

INTRODUCTION

In line with all the other museums registered as such in the UK by Resource: the Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries, the National Museums & Galleries of Wales (NMGW) is required to have in place formal policies for the management of its collections, which effectively serve as a code of conduct for the institution and its staff in such matters. These policies ensure that best practice is followed throughout the institution, and that every other body and individual with whom we deal is aware of our standards and our expectations of them.

Our previous Collections Management Policies were adopted in 1995 and are now due for review. The Policies contained in this document have been revised substantially by our in-house Collections Management Group and have benefited greatly from the contributions made by members of our Collections & Education Advisory Committee. The Policies were formally ratified by the Museum's Council in July 2000 and are thus formal statements of NMGW's policy. They will next be revised in July 2005. These Policies are supported by detailed internal procedures which ensure standardised implementation across all our sites and subject areas.

Throughout these documents we refer to 'NMGW's collections'. NMGW is one of the twenty-six National Museums and Galleries in the UK, and is largely funded by the taxpayer via the National Assembly for Wales. The phrase 'NMGW's collections' is thus very much a shorthand expression, for the collections belong to the nation and are only managed by us on its behalf.

Our institutional aims, expressed in our Corporate Plans, include being 'the best possible repository for the collections of national renown and importance held in care for Wales' and we are very conscious of that responsibility. It is a major part of the duty of our honorary Officers and Council members to ensure that these Policies are adhered to, and that the institution maintains the highest standards of probity and accountability throughout.

As an institution, we are acutely aware that the 4.8 million or so

items or groups currently in our collections represent the major three-dimensional educational archive of and for the Welsh nation, the contents of which should be made available to all. To provide properly mediated access to more and more of these collections and the knowledge contained in them is one of our high aspirations in the spirit of life-long learning and social inclusion, fundamental principles since the institution was founded in 1907.

We would welcome comment on the contents of these Policies, and any requests for further information should in the first instance be addressed to myself at the Museum.

Eurwyn Wiliam

*Director of Collections & Education, National Museums & Galleries of Wales,
National Museum & Gallery, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NP*

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All museums are entrusted with collections which they hold for the benefit of the community they serve. Accordingly they have a responsibility to act in the best interest of the public in terms of the stewardship of those collections. Underlying this principle is the need for museums to act ethically, and Lord Nolan's seven principles for public life, presented below, are as applicable to those who work in museums as in any other public service; they also apply to those who serve on museum governing bodies. The seven principles are:

- **Selflessness** - all decisions taken should be undertaken solely in the public interest
- **Integrity** - individuals should not place themselves under financial or other obligation to outside bodies that jeopardises their performance for the Museum
- **Objectivity** - all choices made should be on merit
- **Accountability** - individuals should be accountable for their decisions and actions
- **Openness** - individuals should be open about the decisions reached and actions taken
- **Honesty** - any private interests should be declared and any conflicts resolved in favour of the public interest
- **Leadership** - individuals should promote these principles by leadership and example

The National Museums & Galleries of Wales endorses the Museums Association 'Code of Ethics' and strives to ensure that all of its employees and members of its governing body adhere to the principles contained therein.

POLICY on the ACQUISITION and DISPOSAL of the COLLECTIONS

REVIEWED JULY 2000

NEXT REVIEW JULY 2005

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1. INTRODUCTION

a. Scope

i. Collections are the *raison d'etre* of museums; without collections there would be no such institutions. National Museums & Galleries, in particular, acquire, preserve and interpret collections for the benefit of humankind and for the present and the future. Museums have a duty to regulate the process whereby they acquire objects and, in rarer cases, dispose of them.

ii. This policy establishes policies and guidelines for acquisition and disposal of collection items within NMGW. It delineates the circumstances in which objects and specimens will be acquired and disposed of, as well as the methods that will be used to do this.

b. Authority

i. The Museum's current Charter (revised 1991) states that its objective is '*to further the advancement of education and the promotion of literary and scientific research*'. We will achieve this '*primarily by the complete illustration of the geology, mineralogy, zoology, botany, ethnography, archaeology, art, history and special industries of Wales*'. Our task is therefore '*the collection, conservation, elucidation and presentation of objects and things (including pictures, engravings, statuary and all works of fine art of any kind) whether connected or not with Wales*' and '*the preparation and publication of reproductions, films, tape and other illustrations (of whatsoever nature) of all*

such objects and things as aforesaid.'

ii. All acquisitions and disposals must relate to our mission statement, namely: *Telling Wales about the world and the world about Wales*

Our aims (as expressed in our Corporate Plan 2000/1 - 2003/4) are:

1. *To advance knowledge of Welsh heritage and culture in a world-wide context and thus improve understanding of Wales as a nation and of its place in the world.*
2. *To be the best possible repository for the collections of national and international renown and importance held in care for Wales.*
3. *To encourage the study and appreciation of the arts, humanities, sciences and technology in order to promote an understanding of the present, and inspire informed discussion about the future.*
4. *To excite an increasing number of people to visit our museums and to make use of their diverse resources.*

iii. Authority for the acquisition of objects or specimens rests with the Director of the National Museums & Galleries of Wales (in certain circumstances, subject to the approval of the Museum's Council). This authority is delegated, within certain parameters, to the Director (Collections and Education).

c. Definition of Terms

i. Acquisition

The acquisition of all objects, specimens, books, serials, archives or data will be in accordance with our objectives, national and international law, and recognised codes of conduct and guidelines.

ii. When acquired by gift, purchase, bequest, exchange or officially collected, all material will be accessioned by the relevant department. Full records of transactions will be kept. A transfer of ownership form signed by the donor or vendor will formally establish legal title to objects and specimens acquired by donation or purchase. Where appropriate, transfer of copyright will be sought as part of the acquisition process.

iii. Disposal

Disposal of objects or specimens will only be made in accordance

with our objectives, national and international law and recognised professional codes of conduct and guidelines. Where approved, disposal will be undertaken by exchange, gift, sale or destruction. Full records appropriate to the method of disposal, including the de-accessioning process, will be kept. All recommendations for permanent transfer or disposal must be supported by the appropriate Advisory Panel and authorised by Council, with information passed to the National Assembly for Wales in writing. Full records of all decisions will be kept.

iv. Nomenclature

In this document, the terms object and specimen refer to all the various kinds of items that form part of our collections.

d. Review period of policy statement

i. The policy statement will be reviewed at five-yearly intervals. The next review date is May 2005.

ii. We shall notify Resource: The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries of any changes to the Acquisition and Disposal Policy before the next review date, together with the implications of any such changes for the future of the existing collections.

e. Scope of collections

The multi-disciplinary nature of NMGW militates against establishing a single set of criteria applicable to all departments. We possess varied and wide-ranging collections, both in form and in geographical origin, and covering all periods. Objects and specimens are currently held at all of our sites. The scope, size and diversity of the extant collections, along with their locations, are listed in Appendix 1. More complete details appear in individual departmental collections management documents.

