

# GUILDHALL MUSEUM (ROCHESTER)

## ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL POLICY 2008-2012

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# ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL POLICY 2008 - 2012

**Museum:** Guildhall Museum (Rochester)

**Governing Body:** Medway Council (Cabinet)

**Date approved by governing body-:** **To be entered following Cabinet approval**

**Date at which policy due for review:** April 2012

## Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles by which the Guildhall Museum will acquire and dispose of objects. It is a tool to assist curatorial staff with the development of the museum's permanent collection and also outlines policy and practice in this area to other interested bodies. It has been written with reference to the acquisition and disposal policies of other local museums and in line with Museums Association and Museums, Libraries and Archive Council (MLA) guidelines.

## Historical Background

The old City of Rochester Museum was founded in 1897 as part of Rochester Corporation's celebrations of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. On 17<sup>th</sup> February 1897, the Estates and General Purposes Committee of the Corporation of Rochester considered the best way of celebrating the Jubilee. The Committee concluded that *there could be no better or useful and lasting memorial than the purchase of Eastgate House for the purpose of a Museum*. The following month a purchase price of £2,000 was agreed for the property, and the City of Rochester Museum was born.

The museum was originally established at Eastgate House, a fine Elizabethan town house of c.1590. Between 1922 and 1923 an annexe extension was added to the property, financed from a bequest made to the City of Rochester by Thomas Hellyar Foord, a benefactor who also bequeathed his collection of furniture, paintings and other works of art to the museum. The museum had amassed a collection of nearly 7,000 objects by 1928.

In 1978, a decision was made to create a themed tourist attraction at Eastgate House to be called *The Charles Dickens Centre*. This project resulted in the removal of the museum to the Grade 1 listed 17<sup>th</sup> century Guildhall in Rochester High Street.

The museum was extended in 1992 by means of the acquisition of the former offices of the Medway Conservancy Board – a fine Grade 2 listed building adjacent to the Guildhall. This building is now used for the display of 19<sup>th</sup> and

early 20<sup>th</sup> century objects and houses the Dickens Discovery Room and associated Audio-Visual Theatre, and the museum shop.

Creation of the Medway Unitary Authority in 1998 gave the museum a new and expanded role as the Museum of Medway (covering the history of Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham, Rainham, Strood and the Hoo Peninsular).

It is perceived that the museum will play an important future role as a driver in the regeneration and cultural development of the emergent 'City of Medway'.

The existing museum, together with Chatham Historic Dockyard (potential World Heritage site) and the Royal Engineers Museum at Gillingham (Nationally Designated collections) will provide a 'Gateway' to the preservation and interpretation of Medway's nationally important heritage. Medway is extremely fortunate to have three outstandingly good museums within its administrative boundaries.

Future plans will see the development of the Guildhall Museum as the Council's hub museum facility with other museum satellite outstations at Upnor Castle, Rochester Castle, Gun Wharf (Chatham), the St. George's Centre (Chatham), Eastgate House (Rochester) and possibly a converted Medway school building (yet to be identified). The gradual development of satellite museum facilities will enable a greater percentage of existing museum collections to be made accessible to local residents and visitors alike.

## **1.0 Museum's statement of purpose**

- a) The purpose of the Guildhall Museum, Rochester, is to collect, document, research, preserve, exhibit and interpret material evidence and associated information for the public benefit. Where possible, collections held by the museum will relate to the geographical area currently administered by Medway Council.

## **2/3.0 Existing collections (subjects or themes and the periods of time/geographic areas to which the collections relate)**

**Also: Criteria governing future acquisition policy including the subjects or themes, periods of time and/or geographic areas and any collections which will not be subject to further acquisition**

### **2/3.1 Introduction**

- a) In general terms the museum collections are essentially based upon the environmental, social and political history of the geographical area administered by Medway Council. A high percentage of the local and social history collections relate specifically to the pre 20<sup>th</sup> century history of

Rochester. Material relating to Chatham, Gillingham, Rainham, Strood, and the surrounding rural community is significantly underrepresented in the collections. This reflects the original historic role and purpose of the museum as the museum of the City of Rochester.

- b) The museum houses important generic social history collections (including the Gillingham Urban Heritage Collection) as well as a small number of important specialist collections (Davis Collection of lamps and lighting; firearms; the Elizabeth Horton Collection of Victorian Costume Accessories; personal items and paintings associated with Charles Dickens and his family, and a modest but important collection of art-work by locally-born artist Charles Spencelayh).
- c) It is estimated that approximately 35% of the museum's total collections are on permanent display. This is a much higher percentage than for most museums. The 'reserve' collection comprises a number of important themed collections that are already, and will in future, be actively used to underpin the museum's temporary exhibitions programme and educational work, as well as collections that are primarily of research interest to the public and the academic community. Some of these specialised academic collections are by their very nature not appropriate for public display but help to enhance the museum's reputation as a valuable resource for individuals and academic institutions conducting high-level research in the disciplines of geology, archaeology and natural history. Reserve archaeological collections are particularly well used by the academic community.

### **2/3.2 Geographical range**

- a) Historically (pre 1998) the Guildhall Museum functioned as the museum of Rochester and its hinterland. With the creation of the Medway Unitary Authority in 1998, the museum took on responsibility for reflecting the heritage and historic development of all of Medway, including the rural areas administered by the newly constituted Council. Future plans for the museum will focus on establishing 'satellite' museum facilities at other key heritage buildings to extend the museum service and its collections into the wider Medway community.

## **Archaeology**

### **Archaeological Collections**

#### **2/3.3 Existing Collections**

- a) The museum houses a locally important collection of archaeological objects ranging in date from earliest Prehistoric times to post Medieval times. Flint implements, early metalwork, everyday objects, grave goods, building materials and pottery make up the bulk of the collections. The most complete items are on permanent display in the museum's small

archaeology gallery. The remainder of the collections - which comprise a mix of excavated material from local and other Kentish sites, as well as unprovenanced material, – are mainly of academic research interest rather than suitable for public display. Excavated material originates from a number of sites at the following locations:- Chatham High Street (Former Alders site); Darenth Roman Villa; St Margaret's Banks Rochester (1982); Eastgate (Rochester); Rochester High Street; St Bartholomew's Chapel (Chatham); Newark Yard (Strood); Oakleigh Farm (Higham) etc.

- b) There is quite a large body of unprovenanced material in the collection. In past years, this material has been used for display purposes and also for handling material at public events and in support of Museum Education Service activities. A few boxes of finds in the collection originate from London and Sussex.
- c) In addition to the research value of individual items or groups of objects from particular excavations, the collection itself charts the development of archaeological techniques during the last century.
- d) The future development and regeneration of Medway (Rochester Riverside, Chatham waterfront, Strood waterfront etc.) will doubtless lead to the discovery of important archaeological finds. It will be the policy of the museum service to secure 'first option' for public display of any individual objects/groups of objects of outstanding local interest recovered as a result of on-going work. It will also be the policy of the museum service to negotiate for the short-term loan and display of such objects where and if they are stored as part of a larger archaeological archive outside of the Medway Towns.

**2/3.4 Prehistoric:** The museum houses small but representative collections of Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic flint implements of local and wider Kentish provenance. Flint axe-heads, scrapers and microliths form the basis of the collection. Some comparative worked flint and stone objects from other world cultures are housed in the collections. Faunal remains from the local area provide valuable evidence of the local climate and habitat in Prehistoric times.

#### **2/3.4.1 Resources and Principles**

- a) Some of the best and most complete examples of Prehistoric implements are displayed in the Guildhall's introductory gallery. The remainder of the Prehistoric collections are boxed and stored in the Guildhall Archaeology Store.

#### **2/3.4.2 Future Collecting Policy for Prehistoric Material**

- a) The museum will only acquire small quantities of Prehistoric material of local provenance (i.e. from the geographical area administered by Medway Council) or material from other world cultures that exemplifies some of the techniques used in the manufacture of ancient Prehistoric tools etc.

Additions will only be made to this collection in exceptional circumstances and then only subject to the availability of appropriate storage facilities. In the short-term, it is proposed to maintain rather than actively augment the Prehistoric collections. This policy will be re-visited as new storage facilities are made available.

**2/3.5 Bronze Age and Iron Age:** The museum houses some good examples of Bronze and Iron Age pottery and metalwork, including an extensive founder's hoard of late Bronze Age axe-heads and weaponry found near Hoo St Werburgh. This hoard, dated to c.700BC, comprises part of the stock-in-trade of an itinerant bronze-founder. Of national interest is the 'Stoke Hoard' of Iron Age coins - a set of twenty-seven gold quarter stater coins that were the subject of a Treasure Trove inquest. Eleven coins from this hoard were subsequently purchased by the museum service. This hoard is now on permanent display in the museum galleries. A range of Bronze and Iron Age weapons from Rainham, Higham, Frindsbury and other Medway and Kent sites also forms part of the collection.

#### **2/3.5.1 Resources and Principles**

- a) Most of the key Bronze and Iron Age artefacts housed in the collection are on permanent public display in the Guildhall's introductory gallery. The remainder of the Bronze and Iron Age artefacts are in reserve storage.

#### **2/3.5.2 Future Collecting Policy for Bronze Age Material**

- a) The museum will only acquire small quantities of Bronze Age and Iron Age material of local provenance. The only exception to this might be if further founder's hoards etc. were discovered in the area and acquired for the collection. The emphasis will be on collecting small finds that add significantly to public knowledge of life in Medway during the late Prehistoric period. Small quantities of Bronze and Iron Age pottery will only be added to the collection if it sheds new light on the late Prehistoric occupation of the local area. The museum will continue to collect provenanced Iron Age coins from the local area

**2/3.6 Roman:** Although surprisingly little systematic excavation has taken place within the Roman boundary walls of the City of Rochester, the museum houses a modest but representative collection of Roman pottery, building materials, glassware, jewellery, metalwork and objects of votive or religious significance from the local area. Some objects in this collection were found outside the boundaries of Medway (including material from Darenth Roman Villa in North West Kent). Most of the high status objects within this collection are on permanent display in the museum's archaeological gallery. The museum stores many boxes of Roman pottery items (both complete items and sherds) from local kiln and in-fill sites. The most important collection comprises black-burnished ware pottery from the Upchurch area of the Medway Marshes, from the collection of the Reverend John Woodruff, Vicar of the Parish of Upchurch 1828-1869



(collection gifted to the museum 1903-5). Vessels in this collection form the largest single collection of this type of pottery extant. Additional pottery originates from the Walter Collection. The museum also houses a locally important collection of Roman coins (excavated and/or 'chance' finds).

