

Collections Development Policy 2026-2030

Name of museum: Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery (RAMM)

Name of governing body: Exeter City Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: 16 December 2025

The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

Date at which this policy is due for review: 2030.

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1 Relationship to other relevant policies and plans of the organisation:

1.1 The museum's statement of purpose is:

The Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery (RAMM) is a service of Exeter City Council. It exists to enrich the lives of people living, working in and visiting Exeter by providing them with opportunities to be inspired, informed and entertained. The City's world-class collections are placed at the heart of everything the museum does. RAMM will acquire collections that document the natural and cultural history of Exeter set within its regional and national context as well as those that represent the City and region's connections across the world. The museum holds collections in trust for present and future generations, managing their care and security for the public benefit.

Its Manifesto states RAMM is:

Guardian of the past and collector of the future - Our world-class collections are at the heart of everything we do. We have been collecting since the 1860s – and will continue to do so – to record the natural and cultural history of Exeter, its region, and its place in the world. We collect specimens and artefacts in a thoughtful way, recognising our environmental and ethical responsibilities. We manage and care for collections for present and future generations.

1.2 RAMM's governing body, Exeter City Council (ECC) 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. ECC 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 from the museum's collection.

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

1.5 The museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using Spectrum primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account

limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

- 1.6 The museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- 1.7 The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

2 History of the collections

2.1 Overview

RAMM owes the wealth of its extraordinary collections to its origins in the 1860s. Its predecessor, the Devon & Exeter Albert Memorial, was created through public subscription in the wake of Prince Albert's death. Civic leaders had been toying with the idea of a museum for several decades as there were important collections of artefacts and specimens in the city, such as those held by the Devon & Exeter Institution, gathered by people who had lived or worked abroad and retired to Devon.

These early donations helped to establish RAMM's collection priorities when it opened in 1868 around four subject areas: Antiquities (Archaeology and Local History), Art, Ethnography (World Cultures) and Natural History. In 1870 the Albert Memorial Museum, School of Art and Free Library was conveyed to the Corporation of Exeter in trust for the benefit of the City of Exeter under the Public Libraries Act, 1855. In the subsequent years collecting in the four core areas has been refined and formalised through a policy periodically ratified by elected members.

Between 2000 and 2013 RAMM undertook a major project to tackle a backlog in collections documentation followed by a root-and-branch review of its collections by assessing information on provenance, significance and usage. The award-winning review identified collections strengths and weaknesses and informed the themes and priorities for future research, collecting and rationalisation.

While the core themes established at RAMM's foundation remain the cornerstone of collecting, the museum's acquisition policies have evolved in the subsequent years.

3 An overview of current collections

3.1 Overview

RAMM houses a varied collection well in excess of a million items. The principal subject areas are classified under the headings of Antiquities, Costume and Textiles, Decorative Art, World Cultures, Fine Art, Natural Sciences and Social History.

Alongside (and sometimes within) the principal subject areas, RAMM's holdings also incorporate inter-disciplinary material, such as Numismatics, Contemporary Art and Photography.

3.2 Antiquities

Approximately 55,030 accession records refer to the archaeology of Devon and Exeter, Britain, Egypt, the Mediterranean and Western Asia as well as fragments from local buildings. Many of these records refer to group accessions (one accession number may cover a box of many pot sherds for example) so the actual number of objects within the Antiquities collection is significantly higher – estimated at 1,060,700 (May 2025).

RAMM's local archaeology and history collections represent the heritage of almost every community in Exeter, East Devon, Mid-Devon, Teignbridge and parts of the South Hams and Dartmoor. The collections cover most aspects of domestic, social, cultural, religious, economic and political life over the past 300,000 years.

For a small city, Exeter has been the subject of a huge amount of archaeological attention. The results of this work are deposited at RAMM. The archaeological holdings reflect the history of Exeter: from Roman military origins; a Roman civilian phase; post-Roman decline; Anglo-Saxon renewal; medieval growth; a Tudor and Stuart period of prosperity from trade and colonialism; to a less prominent but affluent Georgian and Victorian period.

Archaeological projects on the outskirts of Exeter have increased our knowledge of the prehistoric, Roman and medieval occupation of the area. For example, during the development of the Exeter Logistics Park, a 6000-year-old Neolithic grinding stone for making flour was uncovered, it is the largest and most complete example in the UK. Further afield, near Newton Abbot, the largest prehistoric pot to be found in Devon, a Middle Bronze Age (1600-1200 BCE) bucket urn, was discovered during excavations preceding a housing development.

The collection includes a large number of coins and coin hoards found by archaeologists and metal detectorists (e.g. the Roman hoard from Seaton Down). There are also 18th and early 19th century coin finds from Exeter, particularly those of W.T.P. Shortt and the Norton collection. These two are of particular note as they contain large numbers of eastern Mediterranean and Arabic coins which have long puzzled archaeologists. Coin finds from controlled excavations are of great importance in site dating and interpretation.

Historically, RAMM has collected archaeological material from the whole of Devon; however, since the 1990s, the museum has only collected archaeological archives from the local authority areas of Exeter, East Devon, Mid Devon, Teignbridge, plus the eastern half of Dartmoor and the South Hams (see Appendix A). RAMM levies a fee for the deposition of these archaeological archives which covers their long-term storage and curation. RAMM holds the archives of field records, site plans, photographs, etc., relating to pre-2014 archaeological sites from both Exeter and Devon. Now that most archaeological documentation is 'born digital', RAMM no longer collects this material, instead it is archived with specialised digital repositories such as the Archaeology Data Service (ADS).

RAMM works actively with the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) and metal-detecting communities to encourage detectorists to record their finds. The Museum has acquired finds through the Treasure Act 1996 as well as non-treasure items directly from landowners and detectorists.