2. ACQUISITION POLICY

a. Acquisition aims and objectives

This policy document determines the scale, scope and range of new acquisitions by NMGW. With limited resources, selectivity is

essential in considering further acquisitions.

Our relevance as a Welsh institution is paramount and enhancing our image as a lively and relevant element in the life of the people and the broadening of their knowledge is a primary consideration of our Council and staff. In addition, NMGW is one of the principal centres of excellence for scholarship and research in Wales.

Our collections have a predominantly territorial basis similar to those of the National Museums of Scotland, the National Galleries of Scotland and the National Museums & Galleries of Northern Ireland. Our reputation and liaison with other institutions is based on the importance of our Welsh and associated collections; consequently we differ from most other national museums funded by government in the United Kingdom, which are centred mainly on London.

Three broad aims are recognised within the objects of our charter; specific acquisition guidelines are contained in departmental collections policies and procedures.

The current series of aims and objectives reflects the broad range of multi-disciplinary collections held by the Museum and all three aims and corresponding objectives are intended to enhance the collections for specific uses and activities.

i. First aim

Our first and main aim is to collect, conserve, document, research and interpret objects and specimens relating to the natural, cultural, linguistic, artistic, social and economic heritage of Wales and its people.

To this end we will strengthen collection areas in which we have a current specialisation and recognised interest, especially when objects or specimens or collection areas are threatened irreversibly by humans, by neglect, by destruction or by export. We also aim to expand our collections to include material from areas, disciplines and cultural traditions within Wales which are currently under-represented, in order to fulfil the obligations placed upon us by our Charter.

We will seek to obtain objects or specimens from threatened or endangered sites or areas within Wales, or cultural objects and specimens that are liable to be lost for posterity. In certain specific collection areas, where the Museum currently possesses little or no expertise, and we shall develop and implement detailed collecting policies within budget constraints.

We aim to be an institution generating research, publications (including the use of electronic media), exhibitions and displays of the highest quality. The collections form the critical base for advancement of the education of the public, acting not only as a resource for primary and secondary schools and for further and higher education and study, but also to foster a culture of life-long learning among the public in general.

ii. Second aim

The second aim is to broaden the comparative base of our established collection areas. Thus, we will acquire relevant objects and specimens from other parts of the world in order that the natural, material and cultural environment of Wales may be better understood and interpreted, and that the people of Wales are given an opportunity to learn about other lands and cultures.

Some of our departments, through their liaison with universities and by acquisitions, continue to expand key collections. These enhance greatly the educational role of the institution, and the selective broadening of these established collection areas is an essential priority for future development.

A few specific large-scale collections of international significance form an integral part of our collections and bring international recognition to the Museum via display, scholarship and liaison with other institutions worldwide. Enhancement of these collections, given constraints, will continue at a highly selective level with due regard to the artistic and/or scientific merits of any proposed acquisition. A strong case for the purchase or acquisition of relevant objects or specimens will accordingly be required.

iii. Third aim

The third aim is to continue to acquire objects or specimens specifically for educational and outreach purposes, for example by developing loan and handling collections. Because the objects and specimens in such collections may not have the same scientific, historic or artistic value as items in the recognised curatorial collections, access to and use of them will therefore be subject to different rules. (See also our Policy on Access to and Use of the Collections.)

b. Constraints on acquisition

RESOURCES

- i. The acquisition of all objects and specimens will be constrained by the availability of resources. Acceptance of material will depend on the Museum's ability to ensure adequate control of storage, curation, conservation, finance, professional expertise and other factors essential to good collections management.
- ii. In any purchase, we will seek to strike an appropriate balance between the need to get good value for public money and the right of the vendor to obtain a fair price.

CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

- iii. Consideration is given to the collecting policies and interests of other museums and cognate institutions. Close liaison with such institutions should ensure that unnecessary duplication is avoided and that where there is overlap only those items or collections deemed of national significance enter our collections. Areas of potential overlap are detailed in departmental collecting policy documents.
- iv. Owners of objects or specimens declined by us will be encouraged to offer these to other museums, the Museum being available to assist in recommendations. In line with our pastoral role, emphasis will be on co-operation with other institutions, particularly those in Wales, and we will not act in competition in the acquisition of objects or specimens.

CONDITIONAL ACQUISITIONS

v. We will not normally acquire objects or specimens where restrictions by the depositor or legal owner would prevent effective curation, documentation, research, normal exhibition use, loan or disposal in accordance with the policies outlined in this document. We will not normally accept specimens on condition that they be placed on permanent or long-term exhibition, or that they form a collection. In these cases a full cost analysis of such conditions will be carried out, including a consideration of the long-term policy implications for staff and storage. Acceptance of such gifts, either permanently or loaned for a negotiated period of time, will not take precedence over other collections-related priorities in the event of resource limitations.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

vi. We will apply ethical considerations when we acquire material.

vii. We will not acquire whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange any object or specimen unless the Council or our responsible officer is satisfied that the Museum can acquire a valid title to the object or specimen in question. All acquisitions will possess appropriate documentation not only to establish legal title, but also to enable the objects or specimens to be housed in the permanent collections in a way that facilitates access and scholarship.

viii. We recognise that in many cases a curator has to make his or her own judgement on the validity of title and the reliability of provenance. Under such circumstances the Museums Association's Codes of Ethics will be adhered to.

ix. Special consideration will be given to the issue of spoliation of works of art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period. Where appropriate and as far as is reasonably possible, care will be taken to establish the provenance of works of art for the years 1933-1945. Acquisitions will not be made if there is demonstrable or probable evidence of wrongful taking. (See also Disposals Policy, Paragraph b[ix].)

x. We will not acquire an item that is deemed to have been disposed of unethically by another museum, unless this is seen as the only way to keep the item in the public domain.