### **2/3.6.1 Resources and Principles**

- a) Most of the key Roman objects in the collection are on permanent display in the Guildhall's introductory gallery. Large quantities of Roman pottery (complete vessels and sherds) are stored in boxes in the Guildhall and in the Guildhall's archaeology store. Some of the more complete pottery items are stored unboxed on shelves in the Guildhall's archaeology store.

### **2/3.6.2 Future Collecting Policy for Roman Material**

- a) As the Roman history of Medway is especially significant and - in parts - underrepresented in the collections, the museum service will seek to add interesting and significant local Roman 'finds' to the collections. Where possible, these will be used for exhibition or educational purposes. Roman glassware, pottery (i.e. complete vessels or vessels of unusual fabric/decoration), metal objects, bone objects, leather items, items of jewellery or personal adornment and significant Roman coins will continue to be added to the collections on an occasional basis.

**2/3.7 Saxon:** The museum's collection of Saxon material is quite small – mainly pottery, grave goods, metalwork, weapons, jewellery, domestic items, small finds and coins. Some of the objects on display were excavated from a series of graves found on the site of the railway cuttings at Higham. Other material in the collection is from cemetery sites at Watts Avenue, Rochester, and from Chatham Lines. The museum collection houses an important set of local Saxon coins of King Aethelred's Mint c.950AD.

### **2/3.7.1 Resources and Principles**

- a) Most of the complete Saxon objects in the collection are on permanent display in the Guildhall's introductory gallery. Material not suitable for display is stored in the Guildhall's archaeology store.

### **2/3.7.2 Future Collecting Policy for Saxon Material**

- a) Because Saxon artefacts are significantly underrepresented in the museum collections, consideration will be given to acquiring Saxon material of Medway provenance for addition to the collection. Only material that is appropriate for exhibition purposes or adds significantly to knowledge of life in Saxon Medway will be added to the collection. The emphasis will be on collecting good-quality complete items that can be easily stored or exhibited.

**2/3.8 Medieval and Post-Medieval:** The museum's collection of Medieval and post-medieval archaeological material is small. A number of high-quality

complete and semi-complete ceramic and metalwork items are displayed in the museum galleries. Additional material from key local sites in Medway (including Chatham) is housed in the reserve collection and is mainly of academic research interest.

### **2/3.8.1 Resources and Principles**

- a) Most of the complete or almost-complete Medieval and Post-Medieval archaeological objects in the collection are on permanent display throughout the Guildhall. Material not suitable for display is stored in boxes in the Guildhall's archaeology store.

### **2/3.8.2 Future Collecting Policy for Medieval and Post-Medieval Material**

- a) Complete Medieval artefacts are significantly underrepresented in the museum collections due to a lack of excavation work in Medway on sites that are likely to yield Medieval archaeology. The museum does not currently have the capacity to accession large collections of excavated material, but this situation may well change in the future as new storage facilities are found for the museum service. The short-term emphasis will be on collecting individual or small groups of Medieval objects that make a real contribution to understanding the history of Medway from the 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> centuries onwards. Small finds, coins, metalwork and substantially complete items of pottery will be the focus for future collecting strategy. A similar policy will be adopted for artefacts representative of the Post-Medieval period.

### **2/3.9 Resources and Principles: archaeological site archives**

- a) The importance of retaining both the objects and the written records (collectively called the 'archive') has been repeatedly emphasised in reports, including that by a working party of the Committee for Rescue Archaeology of the Ancient Monuments Board for England (the *Dimbleby Report*), published by the Department of the Environment in 1978.
- b) Having, in the past, accepted the archive from a number of excavations into its collections, the Guildhall Museum takes responsibility for the preservation of the objects and any associated paper-based documentation. Many of the objects stored are in themselves unsuitable for conventional display, but will be available for archaeologists of future generations to study or reinterpret.
- c) If in future years, it is decided that these archaeological 'archive' collections should be transferred to a more appropriate repository with better storage facilities and enhanced public access, the archive will be transferred in its totality and will not be split into constituent parts. This will preserve the integrity of the archive.
- d) The museum does not yet have access to storage facilities that fully meet the minimum national Accreditation standard for the storage of

archaeological archives (objects and documentation). Medway Council hopes to be able to upgrade general storage facilities for the museum in the short to medium-term to create capacity for the storage and long-term curation of local excavated archaeological material.

### **2/3.10 Future Collecting Policy for Archaeological Site Archives**

- a) Medway Council is committed to securing higher grade storage facilities for the museum service. Once new upgraded storage facilities are forthcoming, the Guildhall Museum will eventually be in a position to house medium-size archaeological excavation archives in environmental conditions that meet the national standard. Medway Council recognises that the long-term storage of archaeological site archives is a County-wide problem on a massive scale that may require a County-wide solution (including the possible creation of a centralised staffed storage facility to house archaeological site archives from the historic county of Kent).
- b) If substantial groups of archaeological objects are found in future years within the geographical area administered by Medway Council (particularly as a result of regeneration and re-development projects), alternative storage arrangements that meet the national Accreditation standard will need to be sourced and funded by the Council or its developers.
- c) The above situation will be reviewed as new storage facilities become available or when a collective arrangement is made for the establishment and operation of centralised regional archaeological storage within the historic county of Kent.
- d) In the short-term, the acquisition of archaeological objects for the collection will be limited to stray finds, small objects that can be used as a basis for display/education work, or individual objects that make a significant contribution to public understanding of the early history of the area.
- e) Purchases will only be made in exceptional circumstances. This will principally be where objects are offered to the museum through the process of the 1996 Treasure Act.
- f) Loans will be accepted only where these are either required for display purposes or where they will make a significant contribution to the research potential of the collections.

## **ETHNOGRAPHIC COLLECTION**

### **2/3.11 Existing Collections**

- a) The museum houses a small but interesting collection of Ethnographic items that appear to have been collected mainly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The objects originate from the following geographical areas – Africa, Oceania, Australia, Japan and China. Contents of the collection can be summarised as follows:-

**b) Africa**

- Two unique items (an axe and a club) from the H.M. Stanley expedition in the Congo region of 1875-1877.
- A collection of over 50 miscellaneous spears, presumably from central and western Africa.
- A small group of other African items, including a shield, clubs, knife, bark cloth, gourds and beads from South Africa (20 items).

**c) Oceania**

- Five carved Oceanic clubs and other carved wooden items.
- Samples of tapa cloth (2 items).

**d) Australia**

- Miscellaneous items, including a shield, boomerang, arrowhead knapped from glass, bull-roarer and other pieces (10 items).

**e) Japan**

- Over 20 miscellaneous pieces of armour, including helmets, chain-mail, sword and musket, all of 19<sup>th</sup> century date.
- Some ornaments and curiosities such as a flytrap and folding candlesticks.

**f) China**

- Several pairs of Chinese shoes, two carved figurines and an oil painting.

**2/3.11.1 Future collecting policy for ethnographic material**

- a) The museum will not collect any further ethnographic material other than material that is directly relevant to Medway's current and future ethnic minority communities.

## **LOCAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS 1500-2008**

### **Local and social history collections 1500-2008**

#### **2/3.12 Existing Collections**

- a) The museum houses a wide range of generic social history items 1500-present day, as well as local history objects specifically relevant to Medway and the surrounding geographical area.
- b) The object collection is particularly rich in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century local and social history material, but the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries are also strongly represented with a high proportion of the objects of this date on public display in the galleries.
- c) The museum service has also acquired or purchased a number of specialist themed local history collections which complement collections of local relevance. These collections include a collection of Napoleonic Prisoner-of-War work in wood, straw and bone; the Elizabeth Horton Collection of Victoriana (purchased in 1994 and 1995), and the M.A. Norris Collection of Lamps (purchased in 1982 with grant aid assistance from the Science Museum, London).

#### **2/3.12.1 Resources and Principles: Local and Social History Collections**

- a) The local and social history collection is composed of items that do not 'fit' conveniently into other collections and are therefore a fairly eclectic 'mix' of objects. Despite its importance supposedly lying in its 'local' links, limited evidence of these appear to survive in the supporting documentation. This is particularly true of the so-called Gillingham Urban Heritage Collection which was entrusted to the safekeeping of Medway Council with the formation of the unitary authority in 1998. A lack of obvious Medway-specific material is also limiting, making it difficult to tell many local stories in display form.
- b) The old City of Rochester museum collections did not contain very much local or social history material post 1910. Social history objects in the Gillingham Urban Heritage Collection help to address this deficiency, but the fact that there is no original detailed inventory accompanying the Gillingham Collection means that use of the collection as a reflection of the local 20<sup>th</sup> century community and community 'stories' is almost impossible. Most of the objects housed in the Gillingham Urban Heritage Collection are generic social history items with little or no specific relevance to Gillingham. Some of the objects are also in a poor condition.

- c) As a museum, rather than a library or archive, the emphasis must be on objects. These objects only count as pieces of 'local history' if they have good local provenance and fall within this policy. Relevance can only be proven with research into the object's background and the context of Medway's history.

### **2/3.12.2 Collecting Policy**

- a) Only material with a good local Medway provenance will be acquired by donation, purchase or bequest. Objects with a good local provenance are classified as those that have been made and/or used and/or kept and/or sold within the administrative area of Medway
- b) Long-term loans will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances where the object is of great local historical interest and will perform a valuable function within the museum. All existing loans not covered by the above caveat will in due course be returned as each collection is evaluated and appraised by curatorial staff. Short-term loans will only be accepted for the life of specific exhibitions, displays or projects.
- c) No duplicate items will be accepted unless they have a better local provenance than the one already in the collection, or are in a better and more stable condition. Where appropriate, duplicate items may be retained and used for handling by the Museum Education Service.
- d) Only in exceptional circumstances will large bulky items – whether domestic or industrial – be collected due to limitations on storage. Alternative repositories will be suggested to potential donors of these items. This situation will be reviewed as and when the museum service secures enlarged Accreditation-standard storage facilities.
- e) Offers of donation of original archival material, secondary printed sources, books, maps, ephemera, photographs and old newspapers will be referred to the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre in Strood. The museum service will principally collect three-dimensional objects.
- f) The following broad themes are covered by the social history collections.

### **2/3.12.3 Agricultural history**

Hand tools, farming equipment and farm/gardening implements, costume (smocks), veterinary equipment; agricultural and hop tokens; folders of information/photographs on the history of Kent and Medway windmills etc.

