

# Collections Development Policy

## Oriel Ynys Môn

Isle of Anglesey County Council  
2017

Name of museum: Oriel Ynys Môn

Name of governing body: Cyngor Sir Ynys Môn / Isle of Anglesey County Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:

Policy review procedure:

The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

Date at which this policy is due for review: *October 2019*

*Arts Council England/MALD: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales* will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

### 1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:

#### 1.1. The museum's statement of purpose is:

Oriel Ynys Môn strives to care for, interpret and promote Anglesey's unique culture and heritage. It seeks to inspire creativity, to provide learning opportunities and enjoyment for the island's residents and visitors.

#### 1.2. The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.

#### 1.3. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.

#### 1.4. Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.

#### 1.5. The museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements

and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

- 1.6. The museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- 1.7. The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons

## **2. History of the collections**

Oriel Ynys Môn was opened in 1991 and contains collections relating to Anglesey's history and culture. The museum collection was started with the purchase of the Charles F. Tunnicliffe collection at auction in 1981. The artist Kyffin Williams later became involved with the fledgling service and gifted many artworks and objects. By the time of his passing in 2006 he'd gifted nearly 400 of his own paintings and drawings, together with artworks by other significant Welsh artists.

Alongside the substantial art collection, OYM also holds archaeological collections. Anglesey's Mesolithic and Neolithic periods are well represented, with a substantial amount of lithic material in the collection. Objects from the Bronze Age period are also held, including numerous funerary pots, bronze artefacts and decorative gold personal adornments. There are also rare items from the Iron Age period, specifically artefacts recovered from Llyn Cerrig Bach during the 1940s.

There are also a number of social history items held in the collection. These include domestic wares, textiles and items of costume. They all have significance to Anglesey and its people.

In terms of archaeology, in 2015 we acquired the Cwm Cadnant Hoard (Bronze Age gold penannular ring and copper fragments) with funding from Saving Treasures Telling Stories project in conjunction with Amgueddfa Cymru/National Museum Wales. Funding such as this allows us to address obvious gaps in the museum collection, enabling us to collect prestigious and highly valued objects.

Professional excavation companies working in Anglesey, such as the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, deposit the majority of their finds with the museum, in accordance with our Archaeological Deposition Policy. This policy is sent to excavating bodies prior to undertaking work on the island. It is also available online on the museum's website.

We also work with community groups and local societies, e.g. The Anglesey Antiquarian Society, and have worked with individual metal detectorists and land owners with a view to them depositing finds as part of the museum collection. It is our aim to inform the public of our work and raise the profile of our collecting policy. To help achieve this we lead pre-organised tours of the collections/ museum stores as well as talks and events held within the museum and offsite within the community.

Our collection relies heavily on gifts from the public. Although we often receive donations of art, archaeology and social history items, this reactive method of collecting is unpredictable. We plan to develop a document identifying research priorities for the collection.

### **3. An overview of current collections**

#### **Charles F. Tunncliffe**

This forms the largest single unit within the collections and comprises the originally purchased material from 1981 including 56 working sketchbooks and over 350 measured drawings in addition to volumes of preliminary sketches, book illustrations, finished watercolours, life studies and manuscript material. Some early engravings, books and portraits have been added subsequently to the collection. This is the most complete collection of the work of Charles Tunncliffe in existence and is valuable both in an artistic and scientific context.

#### **Kyffin Williams**

In June 1990 the artist donated a collection of over 300 sketches and drawings to the gallery, and subsequently donated a number of drawings and oil paintings. This forms an important topographical, historical and artistic record of the island and is an invaluable asset in terms of exhibition and research.

#### **Edith and Gwendolen Massey**

This collection of botanical drawings was purchased by the Council in 1985 and comprises of over 500 watercolour studies entitled 'The Wildflowers of Anglesey'. These studies were made in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Each species is identified in Welsh, English and Latin and forms an important botanical record of the island.

#### **Anglesey Art collection**

This collection stems from the work of the Anglesey Rural Community Council which throughout the decades after the First World War, consisting mainly of work by Anglesey artists and collected for the enjoyment and education of the people of the island. Before the 1996 Local Government reorganisation the collection was curated by Gwynedd County Council museum service but was transferred to Anglesey County Council.

Since 1996 work by other artists has been added to the collection including artists from Anglesey or those whose work whose subject is the Island.

#### **Archaeological, Natural History and Social History**

Archaeology material is core to the collections. The material includes the Anglesey Antiquarian collections and the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust excavations material. There is one small mineral/geological collection. The social history material reflects the island's rural, maritime and small industry communities.

