



## **Collections Development Policy 2016-2021**

**Name of museum:** Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum

**Name of governing body:** Darlington Borough Council

**Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:** 08/11/2016

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

**Date at which this policy is due for review:** October 2021

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

1.1. The museum's statement of purpose is:

Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum aims to delight all its visitors in the town that is the birthplace of the modern railway.

The museum's **mission** is to explain the significance of Darlington to railways, and of railways to Darlington.

The museum's **responsibility** is to preserve for future generations, and to make available for education and enjoyment, the unique historical collections it holds in trust.

The museum's **objective** is to make, in relation to the funding it receives, a worthwhile contribution to community development and economic prosperity in Darlington.

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 or bequest, 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**

- 2.1. The museum was opened in 1975 to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, when the campaigning of enthusiasts and community activists resulted in the preservation of the passenger station. The museum opened as 'Darlington Railway Museum' and was originally administered by a charitable trust.
- 2.2. The Trust Collection consisted of a combination of donations, loans from private donors (short-term and indefinite) and loans from local and national museums. In 1985 responsibility for the running of the museum, and the management of the collections, passed to Darlington Borough Council.
- 2.3. The collection consisted of railway items relating to the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR) and the railways and railway industry of the north-east region. They also collected generic railway items not specifically associated with north-east England.
- 2.4. Any items donated after this date belong to the museum and the council. Any items donated prior to this date remain the property of the Trust (which has yet to be wound up despite numerous attempts by the council). These items (along with the loans taken in by the Trust) are regarded as Trust Loans.
- 2.5. Under the management of the council the museum continued to accept donations and loans of railway related artefacts not associated with north-east England, in particular generic railway ephemera, magazines and published material as well as the more relevant S&DR and north-eastern artefacts.
- 2.6. The museum has a number of artefacts on loan from the National Railway Museum including locomotives Locomotion No 1, Derwent, Tennant 1463 and Q7 901, a third class carriage and artefacts relating to the S&DR.
- 2.7. In the 1990's the town's local history museum, Tubwell Row Museum, closed its doors. All artefacts relating to the railways and/or Darlington were transferred to the museum.

- 2.8. In 1992 the collection of Ken Hoole, a renowned railway enthusiast, was transferred to the museum from Durham County Council so that the museum could open a research room called the Ken Hoole Study Centre. The collection made up the bulk of the research material along with archival material from the museum's own collection.
- 2.9. From approximately 2000 the museum's *Collections Development Policy* was updated to only accept material relating to the S&DR and the development and operation of railways in north-east England.
- 2.10. In 2004 the museum received a bequest from local railway enthusiast John Mallon. The John Mallon Collection included a unique collection of railway photographs mapping different railway lines in the region, plus a large collection of railway ephemera collected by Mr Mallon during his time working on the railways. The collection is jointly owned by the museum and the North Eastern Railway Association (NERA).

### 3. An overview of current collections

- 3.1. The museum collection consists of **30,582** accessioned artefacts or groups of artefacts.
- 3.2. The museum's existing collections are almost wholly limited to material illustrating the development and operation of railways in north-east England. Although regional in scope, in some areas they are of national importance because of their association with the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR), as the world's first modern railway.
- 3.3. The existing collections cover:
  - the S&DR and its associated lines
  - the North Eastern Railway (NER)
  - the London & North Eastern Railway (LNER)
  - British Railways (BR)
  - the railway manufacturing industry in Darlington
  - industrial railways in Darlington
- 3.4. The material held includes:
  - archives, maps, photographs and printed ephemera
  - one locomotive and two wagons
  - items used in railway operating
  - 'branded' items associated with the railway infrastructure
  - models and toys
- 3.5. The museum also holds the largest existing collection of Darlington ceramic commemorative ware, and a small group of local history curiosities and by-gones in the form of the remaining collections of the former Tubwell Row Museum.
- 3.6. The museum holds a large archive of railway related ephemera, maps and photographs from two donors in particular: Ken Hoole and John Mallon.

- 3.7. Although not strictly 'collections' in the traditional sense, in that they are fixed structures in their original locations, there is an argument that the most important items the museum holds are the buildings from the occupation of the site known by the S&DR as 'North Road'. These at present comprise North Road Goods Station, built in 1833 and extended in 1839-40; the Goods Agent's Offices, built in 1840; Darlington (North Road) Station, built in 1841-42 and extended in 1853, 1856, 1860, 1864, 1872 and 1876; and Hopetown Carriage Works, built in 1853. The museum also holds the site of the demolished Kitching's Foundry, developed between 1831 and 1855 and effectively the S&DR's locomotive works until 1863.
- 3.8. The museum also maintains a reference library of published texts relevant to the history and development of railways, with particular reference, although not restricted to, north-east England.