#### **a) Future Collecting Policy for Agricultural Material**

The future emphasis will be on collecting small items and tools that highlight the agricultural history of Medway in past centuries. Only items that are in good condition and can be easily stored will be acquired. Larger items of

agricultural equipment and machinery would in the first instance be offered to the Museum of Kent Life at Maidstone.

#### **2/3.12.4 Arms and Militaria**

Edged weapons (swords and bayonets); military uniforms and helmets, medals, firearms. The museum has a small collection of arms and militaria relating to local regiments and volunteers. These date primarily from the late 18<sup>th</sup>/mid 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and the series contain a number of items of great rarity. The museum houses in excess of one hundred firearms including muskets, carbines, rifles, pistols and revolvers. Some of the weaponry is in poor condition but there are also some exceptionally fine pieces in the collection. The museum also looks after a small number of 17<sup>th</sup> century muskets on behalf of the Dean and Chapter of Rochester Cathedral (part of a collection of uniforms and weaponry associated with the Rochester Cathedral Civil War militia). The museum has a full Home Office firearms licence under the terms of the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988.

##### **a) Future Collecting Policy for Arms and Militaria**

The future emphasis will be on collecting firearms in good condition that have direct links with the Medway community, Medway personages, or Medway gunsmiths (i.e. Palmer of Rochester). At present the museum does not have suitable facilities for the secure public display of firearms, but the Council may wish to consider utilising this specialised collection if satellite display facilities are to be established at Upnor Castle or Rochester Castle. At present, the museum collection is very much a reference collection and research resource. Individual firearms may be used for display in temporary exhibitions if security conditions can be met.

#### **2/3.12.5 Coins, tokens and medals**

The museum houses an interesting and varied collection of coins spanning two millennia. There has not been any systematic collecting of coins in the past. Most of the coins have been acquired as a result of random donations or as a result of archaeological excavations. The earliest coin-related items in the museum collection are Iron Age coin moulds of local provenance; thus suggesting a long history of coin mintage in Rochester. Rochester was an approved mint in late Saxon times. There has been some emphasis in the past on collecting representative coins of local mintage, or coins bearing the name of known local moneyers. The most interesting items from the collection are on permanent public display in the museum's introductory/archaeological gallery.

Brief details of the museum's collections are as follows:-

##### **a) Coins**

- 33 gold Iron Age staters found locally in two small hoards.

- c.30 silver Anglo-Saxon pennies of local manufacture.
- 300+ Roman coins, mostly from a large hoard of debased coins from Gillingham. Approximately 50+ are 'type' specimens from late 19<sup>th</sup> century personal collections. A handful of individual specimens are of local provenance.
- Small collection of about 50 medieval and post-medieval coins, some of local provenance.
- Large collection (over 300) of Georgian and Victorian coinage, mostly from amalgamated small local collections.
- Hundreds of pre-decimal British and 'world' coins (not yet catalogued).

#### b) **Tokens**

- Small (80+) definitive collection of local 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> century (mainly local and Kentish) trade tokens.
- Small collection of miscellaneous 19<sup>th</sup> century hop tokens from Kent and Sussex.

#### c) **Jettons**

- A small collection of 10 jettons (mostly of Nuremberg manufacture/type, 17<sup>th</sup> century.)

#### d) **Medals**

- Mostly 20<sup>th</sup> century commemorative Coronation medals of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (160+ items).
- A small collection of individual commemorative medals from the 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- Individual and several groups of medals from the First and Second World Wars (c. 50+ items).
- A small number of 19<sup>th</sup> century military commemorative medals.

#### e) **Future Collecting Policy for Numismatic Material and Medals**

Future policy will be focussed on collecting Iron Age, Roman, Saxon and Medieval coins that have been found or excavated from sites in and around Medway. Coins representative of the late-Anglo Saxon mint at Rochester and/or coins by known Rochester moneyers will be acquired if the opportunity arises. Post-Medieval coinage will only be acquired for the collections if of



exceptional interest or representative of a type of coin not already retained within the collection. The priority will be to acquire coins that are representative of their type, in good condition, and found within the local area. A small collection of representative Roman coins will be retained and added to on an occasional basis for reference purposes and to facilitate the identification of coins brought to the museum by metal detectorists, coin collectors, and other enquirers.

The museum will seek to acquire trade tokens representative of trades and institutions directly associated with the Medway Towns. Non-Medway Tokens will, in the first instance, be offered to either Maidstone Borough Museum or Dartford Borough Museum as these institutions hold major collections of Kentish trade tokens. Hop tokens from local farms and villages will be added to the collection when the opportunity arises. Interesting items of paranumismatica connected with Medway, and early Anglo-Gallic and German jettons will be another focus for collecting.

The museum will only acquire military and civilian medals that are in good condition and directly connected with places, people or events in Medway. Where possible, related biographical information/photographs/service details and documentation relating to the recipient will also be collected to give the medals a more meaningful historic context. Medals offered to the museum which do not have direct local relevance will, in the first instance, be offered to other more relevant museums and institutions (i.e. the Royal Engineers Museum; Maidstone Museum; Canterbury Museum; National Army Museum; Imperial War Museum).

### **2/3.12.6 Costume, accessories, and personal adornment**

#### **a) Existing collections**

The museum houses approximately 2,000 items of costume, accessories, and objects connected with male and female personal adornment (including c.1,000 items of personal adornment/accessories) included in the Elizabeth Horton Collection. This outstanding collection of mainly smaller Victorian/Edwardian fashion accessories was purchased by the old Rochester City Council from Miss. Elizabeth Horton of King's Heath, Birmingham in 1994/5. Part of this collection was displayed at the museum for a period of 5 years, but the bulk of the collection is now mostly stored in the museum's reserve collection. A full inventory of the Horton Collection was prepared by Holloways, Fine Art Auctioneers and Valuers, of Banbury, Oxfordshire in 1995. This inventory provides a comprehensive guide to the collection. Main categories represented within the Horton Collection include:-

Scent bottles; spectacle cases; seals; parasols; fans; gloves and glove stretchers; bags and purses; boot pulls; card cases; children's and women's linen items; shawls; hats; clogs and shoes; stockings; children's clothing; baby clothes; collars and belts; corsets; bodices; aprons; skirts and petticoats; wedding costume; waistcoats; handkerchiefs; beadwork, and jewellery.

The museum's general collection of costume and costume-related items focuses heavily on the Victorian and Edwardian eras. The collection has not yet been assessed by a costume specialist. Much of the collection appears to be in very poor condition. Some items may not therefore be worthy of long-term retention.

Some of the more interesting items of Victorian costume are displayed on character mannequins in the Board Room on the upper floor of the museum's Conservancy Board building (these items of costume, though impressive to look at, are not in very good condition). Other items of costume have been displayed in temporary exhibitions organised by the museum service including *The Fabulous Fifties* and *Dedicated Followers of Fashion*. Contemporary items of footwear were purchased and added to the museum collection in 2007-8 as part of the *Inside Out* youth project.

Quite a few items of costume appear not to have been properly accessioned in the past. A programme of retrospective documentation is therefore required.

The museum's general collection of costume is an eclectic mix of male, female, and children's costume – including, hats; boots and shoes; uniforms (some 20<sup>th</sup> century military uniform items); day and nightwear; outer and underclothing; accessories; jewellery; walking sticks and canes; umbrellas and parasols; fans; spectacles; former civic regalia/costume items etc. Female costume items comprise the bulk of the collection. There is a noticeable dearth of male and children's costume.

#### **b) Future Collecting Policy for Costume, Accessories and Personal Adornment**

Future policy will be geared to assessing and cataloguing existing costume and costume accessory collections and not to acquiring significant numbers of additional items for the museum costume collection. The emphasis will be on restricting collecting activities to those items of costume/accessories that have a local provenance and relevance, are in good condition, and are likely to be used for display or educational purposes in the future. There should be no duplication of existing items in the collection. The museum lacks a representative collection of 20<sup>th</sup> century costume. This will be the focus for any pro-active collecting. Good-quality items of uniform and costume relevant to the First and Second World War eras, and to the post-Second World War era will be acquired if and when the opportunity arises. Further representative examples of 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century footwear are required for the collections. Items not deemed appropriate for addition to the museum collection will be offered first to Maidstone Museum and Art Gallery. Maidstone Museum houses the largest and most important costume collection in Kent. A number of leading fashion designers (i.e. Zandra Rhodes CBE, Karen Millen and Julie Verhoeven) received their training in Rochester. It would be appropriate for examples of their work to be added to the museum collection if the opportunity arose.

### **2/3.12.7 Ceramics**

#### **a) Existing collections**

The museum houses c.100+ ceramic objects of post-Medieval to modern date some of which are of decorative art quality, others are strictly functional and designed for domestic use. Early pottery examples displayed in the galleries or stored in the reserve collection include salt-glazed stoneware; Bellarmine jars; tin-glazed earthenware drug/chemist jars; transfer-printed wares and lustre-ware etc. The collection includes a small quantity of late 18<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup> century porcelain (including Derby and New Hall etc.); some of this porcelain is displayed in the Board Room in the Conservancy Board Building. Most other types of ceramic are represented in the collection including agateware; creamware; tin-glazed earthenware; stoneware; Wrotham ware; country wares. Blue and white transfer-printed earthenware figures prominently in the collection, but many of the items are in poor or damaged condition. The collection also contains some impressive 19<sup>th</sup> century Staffordshire stoneware figures; household ceramics (cups, saucers, plates, serving dishes, jugs, teapots etc.), commemorative china; beer mugs and tankards and tiles.

#### **b) Future Collecting Policy for Ceramics**

The museum will seek to strengthen its collection of ceramics to make the collection more representative. The emphasis will be on acquiring items of local provenance or with local connections. Wrotham ware; local commemorative china; Staffordshire figures; local stoneware tankards (with names of local pubs or breweries etc.) will be given priority. The museum will also seek to acquire more 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century tin-glazed earthenware drug jars for addition to the collection. Items not deemed suitable for the collection will be offered to other more appropriate museum collections.

### **2/3.12.8 Crafts and craft tools**

#### **a) Existing collection**

The museum houses a small collection of tools and related items representing a number of different local crafts including carpentry; leather-working; coopering; casting and moulding; needlework and allied crafts etc. The museum is very fortunate to house what is possibly the finest surviving 18<sup>th</sup> century tool chest (fully equipped with over 200 contemporary tools in mint condition) in the world. The Seaton Tool Chest (1797) which was formerly the property of Chatham cabinet-maker Benjamin Seaton, is known world-wide and has been exhibited in America and featured on national television. The importance of the chest and its contents in providing an exactly dated and definitive set of tools for a late 18<sup>th</sup> century tradesman cannot be overstated. No comparable kit of tools exists elsewhere in Britain or America, its uniqueness lying in completeness, verification provided by a contemporary (18<sup>th</sup> century) inventory and the condition of the tools which are in general little

used and well preserved. The Seaton Tool Chest is on permanent display in the Medway Gallery.

