

In any matters concerning the Acquisition or Disposal of Purton Museum Collections, the governing body will refer to the Museum Association's *Ethical Guidelines on Acquisition & Disposal* and/or will discuss the matter with its professional Curatorial Adviser.

The Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is intended to serve as a guide for the staff of the museum and potential donors to the museum. Its purpose is to ensure that the museum's collections grow in a focused rather than haphazard way and that efficient use is made of the museum's resources.

Description of the existing collections

The Museum collection consists local material including a small amount of archaeological material but mainly domestic, agricultural, and trade artefacts. There is a significant local photograph collection and ephemera collection, paintings of local interest, personalia and costume. There are approximately 2,000 items in the collection.

Criteria Governing future collecting:

Geographical Area

The parishes of Purton, Lydiard Tregoze, Lydiard Millicent and Braydon.

Subject areas and limitations on collecting

Purton Museum will collect artefacts, specimens, models, dioramas, audio recordings visual records of all kinds, published maps and printed material. The governing body is mindful of the fact that it is under no obligation to accept an offer of a gift or bequest if the items offered do not meet the criteria of this policy.

The prime consideration in the acquisition of any item is that it should relate in some way to the district and its inhabitants and should augment rather than duplicate its existing collections.

Time span

The museum will collect items from approximately the 17th century to the present day.

Purton museum will not normally collect, for its permanent collections, archaeological, biological, geological or industrial material as there are not, at present, adequate storage facilities. The governing body accepts that it is unacceptable to acquire antiquities of unknown provenance

Other museums

The collecting policy for the above subject areas does not overlap with any other Registered museum's policy, with the exception of natural history and archaeology where Devizes Museum is the lead museum for such collections. Collecting policies will be exchanged in this instance.

Archives

The museum will collect photographs and printed ephemera and the governing body will be guided by the *Code of Practice on Archives for Museums in the United Kingdom* and the RCHM's *Standards for Record Repositories*.

The museum may collect manuscript material but should deposit it with the Wiltshire County Record Office for the better preservation and access of such items. It acknowledges that the Record Office also

has a right to acquire such material and will endeavour to work in co-operation with the Record Office.

Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums. The governing body will take into account the benefits of preserving items *in situ* and the moral rights of other individuals, groups, societies or peoples to hold items.

Loans

Loans of artefacts into the museum will only be accepted when an outright gift or purchase cannot be negotiated.

For both loans into and out of the museum, the governing body accepts that there is no such thing as a 'permanent loan'. Loans will either be of short term (less than 6 months) or longer term (for up to 5 years). In both cases they will be reviewed at the end of the period of time for the loan which will be agreed upon in writing between the museum and the lender.

Acquisition

Acquisition is the process of obtaining legal title to an item with the intention of using it for museum purpose.

The governing body undertakes to take reasonable steps to confirm the legal title of the present holder of the item and the right of the holder to transfer title to the museum.

The governing body will acquire and accession items only after thorough consideration of its long-term value to the Purton Museum. It should believe that it can provide adequate and continuing care of the item and public access to it. It will take into consideration the condition of the object (and thus the potential cost in conserving it in future), the quality of the documentation accompanying it, particularly information about its context,

The governing body should make itself acquainted with any conditions attached to acquisitions as **it** will be responsible for complying with them

The museum will not acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question, and that in particular it has not been acquired in, or exported from its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned in violation of that country's laws). (For the purposes of this paragraph country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).

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 (eg: a British court in the case of a specimen seized from a third party under the Protection of Birds Acts).

So far as British or foreign archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) are concerned, in addition to the safeguards under sub-paragraph c. above, the museum will not acquire objects in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has reasonable cause to believe that the circumstances of their recovery involved the recent unscientific or intentional destruction or damage of ancient monuments or other known archaeological sites, or involved a failure to disclose the finds to the owner or occupier of the land, or to the proper authorities in the case of a possible Treasure Trove (England,

Wales and Northern Ireland) or Bona Vacantia (Scotland).

Disposal

Disposal is the permanent removal of an item from a museum's permanent collection. Every disposal must clearly demonstrate a long-term public benefit. The governing body undertakes to consult the Museum Association's *Ethical Guidelines* in the event of its considering disposal for any of the items in its permanent collection.

By definition a museum has a long-term purpose and must possess (or intend to acquire) permanent collections in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body accepts the principles that there is a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the museums collection except as set out below.

In those cases where the museum is legally free to dispose of an item (if this is in doubt, advice will be sought) it is agreed that any decision to sell or otherwise dispose of material from the collections will be taken only after due consideration. Decisions to dispose of items will not be made with the principal aim of generating funds. Once a decision to dispose of an item has been taken, priority will be given to retaining the item within the public domain and with this in view it will be offered first, by exchange, gift or sale to Registered museums before disposal to other interested individuals or organisations is considered.

In cases in which an arrangement for the exchange, gift or sale of material is not being made with an individual Registered museum, the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of material. This will normally be through an announcement in the Museums Association's *Museums Journal* and other professional journals if appropriate. The announcement will indicate the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed.

A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by exchange, sale, gift or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, and not of the curator of the collection acting alone. Full records will be kept of all such decisions 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.

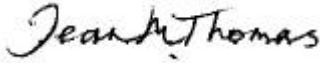
Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items and from insurance claims will be applied for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions but in exceptional cases improvement relating to the care of collections may be justifiable. Advice on these cases may be sought from the MGC.

The governing body is mindful of the possibilities that selling an item from the museums permanent collection out of the public domain always risks damaging public confidence in museums.

Should Purton Museum decide to dispose of an item from its permanent collection which has been acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation, permission from that organisation will be sought before the object is deaccessioned or transferred to another museum.

All acquisitions, loans and disposals will be documented to the standard required by the Museum Documentation Association's *Spectrum* Standard and to MGC Registration Standards.

This collecting policy will need to be reviewed in 2006. The MGC will be notified of any changes to this policy and the implications of such changes for the future of existing collections.

Signed  Jean M. Thomas, Chairman, Purton Historical Society.

Date 30th March 2001