

Oxfordshire Museums Service

Acquisition and Disposal Policy 2006 – 2011

**Revised version
17.10.2005**

Name of Museum:	Oxfordshire Museums Service
Governing Body:	Oxfordshire County Council
Date approved by Governing Body:	
Date at which policy is due for review:	[5 years after approval date]
Author:	Jamie Everitt
Role:	Museums Resource Centre Manager
Date:	October 2005

I. Purpose and History of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to comply with the requirements of the Accreditation scheme concerning Acquisition and Disposal of collections and to encourage public confidence in the Museums Service as a suitable repository. It also defines the present state and use of the collections and reviews the current policy of acquisition and disposal. It ensures material is accepted according to a recognised strategy and serves as a reference document to guide curatorial decisions.

The Oxfordshire Museums Service is governed by Oxfordshire County Council. It works in partnership with a number of other museums in Oxfordshire, which are governed by or supported by other local authorities including Oxford City Council, other District Councils, Abingdon Town Council and the Vale and Downland Museum Trust. A specific role of the Museums Service is the care of the collections that is carried out with the financial support of the other museums and authorities through service level agreements and annual service plans. Each of the partnership museums is required to adopt this Acquisition and Disposal policy through the formal approval of its governing body.

Amendment history

The Acquisition and Disposal Policy 2000-2005 forms the basis for this policy. It was written by Martyn Brown, the then County Museums and Heritage Officer, and was approved by the Museum Service's governing body in December 2000.

As part of the application by the Museums Service for Museums, Libraries and Archives Council's (MLA) *Accreditation* status in 2005 the existing policy had to be updated in several areas to meet the Accreditation criteria. These changes were specified by MLA and were approved by Richard Munro, Head of Cultural Services, under delegated powers in August 2005. The main changes were:

- the requirement to notify the South-East Museums Libraries and Archives Council about changes to the policy (section 5.2)
- tighter controls on the diligence required against acquiring illicit material, and a commitment to the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (sections 9.2 and 9.3)
- the addition of a section concerning Spoliation (section 10)
- the addition of a section covering Repatriation and Restitution (section 11)
- the addition of a section covering Management of Archives (section 12)
- a revised Disposals policy (section 13)

The latest version of this policy has been expanded from the Acquisition and Disposal Policy 2005-2010. Changes have been made to reflect the need for a more focussed approach to collecting, to address the lack of storage space at the Museums Resource Centre, Standlake, and to encourage ways of maximising access to and use of the collections.

2. Definitions

Archaeological archive

1. The complete deposit of material from an archaeological investigation, including all the documentation (paper and electronic) as well as the finds.

Collections Management Team

2. The Collections Management Team is responsible for the acquisition and disposal of objects from the Museums Service's permanent collections.
3. The Team is composed of the Curators, the Documentation Assistant and a representative from the Conservation department, all of who are based at the Museums Resource Centre, together with the Curators from the partner museums of the Museums Service.
4. The Team may invite other members as they think fit, such as representatives of special interest or community groups who would be able to contribute expert information. Such members should be instructed in the principles and ethical standards required in the acquisition and disposal of museum collections.

Governing body

5. The governing body of the Museums Service is defined as the full council of Oxfordshire County Council.

Handling collections

6. Objects suitable for supervised or unsupervised handling by public in educational sessions. The long-term destruction of such objects through wear and tear is implied.

Permanent collections

7. Those collections of the Museums Service, which are designated as worthy of long-term preservation for their intrinsic historical or scientific value. Handling of these items, except by trained staff, is not normally permitted.