**b) Future Collecting Policy for Craft materials and craft tools**

The museum will seek to collect individual tools and sets of tools that are representative of the specialist trades, crafts and economic activity that were the hallmark of Medway's economy for at least three hundred years. The focus will be on acquiring sets of craft-specific small tools that are easy to store, together with any documentary information/photographs/journals that illustrate how and in what context the tools were used. Although the museum will collect tools relating to maritime crafts (i.e. boat building, barge building etc.), it will not collect any tools relating to past ship-building activities at Chatham Naval Dockyard. Any such items offered to the museum will, in the first instance, be offered to Chatham Historic Dockyard or the Dockyard Historical Society collection. The museum will attempt to avoid the collection of duplicate items.

**2/3.12.9 Crime and Punishment**

**a) Existing Collection**

The museum houses a small but interesting collection of 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century items on the history of the maintenance of law and order in Medway. Material in this collection is mostly on display in the Guildhall and includes truncheons and staves; uniform items; rattles; lamps; medallions; posters and other ephemera. The museum also houses old City of Rochester whipping post which is on permanent display.

**b) Future Collecting Policy for Crime and Punishment materials**

The museum will aim to collect objects that complement existing collections, particularly objects that reflect local law and order prior to the creation of the Kent County Constabulary in 1857, and the history of the local Borough police forces. Any offers of non-Medway police material will be forwarded to the Kent Police Museum at Chatham Dockyard.

**2/3.12.10 Domestic appliances and household 'inventions' (mainly 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century)**

**a) Existing Collection**

The Gillingham Urban Heritage Collection housed in store at Anchor Wharf Chatham contains a small but useful collection of domestic appliances and mechanical 'inventions' of mainly early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century date. This collection includes gas and electric cookers; a 1950s refrigerator, kitchen utensils and gadgets; gas and electric fires; hearth furniture; a kitchen range; a 'copper'; knife cleaning machines, toasters; sewing machines; typewriters; lamps and lighting. These items have, in the past, been used to populate temporary exhibitions and for educational purposes. Some of the domestic appliances

have been used to populate a Victorian/Edwardian kitchen display housed on the first floor of the Conservancy Board Building.

**b) Future Collecting Policy for Domestic Appliances and Household 'inventions'**

The museum service will be very selective re: the number and type of domestic appliances that will be added to the collection in future due to pressure on available storage space. The emphasis will be on acquiring high quality items in excellent condition that have a direct link with home life in Medway and reflect a high standard of design. The museum service will not collect duplicate items.

**2.12.11 Domestic furniture**

**a) Existing Collection**

The museum collection contains a number of items of furniture acquired via the Foord Bequest and the Gillingham Urban Heritage Collection. Chairs; settles; sofas; tables; ornamental cabinets; cupboards, ornamental sideboards; pianos and American organs are included in the collection. Most of the Foord Bequest furniture is in good condition and is displayed in the 'Victorian Drawing Room' exhibit on the first floor of the Conservancy Board Building. Many of the items of domestic furniture in the Gillingham Urban Heritage Collection are in poor condition, including a large collection of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century chairs. This collection of chairs has been assessed by staff of the Victoria and Albert Museum – many are beyond the point of restoration and may need to be disposed-of in due course. A number of important items of furniture that were previously on display at Eastgate House, Rochester (formerly the Charles Dickens Centre) are currently being stored in Accreditation-standard commercial storage in London.

**b) Future Collecting Policy for Domestic Furniture**

For the time being, the museum will limit the amount of domestic furniture that it acquires in view of the lack of storage and display space available at the museum and off-site. Serious consideration will have to be given at some future date to the disposal of a large number of the chairs that are currently housed with the Gillingham Urban Heritage Collection. Items of furniture removed from Eastgate House, Rochester, will remain in commercial storage until future display needs and requirements have been assessed and the future use of Eastgate House decided.

**2/3.12.12 Education and learning**

**a) Existing Collection**

The Gillingham Urban History Collection includes a set of Victorian/Edwardian wooden school desks and benches; school text- books; slates and slate pencils; charts and maps; alphabet sets and educational toys. The same

collection also contains post-Second World War school text and exercise books.

**b) Future Collecting Policy for Education and Learning material**

The museum will continue to acquire smaller items that can be easily stored that reflect the history of education in and around Medway. Existing collections are sufficiently wide-ranging to provide the basis for a reconstruction Victorian classroom exhibit.

**2/3.12.13 Glassware**

**a) Existing Collection**

The museum collection contains glassware dating from the Roman era to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some of the more interesting and unusual pieces of historic glassware are on permanent display in the museum galleries. More functional domestic glassware items are housed in the Gillingham Urban Heritage Collection. The museum collection includes Roman glass; ornamental glassware (18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries); drinking glasses; Masonic glass; mirrors; wine bottles (17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries); beer bottles (19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries), domestic bottles; glass tableware ('cut' and moulded glass of 20<sup>th</sup> century date).

**b) Future Collecting Policy for Glassware**

The museum will continue to add significant pieces of glassware to its collection, particularly pieces of local provenance. Examples of early glass would make a welcome addition to the museum collections.

**2/3.12.14 Health and medicine**

**a) Existing Collection**

Pharmaceutical equipment and advertising material, prescription books, surgical instruments, medical packaging, first aid equipment, drug jars and medicine bottles.

**b) Future Collecting Policy for Health and Medicine-related material**

The museum will give priority to collecting local health and medicine-related material that is representative of objects/materials used by local pharmacists, doctors, dentists, military and naval surgeons and hospitals. The emphasis will be on collecting small objects and related ephemera that can be easily stored. Larger pieces of medical equipment or furniture/fittings originating from former 'medical' premises (i.e. surgeries, hospitals, pharmacies) will only be collected in exceptional circumstances.

### **2/3.12.15 Horology (Clocks and watches and watchmaking tools and equipment)**

Pocket watches, watchmakers' tools, long-case, wall and bracket clocks. Smaller timepieces.

#### **a) Future Collecting Policy for Horological items**

The museum's main focus will be on collecting small items representative of local clock and watchmakers. Items will only be collected if they are in good displayable condition or are of outstanding reference interest. Consideration will be given to acquiring locally-made 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century longcase clocks, but the museum must be satisfied that it has appropriate display or storage conditions for the clock/s prior to agreeing to acquisition. Tools and equipment used by local clock and watchmakers will be acquired, provided they do not duplicate material already held as part of the Gillingham Urban Heritage Collection.

### **2/3.12.16 Industrial history**

Models and working engines relating to local Medway companies such as Aveling and Porter and Short Brothers (some generic models housed at the Old Brook Pumping Station at Chatham). Small souvenirs of particular local industries. Steam engine, printing press etc. Diesel pumping engines and wood-burning engine preserved *in situ* at the Old Brook Pumping Station, Chatham. The Brook Pumping Station in Chatham was constructed in 1929, has full Ancient Monument status, and is declared to be the best surviving example of a diesel-powered water pumping station in Britain. The pumping station does not yet have accredited museum status but is recognised to be a unique and important heritage attraction which will feature prominently in plans for the future regeneration of the centre of Chatham.

#### **a) Future Collecting Policy for Industrial items**

Medway has a rich industrial heritage with a strong emphasis on engineering, aeronautics, the manufacture of steam-powered vehicles/engines, papermaking, brewing etc. The museum has to realise its limitations in preserving and interpreting aspects of the local industrial history as most of the plant used in associated manufacturing processes is large and heavy. The museum service will only be able to collect small portable items associated with these industries – including specialist tools, models, and small portable pieces of equipment. Archives, ephemera, photographs and oral history material relating to past Medway industries will be forwarded to the Medway Archives and Local History Centre for long-term deposit and public access. The museum service will continue (subject to available funding) to manage the Old Brook Pumping Station in Chatham. This building is currently open to the general public twice a week throughout the year. Advice about future acquisitions to the Brook Pumping Station collection will be sought from the Chairman and members of the Medway Industrial Archaeology Group.

### **2/3.12.17 'Kitchenalia' and domestic utensils**

Pots and pans, dishes and bowls, eating and cooking utensils, flatware, kitchen fixtures and fittings', labour-saving kitchen gadgets.

#### **a) Future Collecting Policy for Kitchenalia**

The museum will only add further 'Kitchenalia' items to its collection if the items are highly likely to be utilised for temporary exhibition purposes, for education work or for display in the museum's permanent Victorian/Edwardian kitchen display in the Conservancy Board Building. Interesting labour-saving equipment and gadgets not already represented in the collections will be actively collected.

### **2/3.12.18 Lamps and lighting**

Norris Collection of domestic lamps (including oil lamps) – over 1,000 items in this collection; other decorative lamps; more primitive lamps and lanterns; gas mantles; 20<sup>th</sup> century lighting fixtures and fittings.

#### **a) Future collecting policy for Lamps and Lighting material**

The museum service already houses an outstanding collection of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> lighting equipment. This collection is comprehensive in terms of oil and gas-powered lighting. The museum will actively collect interesting or unusual items to complement this collection, particularly interesting 20<sup>th</sup> century domestic lighting appliances.

### **2/3.12.19 Leisure and entertainment**

Playbills, theatre and music hall ephemera; phonographs and gramophones; wireless sets and transistor radios; early T.V. sets; radiograms and record players; tape recording equipment; games; books; hobby items.

#### **a) Future collecting policy for Leisure and Entertainment material**

The museum service already houses a good representative collection of mechanical and electrical equipment concerned with entertainment in the home. It will be the policy of the museum to only acquire unusual or locally significant objects that are in excellent condition, and then only if those objects are likely to be suitable for display or museum education work. Items in full working order (i.e. gramophones and phonographs etc.) may be acquired for demonstration/education purposes. Ephemeral items (posters, leaflets, programmes, playbills etc.) of local interest will in future be offered first to the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre for long-term retention and public access.



### **2/3.12.20 Maritime objects**

Barge and ship models; ephemera; barge racing trophies and shields; name-boards from local barges. Souvenirs re: fishing and ship-building on the River Medway. Oyster fishing and Oyster Fisheries souvenirs. Full-size Medway fishing boat (Doble) the *May* currently housed at Chatham Historic Dockyard.

