

Date: 29 May 2007

Report: DALES COUNTRYSIDE MUSEUM – ACQUISITION & DISPOSAL POLICY

Purpose of the report

1. To seek approval for the Dales Countryside Museum (DCM) Acquisition and Disposal Policy.

Strategic Planning Framework

2. The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework:

- **National Park Management Plan objectives**

Community and Culture CC7

- **Best Value Performance Plan objectives**

Promoting Understanding Objective 2

Background

3. The DCM Acquisition and Disposal Policy has been reviewed in line with the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) Accreditation Process. The approved policy will be incorporated within the DCM accreditation application to be submitted to MLA in July 2007.
4. MLA provide an outline policy which takes into account the relevant parts of the Museums Association Code of Ethics (2002). This has been followed and ensures that items are acquired honestly and responsibly, that the long term interest in the collections is safeguarded and that the interests of people who made, used, owned, collected or gave items is recognised.
5. The Acquisition and Disposal Policy is provided as an **Appendix**.
6. The Museum Accreditation Scheme for museums and galleries in the UK has been endorsed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the local government associations and the Heritage Lottery Fund. The scheme has three aims:
 - To encourage all museums and galleries to achieve minimum standards in museum management, user services, visitor facilities and collection management

- To foster confidence in museums as bodies which (a) hold collections in trust for society and (b) manage public resources appropriately
- To reinforce a shared ethical basis for all bodies which meet the definition of a 'museum'.

7. The achievement of accredited status provides general eligibility for grant-aid and awards offered by a range of organisations including the National Heritage Memorial Fund which administers the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Conclusion

8. The revised Acquisition and Disposal Policy will ensure compliance with the MLA Accreditation process. This will be reviewed within five years.

RECOMMENDATION

9. That Members approve the Dales Countryside Museum Acquisition and Disposal Policy.

Fiona Rosher
Museum Manager

1 May 2007

Acquisition and Disposal Policy

Museum: Dales Countryside Museum

Governing Body: Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

Date approved by governing body: May 2007

Date at which policy due for review: May 2012

1. Vision:

“Dales heritage, there to inspire all, now and in the future”.

2. Statement of Purpose:

The Dales Countryside Museum collects, preserves and interprets the heritage of the Dales in ways that inspire interest in, enable understanding of and enhance enjoyment of the Yorkshire Dales National Park by everyone.

3. Key Aims:

- Create a welcoming site for first time visitors to the National Park and continue to develop the service and facilities to meet visitor expectations.
- Make information about the Yorkshire Dales National Park easily accessible and relevant to a diverse range of groups and individuals, focusing on the urban areas that surround it.
- Contribute to the promotion of National Park messages.
- Offer formal and informal education opportunities that increase awareness of the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and help foster an interest in conserving them.
- Offer a programme of events that inspires an interest in the heritage of the Yorkshire Dales National Park.
- Develop creative partnerships to achieve identified objectives.
- Maintain and further develop the support and interest of the local community.
- Provide opportunities for young people to learn about and be inspired by the heritage of the Dales.

4. Existing collections, including the subjects or themes for collecting

- a. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority collection is a resource for promoting understanding about the cultural heritage, wildlife and landscape of the Yorkshire Dales. It is housed at the Dales Countryside Museum and falls into the following broad subject areas:
- Social History
 - Archaeology and Numismatics
 - Arts – Ceramics, Costume, Textiles, Folk Art and Dialect poetry

- b. The collection is composed predominantly of social history and industrial material from the Yorkshire Dales, with an emphasis on the Upper Dales such as Wensleydale and Swaledale. The majority of artefacts relate to the period 1800-1950. The material is well provenanced and of good quality with certain key areas. The strengths of the collection include agriculture, dairying, tinsmithing and rural crafts and medicine.
- c. In addition to social and industrial material, the museum also has a small collection of archaeological material, in particular material relating to the prehistoric period.
- d. New acquisitions will be considered in the context of how they contribute to the existing collection, how they can be made accessible and in terms of their use for inspiring learning and an interest in the heritage of the Dales. This policy outlines the current position of the collection and the way in which its future development is perceived.

