

**COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY  
2017-2022**

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# NATIONAL MUSEUMS SCOTLAND COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

This strategy sets out:

- The strategic context and over-arching principles and priorities
- Summary overview of the National Museums Scotland Collections
- Themes and priorities for future collecting
- Our legislative, ethical and procedural framework in compliance with the requirements of accreditation, the nationally agreed standard for UK museums.

## 1. CONTEXT

### 1.1 Our Vision

*Inspiring people, connecting Scotland to the world and the world to Scotland.*

### 1.2 Our History

We embody a tradition built up over more than two centuries of collecting for public benefit, developed on a national scale with an international perspective. Through collections originally founded by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in the late eighteenth century, we are inheritors of the highest aspirations of the Scottish Enlightenment and the history and archaeology collections this yielded. The founding of the Industrial Museum of Edinburgh in 1855, opened as the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art in 1866 reflected Victorian philanthropic ideals about public education and the desire to collect omnivorously linking scientific enquiry to art and design. The transfer of collections from the University of Edinburgh's Museum of Natural History ensured National Museums Scotland now benefits from early collecting activity that spans natural history and world cultures.

The collections of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland passed into public ownership in 1858 as the original collections of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland. In 1970 the Scottish United Services Museum came under the oversight of what was then known as the Royal Scottish Museum, though it still functioned separately with discrete collections. In 1985 the major national collections were brought together in the amalgamation of the National Museum of Antiquities, and the Scottish United Services Museum with the Royal Scottish Museum in Chambers Street to form the National Museums of Scotland.

## **2. AIMS**

Our strategic plan 2016-2020 places collections at the heart of the organisation. It outlines four aims including: “Value our collections: preserve, interpret, share and make them accessible for all”. This aim underlies the priorities, activities and actions detailed in this strategy.

We develop our collections to:

- Improve the representation of the Museum’s five subject areas for public benefit through material culture.
- Educate, engage and inspire the public. This can be through display at our own museums, through loans and touring exhibitions at other institutions, and through digital and other media.
- Support research now and in the future.

Our collections are of benefit to people now and in the future, including:

- Our museum visitors or online users, whether school children, experts or people with a general interest.
- Users of the local and international institutions who borrow our collections or to whom we tour our exhibitions.
- Academic researchers.
- Artists and designers looking for inspiration or creative stimulation.

## **3. PRINCIPLES**

Our principles are:

- to continue to collect across the range of disciplines and between disciplines
- in particular, to collect items of national importance to Scotland, whether of Scottish, British or international provenance.
- to be representative rather than comprehensive
- to seek excellence rather than quantity, focussing on items of national or international significance
- to seek items which can be interpreted for audiences in meaningful and interesting ways,
- to seek items which are important for research purposes
- to make our collections publically available through web, publication or display wherever possible.
- to seek items for which we can care within our existing and anticipated resource capacity

## **4. PRACTICE**

### **4.1 Breadth of collecting**

The Museum collects across a broad range of disciplines and its current curatorial structure reflects these broad groupings: Art & Design, Natural Sciences, Science & Technology, World Cultures and Scottish History & Archaeology. The breadth and depth of the collections makes them unique amongst National Collections across the world and gives us international standing.

The Museum's archival collections support this endeavour. These collections contain rare books, manuscripts, plans, photographs, drawings, papers and records as well as archives relating to the history of the Museum and Society of Antiquaries of Scotland

### **4.2 Types of collecting activity**

Gifts, field work and purchase are our basic collecting activities. The emphasis on each varies between departments. Cultivation of relationships with individuals or organisations leading to gifts is of critical importance and we aim to strengthen our relationships with owners, collectors and experts in a range of fields in order to enhance opportunities to acquire significant items. Acknowledgement of supporters' generosity will continue to be important and wherever possible and appropriate, we will seek to profile new acquisitions with due acknowledgement.

Field work involving scientific expedition or excavation is especially important to Natural Sciences collection development, and extends the Scottish History & Archaeology and World Cultures collections. Direct commission of artists and designers can also be used to extend the collections.

### **4.3 Major projects**

Major transformational display projects across all our sites act as catalysts for collecting activity as well as the rediscovery and reinterpretation of existing collections. During the period of the current Collections Development Strategy, such transformational changes will be planned at the National Museum of Flight and the Scottish Galleries at the National Museum of Scotland.

### **4.4 Special exhibitions**

The special exhibition programme can be a stimulus to our collecting. The showcasing of our own collections alongside material from elsewhere can trigger reassessment of their history and importance, strengthen their national and international profile and build valuable relationships. Exhibitions with a high proportion of loans not only bring high quality material into public view but also allow cultivation of important relationships which may lead to future acquisitions.

## **4.5 Opportunity**

While our collecting strategy gives us a general framework and sets out particular targets, there should also be room for us to respond to the unexpected opportunity. Sometimes this may require a swift attempt to lever funding to bid at auction or a much longer term exercise in patience and cultivation, such as via the Acceptance in Lieu scheme. This can also apply to very long term cultivation where it might be our successors who enjoy the final outcome in terms of legacies or bequests.

## **4.6 Resources**

We aim to compensate for the limitations of the purchase funds provided by Government by leveraging other sources such as the Heritage Lottery Funds, National Heritage Memorial Fund and Art Fund as well as other private trusts and donors. The National Museums Scotland Charitable Trust remains a much appreciated source of additional funds. Such leverage is essential for us to remain a serious purchaser in a competitive market.

In future, we will place a strengthened emphasis on matching our own purchase funds with funds from other sources. To do so we will develop our relationships with funding bodies, potential individual donors, and our Patrons and Members. Through creating a culture of goodwill and enthusiastic support we will be best placed to attain our ambitions.

In order to strengthen these collecting aspirations we will encourage and develop further the skills of our curatorial teams in seeking out, nurturing and securing acquisitions. We will also develop our networks of expertise and advice to enable us to draw upon a range of sources should this become necessary.

In addition to financial resources we will also continue to collect sustainably, ensuring that we can afford future storage costs, and the capacity and staff expertise to keep objects in the right conditions as well as, dealing with hazards and object documentation to best-practice levels.

## **4.7 Measuring Success**

We will measure our success by looking at a range of factors including quantity and quality of acquisitions, peer perceptions and the amount of external funding for acquisition which has been achieved each year.

## **4.8 Interdependencies**

This strategy should be read with reference to the Estates Strategy, Collections Research Strategy, National Museums Collections Centre Vision and curatorial training and development plans.

## **5. SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2017 TO 2022**

Our priorities are:

- To build the collections in our five curatorial areas.
- To increase our contemporary collecting in line with current and future display and research priorities.
- To enhance our Scottish collections with a view to the renewal of the Scotland galleries.
- To develop related collections to support the redevelopment of the National Museum of Flight.
- To identify and aim to collect in high-priority areas which have not been the focus of recent active collecting.
- To enhance and diversify our funding and support networks for acquisitions including the cultivation of potential donors and develop further the skills of our staff in this area.
- To identify major collecting institutions with whom we have the potential for overlap and look to resolve any ambiguities.