#### **a) Future Collecting Policy for Maritime objects**

The museum will only collect maritime-related objects if they are likely to be suitable for display purposes or if they complement existing collections concerned with fishing and boat-building on the River Medway. Naval or naval shipbuilding-related material will, in the first instance, be offered to Chatham Historic Dockyard. There are future plans to give selected museum displays a much stronger 'maritime' focus. The museum already houses a representative collection of locally relevant barge and boat models. The museum will continue to collect objects and associated material illustrative of local boat-building families, barge racing, and fishing (including Oyster Fishing).

The museum owns one Medway fishing boat (the *May*) which is the only known surviving example of a 19<sup>th</sup> century Medway 'doble'. This vessel is currently in store in Chatham Historic Dockyard. The future retention of this vessel will need to be reviewed by the museum service if at any stage in the future appropriate undercover storage cannot be found for the boat. The museum will not acquire any more full-size boats/fishing vessels, and will only collect ship models if they are of outstanding historic interest and relevance to the River Medway and/or Medway.

### **2/3.12.21 Memorial and other plaques**

Military and civilian commemorative plaques – some removed from local buildings prior to demolition work taking place.

#### **a) Future Collecting Policy for Memorial and other plaques**

The museum will only acquire plaques of outstanding importance to the history of Medway or its buildings and then only if appropriate storage or display facilities can be secured for the plaques. The museum service will actively encourage potentially redundant plaques to be re-used locally (including transfer to, and display, in new buildings). There is a strong probability that military-related plaques in the museum collection will be made available for public display at the St. George's Centre in Chatham. Plaques and memorials relating to local clubs and societies (Rotary, Soroptimist, Masonic, Civic, Friendly Societies, religious groups, regiments etc.) will only be acquired in exceptional circumstances. The main criteria for acquisition will be whether or not the plaques/memorials will be actively used in the future.

### **2/3.12.22 Musical instruments**

Organette (complete), church organ (in pieces) on loan from Trottiscliffe, Harmoniums/19<sup>th</sup> century pianos/pianola (on display in the Conservancy Board Building)

#### **a) Future Collecting Policy for Musical instruments**

The museum houses a very small collection of musical instruments, most of which are used as 'set dressing' in displays. None of the instruments is in full playing order. The museum will only collect small musical instruments in excellent condition which are directly linked to the history of the Medway Towns or local performers (music hall artistes; bandsmen etc.). The museum will not collect any more pianos, harmoniums or organs unless they are in excellent condition, are likely to be used for display purposes, and are of outstanding local historic interest. The museum is seeking to acquire a harpsichord in full working order for installation in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Guildhall Chamber. All other old keyboard instruments offered to the museum service will, in the first instance be offered to the Finchcocks Living Museum of Music at Goudhurst. Ethnic and Western European instruments offered to the museum but not required for the collections, will be offered to the Horniman Museum, Forest Hill, London or other appropriate specialist collection.

### **2/3.12.23 Napoleonic Prisoner-of-War craft work**

Bone ship models and other miscellaneous decorative bone items made by the prisoners. Also other prisoner-made craft work in straw, wood and bone.

#### **a) Future Collecting Policy for Napoleonic Prisoner-of-War Work**

Interpretation of the history of the River Medway prisoner-of-war hulks is a key component of the permanent displays in the Guildhall. At the heart of the museum is a three-deck partial reconstruction of a Medway prison hulk comprising the 'Hulks Experience'. On permanent display in the lower deck is a small but representative selection of high-quality bone and straw-work items manufactured by French prisoners-of-war in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. None of this material is of known local provenance. Future priority will be given to acquiring prisoner-of-war work that is known to have been made by prisoners incarcerated on the River Medway, or work that illustrates the topography of the River Medway and Medway's centres of population. Contemporary paintings or drawings produced by the prisoners will be especially sought for the collections. Given the recent high rise in the cost of material of this type when it comes up for sale at auction, financial assistance may need to be sought from external funding sources if outstanding local examples come up for sale. Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery - which houses the largest French Napoleonic prisoner-of-war work collection in the world – will be consulted with prior to the purchase at auction of any 'generic' Napoleonic prisoner-of-war craft work.

### **2/3.12.24 Needlework and related crafts**

Needlework tools and accessories; samplers; Berlin woolwork pictures; tapestries; lace-making tools and accessories; lace; tatting work; knitting items; sewing machines (table-top and treadle); beadwork; quilting etc.

#### **a) Future Collecting Policy for Needlework and related crafts**

The museum will seek to acquire 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century needlework samplers of local provenance, but only if they are in good displayable condition. The Elizabeth Horton Collections contains needlework tools and samples of different types of needlework. Significant, locally-used or produced items will be added to this collection as and when the opportunity arises.

### **2/3.12.25 Scientific instruments**

Navigational instruments, optical instruments, specialist scientific instruments.

#### **a) Future Collecting Policy for Scientific Instruments**

The museum will seek to acquire small, easily-stored historic scientific instruments for addition to the collection as and when the opportunity arises. These instruments must have strong local connections. The museum would not normally collect scientific instruments used by the navy or army. In the first instance, these would be offered to Chatham Historic Dockyard or the Royal Engineers Museum at Gillingham.

### **2/3.12.26 Smoking-related artefacts**

Clay tobacco pipes; Tobacco jars; cigarette packets and cards; pipes and pipe racks; cigar cutters; smoking ephemera.

#### **a) Future Collecting Policy for Smoking-related artefacts**

The museum will actively seek to acquire clay smoking pipes; pipe moulds; kiln material; pipe-making tools; smoking advertising material etc. that relates directly to Medway. Fine or exceptional examples of Meerschaum and/or briar pipes will continue to be added to the collection.

### **2/3.12.27 Sports**

General 20<sup>th</sup> century sports equipment for cricket/football/hockey etc. Sporting trophies. Posters and other material relating to Swimming and rowing matches on the River Medway. Souvenirs of Gillingham Football Club. The 'running Bishop's' athletics shorts etc.

### a) **Future Collecting Policy for Sports material**

Objects and ephemera relating to the history of sport is somewhat underrepresented in the museum collection. This is very surprising as Rochester had one of the oldest-known cricket teams in England (c.1718) and the army and navy pioneered many different sports in the local area. There is also a marked absence of material concerned with the history of football in Medway. Future policy will be geared to filling some of the obvious 'gaps' in these collections. It is hoped that new material will be acquired for the collection when the museum stages an exhibition on the history of sport in Medway later in 2008-9. Future policy will be geared to obtaining three-dimensional material, equipment, costume and ephemera associated with popular and minority sports in the Medway. Items connected with outstanding/Olympic sportspeople from the Medway will also be added to the collection as the opportunity arises.

### **2/3.12.28 Toys and Games**

Dolls (19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century); Dolls' Houses; toy soldiers; Noah's arks; Pedlar Doll Bazaar c.1860; optical and mechanical toys; board games and a wide range of everyday toys.

### a) **Future Collecting Policy for Toys and Games**

The museum already houses a representative collection of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century dolls, some of which are on permanent display in the Conservancy Board Building. The museum will, in future, focus its efforts on collecting dolls, bears and 'character dolls' that are more representative of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are also significant 'gaps' in the museum's modest collection of 20<sup>th</sup> century toys, so future policy will focus on the acquisition of representative toys that can be used as a basis for temporary exhibitions and Museum Education Service work. More working/mechanical toys are required for the collection. Only toys and games in good condition will be added to the collection. Board games will only be acquired if they are relevant to other themes represented in the museum's diverse collections.

### **2/3.12.29 Transport and communications**

Local railway souvenirs; 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century bicycles; hand-cart; cycle and carriage lamps etc.

### a) **Future Collecting Policy for Transport and Communications**

Items connected with transport are underrepresented in the collections. There are significant limitations on the facilities available for the storage of transport items, so the museum will need to be extremely selective in what it acquires. The museum already houses a small but interesting collection of late 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> century bicycles (including a number of 'Penny Farthing' bicycles). It is unlikely that the museum would wish to add any more bicycles to its existing collection, although equipment, ephemera, and costume associated with

cycling as a hobby is much needed. There is very little in the museum collections linked with railways, trams or buses. The museum will seek to collect small objects/ephemera/signs etc. linked to these themes, but larger items offered to the museum will be declined or offered to a more appropriate specialist museum.

### **2/3.12.30 Treen**

Miscellaneous ornamental and domestic items of treen; Tunbridge and Mauchlin ware souvenirs.

#### **a) Future Collecting Policy for Treen**

The museum has good examples of 'treen' items in its diverse collections. The priority will be to acquire domestic items of treen that complement existing collections, or decorative wooden items that show views of Medway and its environs. Items of Tunbridge Ware offered to the museum will be offered, in the first instance, to Tunbridge Wells Museum. This museum holds the world's largest collection of Tunbridge Ware.

### **2/3.12.31 War and wartime Home Front items**

A selection of civilian and military uniform items, souvenirs and weaponry from the Crimea War onwards. Boer War and First World War souvenirs. Second World War 'Home Front' items including air raid shelters; gas masks, (military and civilian); stirrup pumps; Home Front badges and publications; ARP, AFS and other Home Front helmets and uniform items. Patriotic items of ephemera. Commemorative china.

#### **a) Future Collecting Policy for War and wartime Home Front items**

The museum service will actively collect objects and ephemera associated with the First World War and the Second World War, with an emphasis on 'Home Front' items. Priority will be given to objects that have clear locally-relevant 'stories or reminiscences associated with them. Objects, uniforms and ephemera with less local naval or military associations will be offered to the most appropriate specialist museum in the region.

### **2/3.12.32 Weights and measures**

Official civic weights and measures for Medway; sets of weights and measures used by local traders and professions.

#### **a) Future Collecting Policy for Weights and Measures**

The museum will continue collecting official weights and measures relevant to Medway as well as weights, scales and balances used by particular trades or occupations in Medway.

### **2/3.12.33 Woodworking tools**

Woodworking tools representative of a range of different carpentry and associated crafts. The 18th tool chest of Benjamin Seaton of Chatham. The finest set of preserved woodworking tools from the 18<sup>th</sup> century (c.1796-7). This chest and its contents are of great consequence in the history of cabinet making. They are accompanied by a contemporary inventory and virtually all of the tools have survived in pristine condition. These factors combine to make it an object of international renown and importance and allow the tools to be used as a 'dateline' for comparison with other tools thought to be of the same period.

#### **a) Future Collecting Policy for Woodworking Tools**

The museum will continue to collect woodworking tools allied to local trades and crafts or tools by local makers. Miscellaneous chests or collections of standard woodworking tools will only be acquired in exceptional circumstances.

