



# Ripon Museum Trust

## Collections Development Policy

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**Name of museum:** *Ripon Museum Trust*

**Name of governing body:** *Ripon Museum Trust*

**Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:** *11 Nov 2014*

**Policy review procedure:**

The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

**Date at which this policy is due for review:** *October 2019*

**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.

### **1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:**

#### **1.1. The museum's statement of purpose is:**

*Our mission is to enrich the lives of all who experience and are inspired by our historic law and order sites and collections so that they gain insights into, and are provoked into thinking about, how the treatment of offenders and the relief of the poor have developed over the last 200 years. We will be a model of the ways in which the past is used to create a deeper, more compassionate and more equitable society. We also want to enhance substantially Ripon's sense of place and to improve the well-being of our volunteers and our local community*

#### **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 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**

Following the formation of Ripon Museum trust in 1982 John Whitehead, the museum founder asked the North Yorkshire police for uniforms, helmets and badges, and was much helped by the Chief Constable, Peter Nobes, and a senior officer who lived at Ripon called Kenneth Henshaw. John acquired from Harrogate a set of Ripon stocks which had originally been in the Thorpe Prebend Museum. Police photographs were also acquired from the BBC Hulton Picture Library. A number of police collectors, such as a Sgt Hislop and Don Hyndman of Nottingham provided many artefacts. Kirkby Malzeard police station closed in a timely fashion and the police charge table (now in reception) and the cell bars now in the big gallery came along. York Castle Museum loaned (and still does) a collection of local truncheons.

From 1995, the project to create a Workhouse Museum began and John Whitehead had also started a collection of prints he called his "Hard Times" images for the workhouse, some of which now grace the Guardians' Room. Since then further maps and documents have been discovered in the building that illustrate the administration of the poor law in 1868 and the 1930 site plan. Features of the Workhouse Museum include fixtures, fittings furniture and objects used a different periods throughout the buildings history and a few pieces from other local workhouses and related institutions.

The Courthouse closed in 1998, allowing us chance to create a graphical collection, e.g. of prints and photographs of past Liberty Magistrates, to be soon enhanced by a collection of transportation items. The extension to the courthouse then provided the stimulus to gather the court statute books (on loan from the Cathedral) housing them in what had been court No 2. The Courthouses Georgian interior remains virtually unchanged and its historical fittings and furnishings form a significant part of the Courthouse Museum's collection. The Courthouse also houses an important collection of painted portraits of past magistrates.

## **3. An overview of current collections**

The Museum Trust collections consist of documents, archives books objects include, historic buildings and material relevant to the history of the maintenance of law and order, and the

administration of justice and local government, including poor law, with particular emphasis on Yorkshire examples. These are displayed in the three museums run by the Trust - the Prison and Police Museum, the Workhouse Museum and the Courthouse Museum. The three Museums are located in significant historic buildings – the structures themselves an integral and important part of the Trust Collection. Together the three museums and the collections tell an interwoven story of Law, Order and Social Welfare.

The Prison and Police Museum collection features historical items from North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and Humberside Police with regionally significant collections of uniform, handcuffs, police medals and truncheons. The collection includes;

- restraints such as handcuffs and manacles
- cycles, including a modern BMW motorcycle
- police uniforms and insignia
- communications equipment
- personal equipment e.g. lamps carried/used by police officers
- weapons both taken from criminals and used by police forces
- a large collection of printed and manuscript material relating to law and order
- a large collection of photographs relating to law and order

### **3. Themes and priorities for future collecting**

The Trust's collecting policy is to continue to collect items from within the old geographical area of Yorkshire as covered by the East Riding, North Riding and West Riding administrative areas. Items not directly connected to Yorkshire but which illustrate the overall picture of the Maintenance of Law and Order, the Poor Law and the Administration of Justice may also be considered occasionally in conjunction with the collecting policies of other relevant museums.

We will also continue to collect items associated with Ripon and other North Yorkshire workhouses

Priority will be given to collecting items which build on our specialisms, which are well-documented and have a compelling provenance or history, and are in good condition, and do not duplicate any already in the collections

We will collect:

- Objects that are historically appropriate furnishings for the House of Correction and Liberty Gaol (late 17<sup>th</sup> century – 1878), Ripon Workhouse (late 18<sup>th</sup>- 20<sup>th</sup> century) and Courthouse (19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries). Some of these objects may not be original to the buildings but will accurately represent the period of interpretation.
- Oral histories relating to the use of our three museum buildings
- Objects which build on our specialisms (Uniforms, handcuffs, truncheons and badges)
- Historic objects relevant to the prison and police services operational in North Yorkshire from 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> century

The collection will not normally be pursued beyond 1999 unless in the view of the curators that an item or object is of particular significance and interest to the collection. In the case of the Workhouse Museum; workhouses ceased to exist after 1952 and this date is considered to be the limit of the collection.

**Until the documentation backlog is cleared, the museum will be collecting only exceptional objects.**

**After this moratorium space and display limitations may continue to limit our collecting.**

#### **4. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal**

- 5.1 The museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.**
- 5.2 The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.**

*At the present time the museum is not looking to rationalise or dispose of items within its collection.*

#### **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.**

#### **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):**
- Galleries of Justice in Nottingham – This museum, housed in Nottingham's old courthouse and county gaol (c. 1770), collects and interprets three centuries of the history of Nottingham crime and punishment in a building where outlaws were judged, imprisoned and executed.
  - Gressenhall Workhouse and Rural Life Museum- Part of Norfolk Museums Service, this museum collects material relating to agricultural industry, social material and interprets the history of the poor law through workhouse on site.
  - The Fire and Police Museum Sheffield – Located in one of the United Kingdom's first purpose-built Fire and Police Stations, this museum collects fire-service related memorabilia from South Yorkshire.

All of these Museums cover some of the specialist subjects of our three museums. By restricting our collections to the Yorkshire area we will try to avoid any unnecessary duplication or waste of resources.

## **8 Archival holdings**

As the Trust holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002).

## **9 Acquisition**

### **9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:**

**The monthly Curator's meeting receives proposals from curators for the acquisition of objects, items or printed material and if the item meets the criteria Laid out in Section 4 an item will be acquired using the current documentation and collection policies and plans.**

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

## **11 Biological and geological material**

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

## **12 Archaeological material**

**12.1 The museum will not acquire archaeological material**

## **13 Spoliation**

**13.1 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.**

## **14 Disposal procedures**

**14.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.**

**14.2 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.**

**14.3 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.**

**14.4 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.**

**14.5 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.**

**14.6 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.**

**14.7 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.**

- 14.8** 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.
- 14.9** 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.
- 14.10** 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.
- 14.11** 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.
- 14.12** Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.

#### ***Disposal by exchange***

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

#### ***Disposal by destruction***

- 14.14** If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.

- 14.15 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.**
- 14.16 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.**
- 14.17 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.**
- 14.18 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.**