3. Description of Existing Collections

Natural Sciences

1. The natural science collections illustrate examples of all specimens or species that occur or are likely to occur in Oxfordshire. The collections have been acquired by donation from individuals, scientific institutions and by active fieldwork as part of the work of the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre. The collections are the prime source of data for the Records and the Museums Service is the only organisation in Oxfordshire that links the written records to voucher specimens. The collections are primarily of Oxfordshire material, but for completeness may include specimens from other localities.
2. There are three main types of collections:
 - a. **Reference** - a few examples of each species, used primarily as an aid to identification.
 - b. **Voucher** - collections supporting publication, individual voucher specimens (new species to Oxfordshire) are normally in the Reference Collections.
 - c. **Reserve** - additional material that can be used for display, exchange, dissection etc.
3. Geology: primarily Jurassic fossils, but also includes borehole samples of the older rocks underlying Oxfordshire. 5,000 specimens.
4. Fungi: a voucher collection deposited by the Oxfordshire Fungus Survey. Some 1,100 specimens to date.
5. Lichens: a voucher collection of some 500 packets deposited by Dr HJM Bowen, supporting a Lichen Flora of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire published in the Lichenologist 12 (2), 1980.
6. Bryophytes: a voucher collection of some 500 packets deposited by Dr EW Jones, supporting the Bryophyte Flora of Berkshire and Oxfordshire, Transactions of the British Bryological Society, 1953 et seq. and the Bryological Section of the Flora of Oxfordshire edited by R Perry, 1998.
7. Osteological: includes a reference collection presented by Prof. BJ Marples, and bird skulls collected by Dr J Kear.
8. Fluid collections: includes the reference collections for spiders, woodlice etc. The fluid collections are continually growing. There are some 2000 tubes of freshwater samples presented by Thames Water.
9. Insect collections: there are 400 drawers of insect reference collections. The Hemiptera reference collection contains about 1000 voucher specimens and material presented by Dr WJ Le Quesne.
10. Mollusca: small but comprehensive collections of both terrestrial and freshwater species have been made as dry shells and also fluid preserved complete animals. Several voucher specimens are included.
11. Vertebrates (taxidermy): 300 individually cased birds and mammals.
12. Vertebrates (birds' eggs): The Jourdain Society 'A' collection, although comparatively small at some 38 cabinets, is said to be the third most important in Britain. The emphasis of the collection is on variation in colour and clutch size. Outstanding are the drawers of red eggs

of Raven and Magpie. Also of note are Passenger Pigeon eggs, a species now extinct, and Eskimo Curlew, a species now barely surviving. The Jourdain Society 'A' and 'B' collections have been augmented with other collections.

Archaeology

13. All collections relate specifically to the modern county of Oxfordshire.
14. The Archaeology collections cover a broad time span from the Palaeolithic to the 17th century. The County Museums Service is the official repository for archaeological material and archives and most of the collections are acquired following excavation as a result of development. Individual finds are either donated by landowners or acquired through the Treasure process.
15. Geographically the collections come from throughout Oxfordshire.
 - a. **Vale of White Horse:** Abingdon collections are of national interest with outstanding prehistoric and Saxon material.
 - b. **South Oxfordshire:** Dorchester was a centre of national importance in late Neolithic/early Bronze Age and sub-Roman periods; the Anglo-Saxon site archives from Berinsfield, Cuddesdon, Bix and Dorchester of national significance.
 - c. **West Oxfordshire:** the Standlake and Stanton Harcourt areas were a Neolithic/Bronze Age centre, as was Eynsham, where the Abbey excavation archive is outstanding.
 - d. **Cherwell:** In addition to the prehistoric, North Oxfordshire hill forts and Grim's Ditch sites, the earlier and more recent excavations from Banbury Castle and medieval town are of outstanding interest.
 - e. **Oxford:** material illustrates the prehistoric importance of the Oxford area. The Roman pottery industry is well represented. The medieval and post medieval collections are of national significance.

History

16. The History collections have been built up by careful acquisition over more than thirty years. Donations from members of the public make up the majority of the collection and the Museums Service provides an important social and cultural function in caring for this material, which illustrates the lives of ordinary people in Oxfordshire over the last 400 years. The collections are strong for the period between 1850 and 1920. The collections illustrating personal and domestic life are particularly good with significant collections of toys and games, smoking and drinking items. Domestic life is well illustrated by collections of furniture, ornaments and domestic utensils. Specific collections of note:

Working Life

17. The strength of the collection is the agricultural and associated food processing and craft material illustrating the period 1850-1940.
18. Woodland industries are well represented. They include chair bodging, tent peg and ladder making from the Chilterns, and brush making. The timber 'bob' from Buscot and timber carriages are of national interest.
19. The Stonesfield slate collection is important and supported by excellent documentation.