Additionally, the antiquities collection includes important architectural fragments from buildings in Exeter and around Devon dating from around AD 950 to 1800. The best examples have regional and national importance as a record of building styles and methods, many of which have been lost during recent development. As with the archaeology collections, they form an important element in establishing a sense of place. Of particular note is a nationally important collection of late medieval ecclesiastical woodwork fragments from churches of the Southwest collected by Exeter-based Harry Hems.

The archaeology of the Mediterranean region, Egypt and Western Asia is represented by collections in RAMM. The majority of the European, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek, Cypriot, Etruscan and Roman material was collected in the 19th and very early 20th centuries. The core of the collection is formed by the Cobham collection of Cypriot antiquities, the Corkill collection of Mesopotamian cylinder seals and the L.A.D. Montague collection. The latter is a good example of a 'gentleman's' antiquities collection, mostly purchased from dealers and including a Greek hoplite helmet said to be from the Battle of Marathon. Individual objects of interest include: the mummy of Shep en-Mut, a late 18th-dynasty stone sculpture head, possibly Tutankhamun or Horemheb, and examples of Coptic textiles. RAMM and its partners are actively researching this material to try to establish more precise identifications and provenances.

3.3 Contemporary Art

Contemporary art and craft in RAMM's collection have been acquired by purchase (with grant support) and donation in recent years and works are found across the collection areas. In 2015-20 sculpture was the particular focus with works by Polly Morgan, Peter Randall-Page, Michael Shaw and others entering the collection. 2020-2025 saw photography take priority (see 3.10). The World Cultures collection also includes artwork commissioned to celebrate the museum's international links, such as by Rosanna Raymond and Suzuki Mutsumi. Acquisitions have been made through the museum's membership of the Contemporary Art Society including Gillian Ayres, Céline Condorelli, Joy Gregory and Michelle Sank. Since 2018 the collection has focused on redressing the gender balance of artists in Fine Art (see 4.7) so artwork by women artists including Fern Leigh-Albert, Susan Derges and Amy Shelton have been acquired.

3.4 Costume and Textiles

RAMM's collections management database includes approximately 17,000 verified records relating to the costume and textiles collection. However, many of these refer to a group of items, so it is estimated that the actual number of objects in the collection is nearer 24,000.

The Costume and Textiles collection illustrates the types of clothes worn by local men, women and children from 1750 to the present day, with some much earlier examples of underwear, accessories and textiles. The collection is strongest in middle/upper class female

clothing but is better balanced for more recent periods, including every day and occupational clothes worn by people of all classes in Exeter.

The collection of lace, some 2,000 items including documentation and equipment, is particularly strong. It covers European and British laces (and allied techniques) from the 16th century to the present day. The Bury Palliser and Treadwin collections - both important 19th-century collections of English and continental lace samples - were among the first collections to be given to the museum in the 1860s. They are unique to RAMM. In recent years RAMM has acquired the collections of two modern Devon lace makers and teachers: Christine Hawken and Elsie Luxton MBE.

The strength of the Costume and Textiles collection is the quantity of material with strong local connections, whilst the quality and quantity of items ranks it among the top ten costume collections in Britain. Many objects have been published.

3.5 Decorative Art

The Decorative Art collection covers a broad field. It comprises approximately 500 items of silver, 1,300 ceramics and 400 glass objects, as well as smaller collections of civic regalia, furniture, horology, pewter and other metalwork.

RAMM's collection of Devon silver is of international importance and dates from the medieval period to the present day. Most was acquired in the post-war years through the Veitch bequest and through the Reynolds Chard bequest. The V&A Purchase Grant Fund in 1995 allowed the acquisition of the Corfield Spoon Collection. The museum also has some important early church silver on loan from churches within the diocese. The collections at the Guildhall are mostly of a later date and with Civic associations. The most recent acquisitions were two Elizabethan silver mounted tigerware jugs from Exeter, about 1580-90, purchased in 2012 through the Reynolds Chard bequest and the V&A Purchase Grant Fund and Art Fund.

The ceramics collection is made up of English and continental material from the 17th century to the present day. Some is of a high quality and the collections of harvest jugs is of national importance. There is also a strong collection of Martinware. Devon potteries such as Brannam's and Aller Vale are well represented, but there are some significant gaps in the studio ceramics collections. RAMM is addressing these and is actively collecting to bring the collection of local studio pottery up to

date. Recent acquisitions in 2024-25 include a jug and raku tea bowl by Jill Fanshawe Kato; and a jar and a dish by Doug Fitch and Hannah McAndrew. Bruce Chivers donated a raku ware vessel in 2017.

The museum has a large and representative collection of glass dating from the early 18th century, based on the Clarke bequest of 1928. There are several pieces of special note such as the Joanna Southcott beakers and Charles II flute glass.

RAMM's collection of horology embraces clocks, watches and clock and watch-making tools from the 17th to the 20th centuries. Most of the watch collection was bequeathed by C.R. Venn in 1928 and is one of the most important collections outside London, including several very rare time-pieces. Later acquisitions, including an 18th-century watch by Henry Gard of Exeter, acquired in 2011, have filled some of the gaps in RAMM's collection.

3.6 World Cultures

RAMM's World Cultures collection consists of some 11,000 items. In 1998 the collection gained Designated status. This is in recognition of its national and significance and international importance. The collection includes items from different parts of the world. It reflects acquisitions made during the time of British colonialism. This period dates from the late 18th century through to the early/mid-20th century.

The collection represents British interests in:

- ▶ Africa, (particularly Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya and South Africa)
- ▶ the Americas (includes Arctic, Northwest Coast and Plains region of the USA, Mexico, Guatemala and the Amazon and Savannah regions of South America)
- ▶ Western Asia (notably Oman)
- ▶ Asia (such as China, India and Myanmar)
- ▶ Oceania (includes Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Australia, Aotearoa, and Tonga).

Local Exeter and Devon residents were responsible for acquiring these souvenirs. Sometimes they donated trophies of conflict, as they were witness to or participated in iconic historic events. The collection represents the significant connections made between local people and Indigenous communities.

