



THE COLLEGE OF
OPTOMETRISTS

BOA Museum Collections Development Policy 2019-2024

July 2019

Introduction

The College of Optometrists is the Professional, Scientific and Examining Body for Optometry in the United Kingdom, working for the public benefit. It was formed in 1980 by an amalgamation of the British Optical Association, the Scottish Association of Opticians and the examining function of the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers. It is registered as a charity and was granted a Royal Charter of Incorporation in 1995.

The College inherited the British Optical Association (BOA) Museum (founded 1901) from its predecessor body. The BOA Museum's *Mission Statement* is:

The collections of the British Optical Association Museum are a nationally important resource for learning about the history and practice of optometry, ophthalmic optics and related subjects, promoting the optometry profession and raising public awareness of its past and present importance to society.

This document sets out the museum policy of the College by which it will be guided in the development of its collections and associated information.

This is the College's fifth Collections Development Policy (previously named *Acquisitions and Disposals Policy*). The first was approved in April 2001 and all acquisitions made since then have been overseen by the Curator acting in accordance with the aims and restrictions of the policy. The adoption and regular review of this policy is a requirement of the Accreditation Scheme for Museums in the United Kingdom (*Accreditation Standard*, November 2018, section 4.2). Significant sections of it follow a prescribed form of wording necessary to fulfil the current Accreditation Standard requirements.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a professional approach to collecting and disposals practice and to avoid indiscriminate or passive collecting. This should, in turn, encourage public confidence in the College of Optometrists as a suitable repository and allow it to continue to develop its diverse but specialist museum collection as one of the finest of its type in the world, expanding in a manner that reflects both contemporary concerns and a longer-term view as to what may be of historical interest to future generations.

It operates alongside, and is to be read in conjunction with:

BOA Museum Forward Plan 2019-2021
BOA Museum Care and Conservation Policy 2019-2024
BOA Museum Access Policy 2019-2024
BOA Museum Documentation Policy 2019-2024

Name of museum: British Optical Association Museum (no 2069)

Name of governing body: The Board of Trustees, The College of Optometrists

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: 17 July 2019

Policy review procedure: The collections development policy will be reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

Date at which this policy is due for review: 17 July 2024

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.

Any amendments made since the last full review are listed below:

July 2019

- Updating of cross-references to other museum plans and policies
 - Section 2.3 updated
 - Section 2.4 updated
 - Section 3 numbers of items updated
 - Section 4.2. removal of Pulsair NCT as a collecting target
 - Section 7 – name of Museum of the RPS revised
 - Section 7.3 – new policy statement on potential for joint acquisitions
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1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:

1.1. The museum's statement of purpose is:

The collections of the British Optical Association Museum are a nationally important resource for learning about the history and practice of optometry, ophthalmic optics and related subjects, promoting the optometry profession and raising public awareness of its past and present importance to society.

1.2. The governing body 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. The governing body 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 5.0 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 governing body or 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. The British Optical Association founded its Museum and Library in January 1901. The collections were built up mainly after the First World War, particularly through purchases made in Great Britain and Continental Europe in the period 1929-1936. The Association's aim was to illustrate the history of optometry and the wider story of vision aids and optical science. A combined catalogue of the Museum and Library's collection was published in 1932. This is now a rare book.
- 2.2. The collections continued to grow in the period after the Second World War, mainly through donations, but also by occasional purchases. Many private collectors associated with the Association or known to it, bequeathed items and to this day a principal source of gifts is the membership.
- 2.3. Title to the collections was transferred to The British College of Ophthalmic Opticians (since 1995, The College of Optometrists), in 1980 and the museum functions as a department of the College, closely allied with the Library. In 1998-99 a museum documentation project revealed that the total number of individual items stood at some 6000. Since then a combination of new acquisitions, more detailed cataloguing (for example the individual listing of items in the stamp album and various scrapbooks of ephemera) and the incorporation of an archival category into the museum collection has increased the number to 28000.
- 2.4. The 21st century saw a consolidation in the number of optical heritage collections. The Museum underwent another period of rapid growth with the transfer of, amongst others, a former loan collection from the Institute of Optometry, the Peter and Jean Hansell Eyebath Collection (from the family) and the Norman Bier Collection of Contact Lenses, Artificial Eyes and Low Vision Aids (from the City University), the decision on this latter acquisition being taken at Board level. Since the last revision of this policy (January 2015) the collection of the former Aston University Ophthalmic Museum, Department of Vision Sciences has been incorporated, together with a substantial donation of items from the Optical Appliances Testing Service (OATS).