## **6. COLLECTING PRIORITIES**

The collections number over 12 million items. The largest collections consist of Natural Sciences, with approximately 10 million items, and Scottish History & Archaeology, with c. 2.1 million items.

### **6.1 Art and Design**

#### **6.1.1 Background and strengths of collection**

Collecting decorative arts has been part of the policy of the museum since its foundation in 1855. In particular, its second Director, Thomas Archer (1860-85), worked alongside the South Kensington museum (now the V&A) to build an appropriate national collection. Although supported by this long history, the current curatorial Department of Art & Design dates back only to 2012. The department focuses on decorative arts, fashion, textiles and sculpture from the Middle Ages to the present, produced in Europe or in the former settler colonies of Europe by descendants of settlers or immigrants. Art from original inhabitants such as First Nations and Inuit in Canada remains the remit of the Department of World Cultures. The result today is a collection of European decorative art which is the most comprehensive in the UK outside of the V&A, and is of international importance. It represents excellence, creativity and innovation in sculpture, metal work, ceramics, glass, furniture, woodwork and dress and textiles. It demonstrates leading edge developments in product design and craft and reflects Scottish and European achievement.

The objects date back to the Middle Ages, with small groups of religious wood carving, ivories, liturgical textiles and enamels. There is some outstanding Renaissance material including majolica and sculpture. Other styles, Mannerism, Baroque and Neo-classicism all have some representation. Victorian material is well represented, reflecting the vigorous collecting effort of the late nineteenth century.

More recently, the focus has been on developing an outstanding corpus of modern and contemporary applied art by gift, purchase and the commissioning of new work. Collecting in the modern field has built up a fine representation of contemporary crafts including studio ceramics, glass and jewellery.

A particular strength is the dress and textile collection which ranges from the sixteenth century to the present. It comprises one of the three largest such collections in the UK, and includes fashionable dress from Europe from c.1500 to the present, and textiles from the fourteenth century to the present. Alongside spectacular finished garments and garments by internationally renowned designers, the collections of dress-related artefacts also include sketches, patterns, accessories, illustrations, photography and retail ephemera.

The textile collections include tapestries, pattern books, samples, lengths of fabric and more, showing Scottish and European expertise in design, weaving, knitting, printing and embroidery. The Charles Stewart Collection, donated in 1977, comprises some 6,000 objects, mainly fashionable dress and accessories from about 1750 to the 1960s. Two further substantial acquisitions have established the Museum as a leading international player in collecting twentieth-century fashion and design: the Jean Muir Collection (2005) forms the world's largest museum collection of an internationally-renowned fashion designer, and the Bernat Klein Collection (2010) features the work of one of the most highly regarded textile designers of the previous century.

As it is a fairly new department, collecting boundaries with the other departments (in particular, with Scottish History & Archaeology) will be clarified during the period of the Strategy. At present, departments work together to support acquisition, research and care.

### **6.1.2 Main focus**

The Art & Design Department will concentrate on securing pre-eminent pieces for display, developing the relatively weak collections of furniture with major items by leading makers/designers, and continuing the long-standing strategy of acquiring cutting-edge, contemporary examples of art, design and manufacture. It will also put a new emphasis on tapestries and other forms of wall décor, and strengthen the collection of stained glass, all of which are currently weak areas of the collection.

### **6.1.3 Means of acquisition**

Many of the department's acquisitions will be purchased at auctions, from dealers or from individuals. We will, however, also make the most of the opportunities and advantages of private treaty sales, acceptance in lieu, and works of art that have been 'export stopped'. We will also develop relations with collectors and living designers in order to inspire both contemporary and historic gifts.

### **6.1.4 Collecting targets**

#### *Pre 18<sup>th</sup> Century*

The medieval collection is of interest, but not as strong as it could be. Major objects from the period are hard to acquire and therefore we should seize opportunities when they arise. Stained glass and enamels, which have strong echoes in nineteenth- and early-twentieth century Scottish creation, should be major objects of focus for this period.

For the later period, the main *desideratum* is major fifteenth- and sixteenth- century Italian sculpture, ideally in Renaissance and Mannerist styles. Early modern furniture is a domain where the market is not yet mature, allowing major acquisitions at a reasonable price, although many pieces are of dubious authenticity. While the development of the historic textile collection should remain a priority, a stronger emphasis should be put on tapestries as a way of building on an existing collecting strength. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the major period for production of high-quality tapestries and should be our focus.

### *Eighteenth Century*

The eighteenth century is an important period for decorative arts and should remain a privileged point of development for the collection, with the focus on acquiring major Rococo and early Neo-classical examples with good provenance. We should focus on specific London and Scottish furniture makers and designers, alongside first-rate examples of French, German and Italian furniture of this period. We should also strengthen our wallpaper collection from the eighteenth century onward.

We wish to secure important examples of eighteenth-century Parisian silver which would complement our strong Parisian seventeenth and early nineteenth century silver-gilt services; and show how Paris led the field and profoundly influenced the silver made in Britain and other Continental countries during the eighteenth century. In the area of ceramic and glass we are looking to acquire examples of Sèvres and Chelsea porcelain and British enamelled glass.

### *Nineteenth Century*

As the nineteenth century collection is already strong, there are fewer collecting targets than for other periods. These include furniture by significant London makers and designers of the Regency period, and post-1850 furniture representing significant achievements in design and craftsmanship in Europe and America (e.g. the Aesthetic and Secession Movements). In terms of the Victorian era, one of the main focuses should be forms of Revivalism in which Scottish artists played a major role and which would have a strong echo across the collections.

### *Contemporary*

Our collection of contemporary ceramics, glass and jewellery is now of international significance, and we should endeavour to maintain it as such by judicious collecting, as well as an increased focus on major pieces of contemporary furniture including major pieces of European and American furniture of the 1920s, late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century jewellery and British modernist jewellery in particular. Carefully commissioned pieces will remain a way of developing our contemporary collection.

Whilst developing the modern and contemporary textile collection in general, late nineteenth century and Modernist artistic textiles should be a point of focus to allow more echoes with our very strong decorative art collection for that era. We should also aim to maintain strong links with Scottish textile and tapestry creation, in particular with Dovecot Studio, one of the major international actors in the domain of tapestry production.

We should develop our fashion collection by acquiring and accepting donated pieces by major designers as well as by building relationships with up-and-coming young designers.



Finally, we should aim to create a collection of stained glass by major artists, a domain in which the museum collection is lacking, and which are quintessential to movements such as Aesthetism or Arts and Crafts.