20. The textile industry collections include important collections of blanket industry material from Smith's and Early's of Witney, as well as material from the tweed industry in Chipping Norton and the plush industry in Shutford.
21. Other rural crafts represented in the collections include masons' and stone working tools, blacksmithing and tinsmithing, leather working (including saddlery, harness and boots and shoes), gloving. Pottery products are represented by the brick industry (e.g. Nettlebed) and country pottery makers (e.g. Leafield).
22. Brewing is particularly well represented, including items from Morrell's, Morland's, Hall's, Brakspear's and Hook Norton breweries.
23. Car manufacture is represented by tools and equipment from Morris Motors and MG. The collection includes a Morris Minor 1000 and Lady Morris' Wolseley (both housed and exhibited at Nuffield Place).
24. Retail activity is represented by collections from Cape's of Oxford, Banbury's of Woodstock and Rathbone's of Banbury.
25. Contemporary working life has been recorded at USAF Upper Heyford, Banbury Cattle Market and Early's of Witney, all before they closed; and to a limited extent by collection at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratories and Harwell.

Textiles

26. The collection covers a range of men's, women's and children's dress from the 17th century to the 20th century, together with some costume accessories and textiles. Most of the collection is based on items relating to local use or manufacture, however, some items are included as comparative pieces. While many items individually are of local importance, when grouped together some form sub collections of regional significance. There are also a small number of items of national importance.
27. Groups of particular interest and importance include women's dress 1820-1940, with an especially good concentration of printed cotton dresses of the early to mid 19th century, women's hats, men's and women's working dress (particularly smocks), a small collection of 18th century men's waistcoats and collections relating to local trades, such as corsetry, plush weaving, wool weaving (especially the Witney blanket industry) and gloves.
28. One off pieces of greater significance, counted of national importance, include a 17th century cavalier's outfit, the Stonesfield embroidered carpet, a group of an 18th century baby cap and pocket, found secreted in a building, a late 18th century guidon for the Abingdon Volunteers, an 18th century corset and a dress which belonged to May Morris.

Decorative arts and Crafts

29. The contemporary craft collection, formerly the Southern Arts Crafts Collection, was transferred to the ownership of Oxfordshire County Council in 1998. The core of the collection was formed by the Regional Arts Board, Southern Arts, by purchase over a period of around 30 years. The collection features a broad survey of craftwork covering a range of different media (including wood, silver, metalwork, ceramics, textiles and paper) from a national arena of crafts people. It is of regional significance overall but includes a variety of pieces made by crafts people of international standing such as David Leach, John Makepeace, Michael Brennand-Wood and Alan Caiger-Smith.

30. Recently transfers have been made to the contemporary craft collection of material of quality and value that was bought for the former Schools Loans Service but which is now not required for the Cultural Loans Service.

Fine Art

31. The collection includes paintings, prints and drawings that are either by an Oxfordshire based artist or depict Oxfordshire. The works represent both well-known artists and also lesser-known individuals whose work is nonetheless of historical significance. In recent years significant additions have been made to the collection by purchases supported by grant aid from the National Art Collection Fund, Victoria and Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund and Heritage Lottery Fund.
32. The following listing includes the better known artists and/or collections: a view of Oxford Castle by Michel Angelo Rooker (1746-1801); a small selection of works by William Turner of Oxford (1789-1862); a watercolour of a view near Banbury by Thomas Rolandson (1756-1827); a series of watercolours of Oxford by James Shuffrey (1859-1939); a series of watercolours of Oxfordshire public houses by Carl Woods (1950s); a single work, The Jungle, acrylic on canvas, by Terry Frost (1915-); a set of 12 prints published by the Penn Print Room of the Cotswold countryside by Robin Tanner (1904-?); a series of watercolours of Banbury by Maurice Draper (1930-); a series of watercolours of Cogges by Nina Carroll (1932-1992).
33. The collection also includes a number of naive works, notably two views of Abingdon by Robert Howes (c1830) and a view of Church Green, Witney, artist unknown (c1800).

Photographs

34. The collections include a number of framed photographic prints that have been collected, catalogued and stored by the Museums Resource Centre due to a lack of suitable storage space for such objects at the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies, as well as a large number of unframed photographs, which have been mainly inherited from the constituent museums of the Museums Service.

