

# Kent Police Museum

## Collections Development Policy

2017



**Kent  
Police**

This Collections Development Policy applies to Kent Police Museum and its existing collections whilst also guiding any future collecting within the stated period of the Policy.

The Museum and its collections are owned by Kent Police who, as the governing body, will review and approve the Policy every five years. This Policy was approved on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2017. The next review will be conducted in 2022 before 18<sup>th</sup> April.

Arts Council England is the Government's lead body for museums and administers the Accreditation Scheme. If the Museum applies successfully to the Scheme, the Arts Council will be notified of any changes to the Collections Development Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections and the Museum's Accreditation Status should it achieve Accreditation.

# **1 Relationship to other relevant policies and plans**

## **1.1 The Museum's statement of purpose is:**

To collect, preserve and care for a collection of police-related material and associated evidence, sharing that resource appropriately with the widest audience to promote a greater understanding of policing, and to develop positive relationships with other stakeholders in the cultural sector.

## **1.2 Kent Police will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.**

## **1.3 By definition, the Museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. Kent Police therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the Museum's collection.**

## **1.4 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.**

## **1.5 The Museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.**

## **1.6 The Museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless Kent Police or the responsible Museum officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.**

## **1.7 In exceptional cases, disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below will be followed. In cases where disposal is motivated by financial reasons, Kent Police will not undertake disposal unless it can be demonstrated that all the following exceptional circumstances are met in full:**

- the disposal will significantly improve the long-term public benefit derived from the remaining collection
- the disposal will not be undertaken to generate short-term revenue (for example to meet a budget deficit)
- the disposal will be undertaken as a last resort after other sources of funding have been thoroughly explored
- extensive prior consultation with sector bodies has been undertaken

- the item under consideration lies outside the museum's established core collection

## **2 History of the Collections**

Kent Police Museum was started by Retired Inspector John Fail in 1973, in an office at Kent Police HQ in Maidstone, assembling scattered items into a collection. This grew steadily until 1992 when the offices were required by C.I.D. and the museum artefacts were boxed and stored until 1994 when the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust offered the use of an old Boiler House in the Historic Dockyard. The collection was re-displayed and the Museum was opened on 26th July 1994 by the Lord Lieutenant of Kent.

The Museum was open to the public until the collection grew out of the space and the space became too much of an environmental risk to the artefacts. Kent Police then made the decision to move the collection out of the Dockyard, to temporary holdings at HQ. During this period, attempts were made to consider the relevance of the collection and what should be done with it. In October 2016, Kent Police began blank canvassing Faversham Police Station and in December of the same year, permanently moved the entire collection.

It now awaits the opening of a dedicated and redeveloped Museum display and storage facility. However, behind the scenes a team of 10 volunteers and the Curator have been busy identifying and cataloguing the objects which had never previously been accessioned into the collection. Large improvements have been made to the catalogue, and artefacts photographed and scanned for use on digital platforms.

## **3 An Overview of the Current Collections**

The collection includes c. 22,000 items including:

- a significant collection of photographs including negatives (c.10,000 items);
- an archive of documentary evidence from varied sources, including newspapers (c.5,000 items)
- an archive of film (c.3,000 items)
- a library of books and journals (c.1,500 items)
- c.3,000 artefacts, including costume, firearms, medals, evidential items from previous cases, and 2 motorbikes

## **4 Themes and priorities for future collecting**

**4.1** The Museum will collect artefacts and associated evidence relating to the history of, and personalities involved in and with the Kent Police Force from the old County of Kent, now Kent & Medway

- 4.2** The Museum will also collect from any period of history. Artefacts to be acquired should have originated in, or have a strong link to, the defined geographical area.
- 4.3** The Museum would particularly like to strengthen its collection of material relating to the following:
- Medals with provenance
  - Firearms with provenance acquired through Kent Police's Firearms Department
  - Newspaper and press material relating to items in the collection.
  - Material relating to police contemporary issues and material, as well as recent press
  - Undertake oral history recordings
- 4.4** Biological material will not be collected as the museum does not have the specialist expertise to care for such material and poor quality material will pose a threat of pest damage.
- 4.5** Items unrelated to the defined geographical areas above may be collected for display and educational purposes where a local example cannot be found.
- 4.6** Items unrelated to the Museum's defined areas of collecting may be held temporarily by the Museum as a safe haven until a more appropriate institution is able to take them. Such items will be recorded in Entry documentation but will not be accessioned.
- 4.7** The Museum will also acquire secondary material which relates to the above geographical area for handling use with schools etc, but this will not be accessioned into the permanent collection.