After the museum opened in 1868, there were several significant donations:

- ▶ The Devon and Exeter Institution transferred items to RAMM. This included rare items from Tahiti collected by Francis Godolphin Bond in 1792.
- ▶ Reverend Henry Townsend was an Exeter-born missionary based in Nigeria. He set up a mission in the new Egba city of Abeokuta in 1846. He acquired prestigious items from people in positions of power.
- ▶ Henry Vaughan was an art collector. He donated items from Captain Cook's second and third voyages. These items came from the 1806 Leverian auction.
- ▶ Crew members from the HMS Discovery (1790-95) and HMS Blossom (1825-28) traded artefacts in the Arctic and Pacific regions.
- ▶ In 1865 botanist John Gould Veitch participated in a collecting voyage on the HMS Curaçoa. Artefacts from these voyages are found in collections at RAMM.
- ▶ F.W.L. Ross served on the HMS Tagus in 1813, built his own museum in Topsham. His naval contacts helped him establish an important collection of rare items.
- ▶ Richard Edward Dennett was a dealer in ivory and rubber in the Congo region. He acquired a collection of artefacts associated with the nganga priest class. He was likely a member of the Lemba trading guild.
- ▶ James Bandinel was the head of the anti-slave department at the Foreign Office (1824-49). His collection of artefacts came from naval ships which had seized slaving vessels.

Modern acquisitions enhance the historic collection. Artefacts have to match the quality and range of existing material. This includes expedition material from the Amazon and Cerrado regions of Brazil. Also, Chhau performance masks made in 1980s India.

Contemporary art has become an important part of the collection. In 2007, Polynesian artist Rosanna Raymond was commissioned to produce *Genealogy*. These barkcloth-covered jeans highlighted the significance of barkcloth to Pacific Island identities. Melinda Schwackhofer is an artist of Muscogee heritage. RAMM purchased her 2021 portrait *I am Mvskoke*. This now features in the Ancestral Voices gallery redisplay.

3.7 Fine Art

The collection includes material from the 16th century to the present. It comprises approximately 500 paintings, 3,600 drawings and watercolours, 3,600 prints and a small collection of sculpture.

The Fine Art collection is strong in 18th and 19th-century local artists - in particular Francis Towne, John White Abbott and John Gendall, representing Exeter and Devon topographical scenes. Since 2005, significant Devon artists of this period (pre-dating the 20th century), such as Francis Hayman, Benjamin Robert Haydon and Richard Cosway have been acquired via grant aid in order to extend and consolidate this already significant collection. These artists are either native to or have a tradition of working in Devon. Artists (of excellence and significance) beyond the above remit, including a John Opie portrait of Micaiah Towgood, have been acquired only via donation or bequest.

The representative collection of 20th-century paintings, prints and drawings has been developed, with the addition of works linking to artists already featured in the collections (e.g. Duncan Grant, Walter Sickert) and the groups and schools with which they were associated (e.g. Bloomsbury, Camden Town, Euston Road). More recent acquisitions include a David Bomberg landscape. Works by war artists have lately been consolidated by the acquisition of Leighton Hall Woollatt's Blitz scenes, among others.

The acquisition of local works, for example landscapes and portraits, can be of more importance for their topographical or historical significance than their artistic merit. RAMM has continued to acquire selected additions of work related to the region, such as Exeter and Devon landscapes; work with a connection to the region through ownership or provenance; and work by established professional artists born, trained or resident in the region, including artists-in-residence. Important recent acquisitions to this part of the collection include works by John White Abbot and Leighton Hall Woollatt.

Works in RAMM's sculpture collection range from the medieval period onwards. The acquisition of sculpture is limited by size, storage and conservation factors. However important 20th-century small-scale works include *Zennor* by Barbara Hepworth, *Carapace* by Michael Ayrton and *Triple Loop* by Bill Pye. In 2017 RAMM commissioned Danish glass artist Steffen Dam to create *Specimens from an Imaginary Voyage* specifically for the 'Sladen's Studies' gallery.

3.8 Natural Sciences

RAMM's Natural Sciences collections are wide in scope covering zoology, botany and geology. They contain British and foreign material of high quality and scientific importance. Approximately 121,000 accession records relate to Natural Sciences objects. Many of these records refer to group accessions (for example, one accession number may cover an entire cabinet of entomology specimens) so the actual number of objects within Natural Sciences is estimated in excess of 500,000.

The molluscs number approximately 70,000 individual specimens with good global and taxonomic coverage. In January 2020 George Montagu's collection of shells received Designated status from Arts Council England. It includes 120 lots with type status and attracts international research interest. It is the most intact and taxonomically important collection of British shells of the early 19th century to be found anywhere in the UK. Juliana Linter's collection of approximately 14,000 exotic land snail shells is also noteworthy for it includes many rare or extinct species as well as some type material.

Percy Sladen's echinoderm collection comprises several thousand microscope slides and fossils from the collection of William and Philip Carpenter and over 2,500 dry and wet-preserved echinoderms. Some of these echinoderms were collected on the expeditions of HMS Challenger (1872-76) and HMS Lightning (1868). This is one of the best echinoderm collections in the UK outside of national museums.

RAMM has excellent British and exotic butterfly collections numbering in the region of 120,000 specimens, many of which have been consolidated (organised taxonomically rather than by collector). RAMM also has comprehensive holdings of British beetles and spiders (the acquisition of Toddy Cooper's collection in 2023 filled many of the gaps in Dave Bolton's collection).

Birds are a particular area of strength within the vertebrate collection with more than 12,500 study skins, eggs, bones and mounts. The specimens are of native and exotic species with good global coverage and include those now extinct or exceedingly rare such as the kakapo, huia, moa, ivory-billed woodpecker and passenger pigeon. North American birds are particularly well represented. Some of RAMM's most iconic objects are mammals. Of the 1,400 mammal specimens around 60 were collected by big game hunter Charles Victor Alexander Peel including the giraffe as well as a polar bear and an African elephant. Reptiles, fish and amphibians are less well represented.

