates which include rare glass plate negatives by Banff photographer George Bremner, and the Ritchie collection of early- to mid-20th-century roll film negatives, both of which are in the process of being catalogued to item level.

In addition to collecting period photographs, it is important to keep the collection up to date by developing a contemporary photographic record of important modern aspects of Aberdeenshire, especially of the farming sector. Industrial premises should be photographed prior to closure for record purposes. There is a need to maintain dialogue regarding the collecting of photographs with Aberdeenshire Libraries, Aberdeen City & Shire Archives and with various community heritage groups.

## **C.8 Ethnography**

The Ethnography collection is based on the Arbuthnot Collection and on other 19<sup>th</sup>-century. The most significant section in the collection is the Inuit material, brought back by whaling ships in the 19th century; other items come from Africa, the Americas, Australasia and China. There is a need to reflect changes in Aberdeenshire demography with material from the Indian subcontinent and Eastern Europe.

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## **4. Themes and Priorities for future collecting.**

## **A. *Fine and Applied Art***

### **A.1 Fine Art**

#### **A.1.1 Oil Paintings**

The Service will acquire works of quality of relevance to Aberdeenshire, including work by contemporary Aberdeenshire artists.

#### **A.1.2 Water-colours and Drawings**

The Service will acquire works of quality of relevance to Aberdeenshire, including work by contemporary Aberdeenshire artists.

#### **A.1.3 Prints**

The Service will acquire topographical views of quality of Aberdeenshire and contemporary examples of Aberdeenshire printmakers.

### **A.2 Applied Art**

#### **A.2.2 Sculpture and Ceramics**

The Service will acquire sculpture which is of relevance to Aberdeenshire, subject to restrictions on space and the nature and weight of the material.

#### **A.2.3 Furniture and Horology**

In view of the varied nature of the existing material and current storage restrictions further acquisitions will only be considered where the material is of significant relevance to Aberdeenshire.

#### **A.2.4 Metalwork**

The Service will acquire metalwork which is of relevance to Aberdeenshire.

## **B. *Natural Sciences***

### **B.1 Vertebrate Zoology**

#### **B.1.1 Taxidermy & Skeletal material**

The Service will acquire new specimens for display, access/handling and educational purposes. Emphasis will be to acquire specimens that

complement and enhance appreciation and understanding of the environment and ecology of Aberdeenshire.

### **B.1.2 Bird's Eggs**

The Service will acquire eggs of local species where the specimens have been offered by the Police with accompanying data following investigation of illegal egg collecting.

## **B.2 Invertebrate Zoology**

The Service will acquire new specimens for display, access/handling and educational purposes. Emphasis will be to acquire specimens that complement and enhance appreciation and understanding of the environment and ecology of Aberdeenshire.

### **B.3 Botany**

The Service will acquire new specimens for display, access/handling and educational purposes. Emphasis will be to acquire specimens that complement and enhance appreciation and understanding of the environment and ecology of Aberdeenshire.

## **B.4 Geology**

### **B.4.1 Rocks**

The Service will collect and acquire Aberdeenshire rock types not represented in the collection. The Service will refer potential donations of overseas material to an appropriate institution.

### **B.4.2 Minerals**

Additions to the collection will be made in order to document local geology. The Service will only acquire specimens of Aberdeenshire minerals and ensure that such specimens are collected solely from recognised sites.

### **B.4.3 Fossils**

The Service will collect and acquire fossils from Aberdeenshire.

## **C. *Human History***

### **C.1 Farming**

Space restrictions dictate against any further acquisitions of large objects.

New collecting will be directed to active collecting of modern material which complements existing material and takes the story up-to-date or of modern material which represents the wholly changed character of current farming and rural business. The museum service will continue to acquire photographic and archival items such as original sales catalogues or small acquisitions of farming business records.

## **C.2 Social History**

The Service will acquire Social History material which reflects the history of Aberdeenshire. In particular, the Service will actively collect items relating to the First World War, the distilling industry,. It will only acquire un-provenanced material where it would strengthen the existing collection or be useful as handling material.

Storage space, at present, is a problem, and precludes the acquisition of many large items. Where material of specific importance to Aberdeenshire does become available, every effort will be made to acquire it.

## **C.3 Archaeology**

The Service will acquire archaeological material from Aberdeenshire with special reference to the periods identified, through the Scottish Archaeological Finds Allocation Panel (SAFAP), the Historic Scotland Finds Disposal Panel and the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service.