## **5 Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal**

- 5.1** The museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.
- 5.2** The procedures used will meet professional standards (see **16** below). The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.
- 5.3** As part of the transfer of collections from the museum site previously used in Chatham Dockyard and installation in the current site in Faversham, the Museum will undertake a major audit and review of its collections during the lifetime of this Policy, paying particular

attention to material which has no relevance to the geographical area noted above, nor is of importance for general reference. Such material could wastefully occupy valuable storage space and rationalisation will facilitate access to the collections and provide space for future collecting. Disposal of such material, after due consideration of its historical value, as well as any items in very poor condition, will follow the disposal policy and procedures noted at **16** below. Heavily duplicated material will be reviewed and may be deaccessioned for use as learning/handling material, offered for transfer to other Accredited museums, or sold if deemed appropriate under the disposal policy and procedures below.

## **6 Ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items**

**6.1** The museum recognises its responsibility, in acquiring items for 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 levels and capabilities, storage availability and care of collection arrangements.

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

**7.1** The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

**7.2** Specific reference is made to the following institutions:

- City of London Police Museum
- Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre (Faversham Society)
- Sittingbourne Heritage Museum
- Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway, Sittingbourne
- Minster Gatehouse Museum, Sheppey
- Queenborough Guildhall Museum, Sheppey
- Bluetown Heritage Centre, Sheppey
- Canterbury Museums
- Whitstable Museum & Art Gallery
- Maidstone Museum & Art Gallery
- Essex Police Museum
- Friends of Metropolitan Police Historical Society

## **8 Archival Holdings**

- 8.1** As the museum holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, and intends to develop this collection Kent Police will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (third edition, 2002). See Appendix B.

## **9 Acquisition**

- 9.1** Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the Police Authority and its Museum, having regard to the interests of other museums.
- 9.2** 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 responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- 9.3** 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).
- 9.4** 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 1st 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The Museum will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

## **10 Human remains**

- 10.1** The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

## **11 Biological and geological material**

- 11.1** So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

## 12 Archaeological material

- 12.1 The Museum will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the Museum has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.
- 12.2 Any finds offered to the Museum from excavations, or other types of discovery, after 1996 must have been reported to the landowner or occupier of the land where the items were found and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure as defined by the Treasure Act 1996.

## 13 Exceptions

- 13.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:
- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin, especially those items relating to the other towns in Swale.
  - 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.

## 14 Spoliation

- 14.1 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. See Appendix A.

## 15 The Repatriation and Restitution of Cultural Property

- 15.1 Should the review of the collections reveal any original cultural items from other countries, Kent Police, acting on the advice from appropriate professional agents, may take a decision to return objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in **16.1-5** will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

## 16 Disposal procedures

- 16.1** All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.
- 16.2** Kent Police will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.
- 16.3** When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the Museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.
- 16.4** When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, exchange or as a last resort - destruction.
- 16.5** Whether the disposal is motivated either by curatorial or financial reasons, the decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by Kent Police only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal.

Criteria used to inform any collections review will include:

- Relevance to the collecting policy, in particular the defined geographical area
- Condition of the item
- Duplication of the item in the existing collection
- Identity and supporting evidence
- Overall use

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.

- 16.6** The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by Kent Police only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal.
- 16.7** 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 Kent Police acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.

- 16.8** Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- 16.9** If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material normally through a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.10** The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.
- 16.11** Any monies received by Kent Police from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from the Arts Council England.
- 16.12** The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.

### **Disposal by exchange**

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

### **Disposal by destruction**

- 16.14** If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, Kent Police may decide to destroy it.