EXTRAORDINARY ACQUISITIONS

xi. Proposed acquisitions which fall outside the aims stated above will only be made in exceptional circumstances, following proper consideration and approval by the Museum's Council.

c. Legislation

i. Objects or specimens will be acquired only when they have been collected, exported or imported in full compliance with the laws and regulations of the country or countries of origin (or any intermediate country in which they may have been legally owned). We do not support the illicit trade in portable antiquities, ethnographic material or natural science material.

ii. Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that these conditions are met and that title to any object or specimen will be properly transferred to ourselves. We will keep abreast of the changing national and international laws and regulations concerning collecting, ownership and movement of objects between countries (Relevant legislation and regulations are listed in Appendix 2), and ensure that our staff behave in accordance with these principles.

iii. In addition to the safeguards outlined in paragraphs (i) and (ii) above, we will not acquire, by purchase or otherwise, archaeological material that has been illegally excavated. This applies in any case where our Council or our responsible officer has reasonable cause to believe that the recovery of objects or specimens involved the recent unscientific or intentional destruction or damage of ancient monuments or other known archaeological sites.

iv. In cases of possible Treasure (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), Bona Vacantia (Scotland) or Wreck, we will encourage

the finder to act according to the relevant laws and to report the finds to the proper authorities.

v. We do, however, recognise that on exceptional occasions it may be acceptable to acquire an object or specimen that has been improperly recovered, if the object or specimen is of sufficient importance for it to be in the best interests of the public and of the object or specimen for it to enter the Museum's collections rather than remain in private hands. The merits of such acquisitions will always be carefully evaluated in accordance with recognised codes of ethics, and the process will be open and fully documented.

d. Formalisation of acquisitions

i. After satisfying all conditions and guidelines, objects or specimens will be accepted. Transfer of ownership will be signed by all donors and vendors, giving NMGW the right to use gifted, bequeathed and purchased specimens as is deemed right. On acceptance, all acquisitions will be accessioned and donors will receive a letter of thanks from ourselves.

ii. In the case of objects or specimens purchased from external agencies or officially collected by Museum staff, prior approval of use of the Specimens Purchase Grant will be given in accordance with our policy and guidelines.

3. DISPOSAL POLICY

a. General

i. We accept that it is a key function of a museum to acquire objects and specimens and keep them for posterity. Consequently there is a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the collections of NMGW without due safeguards. However, it is equally incumbent upon the Museum periodically to assess the continuing relevance of items in its collections.

b. Disposal methods

i. The current Charter of the Museum empowers it to '*accept and make gifts*', to '*sell, exchange, give away or otherwise dispose of any object vested in it and comprised in its collections (provided that where an object has become vested in the Museum by virtue of a gift or bequest the powers conferred by this paragraph shall not be exercisable as respects that object in a manner inconsistent with any condition attached to the gift or bequest)*' and to '*destroy or otherwise dispose of any object vested in it and comprised in its collections if satisfied that it has become useless for purposes of the Museum by reason of damage, physical deterioration, or infestation by destructive organisms.*'

ii. When a decision to dispose of an item has been made it will not be based on the principal aim of generating funds. Any arrangements for the exchange, gift or sale of material shall, in the first instance, be with a registered museum. When this is not the case the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material. This will be through an announcement in the Museums Association's *Museums Journal* and will indicate the nature and number of objects and specimens 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. If there is no such expression of interest in material that was given to us, the Museum will attempt to offer the item(s) back to the original donor(s) or their descendants.

iii. Loan and handling collections can benefit from the inclusion of objects or specimens de-accessioned from the Museum's collections. We will consider such use of de-accessioned items, but will not de-accession objects or specimens simply in order to enable them to be transferred to a loan or handling collection.

iv. Members of staff, members of our governing bodies and members of their families or close associates, will never be permitted to acquire, by purchase or otherwise, objects that have been de-accessioned from the Museum's collections.

v. Full records will be kept of all decisions to dispose of objects or specimens, and of the nature and number of the objects or specimens involved. Proper arrangements will be made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the

documentation relating to the objects or specimens concerned, including photographic records where practicable.

vi. Heads of departments or sections will seek in writing the approval of the Director (Collections and Education) to de-accession any objects or specimens from collections. The Director (Collections and Education) will in turn seek the support of the appropriate Advisory Committee and the authorisation of the Council of the Museum. Council will then inform the National Assembly for Wales in writing that a permanent transfer or disposal has been agreed according to the proper procedures. Full records of all decisions will be kept.

vii. Any monies received by ourselves from the disposal of objects or specimens will be applied for the benefit of the Museum collections. Normally, this means the purchase of further objects or specimens for the collections but in exceptional cases improvements relating to the care of collections may be justifiable. Advice on these cases will be sought from Resource: The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries, or from its Welsh equivalent if one is established.

viii. The role of exchange between institutions and related transfer of title varies. In certain departments formal reciprocal transfer of objects or specimens reduces duplication and widens the diversity of material for education, display and scholarship. Not all relevant objects or specimens from Wales or those required for study are collected or housed by the Museum and it is of benefit to exchange, without damaging the integrity of collections, particular objects or specimens or parts of a collection. This transfer often takes place before accessioning but, where accessioned items are involved, formal procedures requiring approval from the relevant Advisory Panel and Council will be followed. In this respect newly collected objects or specimens can be used to advantage. If objects or specimens are received by donation in large quantities, they will be accepted only on the condition that selective accessioning, exchange or disposal will be possible at the discretion of departments and relevant Advisory Panels, to be approved finally by Council.

ix. Spoliation of works of art

We will give prompt and serious consideration to claims to title to specific works of art in our collections. Should it be established that an accessioned object was wrongfully taken during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period (see Acquisition Policy, Paragraph b[ix]), this fact will be advertised widely. If a claimant comes forward, measures will be taken to provide restitution to the legal owner or otherwise settle the claim, under appropriate legal and governmental advice. In particular, we shall seek advice from the DCMS Spoliation Advisory Panel, the National Museum Directors' Conference Advisory Committee, the Commission for Looted Art in Europe, the Holocaust Educational Trust and other relevant specialist bodies.

While these principles apply most pertinently to Nazi loot, they would apply equally to works of art, archaeological material and natural history or geological specimens wrongfully taken by others and under different circumstances.

x. Restitution and repatriation

We will treat with respect and sensitivity all requests for the return of objects of cultural patrimony. Decisions will be based on all available evidence, ethical considerations, best current professional practice, legislative constraints and consideration of opportunities and options.

xi. Human remains

We will always seek, within the limits of our powers, to return human remains where the material is not of scientific importance or where ethical considerations are seen to be of over-riding importance. In general, ethical considerations are likely to arise where the material is very recent or where a clear link with actual or cultural descendants can be established.

c. Loss or destruction

Loss of material is rare, but it is possible; for example, objects or specimens may disintegrate due to biological failure or adverse

environmental conditions. All material that has disintegrated will be subject to a conservation report. Full records will be maintained, and attempts will be made to rescue material for scientific or educational use.

ii. In some cases part of an object or specimen may be retained on the advice of the Keeper of the department, where future techniques may prove to be of value. The destruction of items will be seen as a last option and will only be used in extreme circumstances.

iii. Destruction is acceptable if material has decayed, been infested or is beyond conservation, and presents a threat to other collections. In some cases, where infestation may threaten the safety of other objects or specimens, it may be imperative to remove the infested object or specimen immediately, wherever possible placing the material in quarantine until formal approval for disposal is received.

iv. Destruction of an object or specimen may occur in the course of scientific analysis. There is a presumption against destruction of this kind and it is only acceptable in certain specific circumstances.

v. When it has been established that an object or specimen has been lost, permission to write it off will be sought from the National Assembly for Wales.