## **C.4 Arms and Armour**

The Service will acquire arms and armour of relevance to Aberdeenshire and its communities, past and present.

## **C.5 Costume & Textiles**

The Service will acquire material with an Aberdeenshire association and fill gaps in the present collection as identified. In particular, there is a lack of women's costume from 1800 to 1850, the period 1920 to 1960, and from 1980 onwards. The collection of items, which represent distinct fashions during these periods, would strengthen the collection. The collection is poor in men's and children's costume and it would benefit from such additions. There is also a need for various examples of working costume which would have been relevant to Aberdeenshire, such as modern fisherman, fish packer, lifeboat and farmer.

## **C.6 Numismatics**

The Service will acquire numismatic material to fill gaps and strengthen the existing collection as identified. Duplicates will not be collected unless the existing material is in poor condition.

## C.7 Photography

The Service will acquire historic and contemporary photographic material of relevance to Aberdeenshire.

## C.8 Ethnography

The Service will not acquire further historical ethnographic material unless there is a strong connection with Aberdeenshire or the existing collection. The Service will seek to actively collect material relating to new communities in Aberdeenshire, including those from the Indian subcontinent and from Eastern Europe.

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## 5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

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

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

**5.3** Most areas of the collection are liable to see acquisitions, although some are regarded as low priority, notably World Cultures, geology, militaria, and some sections of the agricultural collection (see 5.3.1).

Responsible, curatorially-motivated disposal may take place as part of Aberdeenshire Museums Service's long-term collections policies for its museum collections, in order to increase the public benefit derived from those collections.

### 5.3.1 Agricultural Collection

- The agricultural collection, as a **Recognised Collection of National Significance**, is our most important collection at this time, with an entire museum dedicated to its display and interpretation. The popularity and social importance of the collection remains high, and as such is prioritised within the forward plans of the service. We intend to reinterpret, rationalise and contextualise, with emphasis on relevance to the radical changes that continue to take place

within the farming community, while also reaffirming the history and innovation that has taken place within the area for 5,000 years.

- The collection will be re-focussed to encompass not only farming methods and processes of the late 20<sup>th</sup>-early 21<sup>st</sup> century, but also to realign the collection to cover the unique farming environment of Aberdeenshire, one that has been in existence since the Neolithic era. Farming methodology has impacted the Aberdeenshire landscape over millennia, and the collection is ideally placed to reflect this.
- The collection has already been the subject of a professional assessment funded by Museums Galleries Scotland Recognised Collections. The collation of information and study of the collection context led to a rationalisation of the collection as it now stands.

Disposal has been recommended for objects in such poor condition that conservation was not an option; disposal of duplicates eg. pairs of butter pats and other domestic items which can be transferred to education/handling collections; and objects not relevant to Aberdeenshire, such as Shetland peat shovels, which can be offered/transferred to appropriate institutions after disposal procedures have been instigated and strictly followed.

- Community consultation is under way, and funding has been sourced to redisplay and theme the collections within Aberdeenshire Farming Museum, with the emphasis on People, Place and Produce.

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## **6. Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items**

**6.1** Aberdeenshire Council recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the *Museum Association Code of Ethics* when considering acquisition and disposal.

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## **7. Collecting policies of other museums**

Aberdeenshire Council will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations

where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

Specific reference is made to the following museums:

The Portsoy Salmon Bothy  
Grampian Transport Museum  
The Auld Post Office Museum and Session Cottage, Turriff  
Blairs Museum  
Gordon Highlanders Regimental Museum  
Museum of Scottish Lighthouses  
Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums  
University of Aberdeen Museums

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## **8. Archival holdings**

**8.1** A variety of miscellaneous archival records are held, many of which relate directly to other items in the collections. Some archival material has been collected for display purposes, such as posters. Amongst the older records held are seventeenth-century rentals for the Peterhead area and the earliest minute book of the Peterhead Trades (1728-92). Business records include material relating to Crosse & Blackwell and Cleveland Twist Drill in Peterhead, as well as some rural trade and farming businesses such as the account books from the McBain shoemakers' business at Whitehills. There are a small number of whaling journals kept by crew members of Peterhead whalers, and the service has on loan from Peterhead Port Authority the Arrivals/Sailings registers of Peterhead Harbour Board 1865-1935. The service also has the prisoner of war diaries of Thomas Ainsworth who was held at MARLAG und MILAG NORD camp from 1941 to 1945.