- 16.15** It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.
- 16.16** Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.
- 16.17** Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.
- 16.18** 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.

# **Appendix A: Museums & Galleries Commission Spoliation of Works of Art During the Nazi, Holocaust, and World War II Period – Statement of Principles**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The principles and recommended actions outlined below have been drawn up and approved by the Museums & Galleries Commission (MGC). They are based on principles and recommendations drawn up and issued by the National Museums Directors' Conference (NMDC), with which the MGC is working in close collaboration on this issue.
- 1.2 The Statement of Principles is issued by the MGC in its role as the principal advisory body on museums for Government and for museums themselves. It covers the MGC itself and the non-national museum sector, the twenty-six national cultural institutions in membership of NMDC having already subscribed to NMDC's own parallel Statement of Principles (see 1.1. above).
- 1.3 The powers of non-national museums are governed by a variety of instruments, including Charity law, local government legislation and Royal Charter. Restitution or compensation in any single case may, therefore, be affected by the legal status of the institution concerned and may require consent from appropriate bodies. It is recognised that in cases where compensation is offered as an alternative to restitution, the institutions concerned would generally be unlikely to be able to finance this from their existing running budgets and assistance would therefore need to be sought from their funding bodies or from central Government.
- 1.4 This document outlines the broad principles and proposed actions agreed by the MGC. It is not intended to create or alter any existing legal right or obligation.
- 1.5 The MGC has commissioned a set of Guidelines for Good Practice covering the subject of Requests for Restitution and Repatriation. These are expected to be published by July 1999. The general principles they set out will be relevant for material covered by this statement of principles.
- 1.6 At the same time, however, the MGC is, in collaboration with the Museums Association (MA) and the NMDC, assessing the need for more detailed guidance governing material which may have been wrongfully taken during the Nazi period, the Holocaust and World War II. In particular:
  - a. surveying collections and dealing with new acquisitions and loans;
  - b. guidance and information for enquirers or potential claimants;
  - c. dealing with claims.
- 1.6 For the purposes of interpreting this document, wrongful taking shall mean any act of theft or other deprivation, the legality of which is open to reasonable challenge, and which was committed during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II periods.

## 2. Statement of Principles

2.1 The MGC recognises and deplors the wrongful taking of works of art, which constituted one of the many horrors of the Nazi period, the Holocaust and World War II.

2.2 The MGC's supports the principle outlined in the MA's Code of Practice for Governing Bodies (1994) which states that a museum's 'Collections Management Policy should ensure, through the appropriate documentation, that the museum does not acquire or exhibit any stolen or illegally exported works and that it acquires legal title to items accessioned to its collections'.

2.3 This is reflected in Section 4.2.5 a. of the MGC's Guidelines for the Museum Registration Scheme:

The Museum will not 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, and that in particular it 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.

2.4 The MGC is committed to working with other institutions and organisations both within the UK and internationally to increase awareness and understanding of the facts surrounding the spoliation of works of art by the Nazis and others during the Holocaust and World War II period.

2.5 The MGC requires agents or owners offering items in lieu of inheritance tax to provide details of known provenance and to confirm, that they have legal title to the items being offered, and that to the best of their knowledge such items have not been stolen or illegally exported.

2.6 The MGC requires applicants for Government Indemnity to take steps to confirm to the best of their knowledge that the owners of items offered on loan have legal title to them, and that such items have not been stolen or illegally exported.

2.7 The MGC requires applicants to its purchase funds to demonstrate to the best of their knowledge that funds will not be sought for any stolen or illegally exported works, or for works for which full legal title cannot be acquired.

2.8 The MGC recommends that museums give prompt and serious consideration to claims to title for specific works in their collections.

2.9 The MGC recommends that museums adopt a practical approach to reviewing and making accessible information relating to provenance of their collections, taking into account the nature and size of the collections concerned and the resources available.

2.10 The MGC advocates a process of reviewing, reporting and researching the issue of works of art wrongfully taken which respects the dignity of all parties and the complexity of the issue. Each claim represents a unique situation which must be reviewed thoroughly on a case by case basis taking into account both the interests of individuals and the statutory and legal responsibilities of the institutions.