APPENDIX 1

SCOPE, APPROXIMATE SIZE AND DIVERSITY OF THE COLLECTIONS OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUMS & GALLERIES OF WALES

1. ARCHAEOLOGY AND NUMISMATICS

Scope and estimated size:

British archaeology
436,539

Numismatics
44,016

Roman collections, Caerleon
500,000

Approx. size
980,555

Display and collection areas:

- National Museum & Gallery, Cardiff
- Roman Legionary Museum, Caerleon
- Segontium Roman Fort Museum, Caernarfon (display only)

2. ART

Scope and estimated size

Paintings
1,601

Prints / drawings
30,878

Sculpture
559

Applied art
10,905

Approx. size
43,943

Display and collection areas:

- National Museum & Gallery, Cardiff
- Turner House, Penarth (temporary display only)
- RAF St Athan (storage only)

3. BIODIVERSITY AND SYSTEMATIC BIOLOGY

Scope and estimated size:

Cryptogamic / algae material
302,100

Vascular plants
254,500

Woods and plant models
8,435

Archives, prints, paintings and illustrative material
73,350

Entomology
956,233

Molluscan shells
3,620 & 401,113 lots

Marine invertebrates
1,636 & 101,635 lots

Vertebrates
22,922 & 3,725 lots

Models / glass negatives
31,000

Approx. size
2,160,269 & 506,473 lots

Display and collection areas:

- National Museum & Gallery, Cardiff

4. GEOLOGY

Scope and estimated size:

Minerals
29,000

Fossils
857,000

Rocks
44,300

Thin sections
7,700

Archives / photographs
21,400

Approx. size
959,400

Display and collection areas:

- National Museum & Gallery, Cardiff

5. LIBRARY

Scope and estimated size:

Books and periodicals relating to the Museum's subject areas and museology; **Approx. size 193,500**

Display and collection areas:

- National Museum & Gallery, Cardiff (Main Library and 4 departmental libraries)
- Design and Documentation, Cathays Park
- Museum of Welsh Life, St Fagans
- Department of Industry
- Roman Legionary Museum, Caerleon
- Welsh Slate Museum, Llanberis

6. SOCIAL HISTORY

Scope and estimated size:

Social history items
62,032

Oral tape archive
12,155

Paper and photo archive
162,000

Woollen industry objects
2,300

Approx. size
238,487

Display and collection areas:

- Museum of Welsh Life, St Fagans
- Museum of the Welsh Woollen Industry, Dre-fach Felindre

7. INDUSTRY

Scope and estimated size:

Industrial/maritime objects
10,790

Photographic and paper archive
197,500

Welsh Slate Museum
10,400

Big Pit
7,500

Approx. size
226,190

Display and collection areas:

- Collections Centre, Nantgarw
- Welsh Slate Museum, Llanberis
- Big Pit Mining Museum

Approximate total size of collections:

4.8 million objects and specimens

APPENDIX 2

LEGISLATION, CONVENTIONS AND NON-LEGISLATIVE GUIDELINES

National and international laws and regulations to which due reference is made by the National Museums & Galleries of Wales in implementing its stated Acquisition and Disposal Policy.

National:

Bona Vacantia [Scotland]

Merchant Shipping Act, 1894

Import, Export and Customs Powers (Defence) Act, 1939

Protection of Wrecks Act, 1973

Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act, 1976

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979

National Heritage Act, 1980

Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981: including recent schedules

Return of Cultural Objects Regulations, 1994

Merchant Shipping Act, 1995

Treasure Act, 1996 [England, Wales and Northern Ireland]

International:

UNESCO Convention and Protocol for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (Hague Convention), 1954

UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, 1970

UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 1972

European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage, 1973

UNESCO Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), 1975

World Archaeological Congress: The Vermilion Accord on Human Remains, 1989

Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act, United States 1990

EC Council Directive No. 93/7/EEC on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from the territory of a member state

United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Maatatua Declaration), 1993

UNIDROIT Convention on the Return of Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects, 1995

UNESCO Human Rights Commission Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of the Heritage of Indigenous Peoples, 1997

UNESCO Hague Convention (1954) Second Protocol, 1999

Non-legislative guidelines:

Department for Culture, Media and Sport: The Treasure Act 1996 - a Guide for Museum Curators and Local Government Archaeologists, 1997

Department of National Heritage: The Treasure Act 1996 Code of Practice (England and Wales), 1997

ICOM Code of Professional Ethics, 1986 (published with ICOM Statutes, 1990)

International Code of Botanical Nomenclature, 1988

International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants, 1969

International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, 1985

Museum Ethnographers' Group Guidelines on Management of Human Remains, 1991 (revised 1994)

Museums & Galleries Commission series of Standards, 1992-1998

Museums & Galleries Commission Registration Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom, 1995

Museums Association Code of Practice for Governing Bodies, 1994

Museums Association Code of Conduct for People who Work in Museums, 1996

Museums Association Ethical Guidelines: 1. Acquisition 1996

Museums Association Ethical Guidelines: 2. Disposal 1996

Museums Association Codes of Ethics, 1999

National Museum Directors Conference: Spoliation of Works of Art during the Holocaust and World War II Period - Statement of Principles and Proposed Actions, 1998

National Museum Directors Conference: Spoliation of Works of Art during the Holocaust and World War II Period - Interim Report on Provenance Research and Information for Enquirers, 2000

Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Sale of Works of Art by Public Bodies, 1964

Society of Antiquaries Statement of Principles on Portable Antiquities, 1993

Society of Museum Archaeologists Policy on Portable Antiquities, 1999

POLICY on ACCESS to and USE of the COLLECTIONS

REVIEWED JULY 2000

NEXT REVIEW JULY 2005

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1. INTRODUCTION

a. Collections are the *raison d'etre* of museums; without collections they would not be museums. In the past collections were made largely for their own sake, but today it is recognised that collections are acquired for the knowledge they encapsulate as well as any aesthetic value. Providing access to their collections and knowledge is thus a fundamental duty of every museum.

b. Our collections exist for the advancement of knowledge, an ethos only achievable if objects and specimens are made available for research, education, exhibition, loan and photography.

c. We hold collections in trust for the public, access and use of which is not only for the present, but also for future generations. Access and use must therefore be consistent with the conservation, care and security needs of the object(s) or specimen(s) to ensure their long-term survival.

d. It is our policy to make our collections accessible to all within the reasonable constraints of resources, conservation and security.