5. Criteria governing future collecting policy, including the subjects or themes for collecting

- a. In future, items relating to the following themes will be considered for acquisition: rural crafts and industry including tools and products; agriculture including products, processing of products and marketing of farm produce, small tools, implements and machinery; working life; leisure time including friendly societies, clubs and unions; family life including costume and household objects; transport and communication; tourism; cultural, social and landscape change in the Dales; Marie Hartley and Joan Ingilby and their work in the Dales.

Items will be accepted on loan only if of exceptional significance and on a fixed term basis.

b. Social History

The existing collection reflects social change within the Pennine Dales and is made up of objects drawn from everyday life as well as rare and exceptional items. The intention is to build upon the pioneering work of the Museum's founders, Marie Hartley and Joan Ingilby. The collection should document and record change to enable a wide audience to relate to, appreciate and be inspired by the heritage of the Dales.

New acquisitions will help tell the story of ordinary people living, working and enjoying the Dales. They need to reflect the impact upon and changing relationship that people have had with the wildlife and landscape of the Dales over the last 10,000 years to the present day.

We will seek to reflect our communities as a whole in a way that recognises their economic and cultural diversity. This will include contemporary as well as historical material. Items must have clear local provenance, a recorded history and clear documentation of ownership.

Items we wish to acquire:

- Items relating to the creation and impact of the national park including the use and enjoyment of the area by people from communities beyond the national park boundary.
- Items relating to tourism and changes in the leisure use of the countryside such as walking, caving, adventure sports,
- Items produced at the height of the knitting industry in the Dales such as hand knitted socks, a bump cap and Dales knitting patterns.

- Items which reflect significant local events, both negative and positive – e.g. Foot and Mouth 2001 and the re-opening of the Wensleydale Railway
- Items relating to significant local trades and industries not adequately represented in the existing collection eg stonemasonry, quarrying
- Items relating to the history of the Dales Countryside Museum as a railway station
- Small agricultural items and hand tools such as a strickle pricker, salving bowl, tar pan and marker, a conical milk churn
- Items relating to traditional dance, music, games, events, shows and festivals eg a wallops set
- Examples of house decoration and lighting

c. **Archaeology and Numismatics**

The Dales Countryside Museum wishes to build upon its existing holdings in order to represent significant and regional characteristics of the archaeological record of the Pennine Dales. As a result of limited display space we will concentrate on collecting objects and assemblages that tell the story of the people of the Dales from earliest times to the present day, covering prehistoric, Roman, Anglian, Anglo-Scandinavian and Medieval periods. There is a presumption that newly acquired material will be accompanied by reliable locality data (at least a 6 figure grid reference, contextual information and all accompanying documentary and digital archive). We will acquire archaeological material through the planning process, donation and where feasible, purchase.

Sources of new acquisitions will include:

- Existing collections amassed by individual collectors.
- Excavation archives. Material found during excavation, survey or by other means.
- Individual objects which are often offered to the museum following an enquiry.
- Treasure – objects will continue to be purchased through the DCMS treasure process if they meet all other policy criteria.

Items we wish to acquire:

- A select group of archaeological finds relating to Bainbridge Roman Fort that present a broad picture of life there at the time of the Romans
- Items from the medieval period
- Items from the Anglo-Scandinavian period

d. **Natural Science**

The Dales Countryside Museum wishes to provide opportunities for people to learn about the ecology, biodiversity and relationship between people and the natural world, specifically in relation to the Yorkshire Dales. However as a result of limited staffing and space we will achieve this by means other than collecting.

e. **Geology**

The geological evolution of the Dales underpins the social history, wildlife and biodiversity of the area. It is therefore our intention to modestly collect fossils and associated contextual material from the Yorkshire Dales area. We will consider acquiring fossil material from

adjacent to the Dales if it will enrich our understanding of Dales geology. There is a presumption that newly acquired material will be accompanied by reliable locality data, contextual information and all accompanying documentation.