### **3. Actions concerning research and access to information**

3.1 The MGC recommends that each museum with a Designated collection, and all other museums with collections which might contain material relevant to this statement of principles, should develop an action plan with regard to research on and access to information about their existing collections. This will vary in scope and timescale according to the size and nature of the collections and the resources available and may include:

- research based around specific enquiries;
- collation and monitoring of new information about provenance for this period as part of ongoing research;
- identification of objects for which provenance is unknown for any point during the years 1933-45.

The guidance referred to at 1.5 a above will advise on issues to consider in prioritising research and making information available.

3.2 Each institution developing an action plan should nominate a person as the main point of contact for enquiries on this subject who will also keep a central record of research being undertaken.

3.3 The MGC will in turn keep a central record of the nature of the research being undertaken in each institution.

3.4 The MGC undertakes to draw up guidance for potential enquirers including information about the collections of each institution, points of contacts, and types of information that may be available (eg databases, files, websites).

3.5 The MGC plans to work together with the UK Government, MA, NMDC, the Holocaust Educational Trust, other UK organisations and relevant overseas individuals and organisations to collect details of useful information sources, for example about missing objects, and the history of the movement of works of art during the period.

### **4. Procedures for acquisitions and incoming loans**

4.1 In accordance with standard good practice, institutions acquiring or borrowing any new object should:

- exercise due diligence in satisfying themselves that the vendor/donor/executors/lender have good title to the object;
- in accordance with the MA guidance and MGC Registration requirements (both referred to above) take reasonable steps to satisfy themselves that the object has not been wrongfully taken without restitution having taken place subsequently;
- seek from the vendor, donor or executors the fullest possible information with regard to provenance including for the years 1933-45.

- 4.2 In accordance with standard practice, all information with regard to provenance collected during the acquisition process must be recorded on the main acquisition file.
- 4.3 For unique works of art with a value in excess of the level requiring an export licence, for which the provenance in the period 1933-45 is uncertain, and which may have been outside the UK for all or part of this period, it is recommended that a check be made with the Art Loss Register and/or other appropriate databases of missing works of art/claimants. Detailed guidance (referred to at 1.5a above) will provide suggestions regarding other types of check that may be carried out, depending on the nature of the acquisition.
- 4.4 If there is no evidence of wrongful taking then the acquisition may proceed. If there is demonstrable or probable evidence of wrongful taking, then the institution should not proceed to acquire the object.
- 4.5 Guidance for staff (referred at 1.5a above) should include information and advice on:
- use of warranties
  - information to seek from vendor or lender
  - suggested sources of information and approaches to checking provenance.
- 4.6 Consistent with current practice institutions should publish, display or otherwise make accessible all recent gifts, bequests and purchases, thereby making them available for further research examination and study.
- 4.7 Borrowing institutions should ensure that the terms of the UK Government indemnity record the fact that it does not cover any third party claims and draw the attention of the lender to this fact.
- 4.8 In the event that an institution believes that an object it is seeking to borrow is, or is likely to become, the subject of a claim, it should not proceed with the loan.

## **5. Discovery of the wrongful taking of works of art**

- 5.1 If, in the light of new information, a museum becomes aware that an object in its collection was, or is likely to have been, wrongfully taken during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period and was not subsequently restituted, this information should be made public and recorded with the MGC and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The known facts regarding the provenance of the work shall be shown on object labels and in any new publications relating to the work.
- 5.2 Making public means issuing a press release to all media to which the institution in question usually issues press releases and to such principal additional media within the UK as are generally known to serve any ethnic or national group likely to have a particular interest in the matter. The guidance referred to at 1.5a and 4.5 above will provide advice on such additional media.
- 5.3 An institution would normally expect to receive any claims within a period of six years from the publication of new information relating to provenance in accordance with 5.1 and 5.2 above.