2. ACCESS TO AND USE OF COLLECTIONS

a. Access to collections involves providing physical proximity to objects and intellectual use of the information held concerning

them.

b. Physical access is provided through display, temporary exhibitions, loans, and access to study and reference collections. Access is available subject to our criteria for care and management of collections being satisfied and in accordance with our requirements given in our *Policy on the Care of the Collections*, and through the loan of objects or specimens, detailed in our *Policy on Loans*.

c. Intellectual access involves making available information about objects and specimens through exhibitions, catalogues and other publications in manual and/or electronic formats, photographic media and access to supplementary information about the collection. (See also our *Policy on the Documentation of the Museum's Collections*.)

d. Members of all sectors of the community are encouraged to access and use specimens, objects or information in our collection.

e. We are committed to providing longer-term and temporary exhibitions of specimens and objects in its collections.

f. We will identify objects or specimens from amongst its collections that can be handled unsupervised. We will also seek to acquire objects or specimens for this purpose (see our *Policy on the Acquisition and Disposal of the Collections*).

g. We will offer physical and/or intellectual access to collections through outreach programmes, events, activities and lectures.

3. MAXIMISING ACCESS

a. Exhibitions will be advertised widely in publicity material, our website address, the local and national press and other media.

b. Access arrangements to facilities, including educational events, study and reference collections, identification services, library and archive facilities will be governed by departmental Policies on

Access and Use.

c. We offer facilities for the study and use of collections. These facilities are open to all, within the normal constraints on access and use.

d. We make no discrimination for access on the basis of physical, sensory or intellectual ability, cultural origin, age or social status, and will seek to widen general access and social inclusion.

4. LIMITED ACCESS

a. Access and use must be balanced against the conservation, care and security of the objects or specimens to ensure their long-term survival. Any request for access that might jeopardise the long-term future of any objects or specimens may be refused, with full reasons offered. However, the opportunity to examine a photograph or replica of the objects or specimens concerned will be granted whenever reasonably possible.

b. In some cases, access to particular objects or specimens of particularly high value, fragility or sensitivity (for instance, type specimens or human remains) will be restricted to students, scholars and others with a demonstrable need to see the material.

c. Access to collections of human remains or objects of specific cultural significance will not be granted when there is reason to suspect that there is intention to trivialise or sensationalise the specimens.

d. It may be necessary to restrict or to keep confidential information regarding the acquisition of a specimen or object (for instance, in order to protect vulnerable sites or in order to respect an individual's request for confidentiality).

e. Access to notes resulting from research carried out by or on behalf of NMGW will be made available within defined periods. (This will not normally be longer than three years after

completion of the active collection of specimens/data, regardless of whether or not the work is published.)

f. Access may be restricted by conditions of donation or of loan, and we shall advise enquirers of this.

5. CHARGES

a. Access to or use of longer-term and temporary exhibitions and educational facilities may be subject to charges being levied in accordance with current Museum policy.

b. Access to or use of the study and reference collections and loans is normally free, unless this is required for commercial purposes (for example filming or photography). In such circumstances the Museum reserves the right to levy a fee.

a. Provision of information about collections (for example photographs) may also be subject to charges.

POLICY on the CARE and CONSERVATION of the COLLECTIONS

REVIEWED JULY 2000

NEXT REVIEW JULY 2005

CONTENTS

1. **INTRODUCTION**
2. **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**
3. **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**
4. **CONCLUSION**

1. INTRODUCTION

Caring for the collections in its care is a fundamental duty for any museum, and particularly so for National Museums and Galleries, where collections are kept in posterity for the nation. In our case, NMGW cares for the Welsh national collections.

The Museum's policy for the care of its collections is based on a combination of preventative and remedial conservation, both designed to ensure preservation.

a. Preventative conservation covers the measures necessary to retard or minimise deterioration of museum objects and specimens and structures. The necessary preventive measures are based on a thorough understanding of how objects and specimens react to their environment and deteriorate physically or chemically. Remedial conservation involves a treatment to an object or specimens to bring it to a more acceptable condition or state in order to stabilise it or enhance some aspects of its cultural or scientific value.

b. We will pursue 'best practice' in our preservation and conservation procedures as established in such documentation as BS 5454 'Recommendations for Storage and Exhibition of Archival Documents', and the Resource (MGC) Standards of Collection Care. Such standards and guidelines will be reviewed and updated regularly.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

a. A primary aim of the Museum, as stated in its Charter, is to conserve its collections. We will achieve this objective by providing the best conditions for the preservation of all objects and specimens through:

- providing an optimum climate of temperature, relative humidity, light levels, etc., in a pollution and pest free environment that achieves a satisfactory compromise between the long-term preservation of the objects and specimens, and accessibility to public and staff;
- providing storage and display conditions to meet current preservation and conservation standards in order to maintain all collections in a state of high protection and security at all times;
- carrying out conservation assessments of the collections prior to acquisition, loan and display, and regularly monitoring the condition of all specimens;
- prioritising conservation requirements within the framework of resources available;
- achieving the highest standards of conservation through the use of professional, qualified staff and state of the art practice and materials;
- documenting all conservation measures undertaken by NMGW while objects and specimens are in its care;
- working within an awareness that some treatments could prejudice the future research value of an object;
- promoting best practice in handling and care of objects, and minimising the risks to their long-term preservation.

3. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

a. We will take measures over and above those necessary for the day to day protection of its collections, to provide emergency arrangements and facilities in the event of disastrous damage (as from flood, fire etc.). These measures include:

- provision of Disaster Response documentation as part of the Emergency Procedures Handbook, in all collection holding areas.
- provision of appropriate training in disaster protection and response and providing suitable equipment and materials in

- Disaster Cupboards at all sites.
- identifying external bodies whose services may be used in specific emergency situations.

4. CONCLUSION

In all matters regarding the acquisition and use of objects or specimens, we will consider that the care and conservation of the collections is paramount.

POLICY on the DOCUMENTATION of the COLLECTIONS

REVIEWED JULY 2000

NEXT REVIEW JULY 2005

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1. **INTRODUCTION**
2. **ACCOUNTABILITY**
3. **DOCUMENTATION POLICY**
4. **APPENDIX**

1. INTRODUCTION

a. Scope

Publically-funded museums, and particularly National Museums and Galleries, have collections entrusted to their care for posterity. To care for, be properly accountable, and offer ready access to these collections museums must know what they hold, and this is the purpose of documentation.