4. Criteria Governing Future Collecting

1. Future collecting will concentrate on developing existing strengths by updating or extending collections.
2. It is important that any collected material does not duplicate existing holdings without good reason. Where possible, the display needs of museums should be fulfilled from existing holdings rather than by new collecting. It is recognised that sometimes this may not be the same as sourcing an object locally, as the public perceive that they are donating to a local museum, not the County's Museums Service, but it reduces duplication of effort and waste of resources.
3. As additional storage space at the Museums Resource Centre is not available there is a presumption against collecting items which will not be put on display, unless they are of sufficient artistic or historical value to justify their preservation; when assessing objects for acquisition, an attempt should be made to estimate their likely interest to future generations.
4. Collecting should where possible be focussed and systematic, preferably based around an exhibition or research project, rather than passively relying on offers from the public. For example, some geographical areas such as Bicester and Faringdon are not well represented in the collections: work could be undertaken to identify gaps in the collections and then to work with community groups in those areas to fill those gaps systematically.
5. Consideration should be given to developing and improving collections by disposing of poorer examples if better examples are available.

Natural sciences

6. Collecting will continue in order to fill gaps in the existing collection and to support the recording of new species in Oxfordshire. Collecting will build on the strengths of the Jourdain Collection when opportunities arise.
7. All additions to the collections should continue to have an Oxfordshire provenance.
8. Appropriate reference will be made to the Oxford University Museum when considering acquisitions.

Archaeology

9. The service will continue to receive archaeological material and archives from sites resulting from development throughout Oxfordshire.
10. Other material will be acquired which:
 - a. has a proven and documented association with Oxfordshire;
 - b. complements the existing collection;
 - c. results from a programme of research.
11. Deposited archives of material from archaeological sites should always be supported by documentary archives created to the appropriate professional standard. All deposited

archives should conform to the Museums Service's current Archaeological Archive Transfer Procedures.

12. Archaeological units should be encouraged to identify material within site archives that is unlikely to have long-term historical value and to dispose of as much of this as possible prior to deposit.
13. Acquisitions should always be supported by oral testimony, photography and/or other recording methods to ensure that background information about each object is obtained.
14. Other collecting will be in response to consultation with users and non-users and partners, and appropriate reference will be made to the Ashmolean Museum and the British Museum.

History

15. The major themes for collecting for 2005-2010 will be material relating to Oxfordshire since 1945.
16. Material will be acquired which:
 - a. has a proven and documented association with Oxfordshire;
 - b. complements the existing collection;
 - c. or results from a programme of research.
17. Whenever possible acquisitions will be supported by oral testimony, photography and/or other recording methods to ensure that background information about each object is obtained. Other collecting will be in response to consultation with users and non-users and partners. Care must be taken, particularly with generic and mass-produced material, to ensure that the local associations and available supporting information is of sufficient interest and quality to justify their collection.
18. Future acquisitions within the scope of the existing collections should only be undertaken when examples have a strong local provenance and supporting information, or consist of particularly good specimens (especially those that can be used to replace poorer examples).
19. Appropriate reference will be made to other Oxfordshire museums when acquiring collections.

Working and Rural Life

20. Collections representing the industries of Oxfordshire, especially the Witney blanket industry and science and technology industries, should be systematically collected. Material relating to the Cowley motor works should be collected in cooperation with the Oxford Bus Museum.
21. Material relating to ethnic minorities in Oxfordshire should be identified and systematically collected.
22. Material relating to changes in domestic and working life in Oxfordshire should be identified and systematically collected.
23. Collections illustrating and documenting changes in rural life in Oxfordshire since 1945 should be acquired, with the exception of large items of machinery unless they are of especial historical importance.

24. A lower priority will be given to material that falls outside the above criteria, for which generally the collections are extensive and well documented.

Science and Medical

25. Collecting should seek to systematically expand the existing holdings, in particular material generated after 1929 (at which date the collecting policy of the University Museum of History of Science stops); material from the Rutherford Appleton Laboratories and Harwell; other examples of significant innovation originating in Oxfordshire, such as Darvik artificial hearts.
26. Collecting will be in response to consultation with users, non-users and partners, including advice from the Oxford Trust and other organisations on what is particularly relevant to Oxfordshire in this field.
27. Appropriate reference will be made to other museums when considering acquisitions.