We will acquire geological specimens through donation and where feasible purchase. Sources of new acquisitions may include:

- Existing collections amassed by individual collectors.
- Material from the region that has been described, cited or figured in scientific literature.
- Individual objects which are often offered to the museum following an enquiry.

With few exceptions, much of the scientific value of geological specimens lies in their associated geographical and geological context. It will normally not be our policy to acquire specimens without adequate documentation, unless they have overwhelming display or historical interest.

f. **Ceramics**

This section of the acquisition policy deals with all non-archaeological ceramics. We would like to acquire a representative range of ceramics made or used within the Yorkshire Dales and that reflect social change.

g. **Costume and textiles**

The costume and textile collection is limited. It does not reflect subjects such as the historic economic diversity of the Dales, changes in technology, taste and trade. We would therefore seek to acquire items that contribute to the presentation of this subject, for example female and male dress of employees and employers in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. We recognise that such items are extremely rare and that it is unlikely that we will be able to acquire them.

Hand knitting businesses exist within the Dales today and it would be prudent to acquire examples of items produced today.

h. **Folk Art**

Items particularly reflecting the unique cultural, landscape and wildlife heritage of the dales.

i. **Dialect Poetry**

Poetry in both the written and spoken form via the donation of recordings and where feasible oral history.

6. Period of time and/or geographical area to which collecting relates

The Dales Countryside Museum represents the whole area of the Pennine Dales, but recognises the importance of considering the collecting policies of neighbouring Museums.

Artefacts relating to the geographic area described and which date from the prehistoric period to the present day will be considered for acquisition, particularly material dating from the post prehistoric

period up to and including the medieval period. The period from the 1950s to the present day is not well represented and it is intended that this gap be filled via the collection of ephemera, photographs and oral history recordings. The latter will be collected in accordance with the practical and ethical guidelines laid down by the Oral History Society. This collection however, has its own procedures and requirements and for the time being will continue to exist independently of the main museum collection.

7. Limitations on collecting

The museum recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as inadequate staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

8. Collecting policies of other museums

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 specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

Specific reference is made to the following museum(s):

- The Craven Museum, Skipton, particularly in relation to archaeology of the Craven area;
- The Richmondshire Museum, Richmond;
- The Georgian Theatre Royal Museum, Richmond;
- Swaledale Folk Museum, Reeth;
- The Yorkshire Museum, York, particularly in relation to its North Yorkshire-wide collecting policy;
- Upper Wharfedale Folk Museum, Grassington;
- Museum of North Craven Life, Settle
- Yorkshire Dales Mining Museum, Earby

9. Policy review procedure

The Acquisition and Disposal Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is noted above.

MLA Yorkshire will be notified of any changes to the Acquisition and Disposal Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

10. Acquisitions not covered by the policy

Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

11. Acquisition procedures

a. The museum will exercise 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.

b. In particular, 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).

c. 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 DCMS in 2005.

d. 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.

e. The museum will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures, such as reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure as defined by the Treasure Act 1996 (in England, Northern Ireland and Wales) or reporting finds through the Treasure Trove procedure (in Scotland).

f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 11a, 11b, 11c, or 11e will only be because the museum is either:

acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin; or

acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgement of experts in the field concerned has not been illicitly traded; or

acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin; or

in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970.

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.

12. Spoliation

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.

13. Repatriation and Restitution

The museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff, may take a decision to return human remains, objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis, within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications.

14. Management of archives

As the museum holds and intends to acquire 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).

15. Disposal procedures

- a. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and should possess (or intend to acquire) permanent collections in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body accepts the principle that, except for sound curatorial reasons, there is a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.
- b. The museum will establish that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Any decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken only after due consideration.
- c. 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.
- d. Decisions to dispose of items will not be made with the principal aim of generating funds.
- e. Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions but in exceptional cases improvements relating to the care of collections may be justifiable. Advice on these cases will be sought from MLA.
- f. 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), 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 of the collection acting alone.
- g. Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift, exchange or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- h. If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal, and in other professional journals where appropriate.
- i. The announcement 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.
- j. 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.