This document establishes the policies for documenting the collections held by the National Museums & Galleries of Wales (NMGW). It defines the level of documentation required for inventory and associated procedures.

b. Background

Documentation underpins every aspect of museum activity; it is central to the accountability of collections, their accessibility and use. Such documentation is necessary so that publicly funded museums can demonstrate that they are managing their collections efficiently and within the law but also for the benefit of the public in the widest sense. Collection information will be available to all (see our Policy on Access to and Use of the Collection). Although physical access may be limited, museums are keen to extend access to collections and their associated information via alternative technologies such as the Internet.

c. Strategic aims of the Policy

The aim of this Policy is to ensure that we fulfil our guardianship and access responsibilities. The main strategic issues are as follows:

- to improve accountability for the collections,
- whilst maintaining the minimum professional standards in documentation procedures and collection information, attain the very highest standards wherever possible
- to improve access to collection information.
- to improve the security of the collections

d. Operational Issues

This policy is primarily concerned with strategic issues. Operational aspects in the implementation of this policy across the Museum are addressed separately.

e. Group or Item -level documentation

We take a common-sense approach as to whether to document material to group or item level. Ideally for the majority of the collections, especially those that have high monetary or scientific value, curatorial staff will document these collections to item or individual level. However, for certain collections, such as archaeological excavation material or large natural science fieldwork collections, it is not feasible nor practical to document the material in this detail. The National Audit Office (NAO) has agreed that for certain groups it is acceptable to document them in bulk (or at group level). The aim in this case is to have an inventory level record for all identified items and groups within NMGW. The *inventory level* is defined by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport as '*the recording of sufficient key information to allow any object(s) in the museum's care to be individually identified. An inventory should include accessioned items, loans inward and outward, and any other unaccessioned objects as appropriate*'

Departments will identify the collections that merit further documentation, thus raising the standard of information to catalogue level. Catalogue documentation is described as '*the*

creation of and maintenance of primary information for describing, identifying, attributing, qualifying or interpreting museum objects. This must include information to the minimum standards recorded during an inventory'. The Inventory and cataloguing standards are in accordance with the recommendations of Touche Ross (1989), National Audit Office (1997), and Deloitte Touche (1998) regarding item and group documentation.

2. ACCOUNTABILITY

a. Definition of accountability

Resource: the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council has defined the essence of accountability as follows:

"to enable museums to fulfil their fundamental responsibilities for collections and the information associated with them. The principles are that a museum should know at any time exactly for what it is legally responsible (this includes loans as well as permanent collections), and where each item is located." (MGC 1993)

b. Documentation strategy

The following framework is based on the Resource (MGC) Registration guidelines, the Touche Ross documentation and Collections Verification reports, the Deloitte Touche collections reports, the Museums Documentation Association's publications 'Facts and Artefacts' and 'Spectrum' (see bibliography for references).

3. DOCUMENTATION POLICY

a. Documentation of Collections Policy

The main focus of this Policy concerns the implementation of agreed Museum-wide minimum standards to achieve adequate accountability for collections. This initial level of collection information is called Inventory (see definition above). Its purpose is to record sufficient information regarding the item or group in order that it can be recognised from other items or groups within the collections. This initial level of information will apply to all collections.

b. Minimum standards for accountability

Our documentation systems include Micromusée, FileMakerPro, Adlib (Library Management System) and the Audio-visual database. Each system will record the following key information to inventory level for all collections:

- Entry records,
- Transfer records which establish the Museum's legal title to an item or group,
- Restrictions to prevent all unauthorised access to accession records, which record items in the permanent collections. A permanent identity number will be allocated to an item or group of items and provide adequate information for collections management purposes,
- Location records, including movement and loan records. We will maintain records of all loans, whether incoming or outgoing,
- Exit records including disposal information,
- Defined 'core' records, computerised with the CMS databases, as part of an agreed 5-year Inventory plan. This record will include a photograph negative reference for high priority material where appropriate, in particular for all items on display,
- Periodic and systematic verification of the collections (see our Policy on Audit and Verification).

c. Entry documentation

Entry documentation will ensure that collections entering the Museum for any purpose (e.g. enquiries, loans or potential acquisition) are allocated an entry number.

d. Secure links between items and their documentation

The accessioning of collections in the Museum will always ensure there is a direct link between the individual record and the item or group of items. As part of the accessioning process, each item / group will be numbered with its permanent identity number. Numbers will be identified by labelling or marking with due

consideration for conservation needs.

e. Controlled access to sensitive information

Confidential data such as donor, valuations or site details will only be available to authorised users. It may be necessary to restrict or to keep confidential information regarding some collections (see our Policy on Access to and Use of the Collections).

f. Control over movements

Internal movement control and exit systems, with procedures for disposal including de-accessioning, will be maintained.

g. System documentation and staff training

All our computerised collections (including Micromusée, Adlib, FileMakerPro and Audio-visual) databases will provide and maintain manuals explaining the use of the databases.

All curatorial staff will be made aware of the importance of documentation and will be trained in all procedures with which they will be directly involved.

h. Security against loss of irreplaceable collection information

Measures to ensure the physical security and long-term preservation of all records, whether paper or computerised will be put in place. All manual and computerised records will be updated as appropriate. Where collection information is wholly computerised and managed centrally nightly backups will be made to secure the information. Backup copies of all key files will be made, and where considered appropriate, securely housed off-site.

i. Cataloguing

This Policy is designed to ensure a minimum level of documentation for all our collections. For appropriate collections,

we will also create higher-level information for cataloguing and publication purposes.

APPENDIX 1

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POLICY on LOANS

REVIEWED JULY 2000

NEXT REVIEW JULY 2005

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1. PURPOSE
2. DEFINITION
3. STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS
4. FORMALISATION
5. INDEMNITY AND INSURANCE
6. LOANS OUTWARD
7. LOANS INWARD
8. DISPOSAL OF LOANS

1. PURPOSE

a. Our collections are held in trust for the nation. Our staff have a continuing obligation to permit use of the objects or specimens for the benefit of all people, and to enhance this use. Lending objects offers the opportunity of extending access to items which would otherwise remain in store and facilitates research that our own staff might not be able to carry out.

b. The loan or borrowing of objects or specimens benefits all museums by enabling them to prepare more comprehensive displays, to broaden educational facilities, and to improve research opportunities.

c. Loans will be agreed strictly in accordance with our stated ethics. However, we shall continue to investigate ways of expanding our loan activities so that even more people might enjoy and learn from objects in our collections.

2. DEFINITION

a. Outward loans involve the temporary physical transfer of objects or specimens from our collections either to another institution, or to individuals, for use in research, education, exhibition, publication, or enhancing access. Inward loans involve

loans to ourselves from other institutions or individuals for the same purposes.

3. STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

a. Loans of objects or specimens will be made from all collections. All requests will be considered against the need to ensure preservation and security of the object or specimen, in particular of fragile or irreplaceable items, or of any other pertinent factors.

b. Outward loans are for a fixed term. If they are for a period longer than one year then they will be subject to an annual review. Arrangements for a term longer than a year for display or detailed research programmes will be agreed on specific occasions.

c. All loan documentation will be reviewed regularly and the borrower contacted **before the expiry date is reached**; particular note will be made of any extensions of loans, any changes in the condition of the loan, and any changes in the condition of the objects or specimens. No loan, outward or inward, will be made for an indefinite period or as a 'permanent loan', an expression which has no status in law.

d. Loans inward to ourselves will be subject to similar conditions to loans outward.

e. Throughout, we shall aim for best practice in all our activities.

4. FORMALISATION

a. All loans from ourselves will be fully documented with details of the borrower, the venues, the loan period, and the purpose of the loan, as well as details of the objects or specimens, including Accession numbers, individual lot or specimen item numbers and value. Details will be entered on a loan form, and every loan should also have a condition report, and where appropriate photographs of the objects or specimens.

b. The loan form used will be a corporate document, but departments may append specific instructions for restrictions and conditions on use and storage of the material as appropriate. Any such instructions must be regarded as part of the loan agreement. .

c. Each request for a loan will be submitted in writing. We will ensure that there are written agreements signed by both parties (NMGW and borrowers) in advance of the loan.

d. Loan requests will be assessed and, if necessary, specific conditions agreed prior to dispatch and noted in writing especially where analysis or dissection of specimens or other detailed study is involved. The various Museums and Galleries Commission reports on the '*Standards in the Museum's Care of Collections*' are relevant to these circumstances.

e. The authority for the lending and borrowing of objects and specimens lies with the Keeper of the relevant Department. The lending of individual objects or specimens with a value in excess of £5,000 requires the approval of the Director (if within the U.K.) or (if overseas) the Advisory Committee and Council, following advice from the Department Keeper. Facility Reports, where appropriate, will be required to be provided by the borrower to cover transit, environmental conditions and security issues.

f. In respect of outward loans we will retain the right for a member of staff to courier and/or to be present when material is used for display, photographic or filming purposes. The cost of this will normally be borne by the borrower.

g. Any loss or damage occurring to an object or specimen while on loan must be reported to us immediately. No conservation work or other physical intervention will be carried out without express written permission from the Keeper of the lending department, nor unless the exact scope of any agreed intervention is (a) clearly defined and agreed in writing beforehand, (b) documented in a manner specified beforehand in writing by the Keeper.

5. INDEMNITY AND INSURANCE

a. Indemnity for loans is provided under the terms of the Government Indemnity Scheme (G.I.S.). The G.I.S. provides indemnity cover for both loans from institutions and individuals lending to the Museum, and for loans to non-national organisations, such as local museums and galleries, subject to the borrower meeting certain requirements (see Appendix 1). Loans to other institutions not covered above, private individuals or commercial organisations must be covered by insurance at the borrower's expense. Proof of cover while the objects or specimens are out on loan from the Museum must be provided by the borrower. No insurance or indemnification is required for loans to or from other U.K. government-funded bodies providing transit arrangements meet G.I.S. requirements.

b. Government indemnity for loans made to ourselves is essential in order that we are fully covered for any claims for loss or damage which we may well be unable to meet from our own resources. The indemnities are currently issued by the National Assembly for Wales.

c. Loans to ourselves, either for an exhibition, research or for more general loan, will be indemnified as appropriate before acceptance. This is a separate exercise from the profile of expected indemnity requirements which departments and branches submit to the Administrative Officer each year. The procedure for indemnity is set out in our Inward Loans Procedures document which is appended to this Policy.

d. We will ensure indemnification of all eligible objects or specimens in the institution's custody, ensure that the indemnification period includes times of transit to or from the institution and ensure that the appropriate minimum liability sum is available for payment if required.

e. National Assembly for Wales requirements do not allow loans to be accepted for an indefinite period. For existing long-term loans of objects or specimens valued in excess of £500,000 the

indemnity will be renewed annually in order to reconsider the valuation. Loans of lesser value will be re-indemnified every five years. The valuation of individual objects or specimens offered for loan should be agreed with the owners before the loan is accepted. If prior agreement cannot be reached, reference will be made to an arbitrator appointed by the National Assembly for Wales after reference to both the owner and the borrower.

6. LOANS OUTWARD

a. Loans Outward for Research and Education

We will consider loan transactions with museums and other educational institutions in any country. Normally loans will be made to institutions or *bona fide* research workers with the loan housed in a recognised institution. In exceptional circumstances, loans of material of low commercial and scientific value may be made at the discretion of a Keeper to approved individuals. We will not normally charge a fee for a loan made for non-commercial purposes. We will require that objects or specimens will be insured or indemnified by the receiving institution or individual, and that any damage in transit will be reported immediately on receipt. We will ensure that borrowers confirm their intent and ability to provide an acceptable level of care, security and safekeeping of the objects or specimens, taking into account proper conservation and environmental requirements to avoid infestation or damage. In addition, certain other conditions will also be met:

- the receiving institution will have a recognised professional member of staff in the appropriate field;
- the reputation of the professional staff and institution will be of sufficient standing so as to ensure adequate care and security of the objects or specimens while on loan;
- the objects or specimens will not be put at risk as a result of potential political or economic difficulties;
- the objects or specimens will not be required for study by staff or students at NMGW, and not required for display or any other educational purpose during the proposed period;
- packing and shipping of the loan will not place an unreasonable logistical or financial imposition. Any costs must

be borne by the borrower.

- the specimens will not be so fragile, rare or valuable that the risks in handling and shipping are unacceptable;
- the institution requesting the loan will honour reciprocal loan requests from ourselves;
- special permission must be sought, with full justification, before the removal of material for use in molecular studies.

b. Loans Outward for Exhibition and Display

Loans for exhibition and display will be predicated on offering access. Generally, such loans will be to museums, galleries, interpretation centres, town halls, universities, etc. to which the public has ready access. Since we effectively play the part of the Government Art Collection in Wales, loans to government buildings also fall into this category.

Many of the aforesaid qualifications and criteria for loans outward for research and education also apply to loans for exhibition purposes. However, additional considerations apply to exhibition loans:

- adequate security for any items on loan will be ensured by the borrowing institution. In the case of travelling exhibitions via Area Museum Councils or other such organisations, all sites will adhere to appropriate environmental control and security as required;
- loans will not be made where an exhibition involves support or promotion of an ethical position contrary to that held by ourselves;
- loans for exhibition will normally be agreed for a duration up to one year but may be longer in particular circumstances, at the discretion of the relevant Keeper. For such loans there will be an annual review to establish conservation requirements and continued insurance cover, with costs borne by the borrower;
- full acknowledgement of ourselves will be made by the lending institution, and any text should be agreed by ourselves.

c. Loans Outward for Commercial Use

Under particular circumstances, at the discretion of the relevant Keeper, loans can be made for commercial purposes. We shall continue to investigate the practicality of enhancing this facility. Charges for loan of objects or specimens to commercial outlets, including television companies or publishers will be negotiable based our framework for charges current in the various departments. We will insist that, whenever possible, photography or television work using objects or specimens from the Museum collections is undertaken on Museum property.