The botany collection is a good reflection of the activities of collectors from Victorian times up to the mid-20th century. Specimens from early collectors such as William D'Urban and William Hiern are particularly data-rich. Both collections include local and national material. Some of Hiern's specimens have been published in *Flora of Devon* (1939) by Keble Martin and Fraser. Also of note are approximately 2,000 seaweed specimens, many collected by female collectors including Amelia Griffiths, Mary Wyatt, Catherine Cutler, Fanny Hindon and Ellen Hutchins.

The geology collections are strong in specimens from Devon and the South West of England; together with intermittent worldwide coverage. The palaeontology collections are particularly extensive, with important material from the local Cretaceous, Pleistocene and Triassic systems including the holotype of *Fodonyx spenceri*.

3.9 Numismatics

The numismatics collection comprises coins, tokens, medals and bank notes issued in Devon. Archaeological coins and coin hoards are represented within the Antiquities collection (see 3.2). The most important elements are a very fine systematic collection of the silver pennies struck at Devon's four Saxon and Norman mints (Exeter, Barnstaple, Totnes and Lydford), which includes one of only three known Alfred the Great EXA pennies, acquired in 2025. The sequence of Exeter's Civil War coinage is also of great importance.

There are also good collections of Devon tradesmen's tokens of the 17th and 18th centuries, local medals, pub checks and badges, and a small collection of local banknotes. The museum also holds a representative selection of typical British coins of Saxon to modern date and a small collection of Classical coins.

3.10 Photography

An assessment of RAMM's photographic holdings was undertaken by a curatorial post from the V&A Museum's Photography Curators' Training programme, supported by Art Fund. It identified photographic material in all of RAMM's principal collection areas, as well as in the archive. It includes early daguerreotype and ambrotype material from the 1850s to present day prints. It is estimated that there are 600 photographic prints (including unique photographs, original and reproductive prints); 250 negatives and transparencies; 4,700 lantern slides; a small collection of

photographic albums and books containing photographs; and a collection related to photographic technology, including photographic equipment and raw materials.

The collection is strong in late 19th- and early 20th-century material by local, professional photographers with a particular focus on studio portraiture (cartes de visite, cabinet cards, loose and in photographic albums), such as by Owen Angel, James Frederick Long and Heath & Bradnee Ltd.

Highlights of the collection include:

- ▶ Four photographic portraits of the Royal family (reproductive prints) by Baron (Stirling Henry Nahum), Alice Hughes, and W. & D. Downey
- ▶ A tri-colour carbro print, *A Domestic Affair*, c. 1925, an outstanding example of early colour photography by Exeter-based photographer Frederick Gordon Tutton (1888-1930)
- ▶ Book with albumen prints of fungi (c. 1870s-80s), some hand-coloured, by early female photographer Miss M.M. Clarke
- ▶ Book *Hortus Veitchii*, 1906 with approx. 50 photogravure illustrations possibly by E.J. Wallis
- ▶ Group of 44 photographs of tree specimens collected by JR Jackson (including albumen prints by Samuel Bourne, Bourne & Shepherd, Charles Thomas Scowen, Nicholas & Curth and GR Lambert and Co.)
- ▶ A unique photographic album (platinum prints) of *Reminiscences of Mysore* by Barton & Son, Bangalore from c. 1906.
- ▶ Three crystoleum photographs by Exeter-based photographer Owen Angel, c. 1870s-80s
- ▶ Daguerreotype of an unknown girl by Charles Henry Williamson (1826 - 1874), c. mid-1850s
- ▶ Two boxes of microphotographs, some made by the pioneer of microphotography John Benjamin Dancer
- ▶ Photographs by Michelle Sank depicting the 2015 Rugby World Cup and subsequently COVID-19 pandemic purchased through the Contemporary Art Society's Rapid Response Fund.

Recent acquisitions focussed on Dartmoor, with works by Suan Derges, Garry Fabian Miller, Robert Darch, Fern Leigh Albert and Marie Yates entering the collection.

3.11 Social History

The Social history collection at RAMM is currently estimated at 9,955 records and 16,945 objects. Social history has recently been identified as a discrete group within RAMM's collections and we are currently assessing our holdings for significance.

These objects reflect the history of Exeter and its region from the 17th century onwards. They include artefacts relating to the city's institutions (the defences, religious institutions, the Guildhall, public health and the water supply for example), its foreign and regional trade (with highly important material from the operation of the custom port of Exeter), its industries, domestic life and topography (the last including a series of city models ranging in date from about 1820 to the 1970s). There has been little organised collecting in the past, and this is an area the museum is looking to develop in the future.

RAMM holds a small collection of musical instruments including important keyboard instruments as well as some woodwind and string instruments dating from the late 18th century. The 17th-century virginals by Charles Rewalyn of Exeter and the Italian harpsichord of 1782 are outstanding pieces.

The small collection of armour and swords is based on local 17th- and 18th-century material. A medium-sized collection of firearms has as its core the high quality products of the local firm of W.J. Harvey and other innovative 19th-century firearms collected by W.J. Harvey.

The small technology collection numbering some 296 objects was mainly collected between the 1970s and 1980s, with a few existing older acquisitions being included. A number of objects in this collection was identified as potential candidates for disposal following a rationalisation exercise.

RAMM has a significant collection of objects relating to fire insurance and firefighting, with some of the earliest examples dating from the 18th century. These objects include fire buckets, fire insurance marks, uniform and equipment, and a fire engine used by Exeter Cathedral.

4 Themes and priorities for future collecting

4.1 Overview

RAMM's approach to collecting is shaped by its organisational purpose and values and responsibility to manage collections ethically, legally and effectively within the resources available and in line with the distinctive character of the museum, and always for the public benefit.