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

- 4.1. The museum recognises its responsibility, when collecting new items, to ensure that collections care, documentation and use will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations imposed by such factors as inadequate staffing, storage and care of collections arrangements (see Documentation Policy and Care and Conservation Policy). Where the acquisition of an item would have significant financial implications, either in terms of purchase price or future preservation, the matter will be referred to the Assistant Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources for approval.
- 4.2. The primary objective in collections development will be to acquire material, by donation or purchase, which can document and interpret the following themes:
  - The evolution and significance of the North Road site and its buildings.
  - The origins, development and historical significance of the S&DR.
  - The history and significance of S&DR 0-4-0 No 1 Locomotion, particularly the story of its iconisation by railway company publicity and the contribution this made to the birth of railway preservation.
  - The history of Darlington as a railway manufacturing town, with particular reference to North Road Locomotive Works, 'Stivvies' (Robert Stephenson & Co), Faverdale Wagon Works, and their products.
  - The impact of railway transport and haulage on the economic and social development of Darlington and its surrounding area, including the town's industrial railways.
  - The role of railways in popular culture and leisure, through such things as toys and model engineering.
- 4.3. The museum will continue to add to its collection of Darlington ceramic commemorative ware, as appropriate items are donated. It will also, as a home of last resort, be open to the acquisition of particularly significant individual items relating to the town's local history.
- 4.4. In relation to archives, maps, photographs and printed ephemera, the museum will continue to collect material generally relevant to the development and history of railways in north-east England. It will also continue to purchase, or to accept gifts of, relevant books and other publications for addition to its reference library.

- 4.5. The museum will collect relevant items from any historical period. In practice, and with the possible exception of significant local history items, few potential acquisitions are likely to be older than 1800. Where appropriate, particularly in the field of locally relevant 'branded' railway ephemera, the museum will selectively collect contemporary material.
- 4.6. In terms of geographical area, the museum's primary interest will be the Borough of Darlington and its dependent and surrounding area in terms of railway operating and use. This will be deemed to include the routes of the S&DR and its associated companies in their entirety, and the route over Stainmore.
- 4.7. The museum will also selectively collect items associated with the NER, the LNER and BR, provenanced to the area covered by the pre-1974 counties of Durham and the North Riding of Yorkshire, where these illustrate aspects of railway history that are not covered by more locally provenanced material.
- 4.8. The museum will only collect large structural items or historic buildings (such as stations or signal boxes) where these can specifically contribute towards the delivery of the Museum Forward Plan or are functionally required for railway operating purposes. No large structural items or buildings will be acquired unless, on an item by item basis, it has been ascertained in advance that their erection and use on the site would be acceptable under planning legislation and to English Heritage.
- 4.9. Since its establishment in 1975, the museum has traditionally depended upon loans, from other museums or heritage railway organisations and from private individuals, for the great majority of the locomotives, carriages and wagons that have made up the core of its displays. As permitted by available opportunities and resources, the museum would like to significantly reduce the extent of its dependence on loans by acquiring its own collection of railway vehicles relevant to its mission and stated interpretive objectives.
- 4.10. The museum will seek to collect a representative selection of locomotives built in Darlington, both to show how railway motive power has developed chronologically and the part the town once played in the manufacture of such locomotives.
- 4.11. A number of locomotives built elsewhere but used at Darlington industrial sites do survive in heritage railway ownership. Should opportunities arise, the museum would wish to acquire single examples of steam, diesel and electric locomotives used in Darlington industry. At the date of adoption of this Policy, the museum owns no passenger carriages.
- 4.12. The movement of goods by rail had a significant impact on the urban and economic development of Darlington, and on life in the area. Therefore the museum will seek to acquire a small selection of appropriate vehicles, to illustrate how railway travel in the area has changed over time.
- 4.13. The museum will seek to collect a small, representative, selection of wagons of different types, to illustrate the range and nature of railway goods traffic in the past.

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

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.

5.3 The museum will undertake rationalisation of the collection where:

- The artefact does not match the current *Collections Development Policy*.
- It is a duplicate of another artefact in the collection.
- The artefact is unprovenanced (i.e. does not have sufficient background information to provide context).
- It is too badly damaged or decayed to be worthy of retention, or was not in the first instance actually of museum quality.
- Its ongoing retention would represent a threat to the health or safety of museum staff or members of the public.
- Would be more appropriate to another museum or organisation's collection.

## **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 museum(s)/organisation(s):

- National Railway Museum (York & Shildon)
- Beamish, the North of England Open Air Museum
- Tyne & Wear Museums Service
- Hartlepool Borough Council
- Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council
- Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
- Middlesbrough Borough Council
- Durham County Council

Specific reference is made to the following Heritage Railways:

- Tanfield Railway
- Bowes Railway
- North Yorkshire Moors Railway
- Weardale Railway
- Wensleydale Railway

The museum also acknowledges the collecting activities of Darlington Library in the field of local history, and will work with the Library to ensure that significant material is preserved in the most appropriate place.

## 8 Archival holdings

- 8.1 The museum holds a large collection of archival material including photographs, ephemera, maps and plans, and locomotive diagrams. The majority of the acquisitions that the museum receives are archival in nature and we will continue to collect relevant material for our collection. Archival material is available to the public for research purposes and is a much used resource.

## 9 Acquisition

- 9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

All acquisitions must be approved by a member of the Collections Team (either the Manager Curator or the Collections and Learning Assistant). No other member of staff may approve an acquisition in their absence. All acquisitions must comply with the museum's current *Collections Development Policy*. Where the acquisition of an item would have significant financial implications, either in terms of purchase price or future preservation, the matter will be referred to the Assistant Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources for 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 The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

## **11 Biological and geological material**

11.1 The museum will not acquire any biological or geological material.

## **12 Archaeological material**

12.1 The museum will not acquire any archaeological material.

## **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**

*The following statements must also be included, if relevant to the museum:*

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.

## **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, 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, 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.
- 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 museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

*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.