Textiles

28. Everyday dress is of particular relevance in the 20th century, and the textiles collections from this period are generally weak; collecting should seek to systematically extend the holdings in this area.
29. Representation of the costume and textiles of ethnic minority groups is a current weakness and collecting should seek to systematically extend the holdings in this area.
30. Collections of women's dress will be continue to extend and develop holdings pre-1840 and post-1940 (lower priority will be given to material from within these dates).
31. Working dress will be collected, particularly relating to local trades such as brewing and the waterways, as well as that relating to emergency services' outfit and equipment.
32. A priority will be given to items relating to, or providing a comparison with, local products such as corsetry (plus related costume showing the changing shape of dress), gloves, plush (with a priority for costume items made of plush) and wool weaving (especially household textiles such as blankets).
33. Appropriate reference will be made to other museums when considering acquisitions.

Decorative arts and Crafts

34. Oxfordshire Museums will continue collecting from both within and outside Oxfordshire in order to maintain the life and vitality of the collection and stimulate new perspectives on existing material.
35. The quality of work should always be a primary consideration in collecting contemporary craft and will go hand in hand with issues of media, maker or provenance. Collecting will concentrate on acquisition directly from the maker at or around the time of making to represent the vitality of contemporary craft. Links with makers already represented will be maintained in order to follow the development of their work, however links will also be forged with new makers to ensure the work of new generations of craftspeople are introduced. No restriction will be placed on type of material collected, however, preference will be given to media that have a strong regional context such as textiles and wood. Careful consideration must be given to works containing materials that will not prove durable. Work will be acquired with supplementary preparatory material whenever possible to assist with its interpretation.

36. Material acquired for the former Schools Loans Service that is not required for the Cultural Loans Service may continue to be transferred into the collections, provided that it meets the quality criteria specified above.

Fine art

37. The Service will collect topographical work of relevance to the County, particularly the work of significant artists and of artists who have a close association with Oxfordshire. Portraits of Oxfordshire people will be acquired.
38. Other works of art will be acquired where a clear relationship with the County or the collections can be established. In particular works from the following artists will be collected: J.B. Malchair, J. Buckler, William Turner of Oxford, Thomas Rowlandson, Sir William Nicholson, Paul Nash, and works by members of the Oxford Art Society.
39. All works should be of an artistic quality or historic interest sufficient to justify their collection. Careful consideration should be given to works that are unique for whatever reason, especially if this means that they cannot easily be exhibited.
40. Watercolours may be an exception to the requirement that objects are collected for display only as their nature does not permit them to be displayed for long periods of time, provided that the works themselves are of sufficient quality to justify their acquisition.
41. Appropriate reference will be made to the Ashmolean Museum when considering acquisitions.

Photographs and archives

42. Photographic works will be forwarded to the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies as the appropriate repository, unless the items in question are part of an offered or existing collection of objects and add to the historical value of and knowledge about those objects.
43. An exception may be made with framed photographic works which have been historically collected and stored at the Museums Resource Centre due to lack of storage space at the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies.
44. Archives will not be collected but referred to the Oxfordshire Record Office.

5. Historical and Geographical Associations

1. Specimens and objects will be acquired to illustrate all periods of time in Oxfordshire.
2. The geographic area to which the collection relates is Oxfordshire. All acquisitions (with the exception of contemporary crafts and birds' eggs) must have a proven association with the county. Specimens and objects will be acquired with an Oxfordshire provenance; they will have been found or made in Oxfordshire, used by a person or people in Oxfordshire, or illustrate a place or activity or person associated with Oxfordshire.
3. The acquisition of contemporary crafts may include objects made outside Oxfordshire in order to complement the contemporary craft collection, provided that the works themselves are of sufficient quality to justify their acquisition.
4. The acquisition of birds' eggs may include objects provenanced outside Oxfordshire in order to complement the existing collections, with due regard to policies safeguarding endangered and illicitly traded material (sections 10.2-10.4 below). Any acquired collection should, however, contain a proportion of eggs collected within Oxfordshire in order to justify the requirement that the collections have a proven association with the county.

6. Limitations on Collecting

1. The Museums Service 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 Museum Accreditation Standard. It takes into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as inadequate staffing, storage and care of collections arrangements.
2. In particular, the Museums Service will only acquire objects that it does not have the resources to properly care for and make accessible to the public if such objects are of outstanding historical or scientific importance, or the possibility exists that the objects can be cared for and made accessible within a definite period of time.
3. Care must be taken when acquiring objects to ensure that they are suitable for long-term preservation and access, and especially that they will not impose a risk to the health and safety of staff and the public or to other collections.
4. The Museums Service should take special care not to acquire duplicates of items already in the collections unless there is a compelling reason for doing so, for example:
 - a. an item that is in better condition than one already in the collections;
 - b. one that has a significantly better provenance or related history.
5. In such cases, careful consideration must be given to disposal of the original object giving due regard to the disposal procedures outlined in section 13 below.