RAMM will collect in accordance with the following general principles:

- ▶ RAMM will collect strategically and ethically, to further our organisational purpose.
- ▶ Acquisitions will contribute to the exploration of themes, issues, events or people important to the natural and cultural history of Exeter, set within its regional and national context, or the city and the region's connections across the world.
RAMM is actively seeking to acquire material that reflects the diversity of contemporary Exeter and the surrounding area including, but not limited to, faith, race, gender, sexual orientation and disability.
- ▶ As part of the process of considering an item for the collection, we take into account the potential of the item to stimulate discussion and new perspectives and to help personalise the making of meaning.
- ▶ We take a focused, responsive approach to collecting, within the resources available to us.
- ▶ Whilst we emphasise the interconnectivity and diversity of our content, we do not aspire to build a comprehensive collection covering all areas of material culture.
- ▶ We balance further collecting with the imperative to better understand and make use of existing collections.
- ▶ In considering an item for our collection, we take into account the need for collections information, care and access.
- ▶ We seek to fill gaps in our collection only where this will strengthen existing collections themes, enrich visitor experience, or contribute to opportunities for discussion and debate.
- ▶ We will acquire an object only if it has clear potential for display, interpretation, research, learning, access or outreach.
- ▶ We will not acquire material whose care and conservation needs are out of proportion to its potential for display, interpretation, research, learning or outreach.
- ▶ The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations and work with them to ensure Devon's unique history is reflected in museum collections without significant duplications.

4.2 Antiquities

Selective acquisitions may be made on the basis of the established Antiquities collection areas as set out in 3.2. A particular focus for the next five years will be:

- ▶ Archaeological finds (whether they are found by professional bodies or members of the public) that significantly add to RAMM's collections or to the heritage of local communities.
- ▶ Archaeological archives from planning and development projects in line with the museum's Guidelines for the Deposition of Archaeological Archives. (Please see Appendix A for full details.) A priority will be to collect archives from the new communities that are being built in and around Exeter. Another focus will be on material that has potential to benefit from new analytical technologies investigating such subjects as DNA, stable isotopes and trace elements.
- ▶ Selected items of treasure (as defined in the 1996 Treasure Act). RAMM will follow the procedures as set out in the Treasure Act Code of Practice (see Treasure Act Code of Practice, paragraph 60). Coin hoards and hoards of Bronze Age metalwork are particularly strong sources of information and are a priority for collection.
- ▶ The Museum strongly discourages the removal of historic architectural fittings from their original buildings. However, in circumstances where such pieces will certainly be removed, or already have been removed, ecclesiastical or secular woodwork with Devon provenances will be acquired by purchase, gift or bequest, subject to their historic importance and with consultation with relevant local museums outside Exeter. Items relating to Harry Hems or Herbert Read and their workshops are of particular interest.

RAMM will not collect the following:

- ▶ British archaeological material from outside Devon.
- ▶ Digital documentation from archaeological projects or paperwork generated by such projects. Contracting units will be asked to deposit a digital archive with a suitable repository, such as the Archaeology Data Service.
- ▶ Examples of UK coinage or coinage from other countries (unless it is part of an archaeological find).
- ▶ Large architectural items owing to storage constraints. If the museum becomes aware of endangered architectural items, the Local Authority Archaeologist and Historic Environment Record will be contacted. Where practicable, attempts will be made to find alternative homes for significant items.

- ▶ Significant new collections of foreign archaeological material. New acquisitions, however, will be considered if artefacts are known to have come from the major donors of material already held in the collection e.g. Claude Delaval Cobham, Lt. Col. L.A.D. Montague, Dr. N.L. Corkill.

4.3 Contemporary Art

Since 2011 RAMM has developed a reputation for exhibiting and commissioning contemporary artists. Since 2018 this work has been guided by the role of Contemporary Art Curator and Programmer through a range of selection processes.

RAMM will acquire contemporary art. Collecting will be informed by RAMM's Manifesto, Business Plan and programming themes. Contemporary art acquisitions will contribute to exploring issues, events or people relevant to RAMM's wide-ranging collections. It will also be informed by Exeter's natural and cultural histories and its connections across the world. Contemporary art acquisitions may also explain historical museum processes and engage in dynamics of thinking between disciplines.

Funding will also inform the rationale for collecting contemporary art, as investment will be required for ambitious projects to be realised.

Methods for acquiring contemporary art may include:

- ▶ Purchase, bequest or donation (including donation in lieu of tax) in particular where it is linked to programmes and themes across RAMM
- ▶ Commissioning work for exhibition and public programmes
- ▶ Acts of repatriation
- ▶ National collecting or commissioning schemes such as through the membership scheme of the Contemporary Art Society
- ▶ In particular, RAMM needs to address the long-term storage of digital works already commissioned and to futureproof future programming and commissions for collecting. (see 4.11)

4.4 **Costume and Textiles**

Selective acquisitions may be made on the basis of the established Costume and Textiles collection areas as set out in 3.4. A particular focus for the next five years will be:

- ▶ Costume items with strong local provenance and which fill gaps in existing collection (Exeter and Devon); early Devon-made pieces; designers/makers with a local connection (all periods).
- ▶ RAMM seeks to build on existing collections of occupational and working-class dress particularly 18th and 19th century
- ▶ European lace items which fill gaps in existing collection: early pieces, particularly Devon-made; 16th- and 17th-century continental laces.

4.5 **Decorative Art**

Selective acquisitions may be made on the basis of the established Decorative Art collection areas as set out in 3.5. A particular focus for the next five years will be:

- ▶ To fill gaps in the studio ceramics collection, including both 20th-century and 21st-century pottery. A particular focus will be on Devon ceramicists and studio potters of national significance.
- ▶ Contemporary craft work that relates to RAMM's collections
- ▶ Silver with an Exeter or Devon association

4.6 **World Cultures**

New acquisitions should enhance collection strengths. Or they can fill existing gaps in the collection. Artefacts which reflect contemporary issues for collections-connected communities are also considered.