## **6.2 Natural Sciences**

### **6.2.1 Background and strengths of collection**

The collections cover the following:

- Minerals, meteorites and rocks
- Vertebrate, Invertebrate and Plant fossils
- Vertebrates (Mammals, Birds, Reptiles and Amphibians),
- Invertebrates (including Entomology)

The collections contain specimens of national and international significance. Among the most important is the collection of Palaeozoic vertebrates, which is unique in the world as one of the most comprehensive early records of vertebrate life on land and in water. In addition, the Hugh Miller collection of Palaeozoic invertebrates, vertebrates and plants has eminent significance in the history of palaeontology and evolutionary theory. Collections of minerals, insects, and terrestrial mammals and Scottish fauna are of international significance. The whale collection ranks among the top ten in the world. The insect and vertebrate collections are further significant as historical archives of terrestrial environmental change, highly relevant to pressing issues such as global warming.

Of special note are the Type Specimens that are the internationally recognised standard reference for a particular genus and species. As we continue to acquire new material of new species these holdings grow and our collections become much more widely used by the research community.

### **6.2.2 Main focus**

The main focus of collecting will be to extend the existing collections to reflect the frontiers of knowledge in the natural world, particularly as they relate to the impact of human societies on the natural environment. In addition efforts will be made to acquire historic collections with sufficient data of interest to further enhance the value of the present collections. Acquisitions will be driven by display and other forms of public engagement, as well as research programmes. Overall, the aim is to ensure that the Museum's natural science collections remain relevant to the public and scientists alike.

### **6.2.3 Means of acquisition**

Continued collecting and research will immeasurably enhance the historical collections providing indices of environmental change through time. Field work coupled with international peer-to-peer collaboration is the prime method of acquisition. For example, further major collaborative research programs in the Central Belt of Scotland promise to underscore our reputation as the world's foremost institution for Palaeozoic vertebrates. Research collaboration is a key driver in the development of knowledge and understanding of our own and others collections in this area, as well as providing rigour for the acquisition process.

In the past two decades there has been a major shift in emphasis towards molecular and genetic studies with an increasing requirement for such data to complement traditional morphological data for taxonomic research. Our historic collections are becoming increasingly relevant to this growing field of study, including the collections amassed through long-term ecological studies. To maintain the relevance of the collections for modern taxonomic studies we must ensure that we continue to collect a range of tissue samples, within the confines of available resources, not only the traditional invertebrates but also vertebrate soft tissues. This will broaden the range of tools we have to engage with the public on conservation and environmental issues.

There is also the potential for the acquisition of significant new specimens complementing our existing collections through the donation of private collections, including those of retired academics, major amateur collectors and other sources such as zoos.

Purchase of specimens will continue to be important in some areas, particularly minerals, meteorites, insects and fossils. Recent examples are the “Romer’s Gap” fossils and a collection of Burmese amber. With about 60 new minerals identified each year we need to maintain a representative range. These are typically acquired from private collectors and dealers.

#### **6.2.4 Collecting targets**

##### *Palaeozoic Vertebrates.*

The museum has the one of the best collections of Palaeozoic vertebrates in the world, which is important for studying the evolution of this group. Although rare, new material can be found that can lead to profound changes in our understanding of the evolution of life on earth. The momentum achieved by the collaborative “Romer’s Gap” research programme will be maintained to keep us at the forefront of high level international research in this area.

##### *Amber.*

The museum has the second largest collection of amber in the UK, which includes the largest collection of Mexican amber. The exquisitely preserved insects and other inclusions attract interest from international collaborators. The continued acquisition of potential new species is vital to maintain our reputation in a rapidly expanding global field.

##### *Invertebrates*

Insects are critical to agriculture and the health of our rural ecosystems and so are vital to our economy. The biological collections help us to engage the public with climate and environmental change and associated issues surrounding food security. For entomology, the nature of field collecting methodologies means that entire insect communities are sampled and it is practically impossible to target specific groups such as flies or beetles. Our collecting approach is therefore to concentrate on particular sites and regions in Scotland considered marginal and/ or threatened. These will include Scottish montane and riverine habitats. Saline lagoons are among the most fragile, yet almost completely unmonitored and un-sampled environments in Britain, and potentially the most potent indicators of environmental change in the UK. Working together with partners, including

Scottish Natural Heritage, saline lagoons will form a key strand of collecting for Natural Sciences in the next five years.

#### *Hybridisation*

Collecting large population-level samples is key to understanding the dynamics and progress of genetic introgression and we have key expertise in identification of hybrids using morphological criteria, which complement genetic data.

#### *Functional morphology and effects of captivity*

Major sources of specimens are zoos and wildlife parks, which has resulted in a recent expansion in research projects aimed at understanding basic anatomy of the musculo-skeletal and digestive systems, and the impacts of captivity on the skeletal morphology of vertebrates. These studies have important implications for long-term management of endangered species in captivity and attempts at reintroduction to the wild.

#### *Marine mammals and marine invertebrates*

Current efforts in assembling collections of marine mammals and marine invertebrates, (including deep sea) continue to be very important since this is an ecosystem of critical environmental concern. Few institutions are systematically collecting these organisms and our work in this area enhances the significance of our collections.

As top predators in the marine environment, marine mammals offer important opportunities for looking at the health of the marine environment. We will continue working with the Scottish marine Animals Stranding Scheme to realise the full potential of this collection.

#### *Earth Systems*

Shifts in emphasis in the Geosciences parallel those in the biological sciences, with the stress now being on Earth Systems science - Earth and all its processes - not just its geological composition in the form of rocks and minerals. Understanding the interaction between organisms and minerals and how mineral chemistry can be altered by organisms is a major area of collecting and research. The environmental conditions governing the diversity and formation of new minerals is also a developing area of further collecting and study.

One historically important location for Scottish minerals is the Wanlockhead/ Leadhills area in Dumfries and Galloway. Mined in the past for silver, lead and gold, the diversity of minerals from the area is world-renowned and they form a key part of our collections. Today new minerals continue to be found in this region and they should continue to be collected and used to form the basis of important experimental work on mineral biogenesis.

Other collecting will focus on uniquely Scottish material and minerals containing Rare Earth Elements (REEs). These are exceptionally important in digital and green technologies yet the minerals that contain them in high concentrations tend to be fairly unusual and form in unusual environments. A number of research programs around the world are directed towards understanding the natural processes which lead to the concentration of REEs. Collecting these minerals will equip us to engage with the public and scientists in the geology of modern technologies.

### **6.3 Science & Technology**

### **6.3.1 Background and strengths of collection**

The Science & Technology collections held by National Museums Scotland are amongst the most important in Europe. They are broad-based, ranging from scientific instruments made in the eleventh century to cutting-edge developments in renewable energy technologies. Some items are tiny, such as micro-electronic computing components; some are huge, including 73 aircraft.