## **ART COLLECTION**

### **2/3.13 Existing Collection**

- a) The museum houses a modest but interesting art collection comprising oil paintings, watercolours, and prints and engravings. Some of the most important paintings in the collection are on permanent public display in the Guildhall Chamber and in the Conservancy Board Building. Other paintings are displayed on an occasional basis in temporary exhibitions. The museum does not yet have an appropriate dedicated gallery-space for the display of paintings. Plans for the future of Eastgate House, Rochester, may include provision of a traditional art gallery facility where local works of art could be displayed and made more accessible to the public. Art displays have, in recent years, been held in the Guildhall Chamber (this room does not have any wall-hanging space for temporary exhibits and environmental conditions and lighting levels would militate against the medium-long term display of watercolour paintings).
- b) There appears to have been some attempts at systematic collecting in the more recent past with an emphasis on acquiring local topographical views and the works of Rochester-born artist Charles Spencelayh (1865-1958). Charles Spencelayh was born in Rochester and lived in the local area for the first forty-seven years of his life. He is one of the most notable artists that the Medway has produced. He is generally associated with exquisitely painted works in the High Victorian 'narrative' style. A number of important Spencelayh paintings were purchased by Rochester-upon-Medway Council for addition to the museum collection in the 1980s and 1990s. The purchase of some of these paintings was with grant aid from the Victoria and Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund. Further additions have been made to the Spencelayh collection resulting from the transfer of Spencelayh paintings from the Tate Gallery (London) to the Guildhall

Museum. There are over 40 works by Spencelayh in the museum's art collection.

- c) The fine series of large oil paintings of monarchs and local worthies that grace the walls of the Guildhall Chamber are of particular importance. The paintings are referred to in Charles Dickens' novel *Great Expectations*.
- d) A small dedicated art-store was installed in the Guildhall in 2006-7. Paintings can now be properly hung on appropriate roller-racking, made accessible to researchers, and stored in reasonable environmental conditions with all natural daylight excluded.

### **2/3.13.1 Oil paintings**

- a) The museum houses c.140 oil paintings – an eclectic mix of portraits, and landscapes featuring locations in and around Medway. This collection has been fully catalogued and published by the Public Catalogue Foundation (See: *Oil Paintings in Public Ownership: Kent; Public Catalogue Foundation, 2004*). Some of the paintings in this collection are in poor condition, others are unattributed.
- b) The Guildhall Museum holds over 20 oil paintings by Charles Spencelayh (together with drawings, engravings and preliminary sketches). The collection attempts to provide a biographical story and focuses on the artist's self-portraits, portraits of his son and both wives, and pictures that incorporate other personal touches such as family pets and visual references to the Medway area. The collection also includes several examples of his well-known works, showing his interest in the eccentric and whimsical portrayal of elderly character studies. Some of the oil paintings were generously donated by descendants of the artist.
- c) **Important oil paintings in the collection are by or attributed to:-**
  - Thomas Sidney Cooper (1803-1902)
  - Michael Dahl (1659-1743)
  - H. Branston Freer (1870-1902)
  - Henry Hopper
  - William Aldolphus Knell (1805-1875)
  - Godfrey Kneller (1646-1723)
  - Daniel de Konink (1668-)
  - Hendrik Frans van Lint (1684-1763)
  - Kate Perugini (1838-1929)
  - W. Huntley
  - Richard Philips (1681-1741)
  - Charles Spencelayh (1865-1958)
  - John Wollaston (1736-1775)
- d) The collection includes important original paintings of Sir Cloudesley Shovell; members of Charles Dickens' family; and monarchs and MPs

including William III; Queen Anne; Sir Stafford Fairbourn; Sir Joseph Williamson; Sir Thomas Colby; Richard Watts; Sir John Leake etc.

### **2/3.13.2 Watercolour paintings**

- a) The museum houses a collection of approximately 130 watercolour paintings by local artists generally featuring Medway and Kentish topographical views. All of the watercolour paintings have been catalogued. A dozen or so watercolour paintings by Charles Spencelayh are the most important in the collection. The collection also contains a number of folios of 19<sup>th</sup> century watercolour sketches (c.230 in number) by unknown amateur artists, featuring Kentish topographical views/buildings etc. Some of the most interesting watercolours are displayed in the corridors and on the stairwell of the Conservancy Board Building.

### **2/3.13.3 Prints and engravings**

- a) The museum houses a collection of over 1,000 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century prints and engravings (mainly monochrome, but some polychrome or hand-tinted) – some extracted from printed volumes – covering a wide range of subjects including monarchs; famous personages; topographical views; battles; maritime history etc. Three quarters of these prints and engravings have been catalogued. A documentation programme (2007-2008) will result in all of these prints and engravings being properly catalogued.

### **2/3.13.4 Resources and Principles**

- a) The museum has long collected paintings by local artists and of local subjects even though the museum service lacks an art gallery facility and until recently has not had access to accreditation-standard storage facilities for housing the art collection. There has always been the expectation that a proper art gallery will one day be established in Medway and that part or all of the museum's art collection would be used as a core collection to populate the new gallery. Some of the paintings held within the museum's art collection will require expensive restoration work prior to being placed on public display. Some of the paintings would also require re-framing or extensive repairs to existing historic frames. Key paintings in the collection which are on permanent display in the museum are generally in good condition and have been cleaned or restored in recent decades. Quite a few of the paintings in the collection are unattributed. The collection is seen as a potentially valuable resource for small temporary exhibitions and for educational work (particularly the portraits which are useful indicators of period fashion and taste). Some paintings might be appropriate for short-term loan to other museums or institutions that can meet the accreditation standard for the display of works of art. There are no suitable spaces within the Guildhall or the Conservancy Board Building for the establishment of a permanent art gallery, but – as previously stated – new gallery facilities may be forthcoming with the development of Eastgate House in Rochester High Street. In the short term, the number of additions to the art collection will



need to match the available storage space in the museum's small dedicated art storage facility.

### **2/3.13.5 Future Collecting Policy (Art Collections)**

- a) The museum will continue to acquire by purchase, donation or bequest paintings, prints and engravings that are locally relevant by virtue of the artist, subject or provenance. Local in this context covers the area currently administered by Medway Unitary Authority. Additional paintings will only be added to the collection if they are in good condition, highly relevant to the local area or the role of the museum, and can be accommodated within the limited storage facilities of the museum art store. Works which have been collected in the past but which fall outside of the 'local' criteria will be retained for the time being and will be used as an educational/study resource. Works of art featuring local naval/military themes will, in the first instance, be offered to more relevant museums in Medway (i.e. Chatham Historic Dockyard or the Royal Engineers Museum at Gillingham). The museum service will reserve the right at some future date to consider the disposal (in accordance with accreditation procedures) of a number of minor works of art currently housed in the art collection which are in extremely poor condition or are of little or no artistic merit.
- b) The presumption of the Museum will be against the acceptance of long-term loans of works of art.
- c) The museum will be pro-active in seeking to add to its specialist collection of Charles Spencelayh paintings and sketches; works connected with the life and family of Charles Dickens; paintings of the Medway prison hulks; topographical views of Medway that are distinctive, unique or unusual; and portraits of individuals who have strong historic links with the life and history of Medway.

## **SILVER COLLECTION**

### **2/3.14 Existing Collection**

- a) The Guildhall Museum's collection of civic silver, silver-gilt, and silver plate spans three centuries of civic history. The collection has been fully catalogued and all key pieces photographed. Pieces in the collection included civic regalia (ceremonial maces, chains of office, civic jewellery, presentation pieces, badges of office, tipstaves, staves, caskets, Court swords etc.) and more functional 'civic' pieces (candelabra, plates and dishes, centrepieces, condiment sets, tankards, wine jugs etc.) that were presented to various local councils by civic and local dignitaries for use at banquets etc., or to commemorate a period in office.
- b) The most outstanding pieces in this collection of c.170 separate items comprise the early civic regalia of the City of Rochester and Borough of Chatham including the Rochester City Mace of 1661; the Silver Oar of

1748 used by the Admiral of the River Medway; the Silver gilt mace for the Borough of Chatham (1891); and the Mayoral chain for the Borough of Chatham (incorporating an 18<sup>th</sup> century chain which belonged to one of the Doges of Venice. A small number of items relevant to the Strood Rural District and the old Borough of Gillingham are also housed in the collection. Most of the items in this collection are now regarded as 'historic' artefacts which are too valuable for active use and have therefore been placed in the permanent secure safekeeping of the museum service. Key items from this collection are on permanent display in the Guildhall Chamber. The whole collection was displayed in a temporary exhibition (*The Treasury: Medway's Civic Silver*) at the museum in 2005.

- c) A few items in the collection are used on special occasions i.e. for the annual Admiralty Court held at the Guildhall, for royal visits, or for display at high level civic functions. On these occasions, special arrangements are made for the security, handling and insurance of the objects when they are off-site. The museum service is responsible for the security and well-being of this collection. Consultant advice regarding the care, security, maintenance and cleaning of this important collection is usually sought from Garrards Ltd. Some of the items in the collection have been professionally cleaned/restored by the Crown jewellers.
- d) The museum also houses a modest collection of silver plate items such as sports trophies and medallions; trophies for 19<sup>th</sup> century barge-racing events on the River Medway; civic exchange gifts etc.
- e) The Sir Joseph Williamson Collection of ecclesiastical plate is on permanent loan to the museum from the Dean and Chapter of Rochester Cathedral and the Trustees of the Sir Joseph Williamson Mathematical School, Rochester. This fine collection of communion plate is of national importance and is on permanent public display at the museum. The plate is displayed on a very occasional basis at Rochester Cathedral. On these occasions, the museum makes appropriate arrangement for the insurance, secure transport and handling of the items whilst off-site.
- f) The museum collection contains a small number of redundant ecclesiastical silver items that have been deposited by churches in the local Diocese of Rochester.

### **2/3.14.1 Resources and principles**

- a) The museum is currently used by Medway Council as a secure and convenient repository for its historic silver collection reflecting over three hundred years of civic history. The museum can offer appropriate secure storage, as well as facilities for the permanent display of key items in the collection. There has been discussion in the past as to whether or not unique and highly valuable 'historic' civic items in this collection should remain in active use. It has now been agreed that because many of the items housed in this collection are deemed to be rare, valuable and – in some cases – very fragile, requests to use or display objects off-site will be

risk assessed on an individual basis. The museum service regularly makes available selected pieces of civic silverware for display at civic functions. A commonsense approach is adopted when considering loans requests from Council departments, local organisations and other institutions. In such circumstances, expert advice will be sought from Garrards Ltd., the Council's insurers, and the Council's Insurance Officer. The museum service has always adopted a flexible approach to loans requests and this policy will remain in place.