3. An overview of current collections

The objects in the Museum's collection may be divided into the following categories:

- 3.1. OBJECTS RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF THE COLLEGE (from 1980) AND ITS PREDECESSOR BODIES (from 1629). A relatively small collection including ceremonial objects, badges of office and presentation plaques. Also items relating to various other British optical and eyesight charities, including collecting boxes and insignia.
- 3.2. OBJECTS RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF OPTICIANS. A small but growing collection including 17th c. prints, 18th-19th c. trade cards, business cards and fittings from 19th c. / 20th c. clinics and dispensaries. The material is mainly British with a much smaller number of items relating to the British Empire/Commonwealth and with some European and American material collected for comparative and contextualising purposes.
- 3.3. ANATOMICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL DEMONSTRATION MATERIAL. An unusual collection including an articulated human skull with a model brain, nearly 300 models, mainly late Victorian, illustrating ocular diseases, 20th c. artificial eyes and practice eyes, laboratory teaching slides, magic lantern slides and instructional toys. The 'prosthetics' element has obtained greater prominence in recent years due to publications and lectures on this topic by the museum curator, and the artificial eyes are a particular draw for visitors with the collection often being called colloquially 'the eye museum' and the conscious promotion of the museum's online database as the 'MusEYEum'.

- 3.4. CLINICAL OPTOMETRIC EQUIPMENT. A significant collection of over 1400 instruments and pieces of scientific equipment, dating from the 18th c. to the present day, with a particular strength in the mid 20th century period 1920s-1950s.

Areas covered include:

- Instruments for measuring: errors of ocular refraction, visual acuity and astigmatism, extraocular muscle imbalance and corneal curvature (including retinoscopes, test charts, trial frames, trial cases, refractor heads and keratometers).
 - Instruments for detecting pathological conditions (including ophthalmoscopes, perimeters, central visual field screeners, tonometers).
 - Colour vision tests.
- 3.5. ORTHOPTIC EQUIPMENT. Some 200+ items of orthoptic equipment and visual exercises relating particularly to the period before orthoptics became a separate profession. The collection also includes 'quack' devices for eye massage and visual training.
- 3.6. OPHTHALMIC SURGICAL EQUIPMENT. A small collection of items from the late 19th to late 20th centuries, collected to illustrate the link between the optometrist and the ophthalmologist (in terms of diagnosis, referral and after care) including scalpels, cataract knives, operating lamps, magnets, douches.
- 3.7. EYEBATHS AND OCULAR HYGIENE. Including eyebaths, eyecups, syringes, eye drops, ointments, brighteners and other items linked with the Pharmaceutical trade. With the acquisition of the Peter and Jean Hansell Collection in 2011 the museum probably holds Europe's most significant collection of this type in the public domain.
- 3.8. OPTICAL DISPENSING EQUIPMENT. Objects used by dispensing opticians in the 20th c. including screw drivers, pliers, frame heaters, face rules and focimeters, mirrors, demonstration lenses, accessories and replacement parts, point-of-sale and promotional display material.
- 3.9. OPTICAL MANUFACTURING EQUIPMENT. A small collection to illustrate the processes of lens grinding and spectacle-frame manufacture, mainly in the 20th c. Whilst most private collections and museums (including this one) prefer to acquire unusual and rare items, the tools and equipment used in the manufacturing of these items are often overlooked. They are often large, cumbersome, dirty, and heavy and not particularly appealing, but they have played a very essential part in our history. They may have been scrapped or discarded so they can be obtained at a very reasonable cost and they are useful in building our knowledge of early manufacturing. This information, skill and knowledge is often lost in one generation. The museum recognises that our appreciation of the items we collect would be enhanced if we understood the methods and skill of manufacture, however, due to considerations of space the museum has generally turned down large workshop machinery, much of which is preserved instead at the private Norville Group collection in Gloucester. Emphasis is placed on the processes performed in-practice by opticians themselves rather than large-scale production. (This latter topic is, however, covered through the collection of archival resources and photographs).
- 3.10. OPTICAL INSTRUMENTS. A large collection spanning the 17th c. to the present, including telescopes, binoculars, microscopes, opera glasses, optical drawing instruments, cameras and other photographic equipment. There are also many visually striking objects including spyglasses, optical fans, quizzing glasses, jealousy glasses and monoculars from the 17th to the 19th c. The emphasis is on the items made or sold by opticians, including cameras. This also extends to one or two representative examples of items without any optical component e.g. barometers. On account of this collection the museum is an active participant within the history of scientific instruments community.