5.4 If a claimant shows within a reasonable period of compliance by an institution with 5.1 and 5.2 above that on a balance of probabilities a work of art was wrongfully taken during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period, and that but for such wrongful taking, the claimant would have an interest in the object, then the institution will seek to resolve the matter in an equitable, appropriate and mutually agreeable manner, (taking into account the possibility of competing third party claims) as permitted by its legal status and in conjunction with DCMS.

## **6. Processes for dealing with enquiries and claims**

6.1 Each museum developing an action plan shall nominate a member of staff as the main point of contact for enquiries and claims.

6.2 Should an institution receive a claim that an object in its collection was wrongfully taken during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period it shall record the date and nature of the claim both in a register kept by it for that purpose and in the dossier of the object concerned and shall, as soon as practicable, advise the MGC and DCMS of the claim. Within the limits of its then existing resources the institution shall review such claim promptly and thoroughly with the claimant, including requesting evidence of the claimant's interest in the object to help determine its provenance.

6.3 Guidance for enquirers and claimants should include information and advice on searching for objects and information that should be included with a claim.

6.4 The MGC will keep a central record of the progress of all claims received.

# **Appendix B: A Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom** *Third Edition, 2002*

## **1. Introduction**

This *Code of Practice* was first drawn up in 1990 by the Standing Conference on Archives and Museums (SCAM) on behalf of its three parent organisations: the Association of Independent Museums, the Museums Association and the Society of Archivists. All three organisations approved the *Code*.

The *Code* was offered to museums to give them guidance in administering their archives in accordance with professional standards, and to suggest sources of advice and help. Later in the same year, a *Standard for Record Repositories*, also providing guidance on the administration of archives, was issued by the Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC). The *Code* was revised in 1996, and has been further revised in 2002, in response to comments from museums and other users, and taking into account both changing circumstances in the UK heritage sector and new professional literature and standards, including the *Standard for Record Repositories*.

The Standing Conference would be glad to receive any comments or suggestions from users of this new edition of the *Code*. These should be sent to the Standing Conference via the Historical Manuscripts Commission (address below).

*The Standing Conference on Archives and Museums, September 2002*

## **2. What are archives?**

In general terms, archives may be defined as original documents in any medium created and/or accumulated by an individual, a family, a corporate body or institution in the course of its daily life and work, which have been selected for permanent preservation as evidence of purpose, function, organisation and operation. They may include legal documents such as deeds, wills, contracts, etc., minutes, financial records, files or loose papers, letters, diaries, maps, plans or technical drawings of all kinds, printed books, pamphlets or ephemera, illuminated manuscripts, photographs, newspaper cuttings, volumes/books of product samples, audio-visual material or computer discs or printout.

The relationship between the originator and the documents gives those documents archival significance and intellectual value. The integrity of an archive should therefore be respected where it survives. It should not be broken up, nor should separate items be abstracted. In museums, documentary material may often have been collected from diverse sources because of its interest, or because it bears some relation to a museum's object collections, and in these cases it will be an 'artificial' collection rather than a true archive produced by an individual or organisation.

Please note that this *Code of Practice* applies to all the material described above, even where it is largely divorced from its original archival context; and that the term 'museum' is used to include 'gallery'.

### 3. Archives in museums

Archives commonly found in museums can be divided into four categories:

- Records and documents acquired for the museum's collections by gift, purchase or loan, irrespective of their format or medium.
- Any records deposited in the museum by statutory authority. For further explanation see 'Legal controls' in section 4 below.
- Documentary material associated with the museum's collections. Please note that this *Code* does not apply to archaeological archives which are covered by *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage* (UKIC, 1990), and *Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections* (Society of Museum Archaeologists, 1993).
- The museum's own administrative records, files, etc., illustrating its history and activities as an institution.

Only those records which have been selected for permanent preservation are defined as archives; for the way in which a museum's current administrative records can be managed, and certain of them selected for preservation, see SCAM Information Sheet 5: *Managing a Museum's Administrative Records* (details in section 9 below).

### 4. Acquiring archives for museum collections

Museums should acquire archives (other than their own institutional records) only in accordance with their collecting policy; this should be formulated to take account of the provisions of the HMC's *Standard for Record Repositories*. Archives have special needs, set out in the *Standard*, which should be met by museums holding archives or intending to acquire them.