7. Collecting Policies and Other Museums

1. The Museums Service will take due 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 such organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.
2. Specific reference is made to the collections of the following museums:
 - a. Ashmolean Museum (archaeology, fine art, Oxford University related material).
 - b. British Museum (archaeology).
 - c. Other Oxford University museums (anthropology, history of science, music, natural history, printing).
 - d. River and Rowing Museum (Henley and rowing material).
 - e. Other independent museums in Oxfordshire (these collect material associated with their immediate locality unless otherwise specified):
 - Bampton Museum
 - Bloxham Village Museum
 - Champs Chapel Museum, East Hendred
 - Chipping Norton Museum
 - Churchill and Sarsden Heritage Centre
 - Combe Mill
 - Didcot Railway Centre
 - Dorchester Abbey Museum
 - Hook Norton Brewery Museum
 - Hook Norton Village Museum
 - Nuffield Place (Lord Nuffield-related collections)
 - Oxford Bus Museum (road transport collections, including Morris Motors)
 - Soldiers of Oxfordshire Trust (military collections)
 - Swinford Museum
 - Tolsey Museum, Burford
 - Tom Brown's School Museum, Uffington
 - Wallingford Museum
 - Waterperry Gardens Museum
 - Witney and District Museum (some Witney blanket industry collections).
3. Reference is also made to the following Oxfordshire County Council organisations:
 - a. Centre for Oxfordshire Studies (oral history, photographs and ephemera, excepting framed works).
 - b. Oxfordshire Record Office (archives and documents).

8. Policy Review Procedure

1. 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 on the title page. The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council will be notified of any changes to the Acquisition and Disposal Policy, and implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.
2. The South East Museums, Libraries and Archives Council will also be notified of any changes to the Acquisition and Disposal Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.
3. Minor changes to the Policy (such as alterations to the phrasing required to meet Accreditation standards) may be approved by the Head of Cultural and Adult Learning Services under delegated powers.
4. Major changes to the Policy (such as revised definitions of collection or disposal) must be approved by the Museums Service's governing body.

9. Acquisitions Not Covered by the Policy

1. 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 Museums Service itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

I 0. Acquisition Procedures

1. The Museums Service 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.
2. In particular, the Museums Service 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).
3. In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the Museums Service 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.
4. So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the Museums Service 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.
5. The Museums Service 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).
6. Any exceptions to the above clauses 1, 2, 3, or 5 will only be because the Museums Service is either:
 - a. acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin; or
 - b. 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
 - c. acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin; or
 - d. in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970.

In these cases the Museums Service will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

Gifts and Bequests

7. Gifts and bequests shall only be accepted on the basis that any conditions are approved by the governing body of the Museums Service, and in all cases reference will be made to the limitations on collecting as specified in the policy. The governing body of the Museums Service shall reserve the right to refuse any offer of material.

Loan Policy

8. The governing body of the Museums Service will not normally accept material on loan unless for the purposes of temporary exhibition, or where the item is of exceptional interest to the museum. Any loan will be agreed in writing by the lender and the Museums Service, including allocation of responsibilities for insurance and transport arrangements and shall be for a specified fixed-term only, of a maximum of five years, renewable in writing. Use of the term 'permanent loan' shall be avoided and items will not be accepted on this basis.

Material not Accepted for the Permanent Collections

9. Due to the nature of the Museums Service's activities, it may occasionally acquire certain items that are not intended to be retained for the permanent collections. These items may be used as educational or school handling collections, or, in the case of industrial or transport items, as spares or consumable working parts.
10. In the case of such material, documentation will clearly show the intended use of the object and donors will be made aware of this possibility at the time of entry and informed as soon as a decision has been made regarding the material. These objects will be recorded separately outside the main accession record and shall not be treated as part of the permanent collection since their intended use implies that preservation cannot be guaranteed.