- b) Not all of the civic silver/regalia from the former Medway towns has been transferred to the Medway Unitary Authority. Some of the former Chatham regalia (including a Chatham mace) is still in active use. Most of the historic regalia for the former Borough of Gillingham has been deposited on permanent loan to the Royal Engineers Museum in Gillingham. It would make sense in the longer-term for the Gillingham regalia to be housed with all the other Medway regalia at the Guildhall Museum.
- c) The museum service would not normally wish to enter into a permanent loan arrangement with another institution. However, the permanent loan of the nationally important Sir Joseph Williamson collection of ecclesiastical plate is of mutual benefit to the museum service and to the Dean and Chapter of Rochester Cathedral. If this collection was not on permanent display at the museum it would not normally be accessible to the general public. The museum service would be willing to re-negotiate or terminate this arrangement at a future date if the Dean and Chapter of Rochester Cathedral could offer appropriate secure display facilities at another site. In the meantime, the on-going arrangement will continue with the consent of all parties.
- d) The museum service strongly supports the idea that Medway Council and the Dean and Chapter of Rochester Cathedral should perhaps combine resources to establish a local 'Treasury' where all the civic and cathedral silver (and other relevant civic and ecclesiastical artefacts) could be displayed for the benefit of local residents and visitors. It has been proposed that a 'Treasury' of Civic silver should be established at the new civic headquarters at Gun Wharf, Chatham. Public 'open days' could be used as a vehicle for providing better access to this important collection.

#### **2/3.14.2 Future Collecting Policy (Silver Plate and Civic Regalia)**

- a) The museum service will only add further items of civic regalia/plate to the museum collections if the items on offer are deemed to be of sufficient historic merit for long-term preservation in a museum collection. Specialist advice will be sought to inform the decision. The museum will not acquire any items of civic plate or regalia that are still in regular active use by the local authority. The museum will only acquire items that it can display or store in appropriate conditions.
- b) It will not be usual policy for the museum to enter into temporary or permanent arrangements for the storage or display of silver items on

behalf of other institutions. The museum will only acquire silver items from other institutions (i.e. churches, clubs and societies, freemasons, sporting associations etc.) in exceptional circumstances. In the majority of cases alternative solutions will be sought, or the offer of the item/s declined. There may be the occasional exception e.g. in the circumstance where a local church closes or is deconsecrated and there is no suitable repository for silver items of museum quality.

- c) The museum service will only acquire trophies and other silver commemorative items if they are of outstanding local interest and importance or of special aesthetic merit.
- d) The museum will not collect duplicates of silver items already in the collection.

## **NATURAL HISTORY**

### **2/3.15 Existing Collections**

- a) Natural history collections were a prominent feature of the old City of Rochester museum at Eastgate House. It would appear that most of the natural history material displayed at Eastgate House was in such poor condition that it was disposed-of prior to the move to the Guildhall in the 1970s. Some of the better quality material was transferred to other museums or given to the Kent County Museums Service for addition to the School Loans Collection (some of this material has been returned to the museum following the cessation of the county-wide School Loans Service).

#### **2/3.15.1 Geological Collections**

- a) The museum houses a small but wide-ranging geological collection including fossils, minerals, gemstones, and rocks. The collection was gathered together by Mr. J. C. Taylor and formed a prominent feature of the collections at the old Eastgate House Museum in Rochester. Some of the best fossil specimens from this collection have been displayed in the museum's introductory displays (mainly characteristic local fossils of the Cretaceous, Gault Clay and London Clay deposits in Kent). Additional high quality fossils from other British localities and contexts are also on display in the museum. The larger part of the geological collection is housed in the museum's reserve collection and is readily accessible to researchers. Specimens are generally well-labelled and provenanced. Some specimens are stored in Victorian-style wooden specimen cabinets with glazed drawers. Others are packed in 32+ large museum storage boxes.

#### **2/3.15.2 Future Collecting Policy (Geological Specimens)**

- a) The museum will not be acquiring any further geological material for the collections until such time as a geological subject specialist is able to advise on the status and importance of existing collections and recommend how the collection could be developed and utilised in the

future. Further offers relating to the potential donation of geological collections will be forwarded to Maidstone Museum which employs a professional geologist and houses collections relevant to the whole County of Kent (including Medway). The geological collections housed by the museum will be used for reference and educational purposes.

### **2/3.15.3 Natural History Collections**

- a) The museum houses a number of locally interesting natural history collections including the Natural History Collection of Walter Prentis of Rainham (comprising 300+ mounted bird specimens collected in and around Medway during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a large library of natural history books and periodicals); the W. Gamble Collection of Bryozoa found in the Medway Valley chalk near Chatham (presented to the museum in 1913), and the Pyle Collection of Birds' Eggs (mainly British). Unfortunately, this collection of birds' eggs was not properly packed when the museum moved from Eastgate House to the Guildhall and many specimens were damaged in transit or have become 'unsorted' which makes precise identification difficult. The collection contains a number of cabinets of natural history specimens (mainly British moths and butterflies) collected and mounted by Mr. A. G. J. Butcher.

### **2/3.15.4 Future Collecting Policy (Natural History Collections)**

- a) The museum will restrict its future collecting activity to individual specimens required for temporary exhibitions or to support the work of the Museum Education Service. Specimens will be acquired in accordance with current Wildlife Protection legislation and the museum service will only purchase mounted bird and mammal specimens from a licensed taxidermist. Large collections of natural history material/specimens offered to the museum will be referred to Maidstone Museum which houses county-wide natural history collections, or another appropriate local/regional/national museum which employs qualified natural history collection curators and can guarantee good public access to the material.

## **PERSONALIA**

### **2/3.16 Existing Collections**

- a) The museum houses small but important collections associated with two internationally famous historical figures with close local connections; namely English Admiral **Sir Cloudesley Shovell** and 19<sup>th</sup> century writer and novelist **Charles Dickens**. **Sir Cloudesley Shovell** was one of the most illustrious and gallant Admirals of his time. Sir Cloudesley served as Member of Parliament for Rochester in 1695, 1698, 1701 and 1705 and was the sitting Member at the time of his death by drowning in 1707, when his flagship H.M.S. 'Association', together with other ships of his fleet, floundered on the rocks of the Scilly Isles. Sir Cloudesley was a great benefactor to the City of Rochester, providing at his own expense the very

fine decorated plaster ceilings in the Guildhall and the market bell, clock and decorated brick façade for the Butchers' Market (now known as the Corn Exchange) in Rochester High Street. The museum houses two important portraits of Sir Cloudesley Shovell as well as a silver plate bearing his personal Coat of Arms rescued from the wreck of the 'Association'. All these items are on permanent display in the Guildhall Chamber.

- b) **Charles Dickens** moved to Medway when he was five and spent the happiest years of his childhood around Chatham after his father John, a clerk in the Royal Navy pay office, was transferred to Chatham in 1817. Dickens' most impressionable childhood days were spent in Medway. The historic City of Rochester inspired the author so much that he featured it in his work more than any other city, other than London. Many of the buildings found on Rochester High Street carry plaques giving details of how Dickens incorporated the site into his novels. Stones in local graveyards reveal where he found the names of many of his characters. Three of Dickens' novels *Great Expectations*, *The Pickwick Papers*, and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* feature Medway and its environs. Charles Dickens moved to Gad's Hill Place, Rochester, just outside Rochester, in 1856. He died at Gad's Hill in 1870. The museum collections contain a number of personal items that formerly belonged to Charles Dickens (including his post bag, Bible, walking stick, drinking glass etc.) as well as important original painted portraits of Charles Dickens and members of his family. The museum's collection of Dickens-related objects/paintings is on permanent display in the Dickens Discovery Room within the museum's Conservancy Board Building. The gallery provides information about Dickens in six world languages and a film screened in the adjacent audio visual theatre highlights Charles Dickens' links with Medway. The large collection of Dickens-related material collected by his friend Percy Fitzgerald was recently (2007) transferred from the museum to the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre in Strood. This 'treasure trove' of Dickens material and many rare and early editions of his works will be of outstanding interest to Dickens researchers and the wider academic community.

### 2/3.16.1 Future Collecting Policy (Personalia)

- a) The museum will actively collect personal objects, portraits and commemorative souvenir items illustrative of the lives of Admiral Sir Cloudesley Shovell and novelist Charles Dickens. Given world-wide interest in both of these 'personalities', the museum will need to consult with other interested parties prior to formally acquiring objects/paintings (by whatever means) to ensure that the museum is the most appropriate place for the display of objects/paintings, and that permanent public access can be given to the objects (subject to any limitations imposed by conservation requirements). In the case of Sir Cloudesley Shovell, consultation will take place with the National Maritime Museum (Greenwich) and the Isles of Scilly Government. In the case of Charles

Dickens, consultation will take place with the International Dickens Fellowship, Portsmouth City Council, and the Charles Dickens Museum in London to ensure that there is no conflict of interest in acquiring material.

#### **4.0 Limitations on collecting**

- a) The museum recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as inadequate staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

#### **5.0 Collecting policies of other museums**

- a) The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

Specific reference is made to the following museums:-

**Chatham Historic Dockyard**

**The Royal Engineers Museum (Gillingham)**

**Maidstone Museum and Bentrif Art Gallery**

These museums have been consulted with and have approved the contents of this policy.

#### **6.0 Policy review procedure**

- a) The Acquisition and Disposal Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is noted above.
- b) MLA will be notified of any changes to the Acquisition and Disposal Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

#### **7.0 Acquisitions not covered by the policy**

- a) Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by Medway Council's Cabinet through the relevant Portfolio Holder, having regard to the interest of other museums.

- b) 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 museums and organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.
- c) The museum will not collect material that relates to areas covered by neighbouring museums in the historical county of Kent unless the appropriate local museum is unwilling or unable to accept objects which are relevant to the Guildhall Museum's existing collections. Under these circumstances the museum will only accept such material after full consultation with the appropriate local museum.
- d) The future collection of geological, archaeological and natural history specimens from Medway forms a discrete problem, since historically, Maidstone Museum has housed the most important countywide collections relating to these academic disciplines. Maidstone Museum is equipped with appropriate storage facilities and professional subject specialists to deal with such collections. Until additional storage facilities are made available locally, collections of local provenance that the Guildhall Museum is unable to house will, in the first instance, be offered to Maidstone Museum.
- e) In considering acquisitions, the museum will not normally accept any gift, bequest or loan to which any special conditions apply, except where such conditions are intended to protect the item against disposal.