This material has been amassed since the establishment of the Industrial Museum of Scotland in 1854, with a continuity of purpose of collecting international developments in technology and industry to demonstrate to students, artisans, craftsmen and the wider public how things are made and how they work. Over time early acquisitions have assumed growing historical significance as examples of past technologies. From the mid-twentieth century, the Museum also began actively to acquire historic scientific instruments.

In response to rapid deindustrialisation in the last quarter of the twentieth century, the tempo of collecting increased, especially in relation to tools and apparatus from factories, mills and mines that were being closed down. The social significance of this activity underlined new approaches to our collecting. We are now not only interested in scientific concepts and technical details, but also the historical and cultural significance of science and technology, and their impact on people and the environment. In short, we are concerned with the ways in which science and technology have affected all our lives, and how they continue to do so.

The collections encompass a wide range of topics from energy sources and generation, manufacturing, science, engineering and transport, to communication and information technologies. For example, we hold material from the development of steam power from the time of James Watt, through to nuclear power at Dounreay, to the latest developments in renewable energy. The collections include some remarkable survivors: a beam engine built to a design by Matthew Boulton and James Watt in 1786, which is one of the oldest surviving steam engines in the world; one of the two oldest surviving steam locomotives, the *Wylam Dilly* built in 1813; and the medals awarded to Sir James Black for his discovery of beta-blocker and stomach ulcer drugs. Our transport collections are especially strong in Scottish material, and we have one of the best civil-military aviation collections in the UK as well as iconic objects such as the first pneumatic tyre, gifted by the inventor JB Dunlop. This strategy advocates continuing to address areas where our holdings are not so strong, especially biomedicine and very recent material.

### **6.3.2 Main focus**

We will respond to opportunities to enhance the strengths of our historic collections, seek out twentieth-century material as it comes out of service, and pro-actively collect twenty-first century science, technology and medicine. As these fields become increasingly delocalized we will collect internationally, but with particular attention to Scotland's connections to the world. We focus on building up our strengths in energy, physics and biomedicine. Acquisitions will be driven by display and other forms of public engagement, as well as research programmes.

### **6.3.3 Means of acquisition**

We will continue to acquire through purchase and donation. For the latter, contact with universities and industry is key. We have cultivated and will continue to extend our network of relationships, especially academic and industrial. A long-term view is essential as, for example, in the collection of relics of the nuclear industry, where current contact may lead to further donation in the future. In science and technology the physical size of the acquisition is a key consideration, and the importance of the object needs to be balanced against the resources needed for its preservation.

Wherever possible we will acquire material as part of focussed and funded projects that combine collection development with public engagement and research. We will collect not only material culture but also the stories that elucidate these often incomprehensible artefacts; and aim to represent the diversity – gender, age, geography – of practitioners and users.

#### **6.3.4 Collecting targets**

##### *Technologies of energy generation and consumption*

We will continue to build on our world-class collections and expertise in these areas, working with industry and universities to collect innovative technology and industrial material as its working life concludes. Scale is a particular challenge for energy generation, so we will seek opportunities to acquire representations of large-scale technology: tips, slices, sections and models. We will pay particular attention to renewable energy generation: wind, wave, solar and hydro power. Collecting will also represent the user experience of domestic consumption of energy.

This collecting target will closely align with the acquisition of material from transforming industries, especially nuclear energy-related material. We will continue our practice of liaising closely with industrial partners and other cognate heritage organisations to respond effectively and to undertake fieldwork to key sites as they are decommissioned.

##### *Physical sciences*

Historically, physical sciences are a strength of our collections; furthermore, our interest in materials spans industry, pure and applied science. We will exploit opportunities to build on our strengths in chemistry, computing and physics. From the Higgs Boson to gravitational waves, there have been stunning advances in recent years, and we will use our networks with universities and other research centres to collect, research and interpret equipment related to contemporary advances in quantum, astro- and particle physics in particular. Massive international gravitational wave experiments rely on precision instrumentation designed and manufactured in international collaboration, and we will seek to represent this in our collections. Acquisitions will include laboratory instruments as well as manifestations of scientific developments in everyday life. Our collecting activity will also encompass relevant equipment as it is removed from regular use.

### *Biomedicine*

We will continue the expansion of 21st-century biomedical collecting that occurred during the development of the Science & Technology galleries and build on our enhanced expertise in this area. Collecting foci will include pharmaceutical research and development, prosthetics/implants, and the patient experience. Major exhibitions will provide opportunities to expand our collections in concert with universities, clinicians and patients.

### *Transport*

The redevelopment of the National Museum of Flight will drive much of our collecting in the field of aviation. To populate the redevelopment we will collect not only the technology of transport but also its social, cultural, and design history. This may also include the acquisition of additional aircraft, although space constraints will be a strong factor for consideration.

We will also collect to enhance our strengths in other areas, including the culture of rail travel, and the technology of road transport. In terms of the latter we will continue to collect iconic and landmark cars and bicycles, expand our motorsport collection, and acquire vehicles that evidence significant advances in renewable design. All transport collecting will be undertaken with careful attention to the passenger experience, and aesthetic design. Where an entire vehicle is not feasible, we will explore elements and models.

### *Communications*

In common with other collecting areas, new material for our communication collections will focus on users and their stories. In particular we will enhance our historic and contemporary strengths in networks and networking, from cable telegraphy to the 'Internet of things' (that is, material evidence of the links between the World Wide Web and everyday objects such as washing machines). One area of particular strength that we will continue actively to enhance is mobile telephony – not only iconic models but handsets with particular stories. Telephones elicit powerful responses from our users and we will continue to deploy new acquisitions in STEM engagement.

As part of our wider research programme exploring the challenges and opportunities of contemporary collecting we will undertake an exploratory assessment of collecting intangible and born digital entities, for example software developed with and for mobile phones.

## **6.4 Scottish History and Archaeology**

### **6.4.1 Background and Strengths of Collection**

The Scottish History and Archaeology collections are the bedrock of the material evidence for our nation's past and comprise the largest and most important collection of objects, many of which are unique survivals, from the prehistory and history of Scotland.

The archaeology collection covers Scottish material culture from the earliest times, as well as containing collections of international significance from Europe north of the Alps. It is one of the most important national collections of archaeological material in the world. Over half of the known specimens for many artefact types from Scotland are held by National Museums Scotland, making the collection invaluable for research and an

understanding of our past. The origins of these remarkable collections lie in the work of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, founded in 1780 and which actively encouraged and facilitated the formation of a national collection.

The Early Prehistory collections span at least 200,000 years, ranging from the Palaeolithic to the end of the Bronze Age. Most of the objects are from Scotland and date from between the twelfth and the early first millennia BC. Late Prehistoric and Early Medieval collections cover the period from c.800 BC to AD 1100, which encompasses the formative centuries of Scotland as a nation. Our collections also include a fine and much-studied collection of ancient human remains. One of the great strengths of the archaeology collections is the large quantities of everyday material from settlements, which provides a long-term detailed picture of changing lives and regional differences across Scotland over millennia.