#### **4. Themes and priorities for future collecting**

*As a relatively young service there is much scope to develop the museum collection.* The Charles Tunnicliffe collection will continue to be expanded to create a full record of the artist's life and work. Particular attention will be given to filling the gaps in his early etching and engraving work, finished watercolours and major compositions, books written or illustrated, originals of book illustrations and finished works which relate to the field and studio sketches already in the collection.

*We hold 28 easel paintings by Kyffin Williams, accounting for roughly 7% of the total collection of works held here by the artist. This imbalance has an effect on our exhibition, display ability and research potential.*

The service will also continue to acquire art both historical and contemporary created by artists born or living and working both past and present on the island regardless of subject matter. Work by those from outside the island but in which Anglesey or its people are the subject matter will be acquired but as a lesser priority.

The service will acquire archaeological items from all prehistoric periods through to post medieval and industrial periods. Excavation material from Gwynedd Archaeological Trust will be acquired as per deposition agreement. The excavation archive will be kept at the Anglesey Archives. Un-provenanced material will be acquired to fill gaps in the collections and for teaching/handling purposes.

Numismatic material will only be collected if it is of particular local significance. It is not intended to build a comprehensive reference collection in this field.

Social history material – post medieval to present – will be acquired as space permits to develop exhibitions and learning service.

Material will be collected related to significant people or events in Anglesey's history.

Costume and textiles will only be collected to develop the textiles history of Anglesey.

No firearms or ammunition will be collected.

No natural history specimens will be collected.

Geology material will be acquired to build a comprehensive collection of Anglesey rocks, minerals for reference, study and display.

## **5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal**

The Museum Service has only been operational since 1990. Collecting has been a specific and as space is at a premium no unnecessary or out of policy material has been acquired.

- 5.1 The museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from 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.
- 5.2 The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.

## **6 Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items**

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

## **7 Collecting policies of other museums**

- 7.1 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.

### **7.2 Specific reference is made to the following museums/organisations:**

Storiel - Gwynedd Museum and Art Gallery  
Holyhead Maritime Museum  
Amgueddfa Cymru / National Museum Wales  
Menai Heritage / Thomas Telford Centre  
Llyfgell Genedlaethol Cymru / National Library of Wales  
The Charles F Tunnicliffe Society

## **8 Archival holdings**

- 8.1** Oriel Ynys Môn works closely with the Anglesey Archives and transfers relevant archival collections when necessary. Likewise the Archives have transferred artworks and objects to the museum's collection. However, OYM does hold some archive material, specifically those relating to its holdings. For example the artist Kyffin Williams gifted a large amount of archive material to sit alongside his artworks. These include letters, photographs and exhibition catalogues. We have used them in exhibition displays and make them available to researchers. OYM has also received artworks with related correspondences which have been accessioned together as part of the Charles F. Tunnicliffe collection.

Oriel Ynys Môn will maintain public access to these archives and continue to utilise them for display and research purposes.

## **9 Acquisition**

### **9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:**

Offers of objects for the museum collection are received on a regular basis. These enquiries are dealt with by the Building and Collections Manager, who then consults with the General Manager to discuss whether the items are appropriate for the collection. No decision will be made without the General Managers' approval.

- 9.2** 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).
- 9.3** 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 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.

## **10 Human remains**

- 10.1 As the museum 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.

## **11 Biological and geological material**

- 11.1 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.

## **12 Archaeological material**

- 12.1 The museum 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.
- 12.2 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 (i.e. the Coroner for Treasure) as set out in the Treasure Act 1996 (as amended by the Coroners & Justice Act 2009).

## **13 Exceptions**

### **13.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:**

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

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

## **14 Spoliation**

- 14.1 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.

## **15 The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains**

- 15.1 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 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.
- 15.2 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'.

## **16 Disposal procedures**

- 16.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.
- 16.2 The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.
- 16.3 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.
- 16.4 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale and exchange or as a last resort - destruction.
- 16.5 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 public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be



considered. Expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.

- 16.6 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 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 or manager of the collection acting alone.
- 16.7 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. 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.
- 16.8 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered 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 a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.9 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.
- 16.10 Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from the Arts Council England/MALD.
- 16.11 The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.

- 16.12 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.

### ***Disposal by exchange***

- 16.13 The nature of disposal by exchange means that the museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The governing body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.

- 16.13.1 In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or non-Accredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 16.1-5 will apply.
- 16.13.2 If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.
- 16.13.3 If the exchange is proposed with a non-Accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will place a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, or make an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites.
- 16.13.4 Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in the museum's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the governing body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

### ***Disposal by destruction***

- 16.14 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 16.15 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.
- 16.16 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.
- 16.17 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.
- 16.18 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.