Suggestions for new acquisitions include:

- ▶ Historic photographic archive relating to the collection to aid interpretation.
Textiles from the African and American continents. Examples include Yoruba adire.
- ▶ Contemporary artwork.
- ▶ Traditional religious and high-status artefacts. Care must be taken to show provenance and means of acquisition by the donor. RAMM's care of such items must not cause offence to the originating peoples, and holders of specialist knowledge.

RAMM will not accept the following:

- ▶ Unmodified human remains
- ▶ Artefacts carved from ivory and rhinoceros horn post-1900
- ▶ Items acquired as a result of human conflict
- ▶ Sacred and high-status items as a result of historic colonial policy of assimilation

4.7 Fine Art

Selective acquisitions may be made on the basis of the established Fine Art collection areas as set out in 3.7. A particular focus for the next five years will be:

- ▶ Portrait miniatures by Devon artists. Four of the most important artists in the history of the portrait miniature were Devonian: Nicholas Hilliard, Richard Cosway, Richard Crosse and Ozias Humphry. Though their careers were based in the capital, each maintained strong connections to the South West and secured numerous commissions in the region. Works by Hilliard command prices far beyond the normal resources of the museum and special efforts would have to be made to acquire a work if the opportunity arose.
- ▶ Women artists. RAMM's collection, like many founded in the Victorian period, presents a traditional, patriarchal art historical view. While there are some notable Victorian women artists represented, the collection is heavily male-weighted. RAMM seeks to redress the balance by collecting works by female artists from all periods with strong links to the South West e.g. Exeter artist Ethel Larcombe (fl.1900-1920).
- ▶ Portraiture. The portrait collection is significant with examples from the 16th to the 20th century. The majority of these works depict white, wealthy and powerful sitters, that do not adequately reflect the diversity of historic or contemporary British society. There are no depictions of disability or portraiture that reflects the discourse of gender identity. Few works reflect Britain's racial and ethnic diversity or individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds. RAMM is actively seeking acquisitions to address this, with a focus on the diversity of Devon.

4.8 Natural Sciences

In addition to the considerations set out in 4.1 RAMM has the following standards and criteria for Natural Sciences collecting:

- ▶ Specimens should be well provenanced - known collector, collection location and date
- ▶ They should be locally relevant – this is considered in geographical terms – Devon, Exeter - or from a historical perspective (local collector, collector relevant to RAMM and its history, or local historical event).
- ▶ Foreign material will only be considered if of very good quality and if it complements RAMM's existing collections.
- ▶ Objects with a particular UK geographical association beyond Exeter but within Devon will only be acquired following consultation with relevant museums. Specimens should be identified to species level
- ▶ Herbarium specimens should be mounted where appropriate.
- ▶ Vertebrate specimens will be accepted if already prepared as mounts, skins, skeletons or preserved wet. Carcasses will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances
- ▶ Insects should be set and mounted or preserved in fluid. Papered, un-set or un-mounted specimens will be considered only in exceptional circumstances.
- ▶ Selective acquisitions may be made on the basis of the established Natural Sciences collection areas as set out in 3.8.

A particular focus for the next five years will be to:

- ▶ Ensure both sexes of a species are represented where sexual dimorphism is present.
- ▶ Collect wild species new to Devon, including spreading UK natives and 'alien' introductions.
- ▶ Seek historic and modern specimens to provide voucher coverage (reference specimens) for Devon.
- ▶ Seek local examples of native and introduced reptile and amphibian species that occur in Devon to develop a reference collection of well-preserved specimens.
- ▶ Fill gaps in existing British mollusc collections with Devon specimens (where possible), as well as collecting examples of new species to the county.
- ▶ Fill any remaining gaps in the British spider, millipede, centipede and woodlouse collections ideally with specimens from Devon (list available on request).
- ▶ Collect palaeontological specimens from the World Heritage coast particularly Triassic reptiles from the Helsby Sandstone Formation (formerly known as Otter Sandstone) near Sidmouth and material from other Permian / Triassic sources in the South West.
- ▶ Collect Devon petrological and mineralogical material to fill existing gaps. Material related to industrial use is also sought.

4.9 Numismatics

Collecting will focus on items that were made in Devon or were issued in Devon. As the coin collection is already a very strong one, the focus will be on tokens, bank notes, badges and medals.

4.10 Photography

Selective acquisitions may be made according to the criteria of any of the principal collection areas. RAMM seeks to develop its photographic holdings by acquiring high-quality works by significant artists.

A particular focus for the next five years will be:

- ▶ Works by photographers who have made a significant contribution to the story of photography in the South West. Their work should provide insights into Exeter's and the region's culture and society and/or natural landscape.
- ▶ Photography made in and depicting the South West (specifically Dartmoor) produced during the late 20th and 21st centuries. The primacy of photography's documenting capacity in relation to landscape and the natural world will be of significance, but collecting will not be limited to traditional concepts of 'landscape photography'. Photographs on wider Dartmoor themes and topics related to culture and society of the area such as environment and nature, freedom and living with the land will be considered.
- ▶ Supporting young, local and emerging photographers through the acquisition of photobooks.
- ▶ Representing the diversity of contemporary Devon.

RAMM is not seeking to acquire the following material:

- ▶ Photographer's archives
- ▶ Topographical and documentary photographs of Exeter and Devon will be referred to Devon Heritage Services

4.11 Social History

Selective acquisitions may be made on the basis of the established Social History collection areas as set out in 3.8.