The Scottish history collections, dating from the medieval period to the contemporary, are unrivalled. They include national treasures and reflect changes in Scottish society. For the late modern period, we have strengths in cultural, political, social and domestic history, including bagpiping and Scottish decorative arts. The military and rural life collections are extensive, reflecting the strength of the foundational collections of the National War Museum and National Museum of Rural Life. A key priority is to continue extending the twentieth-century collection and to focus on contemporary collecting.

#### **6.4.2 Main priorities and drivers in the next five years**

Our principal collecting focus in the next five years is to extend our archaeological and historic collections with a view to excellence, quality and their representative nature. A particular focus will be on enhancing our contemporary collections for the future redisplay of the Scotland galleries in the National Museum of Scotland. We particularly seek objects that will change our understanding of the past or that disrupt or nuance established narratives. We wish to continue to build on our existing collecting strengths and give greater prominence to enhancing our political, cultural and social collections to chime with contemporary concerns.

#### **6.4.3 Means of acquisition**

Our means of collecting depends on the nature of the acquisition. For archaeological and early historical collections, acquisitions (except those of human remains) are subject to Scots *bona vacantia* law (and the Treasure Trove process), irrespective of whether they arise from our own fieldwork activities or from university or commercial fieldwork, or are chance finds. Fieldwork conducted by National Museums Scotland and finds from the Treasure Trove process are our principal means of acquisition. We will seek to maintain our reputation as a centre of excellence in archaeology and continue to build the national collections where the finds are of national and international significance. Non-Scottish archaeological material may be acquired through gift or purchase. Human remains are not subject to ownership but may be transferred to National Museum Scotland's keeping from excavations, from finders, or from other museum collections.

We also seek to cultivate our relationships with existing lenders of important objects, as well as expanding the range of organisations and individuals we work with.

Gifts and purchase are the usual method of acquisition for our Scottish history collections. As we increasingly collect to represent current issues, we will investigate

new ways of collecting involving communities, learning from institutions who have built up experience in these areas as a way of identifying methodologies that work for us.

#### **6.4.4 Collecting targets**

In preparation for the development of new Scotland galleries, a thorough audit of the nature and scope of collections in the Scottish History & Archaeology department will be undertaken during the next five years. This will lead to new collecting targets in addition to those outlined below.

##### *Archaeology*

Over the next five years, collecting in this area will be driven largely by the demands of the redisplay of the Scotland galleries. We will seek items of national significance not adequately represented in the collections. Our other collecting principles are: items that shed new light on our existing collections, such as well-contexted and well-dated assemblages of prehistoric pottery, well-excavated examples of later prehistoric ritual sites, and material from sites where we already hold collections to maintain the integrity of assemblage; items that change our perception of prehistory and rare organic items from prehistory. We seek also to maintain and enhance the representative nature of our collections, and our ability to deliver an authoritative narrative of Scotland's past through its material culture.

##### *Medieval and Early Modern Collecting*

We will consider proactive and strategic ways in which we can pursue key objects, some of which we may acquire through the Treasure Trove process but most of which will be owned privately. A number of key objects currently on display are long-term loans, and in light of the proposed redevelopment of the Scotland galleries, a key aim will be to find ways of translating these to the permanent collection.

We will continue to monitor the market to identify objects which will augment our existing collections, such as, for example, objects related to the Scottish Wars of Independence, Mary Queen of Scots or which will enhance our Jacobite collection. We will continue to add to and develop the numismatic collections, which are a significant asset.

##### *Modern History Collecting*

Collecting in the Late Modern (post- c.1750) period will be shaped in particular by our special exhibition programme and by the implementation of our strategy for contemporary collecting. Overall, with a view to future renewal of the Scotland galleries, we will place increased emphasis on objects reflecting public life and politics in Scotland throughout the period. We will seek to build our collections relating to the Scottish highlands and Gaelic society and will continue to pursue international acquisitions to strengthen our representation of the history of the Scottish diaspora and the wider international dimensions of Scottish history, including material relevant to the connections between the Atlantic slave trade and the Scottish economy and society.

We will continue to collect Scottish decorative arts in collaboration with the Department of Art & Design and seek to identify clearer boundaries of respective collecting and research responsibilities. What distinguishes our collecting emphasis is a focus not only on the quality or history of the object in an artistic sense, but more importantly, how it relates to wider historical developments, historic figures or events that contribute to our understanding of the Scottish past.



We will continue to seek high-impact acquisitions symbolic of Scottish influence and military culture across and beyond the British Empire, and look to strengthen our holdings relevant to de-colonisation in the late twentieth century. We will prioritise acquisitions relating to our current significant AHRC-funded research project concerned with collecting by military personnel in Africa and India 1750-1900.

Working closely with the Departments of Science & Technology and Natural Sciences, emphasis will also be placed on strengthening collections representing post-1950 developments in rural life, including changes in the nature of the rural economy, land use and social change. Together we will reflect changes to rural life wrought by technological change in agriculture, with selective acquisitions relevant to issues in recent and contemporary history such as genetic engineering in crops and livestock, artificial insemination, food security, the impact of environmental policy and the appearance of entirely new elements of the rural landscape such as wind power. Our collecting will be informed by a detailed review of our existing rural life collections.

#### *Contemporary Collecting*

We will pro-actively deliver a programme of contemporary collecting, reflecting developments in contemporary Scotland via selective acquisitions including major political, social and cultural change under the themes: *Contemporary Scottish history*; *Identity: the national and international dimensions*; and *The material culture of Scotland: everyday life and memory*. Contemporary collecting will also reflect strategic military issues affecting the defence industry, military installations and the armed forces in Scotland, which will support and extend our existing military collections.

## **6.5 World Cultures**

### **6.5.1 Background and strengths of the collection**

The extensive World Cultures collection incorporates archaeological and ethnographic material and the decorative and fine arts from many cultures beyond Europe, from the past to the present. The recognised strengths of the World Cultures collections are the historic collections that derive from the University of Edinburgh and the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland brought back through first contact with indigenous people through the activities of the Scots diaspora as well as the early collecting endeavours of the Industrial Museum of Scotland.

The internationally recognised early ethnographical collections, covering principally Oceania, Africa and North America are connected to early voyages of exploration and trade as well as Government and Scottish missionary activity. They can be traced to key figures such as Captain James Cook (1728–1779), Sir William Parry (1790–1855), Sir Thomas Brisbane (1771–1860), Frederick Beechey (1796–1856), Dr David Livingstone (1813–1873) and Dr John Rae (1813–1893), amongst others.