Acquisition Procedure

11. All offers for acquisition should be presented to the Museums Service's Collections Management Team, which meets monthly.
 - a. A majority of those present must vote in favour of any offer to the collections before it can be accepted.
 - b. In considering any offer the Team must make reference to the clauses above specifying the nature of what will be collected (section 3), the requirement for a local connection (section 4), limitations on collection (section 5) and the claims of other museums (section 6). It must also consider the use to which the object would be put: *there is a presumption against collecting items which will not be put on display, unless they are of sufficient artistic or historical value to justify their preservation.*
 - c. Care should be taken not to acquire material that has only a single use, for example objects for a specific exhibition which have no obvious further use within the context of the Museums Service. In such cases objects should be loaned in for a clearly defined period and purpose.
 - d. Acquisitions outside the Policy cannot be accepted by the Team but must be referred to the governing body of the museum, along with a recommendation detailing why the material should be acquired (section 8 above).

II. Spoliation

1. The Museums Service 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.

I 2. Repatriation and Restitution

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

I 3. Management of Archives

1. As the Museums Service 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).

I 4. Disposal Procedures

1. By definition, the Museums Service 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 there is a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the Museums Service's collection except as set out below.
2. The Museums Service 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.
3. When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the Museums Service 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.
4. Decisions to dispose of items will not be made with the principal aim of generating funds.
5. Any monies received by the Museums Service's 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.
6. A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the Museums Service acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.
7. Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, 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.
8. 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.
9. 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 Museums Service may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations.
10. 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.
11. Where disposal of objects is by sale, the Museum Service will seek to maximise any income generated.

Selection for disposal

12. Items recommended for disposal should fulfil one or more of the following conditions:
 - a. constitute a health and safety risk to staff, the public or other collections;
 - b. have no documented or obvious Oxfordshire provenance or other historical or scientific value that merits their retention;
 - c. be in such poor condition that they could not be effectively made accessible to the public *and* have no significant historical or scientific value that merits their retention;
 - d. would be better stored elsewhere, such as the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies, the Oxfordshire Record Office, or another museum.
 - e. duplicates another object in the collections and has no documented or obvious Oxfordshire provenance or other historical or scientific value that merits its retention.

13. Items may be selected for disposal with the aim of improving the overall quality of collections, i.e. to allow items of greater historical or scientific importance to be collected, *provided that*:
 - a. the selection conditions outlined above (11 a-d) are met and that the accepted material is approved of by the Collections Management Team as being of greater significance than the material selected for disposal;
 - b. the staff time and resources required to generate space for new acquisitions is not disproportionate compared with the significance of the acquisitions;
 - c. wherever possible, community and expert involvement should be sought in selecting objects for disposal and for recommending acquisitions to be collected in their stead.

14. Archaeological archives present a particular disposal problem due to their size and volume, and the fact that certain parts of the archive may be valuable for long-term retention while others may not. Selection of all or part of an archive for disposal should follow the Archaeological Archives Forum disposal guidelines (forthcoming publication at time of writing).

Disposal procedure

15. All items recommended for disposal should be presented to the Museums Service's Collections Management Team, which meets monthly.
 - a. Individual items up to £1,000 estimated value may be disposed of by the Team without further reference to the Museums Service's governing body provided that there is a compelling reason for so doing and that the procedures outlined above are followed.
 - b. Individual items up to £5,000 estimated value may be disposed of by the Head of Cultural and Adult Learning Services under delegated powers without further reference to the Museums Service's governing body, following a recommendation from the Collections Management Team detailing why the material should be disposed of and provided that there is a compelling reason for so doing and that the procedures outlined above are followed.
 - c. Individual items above £5,000 estimated value must be referred to the Museums Service's governing body, along with a recommendation detailing why the material should be disposed of.
 - d. Items that pose a significant health and safety risk to people or collections should be dealt with as soon as possible according to the appropriate legislation and guidelines. Wherever possible the disposal guidelines outlined above must be followed but it is recognised that it may not always be possible to reconcile these with the requirements of maintaining a safe working environment. Nonetheless, all disposals must still be fully documented.

16. Some items may be designated as suitable for transfer to the Cultural Loans Service or Handling Collections. This is considered a disposal from the collections, as the use of any object for handling implies that it will be destroyed or rendering unfit for purpose by the wear

and tear it undergoes. In these cases, the procedures described above must still be followed.

I5. Grants from External Funding Bodies

1. Where a museum object has been acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation, permission from that organisation will need to be sought before the object is de-accessioned or transferred to another museum. If the object is sold repayment of the original grant may be required.