



Collections Development Policy 2024-2029



**CORINIUM
MUSEUM**
DISCOVER
ARCHAEOLOGY

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**COTSWOLD MUSEUM SERVICE
CORINIUM MUSEUM, CIRENCESTER
RESOURCE CENTRE, NORTHLEACH**

Name of Governing body: COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Policy review procedure: *The Collections Development Policy will be published and reviewed at the point of national or sector guidance changes and at least once every five years.*

Date Policy is due for renewal: 2028

Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to the Collections Development Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

- 1. Statement of Purpose:** To collect, preserve, and interpret collections from the Cotswold District for public engagement.

2. AN OVERVIEW OF CURRENT COLLECTIONS

Cotswold Museum Service (CMS) cares for and enables access to archaeological, paper ephemera and social history collections mainly from the Cotswold District. These collections are of the highest heritage merit and are significant both nationally and internationally. They span four distinct groups: Archaeology, Social History, Costume, Photographs and Paper Ephemera.

Archaeological Collections

The Archaeological Collection constitutes 55% of the entire CMS Collection.

Prehistory

CMS houses material from the Palaeolithic period to the end of the Iron Age including the internationally important Neolithic Hazleton archive. This material is supported by the Bronze Age archives from Cotswold Community and Shorncote, Somerford Keynes; Blenheim Farm, Moreton-in-Marsh; Kingshill North and Poulton, Cirencester; Bourton-on-the-Water; and Lechlade. CMS also holds nationally important archives from the excavations of the Iron Age settlements at Bourton-on-the-Water; Fairford Claydon Pike and Thornhill Farm, Fairford; The Ditches; and Bagendon. These are particularly significant, not least in that they provide an immediate regional context for the Romano-British material.

Romano-British

CMS has one of the finest and most extensive Romano-British collections in the country. Large scale excavation was conducted by the Cirencester Excavation Committee during the 1960s and 1970s producing a nationally important body of material. The collection relates to both the town of Cirencester, Corinium was the second largest town in Roman Britain, and its hinterland. Of particular note are the collections of sculpture, mosaics, numismatics, domestic material, military fittings, and assemblages from the cemetery sites.



Anglo-Saxon

The collection consists of post-Roman material from within and immediately around the town. This includes the 5th and 6th century cemetery archive from Barton Farm, the 6th century material from Kemble and the nationally important cemetery archive from Butlers Field, Lechlade. This latter cemetery was excavated in 1985 and the archive includes over 200 burials, inhumations and cremations.

Medieval

The Medieval collections come predominantly from excavations conducted across Cirencester. During the 1960s the Cirencester Excavation Committee excavated the Abbey of St Mary, one of the wealthiest Augustinian houses in Britain. The medieval collections particularly the sculpture from the Abbey, reflect the status and wealth of both abbey and town.

Post Medieval

This collection reflects the fortunes of the town and the surrounding district during the 17th and 18th centuries. Although the scene of only one pitched battle, the Cotswolds was widely contested during the Civil War. The resultant political, social and economic uncertainty is reflected in the collections by two major Civil War coin hoards from Weston Sub-edge and Ampney St. Mary.

Social History Collections

The Social History Collection constitutes 30% of the entire CMS Collection.

This collection consists of a range of rural life, domestic, social and industrial material from the Cotswolds and wider Gloucestershire area. The basis of this collection is the pre-eminent Lloyd Baker Collection which includes wagons, horse drawn farm implements, hand and craft tools. The objects are predominately of Victorian and Edwardian origin.

Photographs and Paper Ephemera Collections

The Photograph and Paper Ephemera Collection constitutes 10% of the entire CMS Collection.

This collection covers country life in the Cotswolds, architecture and life in the villages and towns, as well as transport and people. The collection dates from 1880 to the present day.

The Costume Collections

The Costume Collection constitute 5% of the entire CMS Collection.

Small, but all of local Cotswold provenance and in excellent condition, the textiles reflect both urban dwelling and agricultural work, with a good collection of day clothes, smocks, wedding dresses and accessories. The collection dates from 1800 to the present day.



3. THEMES AND PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE COLLECTING

The area of authority of the policy shall be the administrative area of Cotswold District Council (as amended from 1 April 1991).

Acquisition is the process of obtaining responsibility for an item, associated due diligence, rights management and transfer of title.

In addition to items acquired for formal accession into the CMS Collection, other items may be acquired to support CMS learning activities. The **Education Collection** consists of objects specifically chosen for handling and teaching purposes. It is a mixture of accessioned objects and replica objects. It is stored separately from the CMS Collection.

Accession is a status afforded to those items that CMS deems to be of such significance that they merit permanent retention and preservation. Acquisition to all categories of the CMS Collection must demonstrate strong relevance to the Cotswolds.

The Cotswold Museum Service (CMS) will continue to develop specialised collections in the following subject areas:

- *Archaeology*
- *Historic photographs, prints drawings and illustrations of all dates depicting Cotswold scenes*
- *Social history objects of unique or intrinsic value to the collection only*
- *Costume or textiles of unique or intrinsic value to the collection only*

Archaeology

Collection of archaeological material of all periods and types provenanced from the administrative area of Cotswold District Council. Collection of archaeological material, especially of Prehistoric, Romano-British and Medieval date from the historic town of Cirencester.