From the mid nineteenth century the Industrial Museum and then the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art set about collecting the decorative and industrial arts from China, Japan, Iran and India. These collections rank as nationally and internationally significant. Within the Chinese collection the lacquer is exceptionally fine. Within the Japanese collection, the prehistoric Japanese ceramics and Ainu material acquired from Dr Neil Gordon Munro (1863-1942) which includes domestic and ritual items is internationally significant. In the arena of the Middle East especially noteworthy are the

Iranian and the Turkish collections, the strengths of the Iranian collections being attributable largely to the influence of Sir Robert Murdoch Smith (1835-1900) who contributed significantly during his tenure as Director (1885-1900), to the development of these collections.

The Ancient Mediterranean collection as it exists today was largely formed by the amalgamation of the three institutional collections, the University, the Royal Scottish Museum and National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland. Largely acquired in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a significant proportion is from archaeological excavations.

The Ancient Egyptian collection (around 6,000 items) is internationally important and comprehensive with substantial sculpture, burial groups, and important inscribed material. It represents all major periods in Egyptian history. There is strikingly high incidence of provenanced material due to their direct association with pioneers in archaeology, most notably Alexander Henry Rhind (1833–63) and Sir William Matthew Flinders Petrie FRS (1853–1942). Much of the collection is of outstanding artistic merit due to the eye and scholarship of Cyril Aldred who shaped the collection during his long tenure as expert Egyptologist from 1937-1974.

The Near Eastern Collection comprises about 3,000 items, with the most recognized object being the massive Assyrian limestone relief of Ashurnasirpal II, which was donated to the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland in 1865 by Sir James Young Simpson (1811-1870). The Classical collection comprises around 3,000 Greek, Etruscan and Roman items, including about 300 ancient Greek and Italian ceramic vases and more than 400 fine examples of ancient glass, one acquired from the Earl of Northesk's in 1879, another from Eugène Piot (1812-1890) the scholar and antiquarian. The Classical collection of vases was originally purchased for comparative purposes in relation to industrial art from dealers or from sales of private collections.

### **6.5.2 Main focus**

The Department of World Cultures is distinguished in having significant historical collections of non-European world art, and ancient Mediterranean archaeology. In the future the intention is to remain focussed on selectively acquiring significant works, developing new areas to compensate for existing weaknesses, or to represent new and emerging artistic fields not covered by other institutions and continuing to purchase from living artists developing work through partnership. Contemporary collecting constitutes a means through which we can challenge perceived understandings and broaden the views of our visitors. Acquisitions will be responsive to the needs of new displays and other forms of public engagement, but they will also arise out of our research programmes.

### **6.5.3 Means of acquisition**

The Department benefits from the normal range of acquisitions such as gift and purchase. However, in the development of the 2011 World Cultures galleries, good use was made of commissions from living artists to add the contemporary to the collections. This is an approach which will be continued as appropriate.

The increased profile of the collections over the last decade has resulted in new donations and other acquisition opportunities. Strategic purchases at sales is an ongoing

strategy to increase the collections' depth and quality, as is the cultivation of donors and other sources of exceptional material. Over the medium term fieldwork and in-country research allows us to make cost effective purchases and to identify contemporary and emerging artists. It will be important to continue to combine field collection with commissions and acquisitions. This will enhance the reach of the collection and secure its standing in relation to other international collections.

#### **6.5.4 Collecting targets**

##### *Ancient Mediterranean*

For the Ancient Mediterranean collections, active collecting requires significant expertise to comply with differing antiquities legislation, however collections development and research activity can enhance the reputation and international prominence of this important collection thus leading to gifts and donations.

##### *Oceania*

In their breadth the Oceanic collections reflect continuing traditions as well as social, cultural and artistic change. With a focus on interdisciplinarity and collaboration, collections development will emphasize cross-cultural aesthetics, to highlight the multiple ways in which form, conceptual ideas and context inform each other and evolve over time. Collecting through purchases will focus on the contemporary, particularly on the Western Pacific. Specific aims will include: (a) the acquisition of contemporary painted or hand-printed barkcloth and feather art from the Hawaiian Islands to complement our important early materials from this region and (b) works by Pacific Islander artists who are part of the diaspora in New Zealand and take a special interest in exploring cross-cultural encounters and historical collections. In terms of the Melanesian and Australian collections, areas of special interest with regard to further development are the historical collection from Vanuatu and the Arnhem Land collection of bark paintings.

##### *Americas*

The historic collections relating to North America have recognised strengths deriving from their association with individuals who collected through the activities of exploration and trade. Especially noteworthy are the exceptional collections made by the Hudson's Bay Company factors in Canada in the 1850s. The cultural areas that have particularly fine historic artefacts include the Arctic, the Sub-arctic, the Northern Plains and the Great Lakes.

Avenues to explore in the future include contemporary Inuit, Yup'ik and Inupiat art, as these are not currently well represented compared to the historic strength of the arctic collection. Equally, contemporary works for the weaker areas may raise the calibre of the collections, for instance basketry from California or the Southwest, good Navajo or Pueblo textiles, and contemporary quillwork or beadwork from the Plains. Inroads have been made in regard to Kiowa clothing and Southwestern jewellery, primarily through cultivating networks for purchase and donation. Little emphasis has historically been put on the South American collections which remain primarily archaeological, this should be addressed through research in the first instance.

### *Africa*

The African collections developed from Scottish missionary and colonial collecting in the late 19th and early 20th century. We are interested in connections between these historic collections and contemporary cultural creativity, developing partnerships which engage with past and present.

Across the African continent textiles are a highly visible means of cultural expression as fashion, art works and performance. We will continue to build our textile collection, reflecting the variety available, to include works by contemporary makers who use their textile traditions in innovative ways.

The east African collections will be a particular focus for development. Of special interest are works by contemporary makers and artists who are reinterpreting traditional materials and practices, using them to interrogate their own history and identity. Potential for acquisition are works which include wood carving, beadwork and metalwork, strengths of the Museum's historic collections, which were originally collected as evidence of cultural difference.

### *Middle East*

Although the collecting focus with regard to the Middle East has changed over the past 160 years, the idea of artefacts as material evidence of technical and artistic innovation has remained a constant. Given the vibrant creative scene of the Middle Eastern countries today, this aspect is therefore still a valid criterion to guide future collecting of 20th and 21st century arts and crafts. We are looking for individual artworks or groups of objects which in addition, reveal intellectual concepts and help understand the dynamics of social processes in these cultures.

Three categories of material – metalwork, ceramics/glass and textiles –will be given special attention across the Middle Eastern collections. The main focus, however, will be on Iran. During the 20th century, metalwork has gained greater importance in Iranian craft and we are building a silverware collection which would be unique to National Museums Scotland. We want to build on the contemporary Iranian dress and textile collection following contemporary acquisition in 2015. Pursued in collaboration with art schools, this is an important field of collecting with potential for cross-cultural cooperation and exchange.

### *South and Southeast Asia*

The South and Southeast Asian collection mainly reflects the interests of Scots living and working in these countries since the 18th century. It is built up from personal memorabilia, and documents the arts and crafts revival of British India as well as missionary activities in Southeast Asia. Therefore, relationships to private collectors are key and we will continue to cultivate them to build the collection.