The service holds a major archive relating to the Troup and MacDonald families from Huntly, descended from the preacher and author, George MacDonald. This archive includes original manuscripts, correspondence, photographs and other memorabilia.

The archive collection also includes the bound volumes of the *Peterhead Sentinel* (1857-1913) and the *Buchan Observer* (1871-present) newspapers.

**8.2** Aberdeenshire Museums Service will actively acquire archival material which relates directly to the collections.

Most offers of civic archival material will be referred to the Aberdeenshire Archives.

**8.3** As Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service 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).

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## **9. Acquisition**

### **9.1. The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:**

Aberdeenshire Museums Service 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(s) is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

**9.2.** Aberdeenshire Museums Service 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, Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service 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.

### **9.4 Procedures for Accessions**

- Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service will hold an Accession Panel quarterly, consisting of a minimum of three professional museum staff. The proceedings of the Panel will be fully minuted.
  - Acquisitions under consideration for accession must fulfil the criteria laid out in Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service's Collections Development Plan.
  - Whether an acquisition is accepted into the collection or rejected, the reasons will be recorded in the service's Day Book.
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## **10 Human Remains**

**10.1** As Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the guidelines in the 'Guidance for the care of Human Remains in Scottish Museums' issued by Museums Galleries Scotland in 2011.

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## **11 *Biological and geological material***

**11.1** So far as biological and geological material is concerned, Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service 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.

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## **12. *Archaeological material***

**12.1** Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service 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.

**12.2** In Scotland, under the laws of *bona vacantia* including Treasure Trove, the Crown has title to all ownerless objects including antiquities. Scottish archaeological material cannot therefore be legally acquired by means other than by allocation to Aberdeenshire Museums Service by the Crown. Where the Crown chooses to forego its title to a portable antiquity, a Curator or other responsible person acting on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council can establish that valid title to the item in question has been acquired by ensuring that a certificate of 'No Claim' has been issued on behalf of the Crown.

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## **13. *Exceptions***

**13.1** Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is either:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin in acquiring an item 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 Aberdeenshire Museums Service will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. Aberdeenshire Museums Service will document when these exceptions occur.

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## **14. *Spoliation***

**14.1** Aberdeenshire Museums Service 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.

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## **15. *The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains***

**15.1** Aberdeenshire Museums Service’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 Scottish museums” issued by MGS in 2011), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance.

**15.2** The disposal of human remains from museums in Scotland will follow the guidelines in the “Guidance for the care of human remains in Scottish museums” issued by MGS in 2011.

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## **16. *Disposal procedures***

### **16.1 Disposal preliminaries**

- The governing body will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.

- All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.
  - By definition, Aberdeenshire Museums Service 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 Aberdeenshire Museums Service's collection.
  - Aberdeenshire Museums Service will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.
  - When disposal of a museum object is being considered, Aberdeenshire Museums Service 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.
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## **16.2 Motivation for disposal and method of disposal**

- When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange or as a last resort – destruction.
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## **16.3 The disposal decision-making process**

- 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 Aberdeenshire Museums Service'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 Aberdeenshire Museums Service will also be sought.
- 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 Aberdeenshire Council

Museums Service acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator of the collection acting alone. The Council's Area Committees will be informed of disposal proposals as part of the process.

- 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.
- If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museum to which it was offered as a gift or a sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material. This is normally done through a notice on the Museums Association'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).
- The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number 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, Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.

#### **16.4 Use of proceeds of sale**

- Any monies received by Aberdeenshire Museums Service's governing body from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from Museums Galleries Scotland.
- 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. Money must be

restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.

### **16.5 Disposal by exchange**

The nature of disposal by exchange means that Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service 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.

- 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 16.1-4 will be followed.
- 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.
- If the exchange is proposed with a non-Accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will place a notice on the Museums Association's 'Find an Object' web listing service, make an announcement in the *Museums Journal* and in other specialist journals and websites where appropriate.
- Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in the museum's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the governing body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

### **16.6 Disposal by destruction**

If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service's governing body may decide to destroy it.

- It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which

lack significant provenance) where no other method of disposal can be found.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

### **16.7 Documenting disposal**

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.

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## **17. *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 below.

Museum Galleries Scotland will be notified of any changes to the Collections Development Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

The next review of the Collections Development Policy will take place in May 2020.

**Prepared by Helen Chavez, May 2015.**