Further information on collecting and acquisitions is available in SCAM Information Sheet 1: *Collections Policy and Management* (details in section 9 below).

- **Consultation and co-operation:** to avoid conflict of interest there should be close liaison and consultation with the appropriate national or local record office before a museum makes any commitment to acquire significant holdings of archives. (See Section 9 below for information on how to contact record offices.) Where the interests of museums and record offices overlap, consultation is particularly important; in some cases a joint venture with a record office might be considered, although care must always be taken to preserve the integrity of the archive. There may also be an overlap with the interests of local studies libraries, for instance when museums plan to acquire collections of mainly printed or audio-visual material, or the kind of 'artificial' collections described in section 2 above; local studies libraries should therefore be included in consultations where this is appropriate.

There have been a number of successful joint ventures between archives and museums; for example, the administrative and financial archives of the Cunard Company were deposited with Liverpool University Archives while the technical archives were deposited, with some artefacts, with the National Museums and Galleries on

Merseyside. Full lists of each other's holdings must always be exchanged between the partners of joint ventures.

- **Legal controls:** certain categories of archives are controlled by law, including public, manorial, tithes and Church of England parochial records, and museums should be particularly careful not to acquire these without prior consultation with the Historical Manuscripts Commission, or, for public records in England and Wales, the Public Record Office; in Scotland, the National Archives of Scotland should be consulted about any proposed acquisition of public records; in Northern Ireland the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland is exclusively responsible for public records and should be consulted on any matter relating to them. Information on statutory controls affecting the acquisition of archives is given in a Society of Archivists Information Leaflet, *Archive Legislation in the United Kingdom*, by A A H Knightbridge, (Society of Archivists, 1985). More recent Scottish legislation, the Local Government, etc. (Scotland) Act 1994, affects records in local authority custody, for which 'proper arrangements' must be made in consultation with the Keeper of the Records of Scotland.

## 5. Stewardship

Archives are fragile and need to be appropriately cared for and managed.

- **Management and conservation:** museums with significant holdings of archives should preferably employ professional staff with qualifications, as appropriate, in archive management or conservation. Where no professional archive staff are available, advice on acquisition, storage, conservation and cataloguing should be sought from an appropriate national or local record office, or from one of the advisory bodies listed below.

- **Storage:** appropriate storage for archives should be provided. Basic guidance on this subject is given in SCAM Information Sheet 3: *Archive Preservation and Conservation*. Detailed information on best practice may be found in the current edition of British Standard 5454, *Recommendations for the storage and exhibition of archival documents*. (Details of publications are in section 9 below.)

- **Display:** because of their sensitivity to light and other environmental factors, most archives are unsuitable for permanent display. Temporary display facilities should afford both physical and environmental protection, ideally in line with the British Standard 5454.

## 6. Public access

There should be arrangements for reasonable public access to the archives; such access must be carefully supervised.

Further details of appropriate policies, facilities and practical arrangements for public access are included in SCAM Information Sheet 4: *Access to Archives*. A draft *National Standard for Access to Archives* has been produced as the basis for a new British Standard, and is available from the Public Record Office (details below).

- **Catalogues:** catalogues and lists of all archive acquisitions should be sent to the Historical Manuscripts Commission for inclusion in the National Register of Archives (NRA), the comprehensive central collecting point for information about the archive and

manuscript sources for British history, or, in Scotland, to the National Register of Archives for Scotland, at the National Archives of Scotland. Similar lists should be sent also to the appropriate national or local archive repository in order to ensure that archive holdings may be known as widely as possible. Where a museum has difficulty in cataloguing its archives, it should seek advice from a record office or advisory body.

Further information is included in SCAM Information Sheet 2: *Archival Listing and Arrangement*.

The National Register of Archives is maintained by the Historical Manuscripts Commission.

Internet users may find information and search the indexes of the NRA online at <http://www.hmc.gov.uk/nra/> . The National Register of Archives for Scotland is a department of the

National Archives of Scotland and acts independently of the National Register of Archives, although it sends copies of all its surveys to the latter.