The existing collection poses the question of how 19th century academic art training influenced contemporary Indian arts and crafts. We are looking to build Indian partnerships to help identify strong representations of the most successful crafts available on the market, which might include ceramics, textiles and painting.

### *China*

Overall the international market in East Asian art and antiquities is extremely robust and highly competitive. These potentially limiting factors shape the scope for acquisition in a number of areas. A longer term aim for the section is the cultivation of collectors, dealers, and other potential individual and institutional benefactors via publication, academic activities, and exhibition. In recent years we have been fortunate in receiving an important collection of Japanese and Chinese ceramics and Chinese lacquerwork from David Hyatt King, donated through the Art Fund. We will build on this and the purchase of 20th century Chinese propaganda material by identifying key works by contemporary makers that reflect on this period in Chinese history. Another aspect of contemporary collecting will be works that showcase new developments from traditional techniques and craftsmanship.

A priority for the Chinese collection will remain good quality ceramics of all periods. Similarly, strengthening and developing the notable lacquer collection is a continuing priority. Areas absent or under-represented in the collection include pictorial art and calligraphy, e.g. paintings, woodblock prints and books, and also arts of the scholar's studio. Other materials and types of object which would enhance the collection include Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) in order of priority dress and textiles, bronze vessels, cloisonné, Buddhist and Daoist material, and late imperial decorative arts.

### *Japan*

The foremost priority for the Japanese collection is to continue building up a group of early modern paintings in order to address this historic area of weakness. Over the last five years, nineteenth-century paintings have been systematically added to the collection through liaison with dealers in Japan and Europe. Calligraphy is another significant area which is under-represented. Acquisition of earlier woodblock prints and printed books will fill out the chronologically narrow range held at present. In keeping with recent collecting patterns, contemporary studio arts will remain a focal area, alongside works representative of traditional crafts, such as bamboo, in other areas not previously collected. Regional material currently absent from the collection from areas such as the Ryūkyū Islands (Okinawa Prefecture) should be pursued in the long term.

### *Korea*

There are a number of key areas of collecting activity for the Korean collection, although the art market here is less extensive than for China and Japan. Foremost among these areas are paintings, traditional dress and textiles, and contemporary crafts. Ceramics from all periods continue to be a priority for acquisition. Other highly desirable object types include lacquer and traditional household items, including furniture, from the late Joseon (1392–1910) period up until the mid-20th century. The acquisition of art forms from North Korea, including graphic and pictorial art, ceramics, and propaganda material, is also a priority.

### *Tibet*

The primary focus of development in the Tibetan Collection will continue to be pre-modern Tibet with a collecting focus on both good quality objects associated with Tibetan Buddhism e.g. thangkas and bronzes, as well as more widely objects which reflect the nature of life in the traditional Tibetan world. We will look to address the lack of modern and diaspora Tibetan art in the collection, and strengthen the collection with material from regions within the wider Tibetan Cultural sphere e.g. Mongolia, Bhutan, Zanskar and Ladakh etc.

## **6.6 Library special collections and archival collections**

The Library Special Collections comprise the rare book collection and archival collections. Rare books are considered to be those produced before 1850 or those of significance due to their rarity, provenance or commercial value. We will continue to collect rare books and archival material relating to the subject areas described in this Strategy, and history of the Museum, informed by the priorities outlined above.

## **7. ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL POLICY**

### **7.1 General**

The Board of Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland ('the Board') will ensure that acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and transparently.

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 Board 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.

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

### **7.2 Acquisitions**

7.2.1 The National Heritage (Scotland) 1985 Act, Section 8, Clauses (1) and (2) sets out the legal powers of the Board to make or receive acquisitions.

- (1) The Board may acquire (whether by purchase, exchange or gift) any objects which in their opinion it is desirable to add to their collections.
- (2) Without prejudice to any power apart from this subsection, a Minister of the Crown may transfer to the Board any object (whether or not he acquired it before the Board's establishment) if in his opinion it would appropriately form part of their collections.

7.2.2 The Museums and Galleries Act 1992 (as amended) enables the Board to acquire objects by transfer from a number of national organisations (Appendix 1).

7.2.3 The Board has delegated authority for acquisitions over 10% of the acquisitions fund to The Trustees Acquisitions Committee, which comprises three members of the Board, the Director and staff of the Museum.

- (a) The Trustees Acquisition Committee is authorised to acquire objects where the purchase price and associated costs is equal to or exceeds 10% of the annual Purchase Grant.
- (b) The Director is authorised to acquire objects where the purchase price and associated costs is less than 10% of the annual Purchase Grants.
- (c) The Director of Collections is authorised to acquire objects where the purchase price and associated costs is equal to or less than £5000.

- (d) Donations and gifts require approval from the Keeper of the respective curatorial department.
- 7.2.4 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. Specific reference is made to the organisations at Appendix 2.
- 7.2.5 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 collections arrangements.
- 7.2.6 Objects acquired for the collection will be formally accessioned and catalogued on the Museum's collections information system and the online 'Search our Collections' as soon as possible thereafter.
- 7.2.7 Where intellectual property rights subsist in an object and belong to the acquisition source, they will be expected to assign any intellectual property in the object to the Museum or to provide a licence to the Museum that enables the reproduction of the object for Museum purposes.
- 7.2.8 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 Board or responsible officer is satisfied that the Museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- 7.2.9 Gifts to the Museum are not accepted subject to conditions which are considered unreasonable or unduly onerous, such as restrictions on the loan or display of an object.
- 7.2.10 As the Museum holds and intends to acquire archives, including photographs, digital images and printed ephemera, it will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (2002).
- 7.2.11 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, including the United Kingdom.
- 7.2.12 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, the Museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The Board will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

### **7.3 Human Remains**

As the Museum holds human remains it will follow the guidelines in the 'Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museums' issued by Museums Galleries Scotland in 2011. The Museum recognises that human remains are worthy of special consideration in regard to acquisition, curation and disposal (transfer), as documented in the Museum's Policy on Human Remains.

### **7.4 Biological and Geological Material**

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 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.

### **7.5 Archaeological Material**

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

### **7.6 Exceptions**

Acquisitions outside the current Collections Development Strategy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.

Any exceptions to the above will only be because the Museum is:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin;
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin.

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

### **7.7 Spoliation**

The Museum will use the 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Holocaust and World War II period: Statement of Principles and Proposed Actions', issued by the National Museums Directors' Council in 1998, and report on them in accordance with the guidelines.



## 7.8 Disposals

- 7.8.1 The National Heritage (Scotland) 1985 Act, Section 8, Clauses 3, 5 and 6 sets out the legal powers of the Board of Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland to make disposals.