The Corinium Museum at Cirencester is recognised as a major archive of archaeological material and throughout its history has concentrated upon in-depth collections from the local area. Since 1974, CMS has developed a similar policy for the Cotswold District, in association with neighbouring museums. The collections include major deposits, such as Cirencester Excavation Committee (1958- 88); Barnsley Park (1969-71); Hazleton (1979-82); Butler`s Field, Lechlade (1985); Fairford Claydon Pike (1981-4); Cotswold Community, Somerford Keynes (1999-2005); Kingshill North, Cirencester (2006 & 2008); Bourton Business Park, Bourton-on-the-Water; Bridge`s Garage (2011) and St. James`s Place, Cirencester (2015). This process continues with all archaeological units excavating within the District depositing under the terms of the guidelines for the Gloucestershire Archaeological Archive Standard (2021).

All associated archives of finds, records and documentation from archaeological excavations, research and fieldwork undertaken by voluntary, professional and commercial bodies and individuals within the Council's administrative area, including the acquisition of such finds, records and documentation transferred from other museums or archives.



Photographs, Drawings and Prints

A representative collection of historical photographs, prints, drawings and illustrations of all dates depicting Cotswold or related scenes. Art and prints of Cirencester and the surrounding area are collected by the Bingham Trust.

Social History

CMS will only collect social history objects of unique or intrinsic value to the existing collection.

CMS will only collect costume or textile objects of unique or intrinsic value to the existing collection.

The Cotswold Museum Service (CMS) does not collect

Due to limited resources and display facilities CMS will not collect rural life material.

Prison history material.

Fine art, decorative art, furniture or architectural fittings (except where it has a specific connection with the material listed under Section 2).

Natural history material, whether botanical or biological, including environmental records.

Geological and paleontological specimens.

4. THEMES AND PRIORITIES FOR RATIONALISATION AND DISPOSAL

CMS recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.

The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with the Governing Body for the collection and key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.

The disposal strategy of objects in the collections of CMS will be motivated by curatorial reasons (See 13.g to 13.o). The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

The priority for rationalisation and disposal of objects in the CMS collections is:

CMS intends to conduct a programme of review and rationalisation in relation to the Social History Collection.

The museum has undertaken a review and rationalisation of its un-accessioned paper ephemera and social history collections.



5. LEGAL AND ETHICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL OF ITEMS

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

CMS will assert title in all its collections. It will formally agree terms of copyright and reproduction rights with the copyright holders, where appropriate.

CMS will ensure sign off by the Governing Body (Cotswold District Council members) before disposing of objects in its collections.

6. LIMITATIONS ON COLLECTING

CMS 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 consider limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as inadequate staffing, storage and care of collections arrangements.

7. COLLECTING POLICIES OF OTHER MUSEUMS

CMS will research 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 museums:

- The Wilson, Cheltenham's Art Gallery & Museum
- Gloucester Museum Service
- Museum in the Park, Stroud
- Tetbury Police Museum
- Court Barn, Chipping Campden
- Swindon Museum Service
- Devizes Museum
- Oxfordshire Museum Service
- The Bingham Library Trust

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. CMS will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any work of art, 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, CMS 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 1st 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, CMS 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. CMS will not acquire any biological, paleontological or geological material.

e. CMS will not acquire archaeological material (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, Northern Ireland and Wales 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 will only be made because the CMS 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 CMS 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. As CMS holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the procedures in the "Guidance for the care of human remains in museums" issued by DCMS in 2005.

10. SPOILATION

The Museum Service will use the statement of principles 'Spoilation 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. REPATRIATION AND RESTITUTION OF OBJECTS AND HUMAN REMAINS

CMS governing body, acting on the advice of the Museum’s professional staff, 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 specimen’ to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis, within its legal position and considering 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 applicable.

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 museum”. CMS maintains a Policy for the Care of Human Remains (2017).

12. MANAGEMENT OF ARCHIVES

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

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, CMS 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. CMS will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be considered.
- d. When disposal of a museum object is being considered, CMS will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to 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 outline in paragraphs 13.g to 13.t will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange or as a last resort – destruction.
- 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 CMS 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 CMS 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 CMS acting on the advice of the curatorial staff, and not the curator of the collections acting alone.

Use of proceeds of sale

i. Where applicable, any monies received by CMS 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 in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements mitigating the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from the Arts Council England.

j. The proceeds of a sale will be ring-fenced so it can be publicly demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.

Disposal by gift or sale

k. Once a decision to dispose of an item has been taken with approval by the Governing Body, priority will be given to retaining the item within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered first, by exchange, gift or sale to Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.

l. If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museum to which it was offered directly, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of material. This will normally be through an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal and other specialist journals publications and websites (where appropriate).

m. The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of the 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, CMS may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.

Disposal by exchange

n. CMS will not dispose of items by exchange

Disposal by destruction

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

p. 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.

q. Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.

r. 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.

s. The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, e.g. the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.

Documenting disposal

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