A particular focus for the next five years will be to:

- ▶ Acquire items with clear and unique connections to Exeter and Devon in terms of design, production or use by people living or working in Exeter, past or present.
- ▶ Collect social history items to enrich visitor experience (physical or virtual), introduce additional voices and stimulate discussion and new perspectives and to help personalise the making of meaning.
- ▶ Women's stories are underrepresented in the social history collection. RAMM will actively seek acquisitions that reflect the lives and experiences of women in Devon
- ▶ RAMM is not currently seeking to acquire oral history material, apart from in exceptional circumstances. On the occasion such material is acquired it will be with due regard to the codes of practice and ethical guidelines established by the Oral History Society and comparable professional bodies.

RAMM will not collect the following:

- ▶ Mass-produced items unless they strongly meet one or more criteria laid out in 5.1
- ▶ Large-scale industrial history items
- ▶ Due to restrictions of space and resources RAMM cannot undertake large-scale contemporary collecting. However, it will seek to make selective acquisitions that reflect contemporary Exeter life.

4.12 **Digital media**

RAMM is keenly aware of the growth in digital work in contemporary art and other creative areas. This includes artist commissions and exhibition content. Because the museum is not resourced for the long-term storage and preservation of born digital, or archived as digital, creations such works are not accessioned at present. Longer term we seek to find a means of accessioning, storing and preserving digital objects and are will explore partnerships that can deliver this aspiration.

5 Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

5.1 Overview

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.

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.

The following areas have been identified as priorities for rationalisation or disposal for the period 2025-2030 following further research and review.

5.2 Antiquities

- ▶ Recent Devon or Exeter archaeological archives with small collections of finds that form typical assemblages. These assemblages duplicate many others in RAMM and have little research value or community interest.
- ▶ Archaeological archives found on properties managed by heritage organisations, such as English Heritage, will be transferred to join existing collections with those organisations.
- ▶ Sampling/retention strategies will be applied to types of archaeological material where industry best practice has been built up. In several instances this best practice has been influenced by RAMM projects. Examples include archaeometallurgy, faunal remains, pottery building materials, and clay pipes.

5.3 Contemporary Art

None identified.

5.4 **Costume and Textiles**

- ▶ Duplicate examples of 20th-century gloves and stockings where condition or provenance is poor.
- ▶ Post-1970 periodicals in mass circulation that do not reflect the content of the collection.
- ▶ 20th-century hairdressing items and cosmetics.

5.5 **Decorative Art**

- ▶ Furniture (excluding pieces connected to Kent Kingdon)
- ▶ European ceramics that do not relate to key donors in the museum's history

5.6 **World Cultures**

- ▶ Souvenirs that contain little cultural value
- ▶ Various items from European countries that may sit better under other collections areas (e.g. Costume and Textiles) within RAMM or be a better fit with the collecting remits of other Accredited museums
- ▶ Duplicate historic items that might be best cared for in another museum collection or community of origin if wanted.
- ▶ Items (particularly weapons) that are in bad repair and are not good examples of their kind.
- ▶ Items which are identified as being sacred by source communities and those which were acquired unethically during the time of British colonialism. Such items will be considered for repatriation to support the needs of the originating community where a return offers significant healing and reconciliation. The significance of need is dealt with on a case-by-case basis in line with RAMM's repatriation process (see section 15 and Appendix C).

5.7 **Fine Art**

- ▶ Duplicate prints
- ▶ Documents better suited to a record office, such as South West Heritage Trust, or that are not locally relevant
- ▶ Publications which are available at other institutions and libraries

5.8 Natural Sciences

- ▶ Spirit collection - Poorly preserved material - often in phenoxytol which has been shown to be ineffective as a preservative – with negligible or insignificant provenance will be disposed of by destruction.
- ▶ Birds' eggs with poor data and little research potential.
- ▶ Recent, mass-produced publications

5.9 Photography

- ▶ Duplicate prints and copies
- ▶ Film negatives (hazardous materials) after digitisation
- ▶ Cameras, technical equipment and photographic raw material without direct relation to the collections and the museum's history or particular significance
- ▶ Material showing signs of extreme physical deterioration without any possibilities for restoration

5.10 Social History

- ▶ Firearms: mass-produced firearms not from Devon makers

6 Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.

7 Collecting policies of other museums

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

7.2 Specific reference is made to the following museum(s)/organisation(s):

Devon

- ▶ A la Ronde, Exmouth
- ▶ Allhallows Museum, Honiton
- ▶ Arlington Carriage Museum, Barnstaple
- ▶ Arlington Court, Barnstaple
- ▶ Ashburton Museum, Ashburton
- ▶ Axe Valley Heritage Museum, Seaton
- ▶ Axminster Museum, Axminster
- ▶ Branscombe Old Bakery, Seaton
- ▶ Braunton & District Museum, Braunton
- ▶ Brixham Heritage Museum, Brixham
- ▶ Buckfastleigh Museum and the Valient Soldier Heritage Project, Buckfastleigh,
- ▶ Buckland Abbey, Yelverton,
- ▶ Burton Art Gallery & Museum, Bideford
- ▶ Castle Drogo, Exeter
- ▶ Coldharbour Mill Working Wool Museum, Cullompton,
- ▶ Coleton Fishacre House & Garden, Dartmouth
- ▶ Combe Martin Museum, Combe Martin
- ▶ Cookworthy Museum of Rural Life, Kingsbridge
- ▶ Crediton Museum & Heritage Centre, Crediton
- ▶ Dartmoor Prison Museum, Princetown
- ▶ Dartmouth Museum, Dartmouth
- ▶ Dawlish Museum, Dawlish
- ▶ Devonshire Collection of Period Costume, Totnes
- ▶ Elizabethan House, Plymouth
- ▶ Exmouth Museum, Exmouth
- ▶ Fairlynch Arts Centre & Museum, Budleigh Salterton
- ▶ Finch Foundry, Okehampton
- ▶ Flete, Ivybridge
- ▶ Holsworthy Museum, Holsworthy
- ▶ Ilfracombe Museum, Ilfracombe
- ▶ Killerton House, Exeter