- 3.11. **MAGNIFIERS AND READING GLASSES.** Some 250 single-lens visual aids from circa 1700 to the present. In recent years the collection has expanded into the specialist topic of **LOW VISION** and the museum now has a particular strength in 20th century LVAs and 'subnormal' vision aids, with special reference to the work of the research department at City University and the optometry department at Moorfields Eye Hospital.
- 3.12. **OPHTHALMIC LENSES.** A near-comprehensive collection of over 700 lenses ranging from 18th c. Franklin-type bifocals to late 20th c. photochromic and variable focus lenses. The core of the collection was gathered by Arthur Bennett in the 1980s and includes examples of obsolete lenses, which were specially manufactured for the BOA Museum as well as replicas reproducing the function of so-called 'ancient' lenses. The museum also holds a small number of intraocular 'replacement' lenses designed for surgical implantation and would like, if possible, to acquire more such objects.
- 3.13. **CONTACT LENS COLLECTION.** A large collection in excess of 1200 items and still under active development, including late 19th c. experimental shells, 1930s hard haptic lenses, early Czech soft lenses from the 1960s, fitting sets, storage cases, cleaning and sterilising solutions, also manufacturing tools and promotional material. By agreement with the Science Museum (February 2003) we are the prime collector of contact lens material in the United Kingdom. There is a significant overlap here with the work of the College Library which holds the Clifford Hall collection of books on the subject, which in many cases permits the identification of otherwise obscure material. With the addition of the Norman Bier Collection in 2013 the museum can reasonably claim to be the most significant collection on this topic worldwide with significant early material and international coverage, particularly of Eastern Europe.
- 3.14. **SPECTACLES.** A collection of over 4000 British and European spectacles and over 950 of their cases. Alongside a small selection of replica Medieval items is a collection ranging from 16th c. silver, leather and whalebone nose spectacles, to steel, brass and real tortoiseshell frames, through over 240 18th c. and 19th c. lorgnettes, some 30 scissor spectacles, 160 folding eyeglasses, hand-frames and nearly 400 pince-nez, to 20th c. frames of rolled gold, cellulose acetate and other plastics, nylon supras and the latest titanium fashion frames. The 'fashion' element to the collection was boosted by the publication of the museum curator's book 'Cult Eyewear' (2011) and is now a particular draw for visitors. The collection includes examples used by famous personalities including Dr Johnson, C.P. Snow, Ronnie Corbett, Johnny Depp, Mel Gibson and Rihanna, the only known examples of Scarlett-type spiral-ended temple spectacles (c.1730) and Storer-type 'Syllepsis' glasses (c.1792). There is a small collection of about 70 Oriental spectacles from 19th c. China, Japan and India, some of these as supplied by British-trained opticians.
- 3.15. **ILLUSTRATIONS OF OPTICS IN ART.** A collection of 25 oil paintings including work by Pietro della Vecchia, Steven Elmer and T.C. Dugdale as well as copies of major works by Domenico Ghirlandaio and Sir Joshua Reynolds, amongst others. Each picture has been collected for its depiction of optical subject matter including spectacles, instruments and symbolism of eyes. This collection also includes two framed watercolours, a painted tile, panel carvings, tapestries, coins, medals, banknotes, ceramics, an Egyptian Eye of Horus from the period 600-400 BC and nearly 900 prints, reproduction prints and drawings.
- 3.16. **ARCHIVAL ITEMS.** Separate from the administrative archives (business records) of the College of Optometrists and former BOA, is a collection of paper items, printed material and ephemera which has been gathered haphazardly over the last century and had not previously been promoted, although individual items were displayed at various times alongside the museum objects. The collection includes various materials dating from the 16th c. up to the present day. The items have been sorted and listed in the Museum Collections Management System (MIMSY XG).