The Board may not dispose of an object the property in which is vested in them and which is comprised in their collections unless -

### Clause (3)

- (a) the disposal is by way of sale, exchange or gift of an object which is a duplicate of another object the property in which is so vested and which is so comprised or
- (b) the disposal is by way of sale, exchange or gift of an object which in the Board's opinion is unsuitable for retention in their collections and can be disposed of without detriment to the interests of students or other members of the public, or
- (c) the disposal is by way of sale or gift made to, or exchange with, any institution mentioned in such section (4), or
- (d) the disposal is made with the approval of the Secretary of State, to an institution other than one of those mentioned in subsection (4), or
- (e) the disposal (by whatever means, including destruction) is of an object which the Board are satisfied has become useless for the purposes of their collections by reason of damage, physical deterioration, or infestation by destructive organisms.

### Clause (5)

An object may be disposed of as mentioned in subsection (3)(e) Notwithstanding a trust or condition (express or implied) prohibiting or restricting the disposal of the object.

- 7.8.2 The National Heritage (Scotland) 1985 Act, Section 8, Clause 3(4) and the Museums and Galleries Act, 1992, (as amended), enables the Board to transfer objects to named organisations and to receive objects from a number of the same (Appendix 1).

- 7.8.3 The Board has delegated authority for some disposals to the Director of the Museum and the Director of Collections:
- (a) The Board will consider the disposal of all objects with a value exceeding £50,000, or which are considered to be particularly sensitive, e.g. Human Remains.
  - (b) The Director of the Museum is authorised to dispose of objects with a value up to £50,000.
  - (c) The Director of Collections is authorised to dispose of objects with a value up to £5,000.

- 7.8.4 The Museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

- 7.8.5 The Board will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.
- 7.8.6 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 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.
- 7.8.7 The disposal 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.
- 7.8.8 If disposal of human remains is undertaken, the Museum will follow the guidelines in the 'Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scotland', Museums Galleries Scotland, 2011.
- 7.8.9 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedure on disposal. 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.
- 7.8.10 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.
- 7.8.11 When disposal is motivated by curatorial or collections management reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, exchange or in certain cases, within the Board's legal powers of disposal – destruction.
- 7.8.12 The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken 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.
- 7.8.13 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object will be the responsibility of the Director of the Museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial and collections management staff and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.
- 7.8.14 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.
- 7.8.15 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museum to which it was offered as a gift or sale, the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through a notice on the Museums Associations' 'Find an Object' web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites, as appropriate.
- 7.8.16 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.
- 7.8.17 Any monies received by the Board 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 monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from Arts Council England and Museums Galleries Scotland.
- 7.8.18 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. In line with the requirements of the National Heritage (Scotland) Act, 1985, money will be used for the purchase of new acquisitions.
- 7.8.19 The Nature of disposal by exchange means that the Museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The Board will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.
- 7.8.20 In cases where the Board wishes for sound curatorial and collections management reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or non-Accredited museums, with other organisations or individuals, the procedures in 7.8.3-7.8.12 will apply.
- 7.8.21 If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.
- 7.8.22 If the exchange is proposed with a non-Accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the Museum will place a notice on the Museum's Association 'Find an Object' web listing service, or make an

announcement in the Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites, as appropriate.

- 7.8.23 Both the notification and announcement will provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in the Museum's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the Museum will consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.
- 7.8.24 Under the Accreditation Standard 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. If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the Museum may decide to destroy it, subject to the Board's legal powers of disposal.
- 7.8.25 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 the Museum's Research Policy and supporting plans and procedures.
- 7.8.26 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.
- 7.8.27 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of Museum staff. 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.

## **8. STRATEGY REVIEW PROCEDURE**

The Collections Development Strategy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the Strategy is next due for review is noted on the cover page.

Arts Council England (as the body responsible for national museums' accreditation) and Museums Galleries Scotland will be notified of any changes to the Collections Development Strategy and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

I

**INSTITUTIONS NAMED IN THE MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES ACT 1992,  
AS AMENDED, SCHEDULE 5**

Part 1: Transferors and Transferees

The Board of Trustees of the Armouries  
The British Library Board  
The Trustees of the British Museum  
The Trustees of the Imperial War Museum  
The Board of Governors of the Museum of London  
The Board of Trustees of the National Gallery  
The Board of Trustees of the National Galleries of Scotland  
The Board of Trustees of the National Library of Scotland  
The Trustees of the National Maritime Museum  
The Board of Trustees of the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside  
The Board of Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland  
The Board of Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery  
The Trustees of the Natural History Museum  
The Board of Trustees of the Science Museum  
The Board of Trustees of the Tate Gallery  
The Board of Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum  
The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England

Part 2: Transferees only

The Court of Governors of the National Library of Wales  
The Council of the National Museum of Wales  
The Board of Trustees of The National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland  
Historic Royal Palaces  
The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty

## Appendix 2

National Museums Scotland will take account of the collecting policies of other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. Specific reference is made to the following:

### **Major UK national and regional museums**

National Museums Scotland maintains contact with the following major UK national or large regional museums where there is significant potential for overlap in collecting.

British Museum  
Imperial War Museum  
Glasgow Museums  
Historic Environment Scotland  
The Hunterian, University of Glasgow  
Natural History Museum  
National Army Museum  
Science Museum Group  
Royal Air Force Museum  
Victoria and Albert Museum

### **Other UK museums**

The following is a list of institutions with whom we have a potential overlap in collecting, in addition to those institutions listed above.

Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums  
Aberdeen University Historic Collections  
Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology  
Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology  
Dundee City Council Leisure and Arts  
Dundee Heritage Trust  
Edinburgh City Museums  
Fashion Museum, Bath  
Fitzwilliam Museum  
Grampian Transport Museum  
Highland Folk Museum  
Manchester Art Gallery  
Manchester Museum, University of Manchester  
Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art  
Museum of London  
Museum of the History of Science, Oxford  
Museum of Scottish Industrial Life (Summerlee)  
Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh  
National Archives of Scotland  
National Galleries of Scotland  
National Library of Scotland  
National Mining Museum Scotland  
National Museum of the Royal Navy  
National Museums Liverpool

National Museums Northern Ireland  
National Museums and Galleries of Wales  
National Trust for Scotland  
Oxford University Museum of Natural History  
Paisley Museum and Art Gallery  
Perth Museum and Art Gallery  
Petrie Museum  
Pitt Rivers Museum  
Royal Armouries  
Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh  
Scottish Fisheries Museum  
Scottish Maritime Museum  
Scottish Railway Preservation Society  
Scottish regimental museums  
University Museum of Zoology Cambridge  
University of Dundee Museum Services  
University of St Andrew's Museum Collections  
University of Edinburgh Centre for Research Collections  
Whipple Museum of the History of Science, Cambridge

**Local collections**

Where local provenance of any item should be taken into consideration, NMS is already proactive in liaising with the relevant local museum within Scotland's 32 local authority areas and maintains an up to date list of contacts with relevant staff.