## **8.0 Acquisition procedures**

### **8.1 Introduction: General Principles of Acquisition and Disposal**

- a) Underlying the policy is the fundamental belief that the Guildhall Museum should continue to acquire objects for the permanent collection in order to provide a full range of services and fulfil its responsibilities to both the residents of the area administered by Medway Council and the wider audience of museum visitors and researchers. Accredited museums act as a long-term guardian of collections that are in the public domain.
- b) The museum recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to the collection, to ensure the care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as inadequate staffing, storage facilities and care of collections arrangements. The Guildhall Museum will abide by the following ethical codes:-



## 8.2 Ethics of Acquisition

- a) The following basic principles must be referred to by Medway Council or responsible officer/s when considering the acquisition of an item for the collection:
- Acquire an item only after thorough consideration of its long-term value, how it will be used, and the availability of contextual information.
  - Acquire an item only if the Guildhall Museum can provide adequate, continuing long-term care for the item and public access to it, without compromising standards of care and access relating to existing collections.
  - Co-operate rather than compete with other Kent/Medway and UK museums when collecting. Recognise that other institutions collecting in the same fields may have a stronger claim to acquisition of a particular item. Resolve disputes with other museums constructively and in the best interests of the public. Take account of the interests of not only other accredited museums, but also of related public organisations such as libraries and archives.
  - Take account of arguments for and against leaving items in their original context. Recognise that individuals or communities may have a stronger claim to certain items than the Guildhall Museum.
  - Do not acquire an item if there is cause to believe that collecting it will damage its original natural, historic, cultural or social context unless, in the opinion of a range of experts, there is an exceptionally strong reason for acquiring it.
  - Exercise due diligence when considering an acquisition. Verify the ownership of any item being considered for acquisition and that the current holder is legitimately able to transfer title.
  - Decline to offer expertise on, authenticate, or otherwise assist the current possessor of an item that may have been illicitly obtained, unless it is to assist law enforcement or to support other organisations in countering illicit activities. In the case of any suspect item/s it is the responsibility of the Service Manager, Curator or Assistant Curator, or another senior officer as necessary, to notify the police or other appropriate authority without delay.
  - Reject any item if there is any suspicion that, since 1970, it may have been stolen, illegally excavated or removed from a monument, site or wreck contrary to local law or otherwise acquired or exported from its country of origin (including the UK), or any intermediate country, in violation of that country's laws or any national and international treaties,

unless the museum is able to obtain permission from authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin. Reject any item that lacks a secure ownership history, unless there is reliable documentation to show that it was exported from its country of origin before 1970. If any such item has come into the possession of the Guildhall Museum, it shall, if legally free to do so, return the object to its donor. If for this reason a public museum or agency of a foreign country seeks the return of an object and demonstrates that it is part of the country's cultural heritage, the museum shall, if legally free to do so, take responsible steps to co-operate in the return of the object to that country.

- Reject any item if there is any suspicion that it was wrongfully taken during a time of conflict, unless allowed by treaties or other agreements.
- Examine carefully the implications, and record the reasons for, accepting items that will not be immediately accessioned into the permanent collection. Some objects will not be added to the permanent collections, but will be accepted (with the depositor's consent) as handling material for the Museum Education Service and other educational activities. The owner of a gift which is intended for the handling collection or for other educational purposes will be advised of its proposed use and made aware of the implications for the object's continued survival
- The Guildhall Museum will discriminate carefully in selecting items to be acquired. Because of the costs of collection care and access, no acquisition is free. All potential acquisitions or loans will be evaluated for storage, insurance, conservation and display implications before a decision on acceptance is made. In particular, no object will be accepted which is in poor physical condition, unless it is of paramount importance to the collection and therefore worthy of the conservation costs required to stabilise it or bring it up to display standard. Decisions about acquisition will be made with caution. Advice will be sought and acted on, whenever necessary, from colleagues in other museums, museum support bodies and consultants. Specialist expertise, through contacts or consultancies, will be obtained when necessary.
- If a gift of a valuable item is proposed to the museum, the owner will be advised of its potential value to avoid taking advantage of their ignorance as to its true worth.
- Curatorial staff will use their professional expertise and judgement to decide whether objects offered to the museum should be permanently added to the collections. Pressure placed on the museum service to acquire objects that fall outside this written Acquisition policy and are therefore not appropriate for accession to the collection will be politely but firmly declined.

- The Guildhall Museum will not value objects brought in as enquiries.

### **8.3 Authorisation of Acquisitions**

For every acquisition (whether purchase, gift, bequest or long-term loan), full object entry documentation must be completed, Only the Curator and the Assistant Curator will be authorised to accept accessions to the collection. Object entry documentation must be signed off by the Curator or Assistant Curator. The accession will then be formalised and documented.

### **8.4 Purchases**

a. The Director of Regeneration Community and Culture has delegated authority to manage the museum, which would include the authority to incur expenditure on acquisitions within budget. However, the museum operates the following procedures with regard to acquisitions. For potential new purchases and acquisitions, the museum curator and assistant curator will have the discretion to spend up to £500 from the museum's Cumulative Purchase Fund on the acquisition of objects that are deemed to be of outstanding interest to the museum. Expenditure up to this level will also need to be approved in advance by the Head of Service. Purchase of items costing more than £500 for which there is a budget is authorised by the Director of Regeneration Community Culture, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

b. Purchases will be exempt from Medway Council's Financial Regulations with regard to the need for three quotations in view of the specialist nature of the objects. However, every effort will be made to minimise the cost to Medway Council by the use of grant-aid, private treaty sales, discounts etc. Where necessary, independent advice will be sought from appropriate bodies or persons as to the suitability of the object for purchase and an estimate of a fair price.

### **8.5 Acquisition Procedures (Details)**

a. The museum will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest, or exchange, any object or specimen unless Medway Council or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

b. In particular, the museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws (for the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).

c. In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003,

the museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. Medway Council will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

d. So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

e. The museum will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where Medway Council 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 (in Scotland).

f. Any exceptions to the above clauses **8a**, **8b**, **8c** or **8e** will only be because the museum is either:-

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin; or
- acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history, but in the best judgement of experts in the field has not been illicitly traded; or
- in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970.

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

## **9.0 Spoliation**

- a) 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.

## **10.0 The Repatriation and Restitution of objects, and human remains**

- a) Medway Council, acting on the advice of the museum’s professional staff, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the

“Guidance for the care of human remains in museums” issued by DCMS in 2005), objects or 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 **12a-12d**, **12g** and **12s** below will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

## 11.0 Management of Archives

- a) As the museum holds/intends to acquire archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, Medway Council will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 2002).

## 12.0 Disposal procedures

### Disposal preliminaries

- a. Medway Council will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.
- b. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. Medway Council therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the museum’s collection.
- c. The museum will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.
- d. When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.

### Motivation for disposal and method of disposal

- e. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs **12g – 12s** will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.
- f. The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

### **The disposal decision-making process**

- g. Whether the disposal is motivated either by curatorial or financial reasons, the decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including the public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. External expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.

### **Responsibility for disposal decision-making**

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

### **Use of proceeds of sale**

- i. Any monies received by Medway Council from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from MLA.
- j. The proceeds of a sale will be ring-fenced so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard.
- k. Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- l. If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through an announcement in the Museums Association's *Museums Journal*, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.

- m. The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.

### **Disposal by exchange**

- n. The nature of disposal by exchange means that the museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. Medway Council will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.
- o. In cases where Medway Council wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or unaccredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs **12a – 12d** and **12g-12h** will be followed as will the procedures in paragraphs **12p-12s**.
- p. If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related area will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.
- q. If the exchange is proposed with a non-accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will make an announcement in the *Museums Journal*, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.
- r. 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, Medway Council must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

### **Documenting disposal**

- s. 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 de-accession and disposal.

### **13.0 Loans**

- a) Because of the resource implications, such as insurance costs and the high cost of storage space, the Guildhall Museum will not accept loans unless they are of outstanding significance for the collection. Loans may be accepted for a short or long-term, but will always be made for a specified period of time and supported by documentation setting out the terms and conditions of the loan. Every effort will be made to return existing loans which fall outside the museum's current collecting policy. The Guildhall Museum will continue to lend material to Accredited museums for a specified period of time and supported by appropriate documentation and insurance detail.
- b) Loans to any other institutions and organisations will be at the discretion of the Curator or Assistant Curator and will only be agreed-to if the recipient institution or organisation can satisfy security, insurance and environmental condition requirements that would pertain in an Accredited museum.
- c) Museum staff will not agree to the loan or use of any objects in its collection if the loan/use of an object has a potentially detrimental affect on the well-being or preservation of the object/s. If there is any doubt about the perceived risk to the well-being of the object/s that are the subject of a loans request, expert independent advice and arbitration will be sought. If the perceived risk to the well being of the object is too great, the loans request will be declined.

### **14.0 Diversity impact Assessment (DIA)**

- a) This policy has been diversity impact-assessed (11 August 2008). The screening process identifies impacts for customers due not only to their racial group, but also to their gender and disability. The DIA also covers possible discrimination due to sexual orientation, age, religion and other factors.
- b) A full impact assessment is not required because the initial screening report has highlighted that the museum's wide-ranging collections are equally accessible to all users and there is nothing within the policy that could have an adverse impact on service users and non-users due to their racial group, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion and other factors.
- c) Strategies are in place, or being developed, to ensure that collections can be actively used and enjoyed by all sections of the local community.
- d) An object-focussed outreach service is available for educational groups and community groups that are unable to visit the museum site.



- e) The museum service undertakes on-going market research into its user base and profile, and utilises comment cards, feedback forms and visitor survey questionnaires as a mechanism for capturing data about visitor interests, needs and requirements. This includes the interests, needs and requirements of service users representative of minority groups.
- f) The Museum Education Service uses museum collections to support community-based projects exploring and promoting self, identity and multiculturalism.
- g) The museum service fosters active links with minority community groups, encouraging them to use the museum's display facilities to promote their particular history, culture and heritage through temporary exhibitions.
- h) The museum service has contacts with minority groups in the community who can be consulted with for advice when key decisions are being made about new acquisitions or disposals.
- i) The museum service seeks to add objects to the collections that reflect the ever-changing role of the wider Medway community. This would include objects representative of minority groups.