They fall into the following sub-categories:

- **ITEMS RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF THE COLLEGE, ITS PREDECESSOR BODIES AND THE OPTOMETRIC PROFESSION.** This category includes old BOA, SAO, IOSc, NAO and SMC certificates. The collection also includes prescriptions issued by, amongst others, the wartime spectacle bureau, and a fascinating series of correspondence between George Bernard Shaw and his optician in Welwyn Garden City.
- **ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS.** Including minute books, membership and committee attendance registers, articles of association, property inventories etc.
- **TRADE CATALOGUES.** A large collection. Including catalogues, promotional brochures, price lists and instructional leaflets. Active collecting in this area followed the acquisition of a core collection from David G. Williamson Optics in 1999-2000.
- **NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS.** A small collection of press and magazine cuttings, articles on optical history, illustrations of optics in art and cartoons.
- **POSTCARDS.** Souvenir postcards, which complement the museum collections of illustrations of optics in art. The collection includes pictures of objects to be seen in other world museums as well as postcards issued by optical companies.
- **PHOTOGRAPHS.** Around 1200 black and white and colour photographs from the late Victorian period to the later 20th c. depicting subjects as diverse as optometric conferences, the London Refraction Hospital and portraits of significant personalities.
- **PHILATELY COLLECTION.** Some 260 international postage stamps including issues from optometric conferences and portraits of famous people wearing spectacles, with a particular emphasis on the 1940s-1950s reflecting the original core collection donated by Mr O. Raphael in 1955.
- **AUDIO & FILM.** The Museum holds a very small number of historic cine reel films, mainly relating to surgical procedures or the Commonwealth Society for the Blind, as well as taped educational materials (e.g. lectures), in addition to modern copies of media broadcasts featuring the museum staff and collections.

- 3.17. **HANDLING COLLECTION.** The museum also maintains a collection of items for educational handling and demonstration. The items in this collection are not accessioned into the permanent collection as their use may result in their ultimate destruction. Most of the items concerned would, in any case, duplicate items already forming part of the permanent collection. Handling items may also be loaned to theatre groups, film companies and exhibitions being held at non-museum venues such as industrial trade shows and village fetes.

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

- 4.1. The Museum will collect objects, either through gift, field collection or purchase (within its annual budget allocation) which can help to explain the purpose and history of optometry, ophthalmic optics and related subjects, the provision of optometric and ophthalmic public services and the history of the College and its predecessors, and in particular:
- The optics of ocular refraction.
 - The history of the detection and correction of ocular refractive error.
 - The history of detection of ocular disease (and its clinical management where this is performed by optometrists).
 - The history of ophthalmic lenses, spectacles and contact lenses.
 - The representation in art of all the above items.
 - The political and social history of optometry, with special reference to the United Kingdom, including the development of the role of the optician, the organised optometry profession and the history of optical education and training.
- 4.2. The priority collecting objectives for the next five years, subject to resources and availability, will be:

- OBJECTS RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF THE COLLEGE AND ITS PREDECESSOR BODIES. Historic portraits of members of the profession.
- OBJECTS RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF OPTICIANS. Small optician signs. Photographs of optical practices and shop fronts. Lens cleaning cloths (where printed with historical details).
- CLINICAL EQUIPMENT. Early (usually mid 19th c.) instrumentation including a Helmholtz ophthalmoscope, Helmholtz Ophthalmometer, Javal-Schiotz Ophthalmometer (the museum already has later examples), von Graefe Tonometer, Czapski Corneal Microscope, Gullstrand Slit Lamp (Early Model), Ruete Ophthaltrope and Coccius ophthalmoscope.
- OPTICAL INSTRUMENTS. Unusual optical fans including leaf spyglass and lorgnette types, small telescopes by named makers, a binocular telescope.
- OPHTHALMIC LENSES. Modern and contemporary lenses (post 1992) or datable lenses pre-1914.
- CONTACT LENSES. Very early contact lenses (1880s-1920s). Portraits of pioneers in the field.
- SPECTACLES. Early spectacles (17th c. or before) including leather and whalebone examples. Dudley-Adams type headband spectacles. Waldstein rimless spectacles. Spectacle-mounted medical devices e.g. hearing aid spectacles, spectacle-mounted facial prostheses. Modern and contemporary spectacles. Designer sunglasses, especially early Ray-Ban (pre-1970), a Silhouette 'Futura' (1974) or a genuine Courreges 'slit' style (mid 1960s).
- ARCHIVAL ITEMS. Pre 1950 Trade Catalogues. Copies of the Optical Yearbook.

It is recognised that many of these objects, particularly the ophthalmic/optometric instruments are extremely rare, perhaps unlikely to become available in the period of this policy and might well be beyond the museum's budget to acquire even then.

New topics for collecting:

4.3. Consideration will be given to limited collecting covering the topics of:

4.3.1. Independent prescribing, which is predicted to play an increasing part in the future role of optometry. Items suggested by the museum's special subject advisers include:

- Relevant syllabi.
- Order or Prescription required by optometrists for action by a pharmacist.
- Drug samples (if not controlled) or packaging if so - a discussion with an independent prescriber would be useful.

4.3.2. Co-management e.g. for glaucoma or diabetic retinopathy:

- Material likely to be archival in nature.

4.3.3. Optics on film:

- Older members of the profession are aware of several films that were made in the past including those of the Information Council for the Optical Industry (ICOI), the AOP ('Eyes Right', 1960s) and a film made by Professor Fletcher showing staff and students at the Northampton Polytechnic. It is not known whether any copies of the first of these films survive. (The College has an edited DVD copy of the last). They are cited in this policy in the hope that should copies be discovered, resources might be available to acquire them and convert them to modern digital format.

Period scope for collecting:

4.4. The BOA Museum will collect objects and paper items from all periods, particularly from those periods that are presently under-represented in the collection:

- Medieval period
- Pre-1700
- The late 19th c.
- The 1970s

Limitations on collecting:

4.5. In terms of geographical limits to collecting, the Museum's main interest in the history of the organised profession of optometry centres on the United Kingdom in the 19th c. and 20th c. It is also concerned with the development of optometry services internationally from the 1920s onwards, through its holdings that relate to the International Optical League and World Council of Optometry, both of which organisations have been administered alongside the College from the same premises.

4.6. There are no periodical or geographical limits to illustrations of the history of optics in art.

4.7. 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 (November 2018). It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collections arrangements. The Museum does not intend to add significantly to any area of its museum collection unless the items in question fill gaps in the existing collection.

Specifically, the Museum does not intend to collect:

- Objects, which do not illustrate the topics, set out in section 3.
- Objects for which it cannot care or meet its legal, moral or ethical responsibilities.
- Objects illustrating ophthalmic surgery or the ophthalmology profession (with the possible future exception of material relating to laser surgery where delivered at high street practices).
- Large objects (ophthalmic instrumentation) - due to storage constraints there is necessarily a moratorium at present on collecting such items. It is recognised that this presents a challenge to the museum for the future, for example if it were to be offered an Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) unit, due to the apparent trend for larger clinical equipment.
- Large objects (machinery) relating to manufacturing optics - however the Museum will investigate the offers of any such material and steer it where appropriate to the Norville Group's private company collection in Gloucester.