- **Personal information:** care must be taken in allowing access to personal information about living individuals, since this is now regulated by Data Protection legislation. Advice on this subject is contained in the *Code of practice for archivists and records managers under Section 51(3) of the Data Protection Act 1998* (Society of Archivists and Records Management Society, expected publication 2002), and is also available from the office of the Information Commissioner (contact details below).

- **Public institutions and Freedom of Information:** access to archives in public institutions has long been subject to certain restrictions - for example, access to official public records in England and Wales has been restricted by statute, and in Scotland and Northern Ireland by administrative arrangements, so that records less than thirty years old have not normally been available to the public. However, Freedom of Information legislation is fundamentally altering the traditional access regime for records created or owned by publicly funded bodies.

Authoritative advice on Freedom of Information is not currently (September 2002) available but should be sought from the Public Record Office or the Information Commissioner, or in Scotland from the National Archives of Scotland, and in Northern Ireland from the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (details below).

## 7. Disposal

If any archive material is considered for disposal, the procedures set out in the current *Registration Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom: Registration Guidelines* should be followed; the disposal should normally be announced through the *Society of Archivists' Newsletter*, as well as in the Museums Association's *Museums Journal*, and the interests of the appropriate national or local archive service should always be considered.

## 8. Professional co-operation

As a matter of professional principle, museum curators and archivists should endeavour to work with each other and with allied professionals:

- In areas where co-operation would be particularly useful, including the care of local commercial, industrial, technological and social history archives, and the collecting of photographs and topographical material.
- In the provision of professional services where collaboration might achieve better and more cost-effective results, especially in education services, joint exhibitions, joint publication, risk awareness and disaster management planning, and in conservation facilities and expertise.

## 9. Sources of help

### • Useful publications include:

- SCAM Information Sheet 1: *Collections Policy and Management* (2000)
- SCAM Information Sheet 2: *Archival Listing and Arrangement* (2000)
- SCAM Information Sheet 3: *Archive Preservation and Conservation* (2000)
- SCAM Information Sheet 4: *Access to Archives* (2000)
- SCAM Information Sheet 5: *Managing a Museum's Administrative Records* (publication due 2002)

The whole series of information sheets is available from the Historical Manuscripts Commission or Resource (addresses below), or online at <http://www.hmc.gov.uk/SCAM/>

*Benchmarks in Collection Care for Museums, Archives and Libraries* (Resource, 2002); together with a series of Resource conservation fact sheets, available from Resource or online at [http://www.resource.gov.uk/Code\\_of\\_practice\\_for\\_archivists\\_and\\_records\\_managers\\_under\\_Section\\_51\(3\)\\_of\\_the\\_Data\\_Protection\\_Act\\_1998](http://www.resource.gov.uk/Code_of_practice_for_archivists_and_records_managers_under_Section_51(3)_of_the_Data_Protection_Act_1998) (Society of Archivists and Records Management Society, expected publication 2002) *Code of Practice on the Management of Records under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000* (draft 2001), available from the Public Record Office or online at <http://www.pro.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/>

*Local Studies Libraries: Library Association Guidelines for local studies provision in public libraries* (Facet Publishing, 2nd edition 2002)

National Preservation Office preservation guidance leaflets, available from the National Preservation Office or online at <http://www.bl.uk/services/preservation/national.html>

*National Standard for Access to Archives* (Public Services Quality Group, draft 2001), available from the Public Record Office or online at <http://www.pro.gov.uk/archives/psqg/>

*Recommendations for the storage and exhibition of archival documents* (BSI, 2000); BS 5454:2000 may be purchased from the British Standards Institute (BSI Group Headquarters, 389

Chiswick High Road, London W4 4AL; tel: 020 8996 9000; fax: 020 8996 7400; web site: <http://www.bsi-global.com>); alternatively, it may be consulted in most local authority record offices.