7. LOANS INWARD

a. We will apply the same standards to loans inward as it requires of borrowers of its own objects or specimens. All incoming material will be documented to basic minimum standard and a condition report form completed by an appropriately-qualified member of staff, regularly checked and reported upon as requested by the lending body. We will:

- secure written agreements signed by both borrower and lender before the loan commences;
- ensure that all loans are for fixed periods;
- ensure a written record of the loan is retained;
- provide insurance or indemnity cover for the loan period;
- ensure that up-to-date information about the location of borrowed objects or specimens is maintained;
- ensure that up-to-date information about the security of borrowed objects or specimens is maintained;
- ensure that up-to-date information about the physical well-being of borrowed objects or specimens is maintained, including the environment and condition of the objects.;
- ensure that all such loans have a well-established provenance and are in accordance with our ethical stance.

b. In certain circumstances we may wish to acquire the loans-in for the permanent collections. We will follow the standard acquisition procedures as set out in the Policy on Acquisition and Disposal of the Collections. We will take advice from the Museum's solicitors as to the steps it will take if the original owners of the loan cannot be contacted or are deceased.

8. DISPOSAL OF LOANS

a. In exceptional circumstances material on loan may present a threat to other material. In such an event we will take all reasonable steps to contact the original lender, or, if that person is deceased, the executors of the estate, in order to determine what action will be taken.

b. If remedial action is required, we will take all reasonable steps to secure written permission for any conservation work that will be undertaken or, in extreme circumstances, the disposal of objects or specimens.

b. Following these procedures, recommendations for disposal of an object or specimen will be forwarded by a Keeper to the appropriate Advisory Committee and Council, using the same guidelines as outlined in the Policy on Acquisition and Disposal of the Collections.

POLICY on the PHYSICAL VERIFICATION of the COLLECTIONS

REVIEWED JULY 2000

NEXT REVIEW JULY 2005

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1. **PURPOSE**
2. **DEFINITION**
3. **PHYSICAL VERIFICATION**
4. **REPORTING**

1. PURPOSE

a. Museums must be properly accountable for the collections in their care and particularly so in the case of National Museums and Galleries, where objects are kept in trust for present and future generations to enjoy and learn from. The National Museums & Galleries of Wales (NMGW) conforms to a basic principle of Resource: the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, namely "*that a museum should know at any time exactly for what items it is legally responsible (this includes loans as well as the permanent collections), and where each item is located*".

b. In order to achieve this level of accountability, we recognise that it is essential to maintain a programme for physical verification for our collections. This policy statement indicates the manner by which this will be achieved, and forms part of our approach to the care and security of the collections.

2. DEFINITION

Physical verification is the process whereby the Museum establishes, at a given point in time, the physical presence and location of a particular object/specimen in its care. The outcome of the verification process will be recorded on computer database where modern computerised records exist but otherwise manually.

3. PHYSICAL VERIFICATION

a. We will meet the requirement for physical verification by adopting and maintaining certain specific verification procedures including:

- establishment, where appropriate, of a rolling programme of systematic verification of our collections.
- establishment of a programme of 'spot checks' whereby objects/specimens for checking will not be predetermined but selected on a random sampling basis.

b. In addition the verification of objects/specimens which occurs during the following procedures will be recorded, preferably on one of the designated computerised collections management systems, or manually if necessary:

- when object-/specimen-related data is entered onto one of the CMS systems.
- when objects/specimens are conserved, re-packaged, re-stored, etc.
- when objects/specimens are placed on display.
- when objects/specimens are used for research/enquiry purposes.
- during the routine listing of all type, figured or cited items/objects.
- when loans in & loans out enter or exit the Museum.

c. Implementation of the above procedures will vary depending on the size and the perceived 'value' of particular collections, both financial and academic.

4. REPORTING

- a. Departments will produce a quarterly report on the progress of the physical verification of their collections for the Director of Collections & Education. Responsibility for co-ordinating the verification exercises within departments, what procedures are followed and how the verifications will be recorded are presented in departmental procedural manuals.

POLICY on the use of NMGW specimens in DNA-based studies

Policy

The Museum welcomes the opportunity to use its collections in as many ways as possible for the furtherance of scientific study. To ensure that the needs of both contemporary and future users are properly catered for the following guidelines have been drawn up.

1. Procedure

1.1 All proposals for research involving the extraction of DNA from Museum specimens should be addressed to the Head of the relevant section.

1.2 The proposal must include:

- an outline of the project
- justification for the use of the material requested
- evidence of a proven track record in the proposed techniques
- evidence that the proposed techniques produce reliable results

Any proposal will be evaluated with regard to scientific importance and technical feasibility. Further information might be requested. If approved, the Museum will nominate a contact for the project.

1.3 The choice of specimens and their use will be under the guidance of the appropriate curator. The smallest possible sample will be taken, from the least intrusive site and causing the least damage to the specimen.

1.4 Requests for sampling archaeological human remains will be dealt with by the Museum's external Archaeology & History panel.

2. Term & Conditions

2.1 The applicant agrees to:

- return aliquots of extracted DNA to the Museum.
- submit sequences extracted from museum specimens to GenBank/EMBL and provide us with the accession numbers or computer-readable copies of sequence data as soon as possible but no later than the date of submission for publication. The Museum undertakes not to disseminate these data until they are accepted for publication.
- provide copies of experimental protocols that differ from published methods. The Museum undertakes not to publicise such innovations until they have been published.
- publish jointly with Museum staff if they have contributed significantly to the work.
- acknowledge use of the Collection in publications involving use of Museum specimens. Reprints of such publications should be sent to the Museum.
- provide brief bi-annual reports on the status of the research until it is either published or abandoned. provide feedback to the Museum indicating possible reasons for problems encountered, especially if the project fails.

2.2 The Museum retains all rights to DNA sequences derived from specimens in its collections, unless rights are still held by the country of origin. The research and the results of the research may not be commercially exploited in any way without the prior written agreement of the Museum. Such agreements may be refused in the Museum's absolute discretion or granted subject to such conditions as the Museum may decide (and may well require prior agreement as to the sharing of the financial benefits arising from such exploitation). Such decisions will be informed by the principles of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

2.3 Material can only be passed to third parties, or PCR products subsequently used, with the approval of the Museum.

2.4 The Museum retains the right to insist that tissue extractions are done in an appropriate laboratory.

2.5 The Museum retains the right to refuse permission for DNA to be extracted from specimens.