5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

5.1. The museum does not intend to dispose of collections during the period covered by this policy.

5.2. Disposal is not a priority for the museum as a formal rationalisation of the collection was carried out in 2000 and it can currently store and care for everything it has to the appropriate standards.

5.3. Disposals may, however, be permitted under this policy for legal, safety or care and conservation reasons (for example, irreversible decay of plastic items, spoliation, radiation, infestation, repatriation).

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

- 6.1. The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the *Museum Association Code of Ethics* when considering acquisition and disposal.
<https://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=1155827>

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):

- *Science Museum Group (The Science Museum, London)*
- *Museum of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society*
- *Wellcome Collection (Collections Development Policy 2018-2023)*

And to the following unaccredited collections:

- *Royal College of Ophthalmologists*
- *Institute of Ophthalmology/Moorfields*
- *Institute of Optometry (George Watchurst collection)*
- *Norville Group Ltd*

- 7.3. The Museum does not envisage making any joint acquisitions during the period covered by this policy.

8 Archival holdings

- 8.1. As the Museum holds archives, including legal documents, diaries, letters, photographs, technical drawings and printed ephemera intended for permanent preservation, its governing body will be guided by the *Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom* (3rd edn, 2002)
- 8.2. The Museum will consult, where and when appropriate, with a qualified professional archivist and will endeavour to store and exhibit archival material in accordance with the BSI Published Document, *Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials* (PD 5454:2012)

9 Acquisition

- 9.1. The policy for agreeing acquisitions is: The Museum Curator has authority to collect and acquire, as directed or restricted by the terms of this *Collections Development Policy*. Proposed purchases of over £500 should be notified first to the Director of Member Services and Communications for possible Board approval. Similar notice will be provided of potential donations where these comprise a substantial collection, would require new or altered storage accommodation or additional preventative conservation measures. In any case, the Curator will supply a list of all items being acquired monthly to the Director of Member Services and Communications and quarterly to the Board of Trustees.
- 9.2. 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).

- 9.3. In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

10 Human remains

- 10.1. As the museum holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005.
- 10.2. It is an aspiration of the museum either to acquire or receive on loan a human eye specimen for display. In this instance it is recognised that as the Museum does not hold the appropriate licence under the Human Tissue Act (2004) this will only be possible in the presence of documentary proof that the item is over 100 years old.

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 material (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.

For all archaeological material found in England, Wales and Northern Ireland:

- 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).

For all archaeological material found in Scotland:

- 12.3. In Scotland, under the laws of *bona vacantia* including Treasure Trove, the Crown has title to all ownerless objects including antiquities, although such material as human remains and environmental samples are not covered by the law of *bona vacantia*. Scottish material of chance finds and excavation assemblages are offered to museums through the treasure trove process and cannot therefore be legally acquired by means other than by allocation to the College of Optometrists (*the British Optical Association Museum*) by the Crown. However where the Crown has chosen to forego its title to a portable antiquity or excavation assemblage, a Curator or other responsible person acting on behalf of Board of Trustees of the College of Optometrists can establish that valid title to the item in question has been acquired by ensuring that a certificate of 'No Claim' has been issued on behalf of the Crown.

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, if any, 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'.

16 Disposal procedures

- 16.1. All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.
- 16.2. 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 the governing body 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, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.
- 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 Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- 16.8. 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).
- 16.9. 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 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.
- 16.10. Any monies received by the museum governing body 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 de-accession and disposal.

Disposal by Exchange:

- 16.13. The nature of disposal by exchange means that the museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The governing body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.
 - 16.13.1 In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or non-Accredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 16.1-5 will apply.
 - 16.13.2 If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.

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

Disposal by destruction:

- 16.14 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body 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, e.g. the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.

17 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by 17 July 2024.

This plan is a working document and individual details not impacting upon the Arts Council template may be amended on an ongoing basis.

This policy will be published online as part of the museum website.

The Museum Collections Development Policy was approved by the Board of Trustees
17 July 2019

I confirm that the above plan was so approved

Dr Mary-Ann Sherratt

Chair of the Board of Trustees