*Record Repositories in Great Britain* (HMSO, 11th edition 1999); copies may be seen at all local authority record offices and many larger libraries

Society of Archivists information leaflets and best practice guidelines, including *Security* (SoA, 1994), *Archive Education Services* (SoA, 1998) and *Film and Sound Archives in Non-specialist Repositories* (SoA, 2001) may be consulted in many local authority record offices or purchased

direct from the Society of Archivists.

*Standard for Record Repositories* (HMC, 3rd edition 2001); copies may be obtained at a cost of £3 from the Historical Manuscripts Commission, or online at <http://www.hmc.gov.uk/pubs/Standards in Action: managing archive collections in museums> (mda, 2002); copies may be purchased at a cost of £18.50 direct from the mda (contact details below).

• **Advice on archive matters in any part of the UK is available from:**

Local record offices, which may be located from the current edition of *Record Repositories in Great Britain* or via the 'ARCHON' gateway at <http://www.hmc.gov.uk>

The Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC), Quality House, Quality Court, Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1HP; tel: 020 7242 1198; fax: 020 7831 3550; e-mail: [nra@hmc.gov.uk](mailto:nra@hmc.gov.uk); web site: <http://www.hmc.gov.uk> . Please note that at the time of printing (September 2002) the forthcoming merger of the Historical Manuscripts Commission and the Public Record Office has been announced.

• or, **in Northern Ireland**, from:

The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, 66 Balmoral Avenue, Belfast BT9 6NT; tel: 020 90 255905; fax: 020 90 355999; e-mail: [proni@dcalni.gov.uk](mailto:proni@dcalni.gov.uk); web site: <http://proni.nics.gov.uk>

• or, **in Scotland**, from:

The National Archives of Scotland, HM General Register House, Edinburgh EH1 33YY; tel. 0131 535 1314; fax: 0131 535 1360; e-mail: [enquiries@nas.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@nas.gov.uk); web site: <http://www.nas.gov.uk>

• or, **in Wales**, from:

the Convenor, Archives Council Wales. Details of the current contact may be obtained from any local record office or from the HMC

• **Other regulatory and advisory bodies include:**

Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF; tel: 01625 545745; fax: 01625 524510; e-mail: [mail@dataprotection.gov.uk](mailto:mail@dataprotection.gov.uk); web site: <http://www.dataprotection.gov.uk>

mda (formerly Museums Documentation Association), Jupiter House, Station Road, Cambridge CB1 2JD; tel: 01223 315760; fax: 01223 362521; e-mail: [mda@mda.org.uk](mailto:mda@mda.org.uk); web site: <http://www.mda.org.uk>

National Preservation Office, The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB; tel: 020 7412 7612; fax: 020 7412 7796; e-mail: [npo@bl.uk](mailto:npo@bl.uk); web site: <http://www.bl.uk/services/preservation/national.html>

Public Record Office, Archive Inspection Services Department, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU; tel: 020 8876 3444; fax: 020 8392 5283; web site: <http://www.pro.gov.uk>

Resource: the Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries, 16 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AA; tel: 020 7273 1444; fax: 020 7273 1404; e-mail: [info@resource.gov.uk](mailto:info@resource.gov.uk); web site: <http://www.resource.gov.uk>

In England, the Regional Agencies for Museums, Archives and Libraries. These are in the process of being established in each English Region, and will absorb the Area Museum Councils and Regional Archive Councils. They are funded by Resource, and will be fully in place by 2004. In the meantime, Resource will provide information about appropriate contacts in each region.

***The Standing Conference on Archives and Museums:***

*Association of Independent Museums*, Secretary of the Association of Independent Museums, Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood, Cambridge Heath Road, London E2 9PA; web site: <http://www.museums.org.uk>

*Museums Association*, 24 Calvin Street, London E1 6NW; tel: 020 7426 6970; fax: 020 7426 6961; email: [info@museumsassociation.org](mailto:info@museumsassociation.org); web site: <http://www.museumsassociation.org>

*Society of Archivists*, 40 Northampton Road, London EC1R 0HB; tel: 020 7278 8630; fax: 020 7278 2107; e-mail: [societyofarchivists@archives.org.uk](mailto:societyofarchivists@archives.org.uk); web site: <http://www.archives.org.uk>