- ▶ Knightshayes Court, Tiverton,
- ▶ Lyn & Exmoor Museum, Lynton
- ▶ Markers Cottage, Exeter,
- ▶ Morwellham Quay Open Air Museum, Tavistock
- ▶ Museum of Barnstaple & North Devon, Barnstaple
- ▶ Museum of British Surfing, Braunton
- ▶ Museum of Dartmoor Life, Okehampton
- ▶ Newton Abbot Town & GWR Museum, Newton Abbot
- ▶ North Devon District Council Museum Service, Barnstaple
- ▶ North Devon Maritime Museum, Appledore
- ▶ Overbecks Museum, Salcombe
- ▶ Salcombe Maritime Museum, Salcombe
- ▶ Saltram House, Plymouth
- ▶ Sidmouth Museum, Sidmouth
- ▶ South Devon Railway Museum Trust, Buckfastleigh
- ▶ South Molton & District Museum, South Molton
- ▶ Tavistock Museum, Tavistock
- ▶ Teignmouth and Shaldon Museum & Historical Society, Teignmouth
- ▶ The Box, Plymouth
- ▶ Thelma Hulbert Gallery, Honiton
- ▶ Tiverton Museum of Mid Devon Life, Tiverton
- ▶ Topsham Museum, Exeter
- ▶ Torquay Museum, Torquay
- ▶ Torre Abbey (Torbay Council), Torquay
- ▶ Totnes Elizabethan House Museum, Totnes
- ▶ Totnes Fashion and Textile Museum, Totnes
- ▶ University of Exeter, Bill Douglas Centre, Exeter

Other counties

- ▶ Bristol Museums, Bristol
- ▶ Falmouth Art Gallery, Falmouth, Cornwall
- ▶ Lyme Regis Museum, Lyme Regis, Dorset
- ▶ Penlee House Gallery & Museum, Penzance, Cornwall
- ▶ Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro, Cornwall

7.3 Specific reference is made to the following records offices and archives:

- ▶ Beaford Arts, South Molton
- ▶ Cornwall Record Office
- ▶ Devon Heritage Services (South West Heritage Trust)
- ▶ The Box, Plymouth

8 Archival holdings

8.1 Overview

As the museum holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, it will be guided by the 'Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom' (third edition, 2002) and resources provided by the Archives & Records Association of the UK & Ireland.

Archival material offered to RAMM that does not relate to RAMM's collections will be referred to Devon Heritage Services or other relevant record office.

9 Acquisition

9.1 Overview

All new acquisitions (whether offered to the museum by external persons or bodies, or sought for purchase by the museum) will be considered by a team composed of museum staff. In the case of small acquisitions this will be made up of curators and conservators with the senior member of the Collections Team to make a final decision, if required. For large acquisitions and those that require significant finance the decision will be authorised by the museum's Management Team.

When a new acquisition is offered to the museum, staff must demonstrate that a proposed acquisition has significance and value to RAMM because it is consistent with the general principles above. Decisions to accept or decline are agreed through the monthly Collections Team meetings.

The museum recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

9.2 Ethical acquisition

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).

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 1 November 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.

9.3 Unsolicited items

Items left at RAMM without prior consent of the collections team (and the completion of an entry form) may be disposed of. Items deemed to be held illegally or a health and safety hazard will be surrendered to the relevant authorities.

10 Human remains

10.1 RAMM will follow procedures in the *Guidance for the care of human remains in museums* issued by DCMS in 2005.

10.2 The museum does not knowingly hold human remains under 100 years old. We are actively reviewing and resolving instances where human remains are lacking documentation or are poorly provenanced.

10.3 If existing holdings are found to be younger than 100 years, or the museum seeks to acquire such material, it will obtain the necessary licence under the Human Tissue Act 2004 and any subordinate legislation from time to time in force.

10.4 For more information see Appendix B: Human Remains Policy

11 Biological and geological material

11.1 The museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any biological or geological specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the

United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

12 Archaeological material

- 12.1 The museum will not acquire archaeological material (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.
- 12.2 In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure (i.e. the Coroner for Treasure) as set out in the Treasure Act 1996 (as amended by the Coroners & Justice Act 2009).

13 Exceptions

- 13.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:
- ▶ acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
 - ▶ acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin

In these cases, the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.

14 Spoliation

- 14.1 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.

15 The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

- 15.1 The museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the *Guidance for the care of human remains in museums* issued by DCMS in 2005), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.
- 15.2 The disposal of human remains from museums in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will follow the procedures in the *Guidance for the care of human remains in museums*.
- 15.3 For a detailed guide to RAMM's procedures regarding repatriation and restitution of objects and human remains please see Appendix C.

16 Disposal procedures

- 16.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the Spectrum primary procedures on disposal. Disposal of accessioned objects will comply with the Museum Association's published guidance: *Off the Shelf: A Toolkit for Ethical Transfer, Reuse and Disposal*, 2023.
- 16.2 A representative of the governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.
- 16.3 When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.
- 16.4 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, exchange or as a last resort – destruction.

- 16.5 The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by a representative (relevant Portfolio Holder) of ECC only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. Expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.
- 16.6 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone. ECC's Portfolio Holder for Arts, Culture & Tourism has delegated decision-making power with regard to disposals. In the event that the Head of Service and Portfolio Holder have concerns about a proposal to dispose, the decision will be made by ECC Executive Committee.
- 16.7 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- 16.8 If the material is not acquired by any museum to which it was offered as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material normally through a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's *Museums Journal* or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.9 The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other museums and heritage organisations. 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 such as educational settings, libraries, and community groups.

- 16.10 Any monies received by the museum 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
- 16.11 The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.
- 16.12 Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with Spectrum procedure on deaccession and disposal.
- 16.13 The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.
- 16.14 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may sanction its destruction.
- 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, e.g. the destruction of controlled substances, a police

certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.