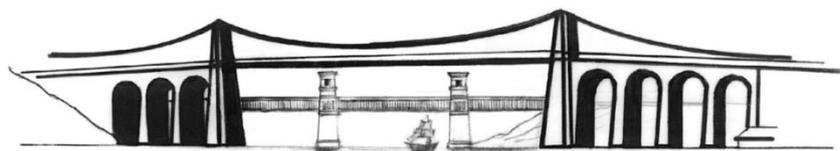


MENAI BRIDGE COMMUNITY
HERITAGE TRUST

Collections Development Policy 2013- 2018

REVISED
FEBRUARY 2017



This policy will be used at all times as guidance for all matters relating to the management of the collections at Menai Bridge Community Heritage Trust and to ensure that collections management continues to meet the Accreditation requirements of Museums, Archives and Libraries Division, Welsh Government (MALD) and the Arts Council England.

1. MUSEUM'S STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of the museum is to make provision for collection, storage, preservation, display and interpretation of objects, documents and drawings relating to:

- The Menai Suspension Bridge, designed by Thomas Telford;
- The Britannia Bridge, designed by Robert Stephenson;
- The rich marine environment and the outstanding natural beauty of the Menai Strait;
- The history of the communities that grew up around the two bridges.

The museum will facilitate public access to the collection for the purposes of education, enjoyment, research and publication.

2. AN OVERVIEW OF CURRENT COLLECTIONS

The collection of over 2,200 items embraces a range of objects ranging in date from 17th century to the present. The collection comprises of material relating to:

2.a Menai Suspension Bridge built by Thomas Telford. Includes a collection of artefacts from the original Menai Suspension Bridge and its construction and later included seven volumes of the daily records of the work carried out during the 1938/41 reconstruction. The collection also includes art work, photographs and documents.

2.b Britannia Bridge built by Robert Stephenson. Includes metal items from the original tubular bridge, the fire in 1970 and its subsequent reconstruction. There is an original portrait in oils of John Hemingway (1795 – 1872) who was responsible for the construction of the masonry for the Britannia Bridge. The collection also includes art work, photographs and documents.

2.c Natural environment of the Menai Straits. Reflects the rich marine environment, geological history and the outstanding natural beauty. Items include pictures of rare marine species.

2.d Social change brought about with the development of the road and rail transport. The collection, including John Ogilby's maps (17thC) of the Holyhead road, also relate to the impact of Telford's road from London to Holyhead, the link with Ireland and Robert Stephenson's Chester to Holyhead railway which links with the London to Chester rail link.

2.e Community Life. Documents and photographs relating to various businesses and industries of Menai Bridge including objects used in shopping, education, warfare, health, entertainment and sport. Examples include local guidebooks, photographs, memorabilia, commemorative objects and objects from the Home Front during the Second World War.

2.f Domestic and Family Life. A collection relating to family life in Menai Bridge including invoices, photographs, reminiscences, house records, porcelain and Ynys Gorad Goch 1927 boat.

2.g Personal Life. Objects belonging to or normally used by one person, rather than general domestic objects.

2.h Items for Education Use. Duplicate items are collected for educational and/or handling use. The donors of such items are made aware that they will be used in such a way. These items are marked with an 'E' suffix to the accession number. Reproductions will be collected only for educational use.

3. THEMES AND PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE COLLECTING

GENERAL CRITERIA

- The museum will continue to collect in accordance with the themes listed above.
- The museum will only collect objects for which suitable storage and exhibition facilities are available. In particular, the museum has limited storage space for large items and careful consideration must be given to the acquisition of any large object.
- Potentially hazardous items will not be collected.
- As the museum has no in-house conservation resources it will in general acquire only objects which are in good or excellent condition. In exceptional circumstances objects which are in poorer condition may be acquired provided (a) resources are available to

carry out the necessary restoration work; and (b) they are important acquisitions of a type otherwise unlikely to become available.

- Items collected should bear a clear relationship to the two bridges, the Menai Straits and the Menai Bridge area by manufacture or use. Items from outside the area may be collected in the following circumstances:
 - where there is clear evidence that objects of this type were used in the area;
 - where there is strong relevance to items already in the collection.
- The museum collects items from any time period, including contemporary items which reflect current society in Menai Bridge.
- There is particular interest in collecting anything relating to the bridges, the people involved in their history and the social history of Menai Bridge, including engineering records, paintings and lithographs of Menai Straits, and artefacts from the School of Oceanography (which include items from the sunken slate boat off Pwllfanogl).
- Supplementary information concerning the origins, provenance and former use of objects in the collection may also be acquired, including in the form of documents, photographs, oral history recordings or digital archives.
- Duplicates will not be collected unless:
 - the second item is in better condition than the first;
 - the item is fragile such as porcelain and so has some risk of breakage;
 - the item carries a particularly interesting history in its own right.
 - the item is needed for educational use (see section 2).

4. THEMES AND PRIORITIES FOR RATIONALISATION AND DISPOSAL

The museum will only dispose of objects for curatorial reasons and will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons. Disposal will be made by gift or sale and in accordance with the procedures outlined in Section 13 below. The Museums Association's Code of Ethics for Museums and Disposal Toolkit will be used to guide disposal.

Objects from the collections will be considered for disposal on a case by case basis under the following criteria:

- poor condition;
- duplicates exist;
- falls outside the Collections Development Policy;
- public benefit better served by transfer to another organisation

5. 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 staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

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

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

Anglesey Museums Service

Gwynedd Museums Service

Amgueddfa Cymru

7. 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 (page 1).

MALD: Museums Archives and Libraries Division (Welsh Government) 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.

8. 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.

9. 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 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport 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. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the procedures include 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.

- f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 9a, 9b, 9c, or 9e will only be because the museum is:
 - acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
 - 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
 - acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin
 - 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.

- g. The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

10. SPOILIATION

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.

11. THE REPATRIATION AND RESTITUTION OF OBJECTS AND HUMAN REMAINS

The museum’s governing body, acting on the advice of the museum’s professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the ‘Guidance for the care of human remains in museums’ issued by DCMS in 2005), 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 and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 13a-13d, 13g and 13o below will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

The disposal of human remains from museums in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums'.

12. MANAGEMENT OF ARCHIVES

As the museum holds / 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 (third edition, 2002).

The museum will refer to the Gwynedd Record Office for advice and for specialist advice on conservation care.

The museum will make the archive collections available for public consultation and study by appointment.

Archive material will be stored in appropriate archive-quality storage. Delicate items will not be available for public consultation except in special circumstances. Duplicates of fragile items will be made wherever resources and conservation restraints allow.

13. DISPOSAL PROCEDURES

DISPOSAL PRELIMINARIES

- a. The governing body will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.
- b. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.
- c. The museum will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.
- d. 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.

MOTIVATION FOR DISPOSAL AND METHOD OF DISPOSAL

- e. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs 13g-13o will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.
- f. The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

THE DISPOSAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

- g. Whether the disposal is motivated either by curatorial or financial reasons, the decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including the 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. External 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.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DISPOSAL DECISION-MAKING

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

USE OF PROCEEDS OF SALE

- i. 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. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the

care of collections will be sought from CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales.

- j. The proceeds of a sale will be ring-fenced so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard.

DISPOSAL BY GIFT OR SALE

- k. 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 or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- l. If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.
- m. 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.

DISPOSAL BY EXCHANGE

- n. The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

DOCUMENTING DISPOSAL

- o. 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.